



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



LCDC

A new way of working

Leitrim Local Community
Development Committee

Local Economic and Community Plan

2023 - 2029

December 2023

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Foreword

LEITRIM LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN
2023 - 2029

Is cúis áthais dúinn Plean Áitiúil Nua Eacnamaíochta agus Pobail Chontae Liatroma a chur i láthair don thréimhse 2023-2029. Déanann an plean forbairt ar ar baineadh amach mar thoradh ar an bplean roimhe (2016-2021) agus beidh sé mar threoir ag forbairt inbhuanaithe eacnamaíoch agus pobail Liatroma as seo go ceann 6 bliana. Rinneadh comhairliúchán forleathan leis an bpobal agus le príomhpháirtithe leasmhara eile chun bonn eolais a chur faoin bplean, chomh maith le hanailís chríochnúil ar chomhthéacs socheacnamaíoch an chontae. Ina theannta sin, déanfar athbhreithniú gach 2 bhliain ar an bplean cur chun feidhme nua atá ina chuid den Phlean Áitiúil Eacnamaíochta agus Pobail, 2023 – 2029, rud a thabharfaidh deis dúinn aghaidh a thabhairt ar dhúshlán nua de réir mar a thiocfaidh siad chun cinn agus a chinntiú go bhfanfaidh an plean ábhartha agus freagrúil maidir leis na cúinsí a bhíonn ag athrú ar fud an chontae.



The LECP, as a high-level overarching plan, complements and is consistent with the County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032. It is also aligned with other key policies at local, regional and national level as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The plan includes an ambition for the County, developed from views put forward during the consultation process, based around sustainability, wellbeing and prosperity. Similarly, the goals, objectives and actions are focused on key areas identified during the consultation and analysis process including education and skills, economy and employment, inclusion and wellbeing, climate and the environment, and tourism and heritage.

The development of this ambitious Plan has been made possible through the dedication, collaboration and inputs provided by the community, businesses and other key stakeholders from across the County and further afield. The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and Leitrim County Council wish to acknowledge and thank all those who have contributed to the development of the new LECP over the last year and have helped to ensure that it is reflective of views, needs and ideas from across the County. This ongoing collaboration and support will be key to the successful implementation of the LECP and the continued sustainable economic and community development of the County.

Cllr. Justin Warnock
Cathaoirleach, Leitrim County Council

Cllr. Sean McDermott
Chairperson, Leitrim SPC

James Gallagher
Chairperson, Leitrim LCDC



Executive Summary



LEITRIM LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN
2023 - 2029

Introduction

Contae beag í Liatroim atá an-uaimhianach. An grá don chontae, don talamh agus don chultúr, chomh maith le dearcadh fiontraíochta agus meon dearfach, tá siad go smíor i muintir agus i ndiaspóra Liatroma. In ainneoin na ndúshlán mór a bhí le sárú ag an gcontae le himeacht na mblianta, is léir anois go bhfuil dóchas ann, gur mian leis na daoine an saol a athrú chun feabhais agus coinneáil orthu ag déanamh dul chun cinn i dtreo 2030. Cuid lárnach de sin is ea an nuálaíocht agus an inbhuanaitheacht, rudaí a dtabharfar aghaidh orthu ach leas a bhaint as láidreachtaí agus acmhainní Liatroma ar bhealach a chuirfidh bonn láidir, rathúil faoin gcontae do na glúnta atá le teacht. In ainneoin a uaimhianaí atá sé, tá cur chuige an chontae réalaióch, agus tá céimeanna praiticiúla, soiléire á nglacadh chun forbairt chothrom a bhaint amach. Is sa chomhthéacs sin a forbraíodh an plean nua seo agus a dhéanfaidh sé iarracht tuilleadh forbartha agus dul chun cinn a chothú as seo go ceann 6 bliana.

This document represents Leitrim's new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the period 2023-2029 and fulfils the requirements as set-out in the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The LECP is an integrated plan that will guide the County's economic and community development over the next 6 years. It has been developed in close consultation with key stakeholders and the community to ensure that it reflects and addresses their views and needs. The development of the LECP has been underpinned by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and is fully aligned with existing policies and strategies including the County Development Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly and the National Planning Framework.

Ambition

The ambition for Leitrim has been developed through research and views provided during the consultation process including from the public, community groups, business sector and other key stakeholders from across the County. It provides a unified path forward and is aligned with the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions of the overall LECP and is as follows: _____

The ambition for Leitrim is for a County that is connected, inclusive and sustainable, where a collaborative approach contributes to shared prosperity and wellbeing, and a County that is known as a great place to live, visit, work, invest and grow.

Research and Consultation



Extensive research and consultation was conducted during the development of the LECP. The research and consultation included the examination of data around key themes including population and demographics, housing, economy and enterprise, social and community infrastructure and the environment. The consultation process included interviews, workshops, surveys and written submissions. Views were provided from a wide range of stakeholders including the public, community groups, businesses, state agencies and service providers. Some of the key needs arising from the analysis and consultation process included:

- » Attracting sustainable investment and further developing and diversifying Leitrim's economy, while supporting existing businesses and building upon the County's key strengths including in relation to tourism.
- » Ensuring adequate provision of and access to services to support the County's growing population including healthcare, public transport and education.
- » Ensuring suitable supports for an ageing population and enhancing inclusion across communities in the County.



- » Addressing poverty and deprivation where it exists and ensuring balanced economic development across the County.
- » Enhancing the provision of high-quality education and training in the County to help support learning, enterprise and innovation.
- » Ensuring the adequate supply of housing to support economic and community development.

- » Combatting climate change and embracing sustainability to preserve and enhance Leitrim's diverse and beautiful natural landscape.
- » Addressing vacancy and enhancing Leitrim's towns and villages as attractive places in which to work, live and visit.

The findings from the research and consultation were used to further develop the LECP with feedback and ideas informing the development of the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions.

High-Level Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives for the entire 6-year timeframe of the LECP are outlined in the table below. More detail on each goal and objective, as well as the desired outcomes, are included in Chapter 7. In support of the high-level goals, objectives and outcomes, are 44 actions which are included in the initial Implementation Plan in Chapter 8. These actions have been developed and informed from the findings of the research and consultation and designed to address specific needs and gaps in the County.

The Implementation Plan will be revised every 2 years providing the Council and its partners with an opportunity to replace actions which may not be having the desired impact and adding actions to address new issues which may have emerged. Combined, the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions cover both economic and community elements in an integrated manner and look to position Leitrim for a resilient, prosperous and sustainable future.

High-Level Goals	Objectives
<p>Goal 1: Leitrim will continue to develop as an inclusive, healthy and equitable county that supports wellbeing and is celebrated as a great place to live</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1.1 Enhance and ensure adequate access to supports and services for the entire community • Objective 1.2 Improve the health and wellbeing of all the people of Leitrim • Objective 1.3 Increase community engagement and collaboration in the development of their local community and County
<p>Goal 2: Leitrim will embrace climate action to increase the sustainability of its communities and unlock the benefits of the green economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 2.1 Implement climate action initiatives to reduce emissions and support the transition of Leitrim to a carbon neutral county through community engagement, energy efficiency and the sustainable development of renewable energy. • Objective 2.2 Ensure the protection of the environment and biodiversity for future generations • Objective 2.3 Involve communities in climate action by raising awareness of environmental issues and sustainable practices.

High-Level Goals	Objectives
<p>Goal 3: Leitrim’s towns and villages will continue to be revitalised and regenerated as attractive places to live, work and visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 3.1 Pilot new and innovative approaches to support regeneration and revitalisation and address rural decline • Objective 3.2 Implement the Town Centre First Policy and reduce vacancy and dereliction in towns and villages • Objective 3.3 Ensure there is adequate housing capacity in the County to meet demand
<p>Goal 4: Leitrim will be recognised for its educational attainment, life-long learning and training opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 4.1 Improve the County's education performance and enhance the employability of our people • Objective 4.2 Increase the level of digital and IT skills across all ages • Objective 4.3 Further develop the provision of education and training in the County
<p>Goal 5: Leitrim will strengthen and diversify its innovative economy, create meaningful employment and promote sustainable enterprise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 5.1 Continue to work with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the LEO to attract investment, increase employment and develop indigenous enterprises • Objective 5.2 Support existing businesses in key sectors across the County • Objective 5.3 Improve the business environment and actively promote the County as an attractive business location
<p>Goal 6: Leitrim will champion its natural and cultural environment and support the development of the county as a tourism destination in a sustainable and balanced manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 6.1 Enhance Leitrim as a sustainable tourism destination and further develop a range of high-quality experiences across the County • Objective 6.2 Improve coordination and capability across the tourism sector • Objective 6.3 Champion Leitrim's rich natural, built and cultural heritage and maintain and protect a green, clean and safe environment for everyone.



1. Introduction

This document represents Leitrim's new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the period 2023-2029. This new LECP fulfils the requirements as set-out in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and has been developed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines (2021).

The Leitrim Local Economic and Community Plan (2023-2029) is an integrated plan that will guide the County's economic and community development over the next 6 years. In doing so, it will look to assist in creating a County that is prosperous, sustainable and inclusive with an excellent quality of life.

The LECP has been prepared by Leitrim County Council in conjunction with the Leitrim Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure, the LECP Advisory Steering Group (ASG) and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). It has been informed by extensive consultation with communities across Leitrim, the private sector (businesses), education and training providers, government agencies, and other key stakeholders. Achievements and lessons learned from Leitrim's previous LECP (2015-2021) have also been taken into consideration during the development of this plan.

The LECP includes high-level goals, objectives, and outcomes for the 6-year period (together these elements are known as the LECP Framework). In contrast to the previous iteration of LECPs, the actions are now part of a detailed two-year Implementation Plan that identifies action owners and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assist with monitoring and evaluation. A revised and updated Implementation Plan will be developed for each subsequent two-year period up to 2029, to reflect progress made and take account of newly emerging policies and programmes.

The Plan fully aligns with and supports existing strategies at the local, regional and national level. At a local level this includes the Healthy Leitrim Plan, Age Friendly Strategy, Arts Plan, Creative and Cultural Strategy, Libraries Plan and Sports Partnership plan. The plan is also fully aligned with the County Development Plan, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (NWRA RSES) and national plans such as the National Planning Framework (NPF) (2018), and the National Climate Action Plan 2023. Furthermore, given the current climate crisis, a core cross-cutting policy of the LECP will be the UN Sustainable Development Goals which underpin the new plan to ensure that sustainability and climate action are at the centre of Leitrim's development moving forward.



1.1 Overview

This document (the Leitrim LECP) comprises of the following chapters:

- » An ambition for Leitrim developed from the views and feedback provided during the Consultation process reflecting a vision for the future as put forward by Leitrim’s community and business interests. (Chapter 2)
- » A summary of key strategies and plans that the LECP supports, embodies and aligns with at a local, regional and national level (Chapter 3)
- » A summary of key findings from the socio-economic analysis of the County, in areas including demographics, the economy, housing, community and the environment. (Chapter 4)
- » An overview of the Consultation process with information on the consultation conducted and key findings identified from the analysis by theme. (Chapter 5)
- » An analysis of the County’s key strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats (SCOT Analysis) as Leitrim moves towards 2029. (Chapter 6)
- » High-level goals, objectives and outcomes for the 6-year period between 2023-2029 that were developed from findings of the analysis and consultation (Chapter 7)
- » An initial 2-year Implementation Plan outlining specific actions (along with action owners and KPIs) to assist in achieving the high-level goals, objectives and Outcomes (Chapter 8)
- » An overview of the approach to monitoring and evaluation of the new plan. (Chapter 9)

1.2 LECP Format

The Leitrim LECP has been developed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines (2021). The LECP comprises of two distinct elements. These are:

- » The LECP Framework covering the 2023-2029 period which consists of the high-level goals, the objectives and the outcomes. The high-level goals establish the strategic direction of the Leitrim LECP in relation to both economic and community elements. The objectives identify more specific areas to address, and the desired outcomes represent key targets for the 6-year period.
- » The Implementation Plan, which is for an initial 2-years, includes the actions and KPIs that will help to achieve the goals, objectives and outcomes for Leitrim. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed and revised every 2 years.

The change to the format of the LECP process is a positive development that provides additional flexibility so that the plan can adapt to address new issues and needs as they arise over the 6-year period. It also allows Leitrim County Council to identify actions that may not be progressing or achieving the envisaged impact and replace them with new actions that better suit the County’s needs in the subsequent Implementation Plans. Key to realising the benefits of this enhanced flexibility and the overall success of the plan will be clear, concise and regular monitoring.



1.3 Preparation of the Plan

The Plan has been developed through the following stages:

1.

Preparation – The first stage in developing Leitrim’s new LECP was the collation and analysis of socio-economic data from relevant sources (e.g. CSO data) and a review of existing policies and strategies in relation to the context and alignment of the plan. This information was then used in the development of the Socio-Economic Statement which included 6 draft high-level goals. The Socio-Economic Statement was then put forward for public consultation to generate discussion and ideas for the new LECP.

2.

Consultation Process – During this stage, an extensive range of public and stakeholder consultation was conducted. This included written submissions on the draft Socio-Economic Statement, workshops and a number of key stakeholder interviews. Views, ideas and suggestions were received from the public, community representative groups, local government, state agencies, education providers and the private sector (businesses). Following the conclusion of the consultation, the draft high-level goals process revised to reflect the views provided by the community, private sector (businesses) and other key stakeholders.

3.

Development of the Objectives, Outcomes and Actions – During the third stage, the objectives and outcomes for the 6-year period were developed along with the actions for the initial 2-year Implementation Plan. These elements were developed from the findings of the analysis of data and the consultation process in stage 2. Proposed action owners/enabling agencies were consulted on the objectives, outcomes and actions to ensure buy-in and alignment of views and ambition.

4.

Finalise Plan – Following approval of the Objectives, Outcomes and Actions, input from the Regional Assembly and Municipal Districts was sought and incorporated into a Draft LECP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening report and Appropriate Assessment Screening report were also conducted following completion of the draft Plan. The Plan was then revised and finalised following the receipt of feedback. Subsequently, Leitrim’s new LECP was formally approved by Leitrim County Council on **6th November 2023**.



Responsibilities in developing the LECP

While extensive consultation with the community and private sector (businesses) was carried out in the development of the new LECP, in line with the LECP Guidelines, the following responsibilities were assigned for the development of the Plan:

- » Leitrim LECP Advisory Steering Group (ASG): The ASG provided oversight for the overall development of the LECP.
- » Local Community Development Committee (LCDC): The LCDC was responsible for the preparation of the community elements of the LECP.
- » Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure: The SPC was responsible for the preparation of the economic elements of the LECP.
- » Regional Assembly: The Northern and Western Regional Assembly was consulted for inputs to ensure consistency and alignment with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES).
- » Municipal Districts: The Municipal Districts of Ballinamore, Carrick-on-Shannon, and Manorhamilton were consulted for input in relation to the consistency between the economic and community elements of the plan and with the existing County Development Plan.



An Integrated and Collaborative Approach

This LECP covers both community and economic development as required by the LECP guidelines. However, in contrast to the previous iteration, the community and economic elements are not separated into different sections. Instead, the goals, objectives and actions have been developed using an integrated approach reflecting the cross-cutting and interlinked nature of economic development and community wellbeing.

The **community elements** of the plan have been developed and approved by the Leitrim LCDC. It includes goals, objectives and actions related to enhancing inclusion, public transport, wellbeing and health, education and training, the culture and creative sector and sustainability. The **economic elements** have been developed and approved by the Leitrim SPC for Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure. It includes goals, objectives and

actions related to improving the business environment, urban and rural regeneration, attracting investment, training and skills, supporting existing businesses and sustainable tourism development.

As outlined in the subsequent chapters, the new LECP has been developed to be a shared plan that will require collaboration between key stakeholders from across different sectors for it to be a success. This will include Leitrim County Council, the public, the private sector (businesses), community and voluntary groups, education and training providers and other key stakeholders that provide vital services in the County. It is through this collaborative effort that this plan will succeed in addressing the needs of all the community and businesses, and will enhance the County as a place to live, work and invest.





1.4 Overriding Status of the Plan

Implementing this plan will involve Leitrim County Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans setting out public policy for sustainable development, including that relating to the economy, communities, infrastructure, land use, tourism and environmental protection and environmental management.

This Plan is situated alongside this hierarchy of statutory documents that has been subject to environmental assessment/screening for

environmental assessment, as appropriate, and forms the decision-making and consent-granting framework. The plan does not provide consent or establish a framework for granting consent and will not be binding on any decisions relating to the granting of consent.

As previously noted, the plan fully aligns with the provisions of the existing National Planning Framework, Ireland 2040, National Climate Action Plan 2023, Housing For All 2021, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 and the current County Development Plan, all of which have been subject to legislative

requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment. As such, the Plan is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents, including the provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes, and does not introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.

In order to be realised, projects included in this plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework. It is a specific provision of this plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the County Development Plan identified as mitigation in the accompanying Screening for SEA and AA reports shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this plan.





2. AMBITION FOR LETRIM



3. POLICY CONTEXT

Policy Context

This section provides an overview of the existing policy context. It outlines key policies at international, national, regional and local level that are influencing the development of Leitrim and to which the LECP has been aligned. The analysis of existing policies has allowed for the identification of a number of key areas that the LECP can help to address. This includes the following:



Community

- » Ensuring the revitalisation of town and village centres to create vibrant settlements across the County
- » Incorporating climate action, sustainability and compact growth across all of Leitrim
- » Strengthening local communities to help reverse and address rural decline
- » Ensuring inclusion and healthy communities
- » Capitalising on Leitrim's existing quality of life, natural amenities and heritage to galvanise its strengths as a place to live and work

Economic

- » Generating economic growth and diversification of local and regional economies, including through supporting SME and micro business creation
- » Advancing development of infrastructure to support emerging employment sectors and to embrace new ways of remote and flexible working
- » Encouraging population growth in settlements of all sizes, supported by job creation and enhanced employment opportunities

These areas are broadly reflected in the high-level goals, objectives and actions that have been developed for this plan. A summary selection of key policies is outlined below with a full list included in Appendix A.

3.1 Selection of Key Policies

3.1.1 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve the natural environment and biodiversity. Of the 17 SDGs outlined in the 2030 Agenda, several share a strong alignment with the purpose and objectives of the Leitrim Local Economic and Community Plan including:

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities - Creating cities, towns, villages and communities which are safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable are key objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. These objectives are closely aligned with those found throughout Irish spatial planning policy. Ensuring access to high-quality services, creating positive economic, social and environmental links are key to achieving this SDG, and are echoed throughout Leitrim’s new LECP.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - In line with SDG 11, promoting sustainable, inclusive economic growth and fulfilling employment for all is strongly emphasised within the objectives of the SDGs, including SDG 8. Similarly, creating a diverse economy, achieving full and productive employment and decent work is a central foundation of both previous, current and future iterations of planning policy for County Leitrim.

SDG 13: Climate Action - The urgency and scale of climate action is ever-increasing. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent public health restrictions has revitalised our sense of value in the natural environment and has provided a prime opportunity for us to take urgent action to combat climate change through our actions, our governments, our institutions and our policies.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Figure 3.1: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

3.1.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region is a high-level plan that seeks to support the implementation of the NPF by providing a strategic planning and economic framework for the region’s sustainable growth and development. It echoes the NPF in emphasising sustainable development patterns and seeks to focus growth within existing urban areas and in regional growth centres.

The RSES provides a spatial planning framework for the region focused on **compact growth and placemaking**, with more sustainable growth focussed on existing cities, towns and villages instead of uncoordinated sprawl or excessive one-off housing. More co-ordinated and concentrated development aims to deliver greater quality of life and more attractive centres for investment and economic growth.

It identifies Carrick-on-Shannon as a **Key Town**, with a population growth target of at least 30% between 2016 and 2040. Key priorities for the town’s spatial development are set out within the RSES including:

Delivering supports to existing businesses in Carrick-on-Shannon
Promoting research and development opportunities
Promoting the potential of the Metropolitan Area fibre optic cable managed by eNET.
Progressing the sustainable development of lands available to the east of the town centre for employment
Further development of the town’s tourism potential to help support local enterprise
Delivering on the Blueway development under the Upper Shannon Erne Future Economy project.

3.1.3 Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Leitrim County Development Plan (CDP) is the statutory over-arching framework for spatial, economic and social development in County Leitrim up to 2029. It reflects higher-level national and regional policy objectives arising from the NPF, CAP, RSES and other policy documents to guide sustainable economic and community development in the County.

The CDP seeks to guide the sustainable physical and social development of the County, balancing growth with the conservation and protection of Leitrim’s natural and built environment. Building on the previous County Development Plan for 2015-2023 (as varied), it recognises several key challenges for the development of Leitrim. These include a dispersed settlement pattern and the lowest population density of any county; the decline of town and village centres; vacancy in the built environment, difficulties in facilitating rural housing, reliance on private cars for travel and the lack of viable sustainable alternative modes of transport; and climate change impacts. Together, the CDP and LECP for County Leitrim seek to proactively address these challenges and support the development of thriving towns, villages and rural communities with excellent access to opportunities for all.

3.1.4 Leitrim Digital Strategy to 2025

The Digital Strategy for Leitrim to 2025 (Digital Leitrim) is the first digital strategy for the County. The Strategy aims to chart the future for digital development in the county out to 2025. The focus and priorities contained within Digital Leitrim are framed around four underpinning pillars: 1. Infrastructure and Connectivity, 2. Smart Communities, 3. Digital Economy & Enterprise and 4. Digital Transformation. In addition to this, the Strategy looks to inform the County Development Plan and new LECP for Leitrim, building on existing resources, knowledge, networks and plans to create a “forward thinking, creative Leitrim that respects and protects its natural resources & environment, its culture & heritage, its people and their skills and talents.”



3.1.5 Leitrim County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

The Leitrim County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy establishes Leitrim County Council’s programme for climate adaptation and mitigation up to the year 2024. It fulfils requirements under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The strategy represents a proactive approach by Leitrim County Council to address risks of climate change. It seeks to ensure realistic comprehension of key risks and vulnerabilities for Leitrim as a result of climate change, establish a programme for climate resilient actions and interventions, and ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated throughout plans, policies and functions of Leitrim County Council.

The Strategy recognises the threats and disruptions arising from a changing climate. More frequent storm events, increased risk of river and coastal flooding, risk of drought during summer months, impacts on water quality, and the risk of new diseases and pest species are all challenges which will require direct action from a national, regional and local level. Given this context, the Strategy provides a baseline analysis of current climate vulnerabilities and sets out a series of objectives and actions to mitigate against and adapt to these climate-related threats.

3.1.6 County Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027

With a close relationship to the Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and the Heritage Plan 2020-2025, the County Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027 builds on the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 in ensuring Leitrim’s communities recognise, promote and protect the benefits of the County’s rich biodiversity. Supported by the Rural Development LEADER programme, the Plan outlines its aims and objectives under five themes:

Theme 1:



Improving our Knowledge of the Biodiversity Resource

Theme 2:



Protection of Wildlife Corridors and Biodiversity Hotspots

Theme 3:



Biodiversity Awareness, Education and Training

Theme 4:



Tackling Invasive Species

Theme 5:



Biodiversity and Climate Change

Particular actions which should be given consideration by the LECP include those relating to the development of greenways within the County, seeking resources to enable the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer/Project Worker for County Leitrim and sustainable agricultural practices. The plan also includes evaluation and performance indicators highlighted for each action. These will be essential to critically evaluate and monitor the success of the plan for the duration of the 5-year term and will help inform the development of future action for the conservation of biodiversity in the County.





3.1.7 Healthy Leitrim Plan 2023-2025

The Healthy Leitrim Plan 2023-2025 looks to continue the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework at a local level to provide tangible and sustainable measures to ensure the improvement of health and wellbeing for all the County's communities. In doing so, it will seek to ensure effective cooperation and collaboration amongst key stakeholders to deliver evidence-based initiatives in the County.

The Plan seeks to improve health and wellbeing across a number of different areas. This includes the development of a breastfeeding friendly environment to improve the health and wellbeing of breastfeeding mothers, babies, and their families. This will be achieved through a whole-of-society approach that supports women who breastfeed and raises awareness and highlights the benefits of breastfeeding.

It will also seek to support older people to continue to age happily, safely, and securely at home and to remain strongly connected to their communities. This will include supporting the roll-out of national policies and encouraging partnerships to deliver more effective and responsive local services such as fall prevention programmes, digital literacy, and befriending for older people.

3.1.8 Leitrim Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2019-2023

The Leitrim Sports Partnership (LSP) Strategic Plan seeks to build on progress made in developing Leitrim’s sports sector and to further enhance sports contribution to long-term health and wellbeing in a sustainable fashion across the county. The LSP Strategic Plan places a particular focus on increasing participation in sport and recreational activities and improving inclusion and access for disadvantaged and new communities.

The plan sets out a number of objectives and actions to achieve its mission organised under five key themes:



- » **Theme 1** – Active Participation: “Develop, support and deliver high quality, inclusive and innovative sport and physical activity opportunities for people from all sectors of society in County Leitrim”.
- » **Theme 2** – Active Development: “To empower and support local communities, clubs and volunteers so that they continue to lead the way in supporting people to become healthier and more active”.
- » **Theme 3** – Active Inclusion: “To deliver inclusive programmes and activities through an approach that removes barriers and contributes towards positive improvements in social, disability, gender, ethnic and other participation gradients”.
- » **Theme 4** – Active Communication: “Promote awareness of the sport and physical activity opportunities through a collaborative, clear and consistent approach.”
- » **Theme 5** – Active Governance: “To ensure that Leitrim LSP is a professional and effective organisation, working collaboratively to demonstrate best practice internally, whilst supporting other organisations to meet high standards in relation to governance, financial management and impact measurement.”

3.1.9 Leitrim County Council – Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027

The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-government initiative committed to enhancing access to, engagement with, and the enjoyment of Ireland’s culture and creativity. Local authorities are central to the delivery of the Creative Ireland programme and so Leitrim County Council has developed a Culture and Creative Strategy that aims to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the county and its creative sector by placing creativity at the centre of people’s lives.

The 2023-2027 strategy seeks to further extend the reach of the Creative Ireland programme, providing opportunities for new communities and individuals of all ages and backgrounds to explore their own creativity, many for the first time. It further seeks to contribute to the development of the Creative Economy, helping ensure the sustainability of those who work in the creative sector.

The strategy builds on progress made under the previous strategy for the 2018-2022 period. It acknowledges the foundational work that was implemented to enhance participation in the culture and creative sectors, which saw significant accomplishments despite the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new strategy establishes a set of strategic priorities to ensure that creativity is at the centre of Leitrim’s communities. A suite of actions is outlined under each of five pillars (i) Creative Communities, (ii) Creative Youth, (iii) Wellbeing, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, (IV) Place, Environment & Climate Change and (V) Creative Enterprise.

has context menu

3.1.10 Leitrim County Council Arts Plan 2023-2027

The mission statement of Leitrim County Council’s Arts Plan is “to nurture and foster the arts in all its diversity; to embrace and welcome new ideas; to create the conditions to help turn those ideas into reality; and to embed the arts and creativity into all aspects of the social, economic and cultural life of Leitrim.”

The Arts Plan further celebrates the positive role that the arts have on wellbeing as well as the positive social and economic impacts the creative sector contributes to society. The plan’s Mission Statement echoes that of the Culture and Creativity Strategy and seeks to embed the arts and creativity across all aspects of life for communities in Leitrim. The plan provides a suite of actions to support the arts sector in Leitrim, organised under three key strategic priority areas:

- » Community Engagement – this is how we serve the public
- » Professional Development – this is how we support artists
- » Children & Young People – this is how we make sure children can make, share, and enjoy the arts

Ultimately, the plan endeavours to ensure that to work as an artist in County Leitrim is a viable option for emerging and established professional artists, and that for everyone the arts remain available, accessible, and central to the life of every community.

3.1.11 Leitrim Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2026

The Leitrim Age Friendly Strategy is informed by the World Health Organisations (WHO) Global Age Friendly City and Communities Programme and the National Age Friendly Programme. It promotes a vision “To develop an inclusive, equitable County in which older people can live full, active, valued and healthy lives.” The

Strategy provides an action plan to deliver on eight key themes and goals for health and wellbeing for older people in Leitrim. This action plan is designed to be a living roadmap that can be revised and updated based on identified needs and issues. The themes and goals are as follows:

Themes	Goals
Theme 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	To make outdoor spaces accessible and safe for older people, thereby creating walkable communities and age friendly spaces.
Theme 2: Transportation	Promote safe, accessible, appropriate, and reliable transport services and infrastructure for active living to enable people to maintain their mobility, independence, and connections as they get older.
Theme 3: Housing	Support older people to live independently in their own community for as long as possible.
Theme 4: Respect and Social Inclusion	Enable older people to be truly valued, respected and integrated in the wider community.
Theme 5: Social Participation	Support older people’s participation in social life to combat loneliness and isolation.
Theme 6: Communication and Information	Assist older people in accessing timely, reliable, relevant, and understandable information.
Theme 7: Civic Participation and Employment	Continue to hear the voice of older people and ensure they can participate fully in their community.
Theme 8: Community Support and Health Services	Promote and provide older adults with a broad range of well located, easily accessible health and community services. Promote healthy and active lifestyles to improve the health status of older people.

3.1.12 Leitrim Heritage Plan 2020–2025

The aim of the Leitrim Heritage Plan as outlined, is to ‘connect all Leitrim residents with their shared heritage and to work together to conserve and celebrate Leitrim’s unique heritage, for the benefit of both present and future generations.’ The plan provides the strategic framework required to chart the best possible future for Leitrim and its deeply-rooted heritage. To achieve this, the plan contains four objectives:

“...connect all Leitrim residents with their shared heritage and to work together to conserve and celebrate Leitrim’s unique heritage, for the benefit of both present and future generations.”

Objective 1:

Support the Conservation and Recording of Leitrim’s Heritage

Objective 2:

Raise Awareness of Leitrim’s Heritage

Objective 3:

Engage Communities with their Heritage

Objective 4:

Support Sustainable Heritage Tourism in Leitrim



Actions within the plan which support similar initiatives outlined within the LECP include those concerning the development and promotion of heritage events in the County, and support for conservation, management and promotion of heritage sites and projects.



4. LEITRIM AT A GLANCE:

Socio-Economic Profile

Leitrim at a Glance: Socio-Economic Profile

Detailed socio-economic analysis was carried out to inform the development of the LECP. This included analysis across key themes such as population, housing, the economy, education, health and wellbeing, infrastructure and the environment. This analysis, along with the consultation process, has allowed for the identification of specific Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) which have influenced the development of the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions (Chapter 5).

The findings from the socio-economic analysis are outlined below. The analysis has primarily utilised 2016 Census data, with 2022 Census used where available. Additional data from the SEAI, Pobal and GeoDirectory has been incorporated where available and relevant. Some of the specific needs for Leitrim identified from the analysis that could be addressed through the LECP include:

- » Nurturing and diversifying Leitrim's economy and attracting new investment to create opportunities for sustainable employment.
- » Providing suitable supports for the ageing population, addressing deprivation and poverty and ensuring that all communities have access to excellent services and amenities.
- » Ensuring the adequate supply of new housing while maintaining affordability.
- » Continuing to develop Leitrim's education and training ecosystem to help support learning, enterprise and innovation.
- » Addressing climate change and embracing sustainability to preserve and enhance Leitrim's diverse and beautiful natural landscape.



4.1 Population

The Preliminary Census 2022 results show a continued upward growth trend in population for Ireland as a whole. The total population for the State is the largest total since 1851 during the Great Famine and represents a 7.6% increase on the total recorded in 2016. This upward growth trend is also reflected in the population totals for the Northern and Western Region and Leitrim. In 2022, the population of Leitrim was 35,087 making it the smallest county by population in the State. However, the County has seen consistent growth in recent years and recorded a growth rate of 9.5% between 2016-2022 making it the county with the fourth highest growth rate in the State. Key findings from this part of the analysis were as follows:

- » The population figure recorded by County Leitrim in 2022 represents a fifth consecutive increase in the population since 1996.
- » The average annual population growth rate between 2011 and 2022 was approximately 0.9%, if that annual rate of growth continues the population of Leitrim could grow to over 45,000 by 2050.
- » In 2016, Leitrim’s urban population grew to 11.6%. Carrick-on-Shannon, identified as a Key Town in the RSES, was the most populous settlement in the County with 4,062 inhabitants and Dromod was the fastest growing settlement with a growth rate of 28.5%.

Historic population and growth figures – Leitrim

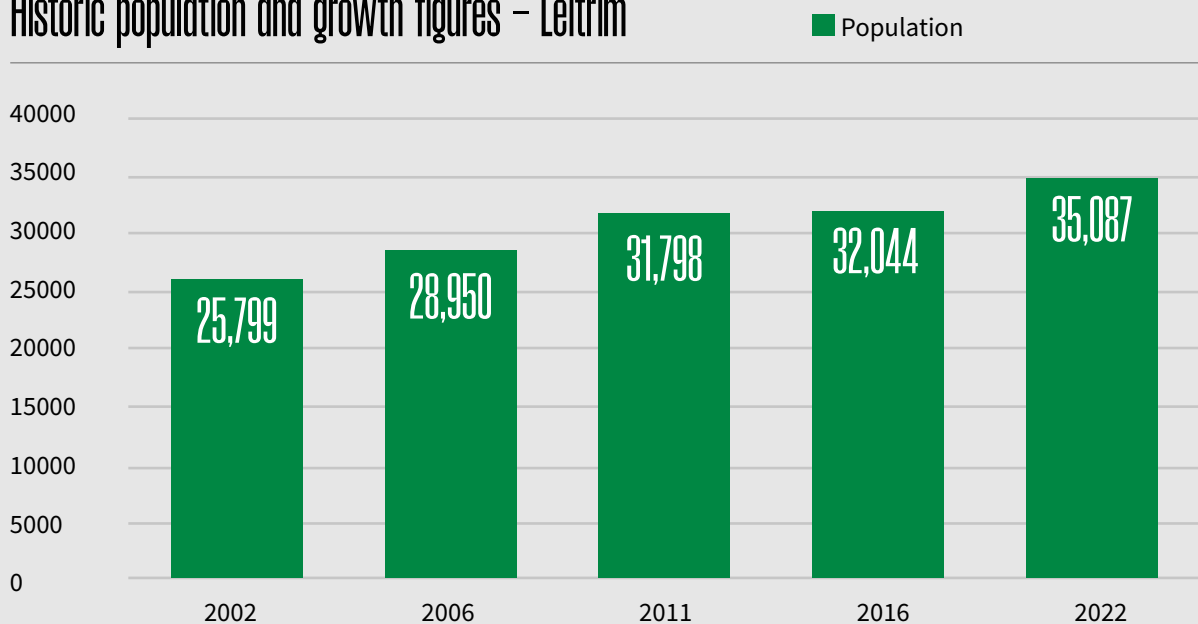


Figure 4.1 County Leitrim Population Growth



- » Within County Leitrim, the Electoral Division (ED) with the largest population in 2022 was Carrick-on-Shannon (4,441) and the smallest ED population was Killargue (65).
- » The Roosky ED recorded the highest percentage population growth at 33.3% and the Garvagh/Arigna ED experienced the highest decrease in population of 35.6%.
- » Net migration was the primary driver of population growth for Leitrim, the Region and the State. The rate of population growth due to migration was 75.6%, which was more than the rate of natural increase of 24.4%.
- » The net migration rate for Leitrim divides nearly equally with females at 50.1% and males at 49.9%, this is similar to figures for the State and the Region, where the net migration figure for females in 2022 is slightly higher at 50.6%.
- » The population composition by gender in 2022 is similar for the State, Region and the County; with females composing 50.1% of Leitrim's population.
- » The largest age cohort in Leitrim was shared between the 0 – 9 cohort with 14.4% of the population in 2016, and the 40 – 49 cohort with 14.2% of the population in 2016. These two age cohorts collectively account for 28.6% of the population in Leitrim.
- » The smallest age cohort in Leitrim as of 2016 was the 84 and over range accounting for 4.3% of the County's population.
- » Between 2011 and 2016, the largest growth recorded by an age cohort was the 60 – 69 group, with a growth rate of 19.4%. Conversely, the age cohort that saw the largest decrease was the 20 – 29 group which decreased by 21.1%.

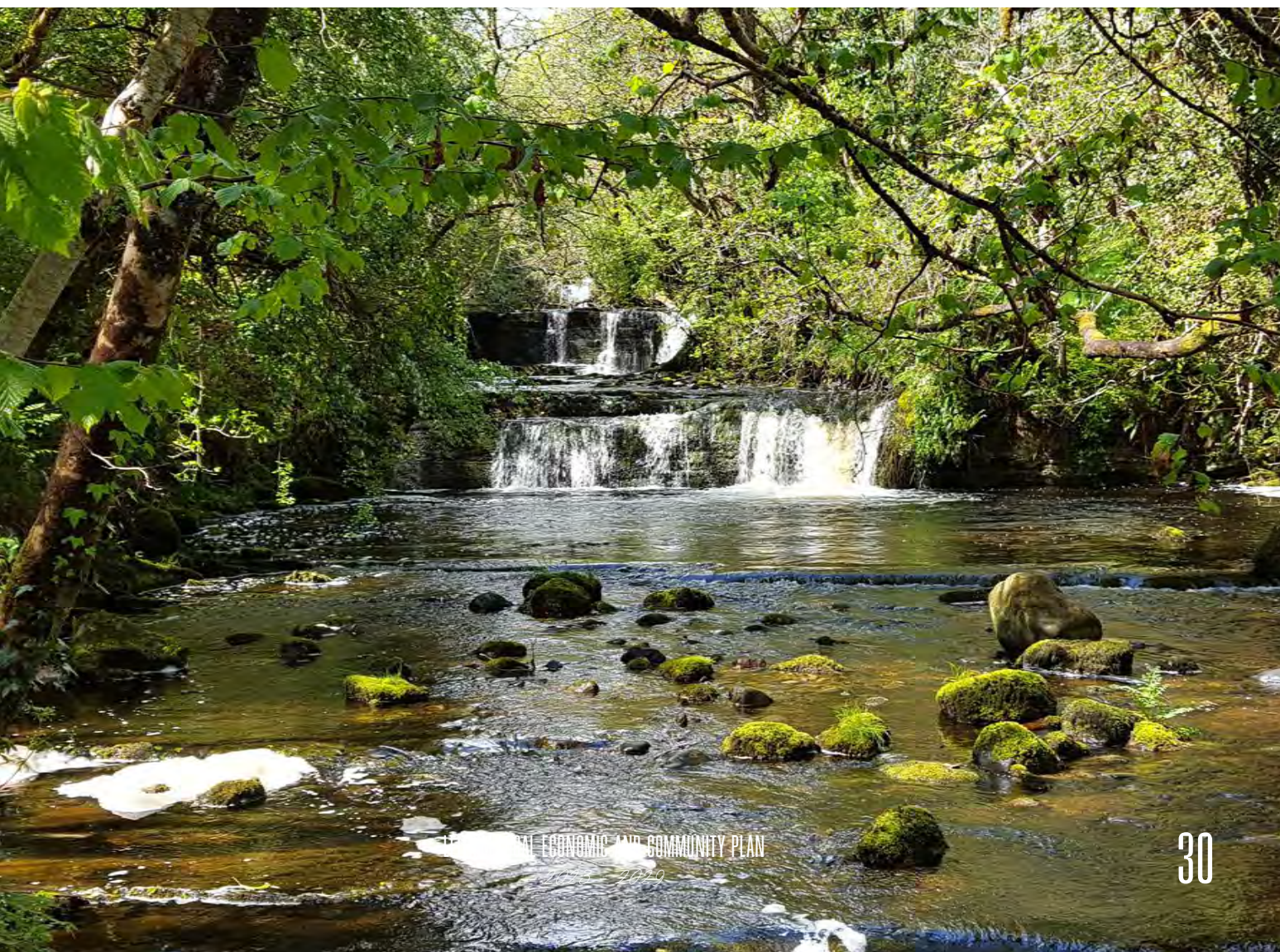
Table 4 1 Population by Age Group

2016 Population by Age Group				
Leitrim			NWR	State
Age	Change 2011-2016	2016 %	2016 %	2016 %
0 - 9	-3.1%	14.4%	14.4%	14.4%
10-19	7.5%	13.1%	13.5%	13.1%
20-29	-21.1%	8.5%	10.5%	12.0%
30-39	-8.1%	13.5%	14.2%	15.8%
40-49	3.8%	14.2%	14.1%	14.4%
50-59	1.7%	13.2%	12.5%	12.0%
60-69	19.4%	11.7%	10.6%	9.5%
70-79	12.8%	7.2%	6.5%	5.8%
80+	8.1%	4.3%	3.7%	3.1%

- » In 2016, compared to the Region and State, Leitrim had an older population with 16.9% aged 65 years and over whereas the Region and the State have 15.2% and 13.4% of the population aged 65 years and over, respectively. This is the fourth highest average age in the State.
- » 21.6% of the County's population was aged under 15 years in 2016 which was higher than the figure for the Region (21.4%) and the State (21.1%).
- » However, the population falling within the working age cohort (15 to 64 years) stood at 61.5% of the County's population in 2016. This figure is lower than that of the Region (63.5%) and the State (65.5%).
- » In 2016, Leitrim's population was largely consistent of Irish nationals at 87.6% of the population. The largest grouping of foreign nationals was that from the UK which accounted for 4.7% of the County's population followed by Polish nationals (2.6%), and Lithuanian nationals (0.6%)
- » Minority groups accounted for 15.1% of Leitrim's population in 2016, which represented a 0.3% decrease from 2011. Leitrim's proportion of minority populations was higher than the figure for the Region (14.8%) but lower than the figure for the State (17.8%).
- » In 2022, the total age dependency ratio for Leitrim is 64 compared to the State ratio of 53.2. Contributing to the total are a young dependency ratio (persons aged 0-14) of 33.4 and old age dependency ratio (persons aged 65+) of 30.6. The individual rates Nationally in 2022 are 30.1 and 23.1, respectively.

Table 4 2 Population by Ethnicity

Population by Ethnicity				
Leitrim			NWR	State
Ethnic Group	Change 2011-2016	2016 %	2016 %	2016 %
White Irish	-0.3%	84.9%	85.2%	82.2%
White Irish Traveller	-23.1%	0.6%	1.0%	0.7%
Other White	0.5%	9.9%	8.5%	9.5%
Black or Black Irish	10.3%	0.3%	0.8%	1.4%
Asian or Asian Irish	10.5%	1.0%	1.3%	2.1%
Other	49.3%	1.0%	1.1%	1.5%
Not Stated	50.1%	2.2%	2.0%	2.6%



4.2 Housing and Household Characteristics

Leitrim’s strong population growth between 2016 - 2022 was not replicated in a similar level of growth of housing in the County. However, despite the apparent misalignment between population and housing, there has been an improvement in the growth rate of the housing stock between 2016 - 2022. Moreover, the growth of the housing stock during the early – mid 2000s outpaced population growth, which may be partly reflected in the high level of vacant properties in the County. As such, it appears that there is some capacity in the County in relation to housing to support the strong population growth it has seen in recent years. However, if this growth is maintained it is likely that this capacity will be further reduced as the population increases.

- » Leitrim’s housing stock grew by 3.4% to 18,657 units in the period between 2016 and 2022. This figure is behind the national growth rate in housing stock (6.0%) for the same time period.
- » In 2022, Leitrim’s residential vacancy rate stood at 16.1% and was the highest vacancy rate in the State. Leitrim’s vacancy rate is 6.3% more than the national vacancy rate of 9.8% and 3.3% more than the regional vacancy rate of 12.8%.
- » The 2022 residential vacancy rate of 16.1% for the County marks the third consecutive decrease in the level of residential vacancy in Leitrim, compared to a residential vacancy rate of 29.1% in 2011.

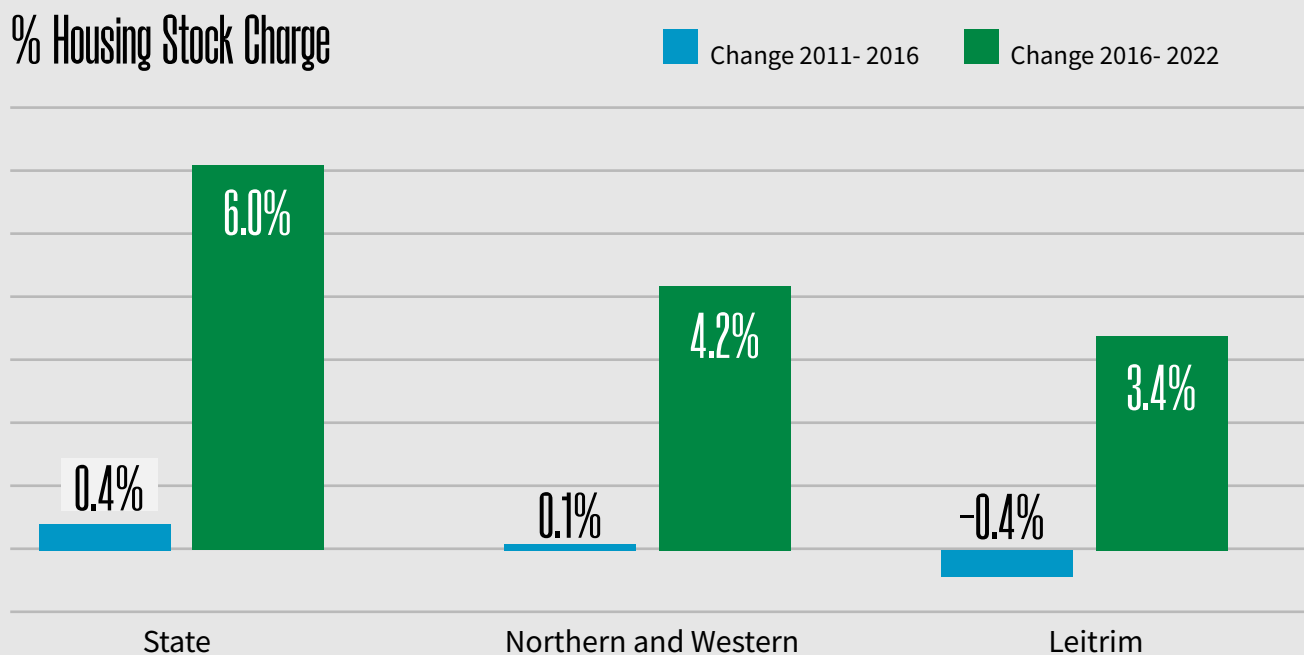


Figure 4.2 Housing Stock Change (%)



- » In 2022, the ED of Carrick-on-Shannon had the highest number of residential vacancies with 401, while the ED of Aghacashel had the lowest number of vacant dwellings within Leitrim with 8.
- » The top 5 reasons for vacancy during the 2022 Preliminary Census in Leitrim were Deceased (21.4%), Rental Property (19.9%), Farmhouse (16.9%), Renovation (12.5%), and Other (9.8%).
- » More than a third (35%) of the 2016 housing stock in Leitrim was built between 2001 and 2010. However, only 1.7% of the 2016 housing stock was built after 2011 highlighting the impact of the 2007-2009 financial crisis.
- » According to Census 2022, 84.1% of Leitrim residents live in rural areas, whereas 36.3% of people live in rural areas Nationally.
- » The home ownership figures in Leitrim in 2016 aligned with that of the State (36%) and the Region (42%) with 36.7% of the homes in Leitrim owned by the occupier with no mortgage owed on the property.
- » There was little change in the overall home ownership rates for the County between 2011 and 2016, however, there was a decrease of 2.5% in the group categorised as owner occupied with mortgage or loan.
- » In 2016, 58% of Leitrim’s population had access to broadband, which was lower than both the regional percentage of 63.6% and the national percentage of 70.7%. However, the number of households in Leitrim with access to broadband increased by 14% in the 2016 census. 14% of Leitrim households do not have internet connection which is highest in the State (8.7% average)

4.3 Economy

The economy of Leitrim is characterised by a shift away from primary economic activities toward the provision of goods and services. This shift is highlighted in the employment with industry data from the 2016 Census results. In 2016, 51.7% of workers in County Leitrim were active in tertiary economic industries¹ such as Professional Services (25.1%), Commerce and Trade (18.7%) and Public administration (7.9%). Conversely, only 14% of workers in Leitrim were active within primary economic industries such as “Agriculture, forestry and fishing” (8.6%) and “Building and construction” (5.4%). Further findings in relation to the composition of the economy and associated employment are as follows:

- » The results from the 2020 Business Demography highlight that the majority (95.1%) of enterprises in County Leitrim employ less than 10 people. The large percentage of small businesses underlines the importance of SMEs and micro-enterprises to the economic livelihood of County Leitrim.
- » The latest commercial vacancy rates for County Leitrim from GeoDirectory show a commercial vacancy rate of 16.8% during the fourth quarter of 2022. This was the 6th highest commercial vacancy rate in the Region and 7th highest in the State. Between the fourth quarters of 2021 and 2022, the commercial vacancy rate decreased marginally by 0.3%.

- » The commercial vacancy rate for Carrick-on-Shannon in Leitrim was 16.6% and accounted for a fifth of all vacant commercial units in Leitrim during the fourth quarter of 2022.
- » In 2022, there were 4 IDA supported companies in the County employing 1,011 people and 18 companies supported by Enterprise Ireland employing 834 people.
- » As noted above, the top three economic industries in 2016 were Professional Services (25.1%), Commerce and Trade (18.7%), and Manufacturing Industries (11.5%). The share in 2016 at State level for Professional Services was 23.5%, Commerce and Trade was 23.9% and Manufacturing Industries was 11.4%.
- » The proportion of workers active within the public sector in 2016 within Leitrim was 7.9% of the workforce, which was higher than the Region (5.5%) and State (5.3%). However, the 7.9% recorded in 2016 represented a 0.7% decrease over the proportion recorded in 2011.
- » The proportion of those active in the building and construction sector remained constant in Leitrim between 2011 and 2016. The 5.4% of workers within the building and construction sector was slightly less than the regional proportion (5.7%) but higher than the national proportion (5.1%).

1. Tertiary economic industries are those industries focussed on delivery of goods and services and is not related to the extraction of natural resources or manufacturing of extracted natural resources.

Occupation by Industry (2016)

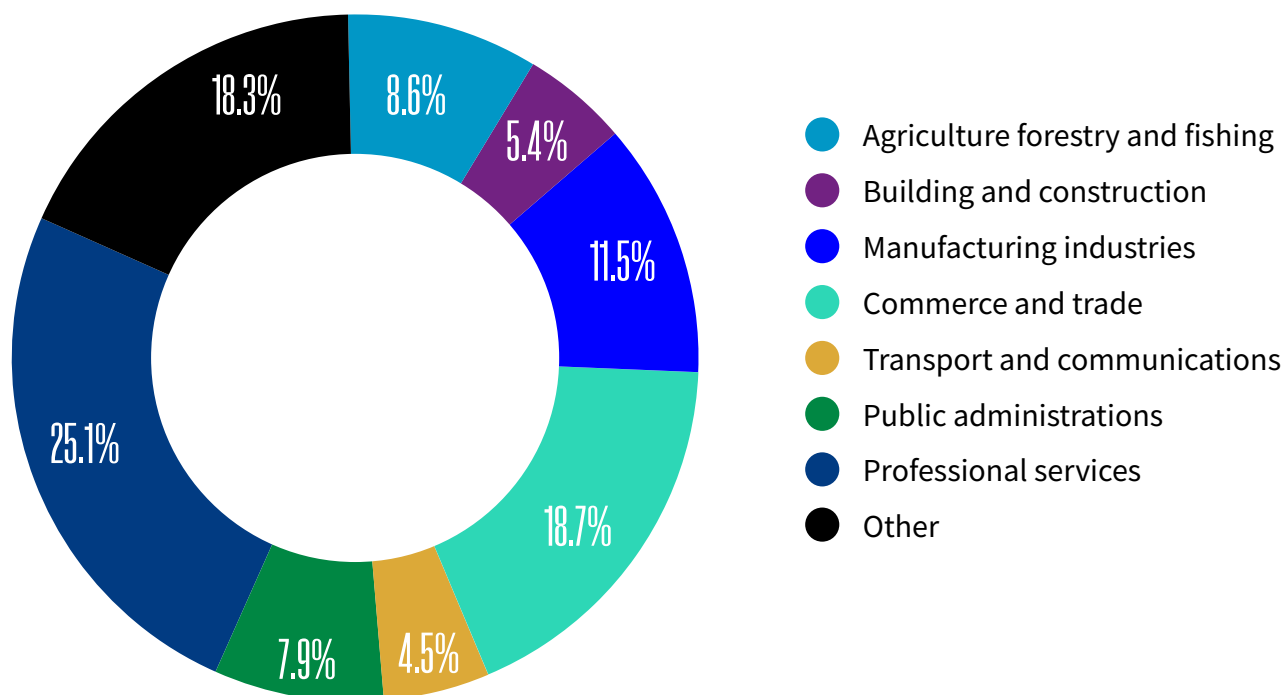
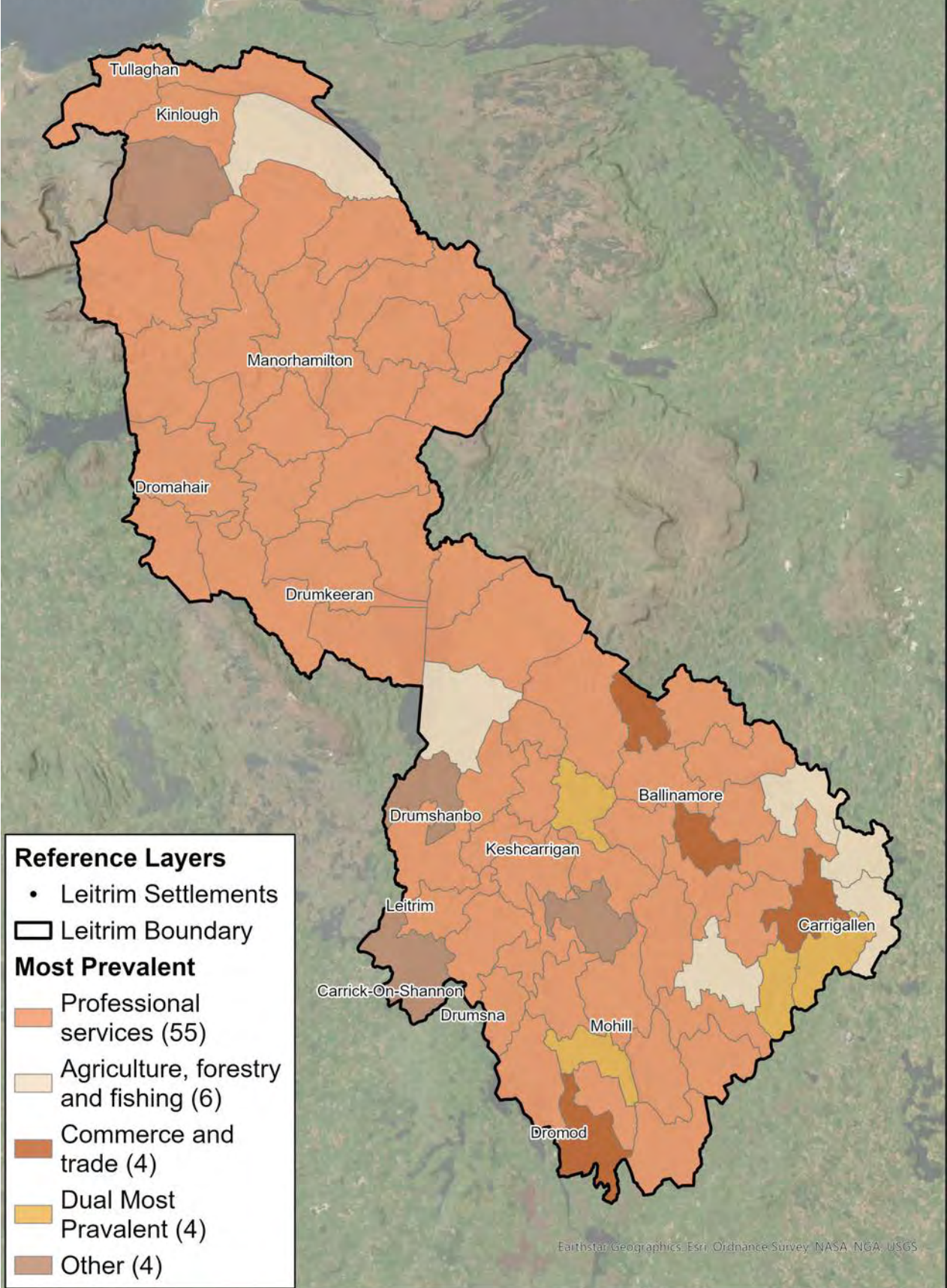


Figure 4.3 Occupation by Industry (2016)

- » Employment activity was equally split by gender across economic industries in 2016. However, there were certain industries that were dominated by either females or males. Females were most prevalent in Professional Services (75.8%) and Public Administration (55.8%). Males were most active within Building and Construction (96.4%), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (91.9%), Transport and Communication (78.1%); and Manufacturing Industries (71.9%).
- » In 2020, the agricultural census recorded 3,445 farms in Leitrim, which accounted for 6% of total farms in the Region and 2.6% of total farms in the State.
- » Between 2010 and 2020, the number of farms in Leitrim decreased by 6.2%, which was the largest percentage decrease in farms for the Region and the 2nd largest reduction in the State.
- » Leitrim had a higher proportion of agricultural holdings held by females (15.5%) than the Region (13.5%) and State (13.1%).
- » More than a quarter (27.9%) of farmers in Leitrim were aged 65 or older in 2020. This is slightly higher than the Region (27.6%) but substantially higher than the State (24.8%).
- » In 2020, more than 80% of agricultural holdings in Leitrim were categorised as either Specialist beef production (65.2%) or Specialist sheep (19%), with both of these proportions being higher than the Regional (61.7% and 17.5%) and national (53.3% and 11.8%) proportions.
- » Leitrim's sheep farms play an important role nationally, with Leitrim having the 5th highest number of sheep farms in the State.

Most Prevalent Economic Sector per ED 2016



- » In 2022, 52.8% of those aged over 15 years in Leitrim were classed as 'At work', compared with 53.9% for the Region and 56.1% for the State. Those classed as unemployed in Leitrim accounted for 4.53% of the labour force, which was slightly higher than unemployment rates for the State (4.26%) and the Region (4.38%). The 'Long-Term Unemployment Rate' across the State averages at 2.56%, with Leitrim reporting a rate of 2.86%.
- » The female labour force participation rate for 2022 is 53.5% while the figure from 2016 was 53.9%. The figures for the State are 55.6% in 2022 and 55.2% in 2016.
- » Among those 'At Work' in Leitrim in 2022, 27.53% were working from home, an increase from the 7% reported in 2016. The proportion of home workers in Leitrim during 2022 was higher than the proportion of home workers in the Region (25.89%) but lower than the State (32.24%).

Table 4-3 Population aged 15 and over by Principal Economic Status (2022)

Population aged 15 and over by Principal Economic Status				
Leitrim			NWR	State
Principal Economic Status	Change	2022%	2022%	2022%
At work	+2.14%	52.8%	53.9%	56.1%
Looking for first regular job	+0.06%	0.86%	0.82%	0.83%
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	-3.27%	4.53%	4.38%	4.26%
Student	+0.50%	9.8%	10.95%	11.1%
Looking after home/family	-1.82%	6.28%	6.56%	6.58%
Retired	+1.83%	19.9%	17.9%	15.9%
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	+0.15%	4.95%	4.74%	4.58%
Other	+0.50%	0.8%	0.66%	0.65%
Total			100%	100%

- » During 2022, the number of persons on the Live Register in Leitrim trended upward with the total increasing from 1,312 in January 2022 to 1,747 December 2022. At the end of 2022, most of the people on the Live Register in Leitrim were over the age of 25 (91%) but there was a relatively equal distribution between female (49%) and male (51%).

Persons on Live Register by age per month - Leitrim

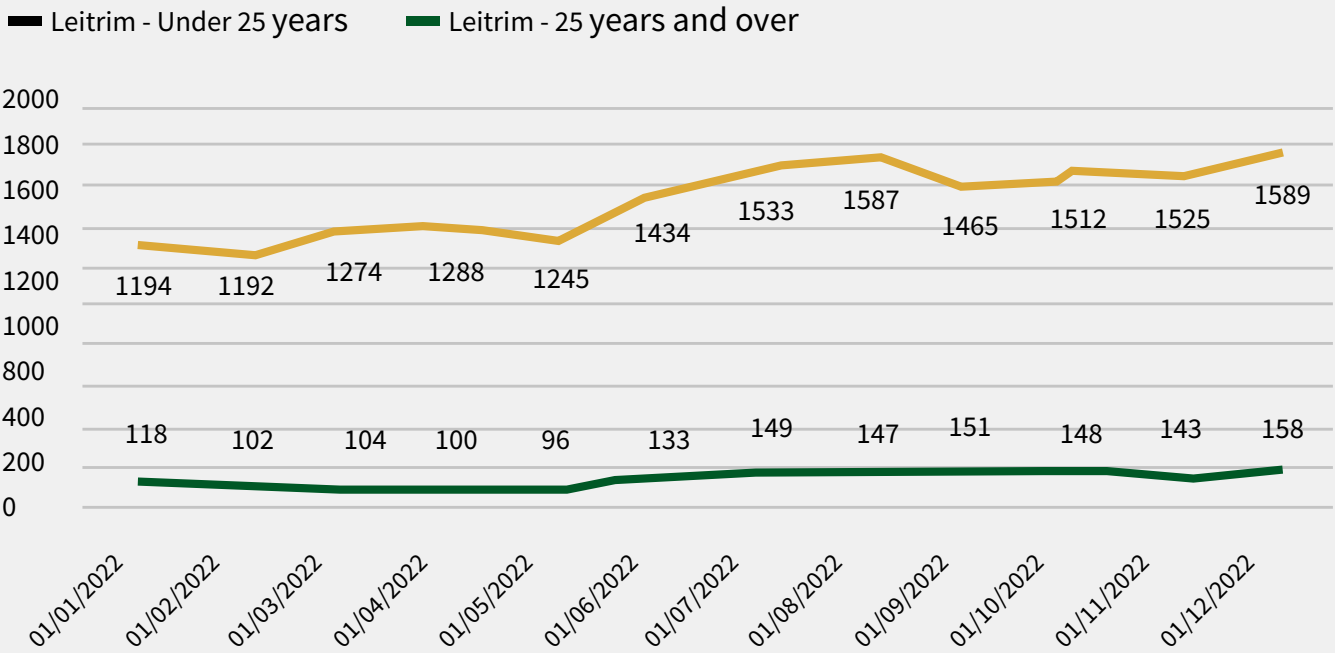


Figure 4.4 Live Register Figures by Age per Month

- » In 2020, the estimated total income per person for Leitrim was €27,334. Leitrim's total income per person was 1.5% higher than the regional average of €26,912 but 6% lower than the national average of €29,085.
- » Leitrim's disposable income per person in 2020 was €20,885. The disposable income per person for Leitrim was 3% higher than the regional average of €20,248 and only 2% lower than the national average of €21,365.
- » Since 2017, the percentage growth in disposable income per person in Leitrim has grown, increasing from 2.5% between 2017 and 2018 to 6% between 2019 and 2020.

Leitrim - Total and Disposable Income per Person 2016 - 2020

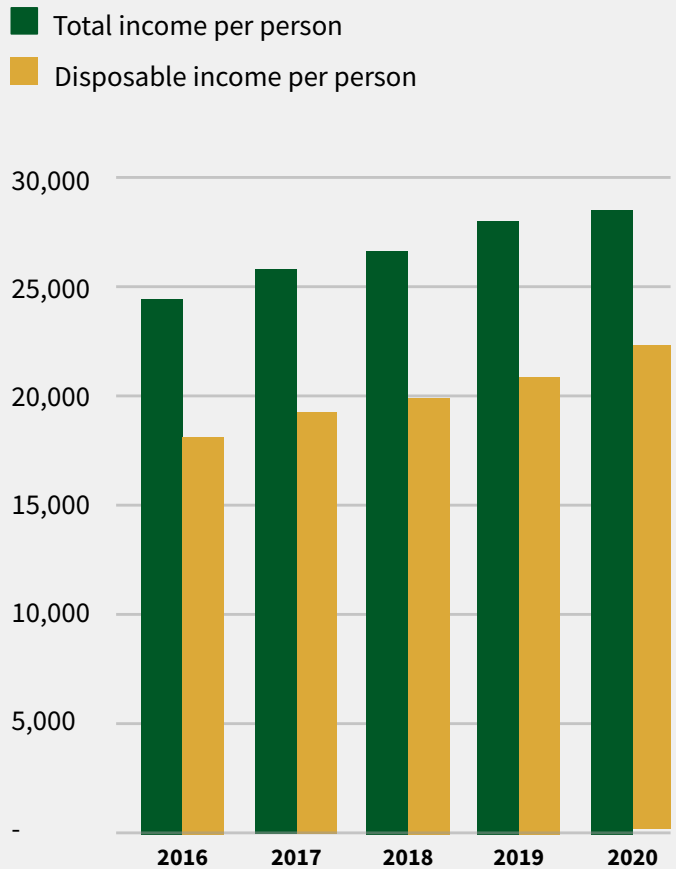


Figure 4.5 Total and Disposable Income 2016 - 2020

4.4 Education and Wellbeing

An educated and healthy population will be key to ensuring a successful future for the County. In this regard, Leitrim has a strong base for its education system, with 30 early childhood providers, 37 primary schools and 7 post-primary schools in the County. While the County lacks a third-level institution, its proximity to regional third level providers, including the Atlantic Technological University, somewhat helps in addressing this gap in provision. In relation to community health and wellbeing, 83.4% of people in Leitrim are classified as in Good or Very Good health. The below outlines key findings from this part of the analysis starting with education followed by health and wellbeing.

Education and Skills

- » In 2016, the proportion of Leitrim’s population that ceased education under 15 years of age decreased by 33.3% and stood at 6.1%, which was lower than the average of the Region (7.3%) but higher than the State (5.9%).
- » The percentage of Leitrim’s population aged 15 and over who attained solely a primary qualification or less stood at 14.7% in 2016, which was lower than the regional figure of 15.6% but higher than the national figure of 12.5%.
- » The 37 primary schools in Leitrim hosted a total of 3,684 pupils during the 2021-2022 academic year. However, the number of primary school pupils has decreased every academic year since the 2017-2018 academic year.

Table 4 4 Primary School Pupils

Change in the number of primary school pupils in Leitrim		
Academic Year	Number of Pupils	Percentage change
2016-2017	3,660	-
2017-2018	3,727	1.83%
2018-2019	3,725	-0.05%
2019-2020	3,723	-0.05%
2020-2021	3,718	-0.13%
2021-2022	3,684	-0.91%

- » There were 7 post-primary schools within Leitrim during the 2021-2022 academic year with a total of 13,241 pupils. The number of post-primary school pupils has increased every academic year since 2017-2018, with the largest single increase (4.5%) occurring during the 2019-2020 academic year.
- » In 2016, more than a third (35.4%) of the population aged 15 or above in Leitrim attained a third-level qualification (NFQ Level 6 or above)² which was on par with the Region (35.8%) but almost 4% lower than the figure for the State (39.3%). With respect to advanced degrees, 7.4% of people in Leitrim hold a master's degree compared to 10.1% for the State.
- » The number of third-level students has increased every academic year between 2019 and 2021, with the largest single increase (8%) recorded between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the top five fields of study for third-level students in Leitrim were 'health and welfare' (18%), 'business, administration and law' (14.7%), 'arts and humanities' (13.7%), education (12.3%), and 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction' (12%).
- » Between 2016 and 2021, the number of third-level graduates in Leitrim increased by 22.5%.

Table 4 5 Post-Primary School Pupils

Change in the number of second-level school pupils in Leitrim		
Academic Year	Number of Pupils	Percentage change
2017-2018	2,524	-
2018-2019	2,568	1.74%
2019-2020	2,683	4.48%
2020-2021	2,700	0.63%
2021-2022	2,766	2.44%

² NFQ Level 6 or higher which includes the following categories: Advanced Certificate/Completed Apprenticeship, Higher Certificate, Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma, Honours Bachelor Degree Professional qualification or both, Postgraduate Diploma or Degree, Doctorate (Ph.D) or higher

- » The top five areas of study by number of graduates in 2021 for Leitrim were, in descending order: Business, Administration and Law, Health and Welfare, Education, Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction, and Arts and Humanities.
- » In 2016, Leitrim had a lower proportion (12%) of Employers and managers than the Region (12.5%) and the State (15.5%). The 12% in 2016 represented a 0.5% decrease on the 2011 proportion.
- » The proportion of those socio-economically grouped as 'lower professional' was 12.4% in 2016 for Leitrim, which represented a 1.8% increase on the 2011 proportion and was higher than regional and national proportions.
- » The proportion of all categories of skilled and unskilled labour decreased between 2011 and 2016, with the largest decrease recorded within the 'Manual skilled' socio-economic group, accounting for 10.6% of the workforce in 2011 and 9.8% in 2016.

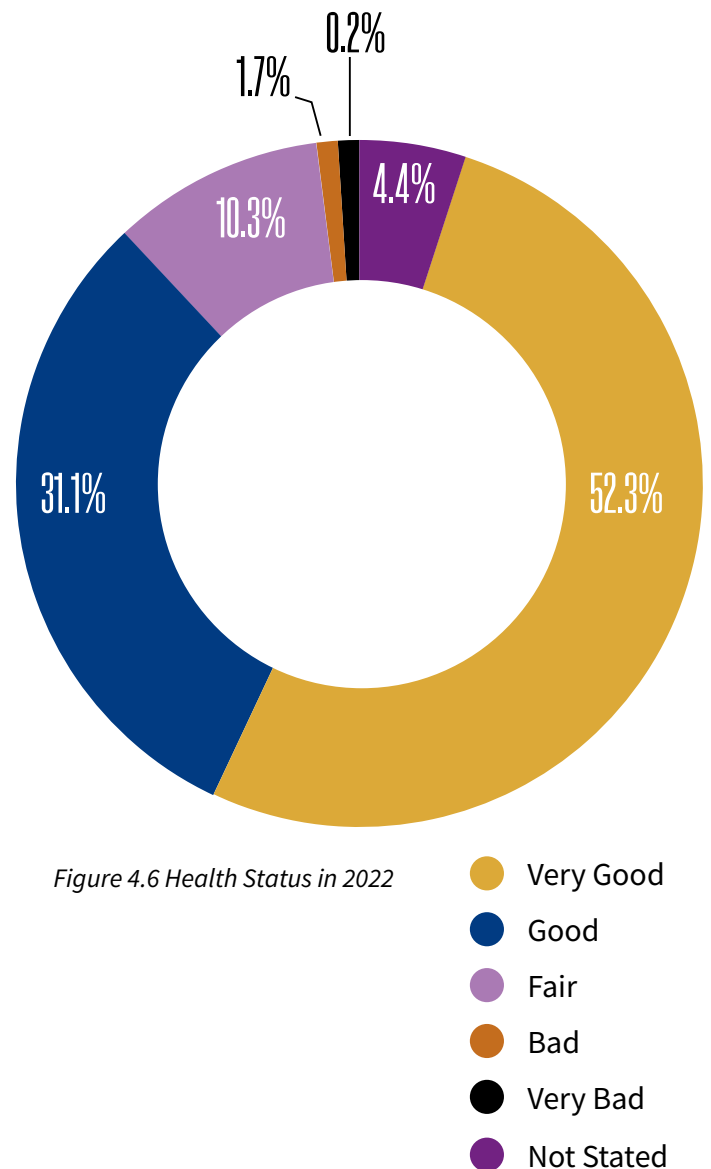
Table 4.6 Socio-Economic Groups 2016

Persons in private households by socio-economic group of reference person			
	Leitrim % in 2016	NWR % in 2016	State % in 2016
A Employers and managers	12.0%	12.5%	15.5%
B Higher professional	4.9%	5.8%	7.1%
C Lower professional	12.4%	11.4%	11.7%
D Non-manual	17.8%	16.3%	18.0%
E Manual skilled	9.8%	9.9%	9.3%
F Semi-skilled	8.0%	9.6%	8.6%
G Unskilled	3.5%	3.8%	3.6%
H Own account workers	5.9%	5.7%	5.2%
I Farmers	10.1%	8.8%	4.9%
J Agricultural workers	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%
Z All others gainfully occupied / unknown	14.7%	15.5%	15.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Health and Wellbeing

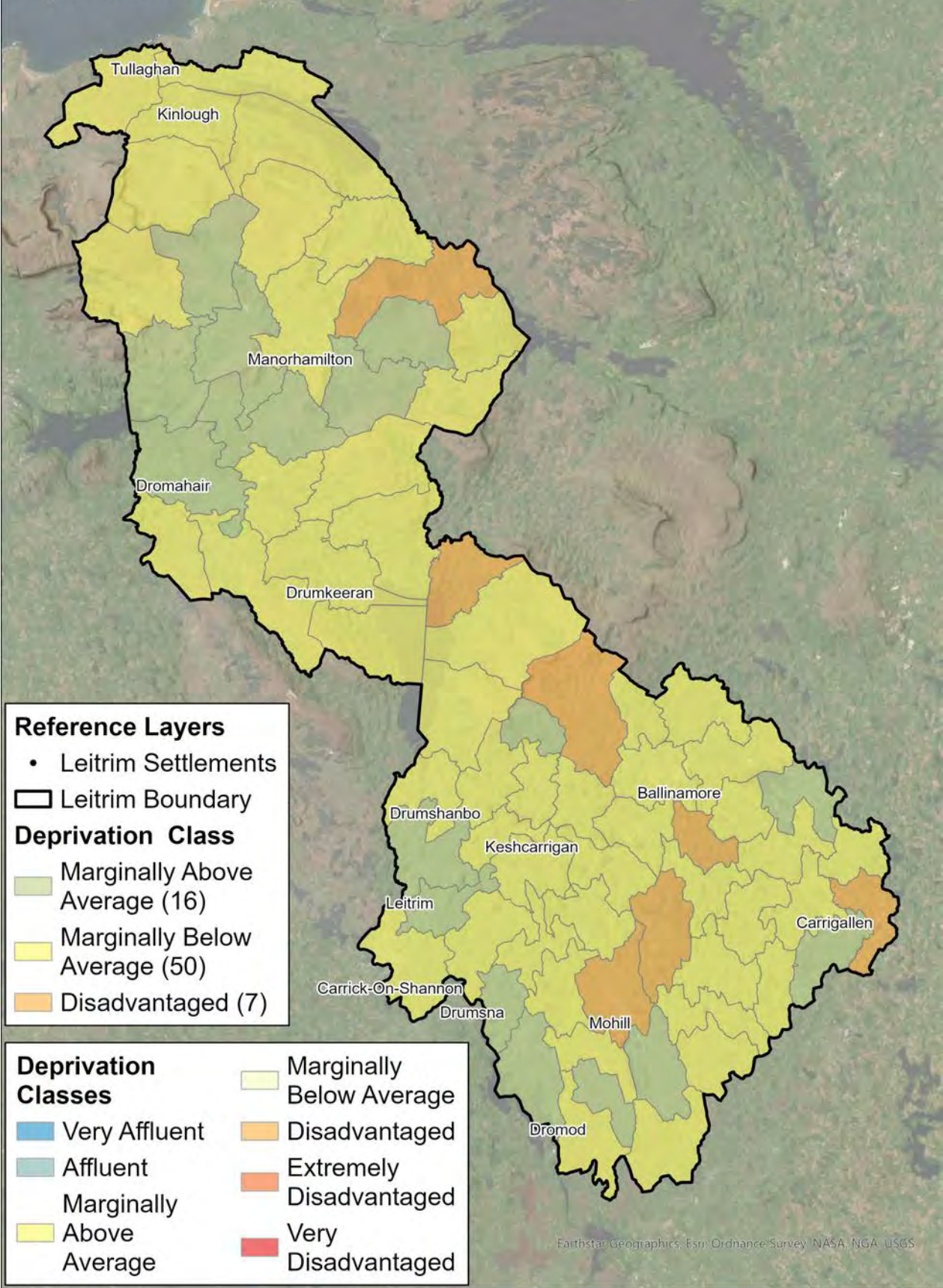
- » In 2022, 52.3% of people in Leitrim classified their health as ‘Very good’ which is slightly below both the Region (52.7%) and the State (53.2%). Furthermore 31.1% of people classified their health as ‘Good’ which is slightly higher than the Region (30.7%) and that of the State (29.7%). Overall those classing their health as being ‘Good’ or ‘Very good’ (83.4%) is higher than that of the Region (83.3%) and State (82.9%).
- » In relation to the pandemic, Leitrim had a lower incidence rate of COVID-19 than the Region and State during 2020 and 2021 but a higher incidence rate than the Region and equal to the State in 2022.
- » Mental health and related supports will continue to be important for the County as highlighted by data from the HRB. Although, well below regional and national averages, between 2016 and 2021 there were 16 suicides recorded in the County (75% male and 25% female).
- » In 2022, 22.5% of Leitrim’s residents reported having a disability with 8.5% of individuals having a disability to a great extent and 13.9% having some extent of disability. The rate of residents having a disability for the State was 21.5%, consisting of 7.9% of individuals having disability to a great extent and 13.6% of persons with some extent of disability.

Health Status 2022



- » The percentage of the population who are carers in Leitrim in 2016 stood at 4.5%, which is higher than the Region at 4.4% and the State at 4.1%.
- » Due to the war in Ukraine, by November 2022, just short of 60,000 Ukrainians arrived in Ireland, with 15,161 arriving in the Northern and Western Region and 1,084 arriving in Leitrim. This represented 3.2% of Leitrim's population at that time. This may increase pressure on the provision of key services in the County and work should be done to ensure that the necessary capacity and services are available to support the specific needs of the refugees.
- » The POBAL Deprivation Index Score for Leitrim in 2016 was -3.18, which is lower than the State (-1.74) and Region (-2.84) with the County classed as marginally below average.
- » The County's score on the 2016 POBAL Deprivation Index is lower than the scores recorded in 2006 (-1.95) and 2011 (-2.57) which shows an increase in deprivation across the county though the County's classification as marginally below average has remained the same. Overall, 78.1% of EDs in Leitrim are categorised as either marginally below average or disadvantaged, with 21.9% EDs classified as marginally above average.
- » According to data from the Health Research Board (HRB), in 2021, there were 91 cases for treatment for alcohol and drug addiction within Leitrim. This was well below the regional (246) and national (675) average for such cases. Furthermore, between 2020 and 2021, the number of cases for treatment related to drug and alcohol addiction decreased by 1.1% in comparison to an increase at Regional (13%) and national (13.4%) levels.
- » In 2022, the Sligo and Leitrim Garda Division recorded a total of 2,890 crimes, which accounted for 15.8% of the Regional total and 1.4% of the national total. Between 2018 and 2022 the number of crimes committed have fluctuated, with the highest number of crimes committed in 2019. 2022 was the first year since 2019 that the number of crimes committed increased.

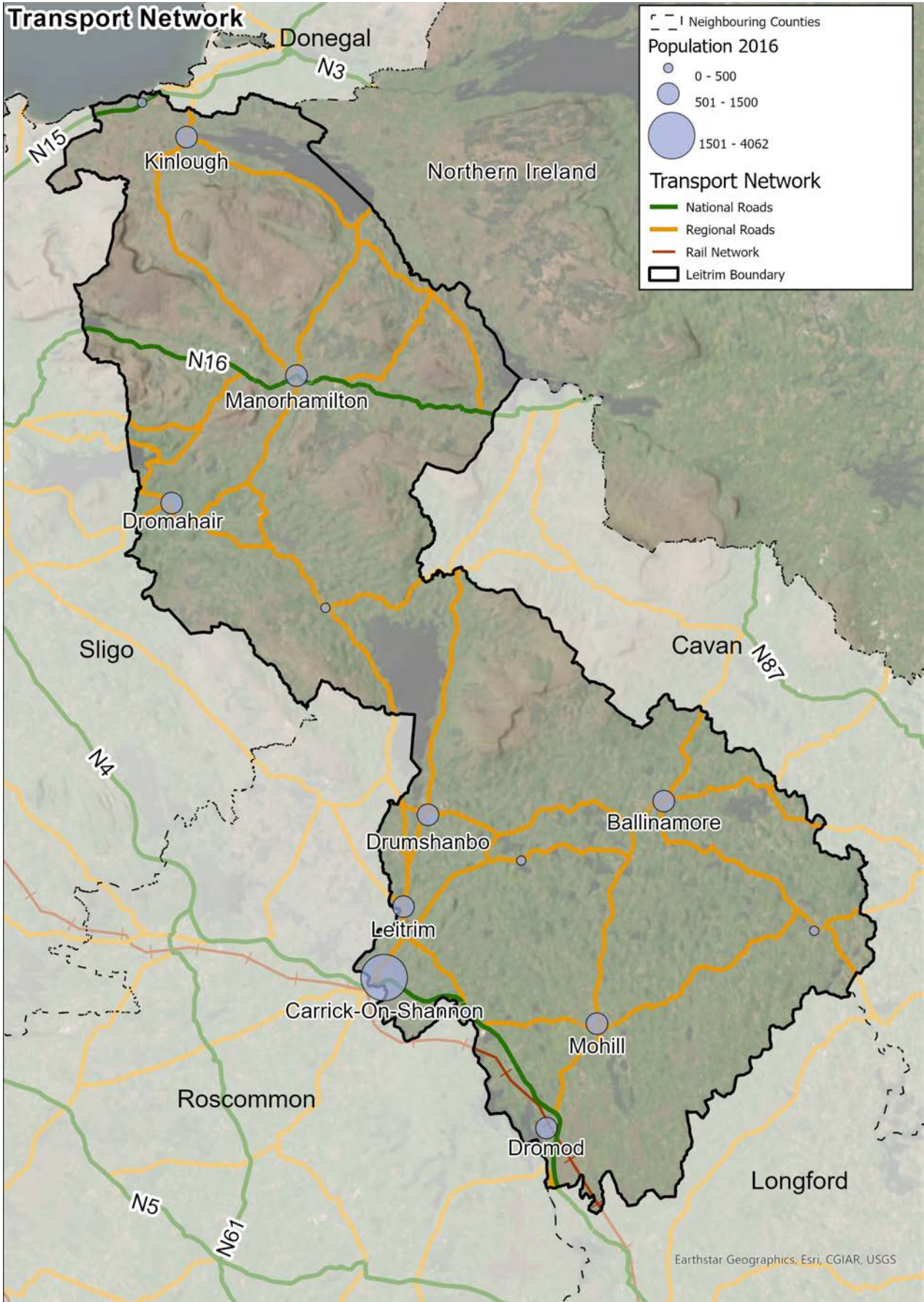
Deprivation Index Scores by ED 2016



4.5 Infrastructure

It is important that Leitrim is a connected County and that it has the necessary infrastructure in place to ensure the County continues to develop as a great place to live, work and visit. In relation to this, the County's existing public road network extends over 2,000 km in length, providing essential links to retail, services and employment centres throughout the County and further afield. However, there is a need to further enhance public transport as well as encourage and facilitate the uptake of more active and sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and EVs). Key findings from this part of the analysis include:

- » Leitrim's road infrastructure consists of a number of local and regional roads which serve interconnectivity between the County's towns and villages. Three national roads also serve the county: the N4 Sligo to Dublin route, N15 Sligo to Lifford route and the N16 Sligo to Enniskillen route.
- » In relation to rail, Leitrim is served by the Sligo/Dublin service operated by Iarnród Éireann, which stops in both Carrick-on-Shannon and Dromod (with Dromod car parking facilities being extended significantly in recent years) eight times per day towards Sligo and eight times per day to Dublin from Monday to Friday. Weekend services are reduced, stopping in Carrick-on-Shannon and Dromod seven times per day on Saturdays and six times per day on Sundays.
- » Leitrim contains a total of 174 bus stops which are served by bus routes operated by Bus Éireann, Expressway and Transport for Ireland (TFI).
- » The County's Capital Programme for the 2020 to 2025 period includes over €150 million in capital funding allocated to roads infrastructure upgrades, supported by TII. These projects include upgrades to the N4, N15 and N16.
- » In relation to air accessibility, the County is less than 1 hour from Knock Airport by road and just over 2 hours from Dublin Airport by road.
- » With regard to wider connectivity, the Key Town of Carrick-on-Shannon is approximately 45 minutes from Sligo by road and 1 hour by rail; less than 2 hours by road from Galway City, and approximately 2 hours by road and 2 hours 20 minutes by rail from Dublin.
- » In 2016, 66% of people in Leitrim drove to work using one form or another of private motorised transport. This compares to 64% Regionally and 58.5% nationally.
- » Public transport usage in Leitrim remained low in 2016, with 0.6% of those commuting for work using public transport. This proportion is more than three times lower than the Regional rate of 2.1% and more than 10 times lower than the national rate of 8.9%.
- » The top five destination EDs within Leitrim for commuters in 2016 were Carrick-on-Shannon (30.5%), Manorhamilton (14.7%), Drumshanbo (8.3%), Mohill (8.2%) and Ballinamore (3.5%). The majority of these commuters, 76.7%, originated within Leitrim with 23.3% of commuters travelling from outside Leitrim. The top five counties of residence for commuters travelling to Leitrim were Roscommon (50.7%), Sligo (16.9%), Cavan (15%), Longford (6.8%) and Donegal (5.9%).
- » A total of 5,818 commuters left Leitrim for another county in 2016, with the top five destinations as follows: Sligo (34.9%), Longford (11.4%), Donegal (11.1%), Roscommon (9.8%) and Cavan (9.4%).



4.6 The Environment and Sustainability

Leitrim, along with the rest of Ireland, is facing a climate and biodiversity crisis that will impact and affect the entire County and its landscape. To address this, it will be necessary to integrate sustainability and climate action to all areas of life. The below outlines a selection of information relating to conservation, energy demand, renewables, and electric vehicles. While the County does have a substantial network of infrastructure contributing to renewable energy generation, improvements can be sought in relation to increasing energy efficiency and promoting and encouraging the uptake of more sustainable and active modes of transport.

- » Leitrim had 9 National Heritage Areas³ (NHAs) in 2023, the 7th most of such designated areas in the State. The 9 NHAs covered an area of 4,397 ha, accounting for 10% of the regional and 7.3% of the national total.
- » In 2023, the number of Special Protection Areas⁴ (SPAs) in Leitrim stood at 3. The 3 SPAs covered an area of 635 ha.
- » A total of 9 Special Areas of Conservation⁵ (SACs) fell within County Leitrim and covered an area of 17,814 ha. This coverage represented 4.4% of the regional and 2.4% of national SAC coverage.
- » The percentage of Leitrim's rivers deemed to have high water quality was 35.7% in 2022, this was higher than the Regional, 29.6%, and national, 20.5%, averages. None of Leitrim's rivers were deemed to have a bad quality of water.
- » Forest Statistics for 2022 released by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, show that Leitrim had the highest percentage of forestry cover in the state at 20.1% covering 32,039 ha.
- » Data from the SEAI in 2022, highlights that no small area in the county had a median Building Energy Rating (BER) rating of B2 or higher (i.e., the most energy efficient buildings).
- » The general spatial trend in the data shows that high BER ratings in 2022 are located in and around settlements, with lower BER ratings situated in rural areas.
- » In 2022, residential buildings accounted for almost 50% of the total average energy demand for heating.
- » Oil powered central home heating was used by 64.7% of households in 2016. This compared to the regional figure of 61.3% and the national figure of 40.4%. The next two largest energy sources contributing to central heating in the County were Coal (9.7%) and Peat (8.9%)
- » In 2016, just over 6% of households in Leitrim used electricity for heating, although it was the primary source for heating in the Carrick-on-Shannon ED, with 4% of households using 'wood (incl. wood pellets)'

1. Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are those areas considered important for the habitats present or which hold species or plants and animals whose habitat needs protection.

2. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for the protection of birds specifically in relation to listed rare and vulnerable species, regularly occurring migratory species, and wetlands especially those of international importance.

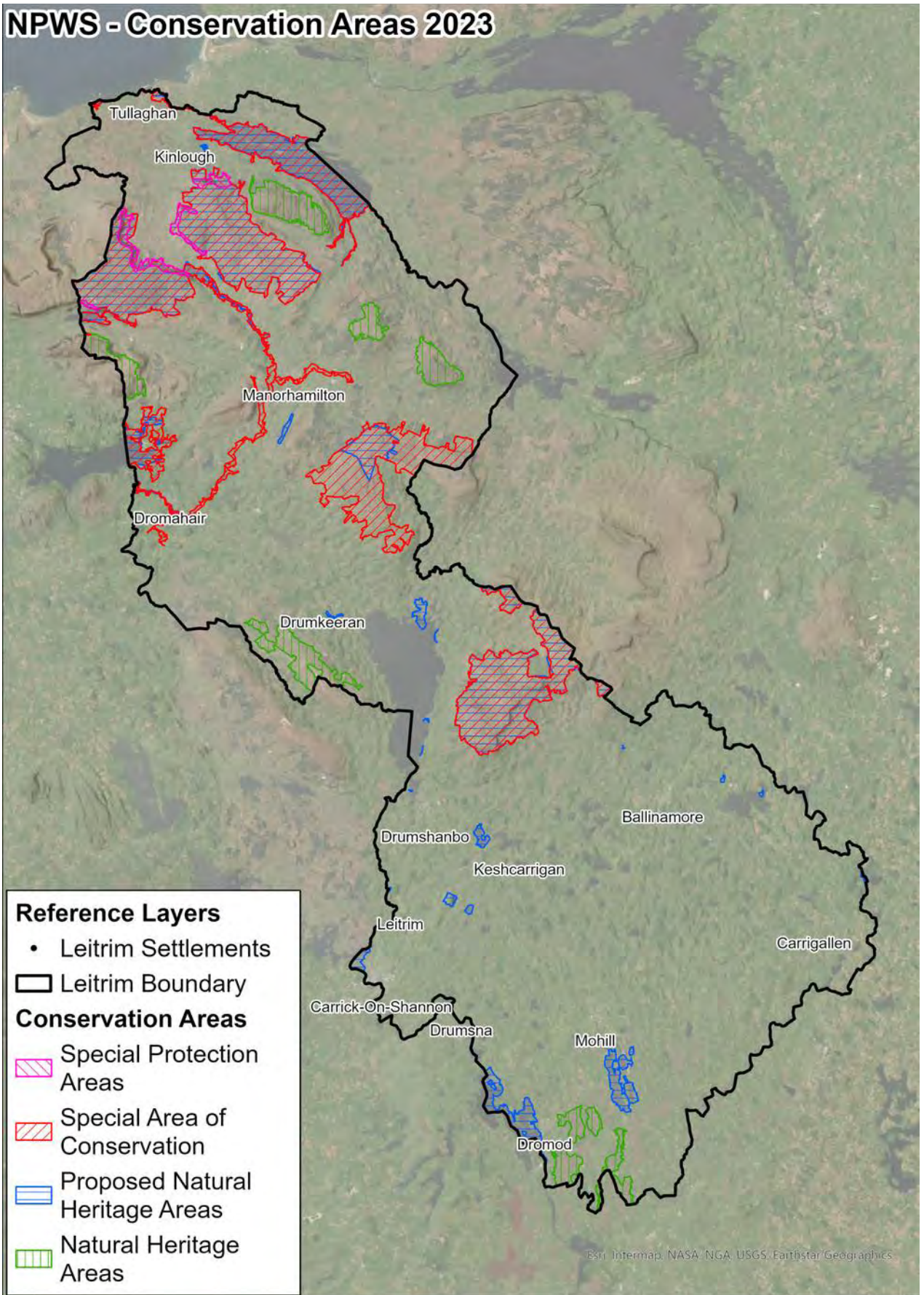
3. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are conservation areas to protect habitats and species that are considered to be important at Irish and European level.

Table 4 7 Permanent Private Households by Central Heating 2016

Permanent private households by central heating – Census 2016			
Central heating	Leitrim	NWR	State
	2016%	2016%	2016%
No central heating	1.5%	1.1%	1.4%
Oil	64.7%	61.3%	40.4%
Natural Gas	1.6%	4.4%	33.5%
Electricity	6.1%	6.1%	8.6%
Coal (incl. Anthracite)	9.7%	7.8%	5.1%
Peat (incl. turf)	8.9%	13.6%	5.3%
Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%
Wood (incl. wood pellets)	4.2%	2.0%	2.0%
Other	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%
Not Stated	1.7%	1.9%	2.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

- » In 2018, all of the wastewater treatment plants in Leitrim passed quality assurance testing.
- » In 2022, data from the SEAI highlights that the County had a total of 13 wind and one hydro electricity generators with a total installed capacity of 93 MW. The total installed capacity for Ireland is 4,304 MW, therefore, Leitrim contributes approximately 2% of the total installed capacity of wind and hydro generator connections in the State.
- » For the State, the number of new wind farm connections dropped from 35 in 2017 to 2 in 2022. Similarly, for Leitrim, there hasn't been any new wind farm connections since 2017.
- » As noted in the infrastructure section, there is a high rate of car use for travel to work and education and low level of public transport use. In 2016, active travel (walking and cycling) accounted for 6% of commuters travelling for work, which was lower than the regional rate of 8.4% and almost half of the national rate of 11.8%. Of the two modes of active travel in Leitrim, walking accounted for 5.5% and cycling made up 0.5% in 2016.
- » Between 2020 and 2021, the number of new electric vehicles sold in Leitrim increased by 133% from 12 to 28 electric vehicles. This figure is below the percentage increase recorded for both the Region and the State where new electric vehicle sales increased by 205% and 176%, respectively.
- » As of November 2022, there were 8 public EV charging stations in the County.

NPWS - Conservation Areas 2023





5. CONSULTATION

Consultation

The LECP has been developed in a collaborative manner through consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including local communities and the public, community groups, the Public Participation Network (PPN), the private sector (businesses), education providers, local government and state agencies.

The aim of the consultation was to identify key priorities, needs and ideas for the County that could be addressed over the lifetime of the LECP and encourage public participation in the development of the County. This chapter outlines the strands of the consultation conducted over the course of the development of the new LECP and a summary of key findings by theme. The findings from

the consultation process have been used to further develop the SCOT Analysis (Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Threats) that follows.

Furthermore, findings and ideas from the consultation process were used to revise the high-level goals to ensure that they were reflective of the views put forward during the consultation process and to inform the development of the specific objectives, outcomes and actions of the LECP which are outlined in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.

As such, the consultation process has played an important role in the development of the new LECP and on-going collaboration and engagement across the various stakeholders will be key to ensure the success of the Plan over the 2023-2029 period.



5.1 Consultation Process overview

Formal stakeholder and public consultation was conducted from December 2022 – February 2023. This included receiving written submissions on the Draft Socio-Economic Statement, two online surveys covering the community and private sector (businesses), workshops and stakeholder interviews. The consultation process was advertised widely including on social media and the Council’s website and was also circulated to local community groups and business networks in coordination with Leitrim PPN and other key stakeholders such as the Local Enterprise Office.

In addition to the formal consultation process that was completed in late 2022 and early 2023, additional consultation with relevant stakeholders was held to ensure that the objectives, outcomes and actions were aligned with identified needs, ongoing programmes and existing strategies, and with the views and ambition of those that would be delivering specific initiatives as part of the new LECP.

As highlighted above, the consultation process engaged with the public and a number of key stakeholders covering a range of different sectors, communities and government agencies as well as other representatives both from the public and private sector (businesses). This included those from hard to reach groups to ensure that their voices were heard.

The below provides a summary overview of the consultation conducted and the engagement received:

One-to-one interviews - 15 stakeholder interviews were conducted with the majority of these taking place between December 2022 – February 2023 and included a range of stakeholders from the public sector, community groups and private sector (businesses). Informed by the expertise and local insights from those in

attendance, the interviews discussed specific needs and potential areas for action relating to the development of the County.

Workshops – 7 workshops were held to inform the development of the new LECP. This included 3 community workshops (2 open workshops and a targeted workshop), a business workshop, a workshop for the Public Participation Network, and 2 workshops with Council staff. The workshops included a discussion around the draft high-level goals and the identification of gaps and suggestions for inclusion in the new LECP.

Online surveys– 2 online surveys were developed to gather the views of the private sector (Business Survey) and the public (Community Survey). The Surveys open from December 2022 – February 2023, with a total of 180 responses received, 38 on the Business Survey and 142 on the Community. The surveys sought community and private sector (businesses) views in relation to Leitrim’s strengths and assets, as well as perceived gaps and constraints in the County. The surveys also included specific questions in relation to business and community topics and needs.

Socio-Economic Statement and Written Submissions – The Socio-Economic Statement outlining the draft high-level goals and initial analysis was published on the Council’s website to generate discussion and ideas for the new LECP. Views, ideas and feedback were accepted from December 2022 – January 2023 with 5 written submissions received. Submissions covered ideas related to areas including volunteering, jobs of the future (e.g. robotics and AI), infrastructure, inclusion and disabilities, sustainability and transport.

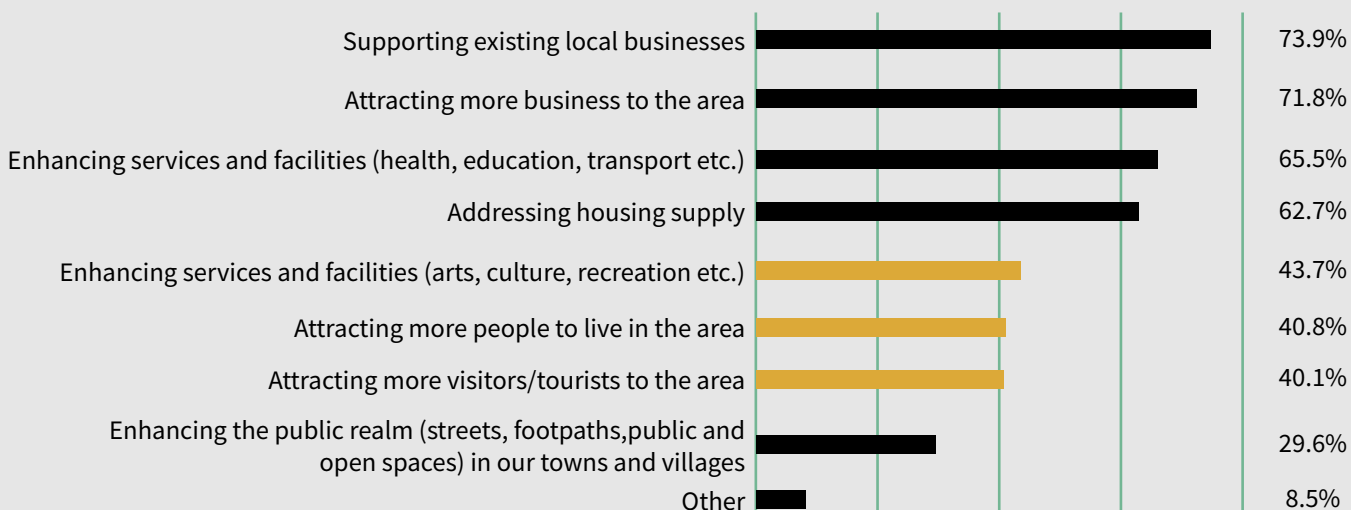
5.2 Key Themes from the Consultation

Feedback and views put forward and collected during the consultation process were analysed for findings. These findings are provided below in summary form by thematic area. As highlighted above, the findings and ideas from the consultation were used to revise the high-level goals and to inform the development of the objectives, outcomes and actions. As such, the community, the private sector (businesses), state agencies and other key stakeholders have played an important role and directly inputted into the development of the new plan.



5.2.1 Economy and Employment

What key objectives would you prioritise to create a sustainable and prosperous future for the people of Leitrim?



In general, it was felt that economic and community development needed to be driven across the County (North and South). Throughout the various strands of the consultation process, views relating to a more coordinated approach to economic development and enhancement of economic activity in the County were evident.

A recurring overlapping issue, highlighting the connection between economic development and community wellbeing, was the need for greater employment opportunities in the County. This was also reflected in the community survey where the current level of opportunity in the County was identified as a key constraint/barrier for those that may be interested in coming to live and work in Leitrim. Similarly, workforce availability was highlighted as a key constraint in the business survey highlighting the need to attract more workers to the County.

Related to this was the need to attract more investment and support Leitrim's existing businesses. It was felt that Leitrim needed to further diversify its economy and develop a more coordinated approach to attracting FDI. Investment should be based around existing sectoral strengths and clusters that could be further developed. Competitors for investment were highlighted as neighbouring counties who may have a more developed brand and identity coupled with larger populations and urban centres.

With regards to existing businesses and fostering an entrepreneurial environment, enhancing business supports was seen as key. This included the provision of additional supports to businesses particularly to those that may have advanced beyond the start-up stage, enhancing the range of mentoring available, raising awareness of international programmes for businesses as well as other supports to SMEs in relation to HR, financial and IT related areas.

Similarly, ensuring that the necessary infrastructure was in place to support an innovative and thriving economy was also seen to be important. This included the provision of suitable office space and serviced sites, public transport, broadband and housing and accommodation of an appropriate standard. Addressing vacancy and dereliction was also seen to be important with views put forward in relation to bringing vacant buildings back into use.

Key sectors in the county highlighted during the consultation included food, the night-time economy (in Carrick-on-Shannon), tourism and leisure, MedTech, manufacturing and agriculture. As well as strengthening and building upon these areas, it was felt that further opportunities existed in relation to visitor accommodation, tourism, the creative economy, organic farming, the green economy (e.g. retrofitting and renewables), and social enterprises.

5.2.2 Community and Wellbeing

A number of different points were raised about the community and wellbeing. Leitrim's people were seen as a key asset with a strong sense of community evident in the County. However, despite a good culture of volunteering, it was noted that the community and voluntary sector has struggled to attract new volunteers since the pandemic. It was felt that this could be addressed by holding events to encourage people to become involved in volunteering as well as through providing additional supports and training to assist with the increased levels of complexity and administration involved in running such organisations.

Access to services and amenities was also seen as something that could be improved in the County. This was particularly the case for healthcare, with indications that getting registered with GPs was a major issue in the community. However, it was highlighted that while waiting lists continue to be a challenge, work was ongoing to improve timely access to healthcare services through ensuring patients were aligned to the correct healthcare pathway. In regards to specific healthcare services, occupational therapy, mental health services and disability services, particularly for children, young people and those from marginalised groups, were highlighted as areas that may need further support in the future.

Similarly, the provision of public transport, particularly to rural areas, was seen as something that could be enhanced. It was noted that an improved public transport service could have a positive impact on a number of issues such as addressing isolation, reducing emissions and easier access to education and employment.

It was also felt that initiatives that seek to assist with inclusion and diversity should continue to be enhanced in the County. This included age friendly initiatives and initiatives to support those with disabilities including in relation to targeted housing. Similarly, it was felt that the County needed to ensure that the necessary supports are in place to meet the needs of new communities and Ukrainian refugees, including access to healthcare, education, employment and language training. Furthermore, specific supports to assist the traveling community with inclusion and employment were also highlighted as important.

Finally, the role of sports and recreation as well as the arts and creative sector were highlighted in relation to their positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community. It was felt that initiatives and facilities to support these areas and encourage community uptake should continue to be developed and implemented. The need for an all-weather sports facility was highlighted as a specific amenity that could positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the County.

5.2.3 Education, Training and Skills

The lack of a third level institute was highlighted as a clear gap in the education provision in the County with young people required to leave the County to pursue third level education. To assist in addressing this issue, it was felt that links with regional educational providers could be enhanced and options explored in relation to the establishment of a third level presence (research related or otherwise) in the County. Ensuring that there was adequate infrastructure in place to support remote/distance learning was also seen as important with reference made to access to high-speed broadband and study spaces.

Similarly, it was felt that there could be greater links between the private sector (businesses) and education providers in the region both to raise awareness of career opportunities within the County and to provide employers with a wider talent pool of graduates. It was hoped that Leitrim could attract young people to work and live through both its quality of life and employment opportunities moving forward.

With regards to primary and secondary level education, it was felt that there may be capacity pressures in certain areas of the County and steps should be taken to ensure that provision meets current and future demand. The enhanced provision of in-county apprenticeships was another area highlighted with an opportunity to address skills gaps in traditional trades as well as preparing the community for jobs of the future in areas related to sustainability and the green economy.

The development and promotion of digital skills across all ages was another area that was seen to be important for the County moving forward. This included getting young people involved in areas such as coding at an earlier age, general IT skills to access services in everyday life (e.g. online banking) and IT skills for employment in an office environment or similar.

5.2.4 Environment and Sustainability

What are Leitrim’s greatest assets?



Leitrim's natural environment was highlighted as one of the County's key assets. It was found to contribute immensely to the quality of life and community wellbeing in the County. It was also seen as a world class amenity that attracted visitors and supported the economy through the tourism sector.

However it was felt that Leitrim could become more active in the areas of sustainability and climate action. It was highlighted that there is an opportunity to pursue carbon neutrality in the County which in turn could result in economic benefits such as employment in retrofitting or sustainable tourism.

To achieve this, enhancing awareness and supports for the community and businesses in relation to climate action and sustainability initiatives was seen to be important as well as the provision of community and business champions to drive such initiatives forward. Similarly, the need for enhanced public transport and a greater uptake of walking and cycling including through the provision and linking of greenways and blueways, were seen as initiatives that could contribute to a reduction in emissions and improvements in health and wellbeing. With reference to biodiversity, exploring the potential for North Leitrim to become a national park was highlighted as well as initiatives related to rewilding and rewetting of peatlands and the potential for the development of a Wild Atlantic rainforest.

It was felt that thought needed to be given to how the land, the community and the economy can become more integrated and work together for the benefit of the entire County. This was particularly the case in relation to the approach to

land management and forestry which was highlighted as both an economic and social issue in the County. Similarly, it was felt that if Leitrim was to become a truly sustainable county and protect the environment for future generations, a solution would need to be found for existing issues associated with water treatment and disposal. However, overall, the beautiful landscape including the coast, the mountains, lakes and woodlands, was a reoccurring strength that was identified throughout the consultation.

5.2.5 Tourism, Culture and Creative Sector

Tourism was seen as a sector of great potential for the County and an area that could build upon the good progress already achieved to date. It was noted that the County is part of two of Fáilte Ireland's major regional destination brands, the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and it was felt that this should be fully embraced in the promotion of the County.

It was highlighted that sustainability was the underlying theme which connects Leitrim's tourism sector, and that sustainable tourism development should continue to be pursued moving forward. Slow adventure tourism and outdoor tourism were seen to be the County's main offering with further opportunity for promotion and development in these areas particularly in relation to linking attractions and supporting businesses. Accommodation was highlighted as an area that could be enhanced to support the visitor economy and should include exploring a range of offerings such as areas for glamping and motorhomes.

The development of the county's blueways and greenways (including the SLNCR greenway) were also highlighted for their potential to contribute to the visitor economy as well as the development of an integrated system that would link the existing routes across the County. Angling was also noted for its potential to attract visitors as was water-based activities in places such as Lough Allen, Lough Rinn and on the Shannon. Similarly, Leitrim's culture and creative sector, was seen to contribute greatly to the County as a visitor destination. The night-time and evening economy was noted to be very popular in Carrick-on-Shannon and a great support to the local economy. However, it was felt that the County could benefit from an enhanced and more coordinated approach to marketing and promotion at a national and international level to assist in attracting more visitors. Similarly, the establishment of a methodology to collect accurate information on attraction performance and visitor numbers to support evidence-based decision making was seen to be important.

5.2.6 Attractive and Vibrant Places

The need to continue to enhance Leitrim as an attractive and connected County was also highlighted during the consultation process. In support of this, it was felt that delivering more compact growth could benefit the County's ability to rival the draw and attraction of areas like Dublin. This could be done through scaled urban centres across the County to support more balanced regional development. Building on the night-time economy was also seen as a way to promote a more place-focussed direction for spatial growth in the County while also creating a more attractive offering for visitors and tourists.

Similarly, addressing vacancy and dereliction which was seen to be important for creating vibrant and sustainable communities across Leitrim's towns, villages and rural areas. It was felt that further thought needed to be given to how vacant and derelict property can be brought back into use and to how owners of such buildings can be encouraged and assisted to do so including through awareness raising of the grants and incentives available.

Ideas for the repurposing of vacant and derelict buildings included repurposing them as spaces for the community and creative sector, repurposing them for residential purposes and repurposing them as spaces for pop-up shops that could drive footfall into towns and villages. Furthermore, it was felt that over the shop living could contribute to the regeneration of town and village centres, though regulation in relation to such developments was seen to be restrictive. Housing was also mentioned more generally in regards to attracting people to live in the County, with issues in relation to obtaining permission for one-off rural housing also highlighted.

Ensuring that the County's towns and villages were adequately connected and serviced by public transport was also seen to be highly important for the sustainability and resilience of the County's various communities. It was also felt that adding to the County's recreational and hospitality facilities would benefit a place-based approach in developing attractive and vibrant areas. Finally, it was highlighted that it was vitally important that the Local Authority continued to consult with and empower local communities to drive development in their areas.





6. SCOT ANALYSIS



SCOT Analysis

A SCOT analysis has been developed to identify the key Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats that will shape the development of Leitrim over the next seven years. The SCOT analysis is organised according to the following key elements:



Strengths

– the existing advantages that Leitrim has at present



Constraints

– the existing challenges facing the County at present



Opportunities

– potential advantages and opportunities that Leitrim can capitalise on



Threats

– Anticipated future challenges and issues facing Leitrim and its communities

The SCOT analysis which follows has been developed from the findings of the socio-economic analysis detailed in Chapter 4 of this document and from the analysis of findings of the consultation process summarised in Chapter 5.

Table 6 1: SCOT Analysis

Strengths	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leitrim’s people and its communities. • The county’s community and voluntary organisations. • Strong culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, with SMEs and micro-enterprises highly important to the economy. • Network of Technology and Enterprise Hubs e.g. The Hive in Carrick on Shannon and The Food Hub in Drumshanbo. • Good accessibility via road and rail. • Beautiful landscape and abundance of natural amenities. • Attractive towns and villages with an excellent quality of life and good work-life balance. • Population growth of 9.5% between 2016 and 2022 (although the small population size should be noted). • As the County Town, Carrick-on-Shannon is considered to punch above its weight in terms of employment. • A number of strong sectors that support employment e.g. MedTech, food and strong tourism potential. • Strong culture, heritage and creative sector evident in the County. • Cost of doing business is favourable with closely knit business networks and good business supports. • Affordability of housing and the cost of living generally in the County. • Proximity to the market in Northern Ireland. • Purple flag for excellence in the evening and night-time economy in Carrick-on-Shannon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High commercial vacancy rate (but also presents opportunities!). • Housing particularly around constraints with approvals for rural housing. • Sustainability could be improved - environmental impact of high rate of car use, and the low prevalence of the most energy efficient type of buildings. • Low level of public transport across the County contributing to issues with accessibility. • General accessibility to the County including to North Leitrim and access to markets and customers outside of the County. • Issues with waiting list times for healthcare and getting registered with GPs. • Large number of young people leaving the county. • Perceived level of employment opportunities. • Workforce availability highlighted as an issue for businesses. • Deprivation levels have increased in recent years. • FDI makes relatively low contribution to overall employment. • Rural decline evident and access to broadband an issue in some areas. • The county does not have a third-level institution. • Despite the high growth rate, Leitrim has the smallest population in the State in 2022 at 35,087. • Lack of all-weather sports facilities.

Opportunities

- Attract further FDI, support cluster development and continue to encourage entrepreneurialism and innovation.
- Repurpose vacant and derelict sites for community and commercial purposes.
- Improve energy efficiency and sustainability across the county including through increased use and generation of renewable energy where possible and raised awareness of supports amongst the community and businesses.
- Promotion of the beautiful landscape and quality of life to attract people to live, visit and work.
- Enhance and benefit from Leitrim's tourism potential including greenway and blueway development and outdoor tourism.
- Continue to improve broadband throughout the County and embrace digital transformation with the new digital strategy.
- Further enhance sports and recreational amenities in the County and develop the creative economy.
- Opportunity to improve public transport provision throughout the County.
- Enhance community inclusion through the continued provision of supports for marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- Enhance coordination between the public and private sector (businesses).
- Further promote the existing community groups and volunteering opportunities.

Threats

- Long-term consequences of Brexit and the effects of current inflation on businesses and the community as well as the potential for a future recession.
- Decreases in younger cohorts could affect workforce availability and impact competitiveness in relation to securing investment.
- High commercial vacancy rate could lead to further decline.
- Increasing population may put strain on key services which in turn could affect the county's ability to maintain growth and community wellbeing e.g., healthcare, housing, childcare.
- Failure to secure buy-in from stakeholders for the new LECF risks the success of the new plan.
- Climate change impacts and associated weather events may present risks for urban and rural areas.
- Biodiversity crisis could lead to decline of Leitrim's habitats and species.
- Seasonality in the tourism sector may impact on employment opportunities for many workers.
- Lack of new volunteers could lead to viability issues with some community and voluntary groups.
- Failure to adequately prepare for an ageing population.
- Failure to attract adequate level of people to sustain current communities in villages and towns across the County.



7. HIGH-LEVEL GOALS, OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

7.1 Overview

As part of the development of the LECP, Leitrim County Council together with the ASG, LCDC, SPC for Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure and other key stakeholders have developed 6 high-level goals with associated objectives and desired outcomes to assist in guiding the direction of the County over the 2023-2029 period. Their development has been informed from the findings of the socio-economic analysis, stakeholder and public consultation process, and the review of existing policies at local, regional and national level.

As outlined below, the goals, objectives, and outcomes cover both economic and community elements as required by the LECP guidelines. They have been designed to positively contribute to the economic and community development of Leitrim and are aligned with the overall ambition for a connected, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable County. The sections that follow outline each high-level goal, along with the associated objectives and desired outcomes (related to the goals and objectives) in more detail. The specific actions related to the goals are included in the initial 2-year Implementation Plan in Chapter 8.

Table 7.1: High-Level Goals

Goal	Goal Description
Goal 1	Leitrim will continue to develop as an inclusive, healthy and equitable county that supports wellbeing and is celebrated as a great place to live
Goal 2	Leitrim will embrace climate action to increase the sustainability of its communities and unlock the benefits of the green economy
Goal 3	Leitrim’s towns and villages will continue to be revitalised and regenerated as attractive places to live, work and visit
Goal 4	Leitrim will be recognised for its educational attainment, life-long learning and training opportunities
Goal 5	Leitrim will strengthen and diversify its innovative economy, create meaningful employment and promote sustainable enterprise
Goal 6	Leitrim will champion its natural and cultural environment and support the development of the county as a tourism destination in a sustainable and balanced manner

7.2 Goal 1, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Goal 1 – Leitrim will continue to develop as an inclusive, healthy and equitable county that supports wellbeing and is celebrated as a great place to live

Promoting and ensuring the health, wellbeing, and inclusion of all communities is imperative to ensuring that Leitrim remains an attractive and sustainable place to live. Leitrim, as a County, must ensure that there are adequate services to meet the demand of its communities both now and into the future as its population increases. Similarly, it is important that the public are encouraged to become involved in their own community and the development of the county to ensure their views and needs are addressed.

The achievement of this goal will be dependent on a variety of factors and will require input from a number of different stakeholders. As such, Leitrim County Council, working in collaboration with key stakeholders and service providers, including the HSE, Leitrim Development Company and the PPN, will continue to be proactive in enhancing supports and developing initiatives that promote and encourage physical and mental wellbeing as well as inclusion across all its communities.

This will include the delivery of programmes that support health, wellbeing and community development, including as part of the National Healthy Ireland Framework and the Healthy Leitrim Plan 2023-2025, and the delivery of initiatives under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). Furthermore, the goal aligns with regional and national policy objectives contained in the NWRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and National Planning Framework (NPF) as well as the UN SDGs.

Objective 1.1 Enhance and ensure adequate access to supports and services for the entire community

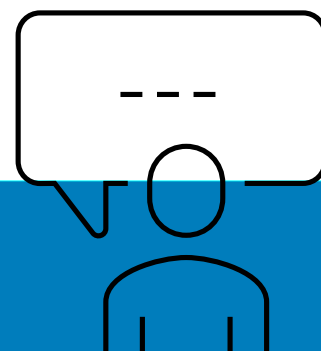
As outlined in the socio-economic analysis, Leitrim's population has experienced strong growth between 2016-2022 and this objective looks to ensure that there is an adequate provision of services to support the County's growing population. To fully support the community and ensure an inclusive County, a wide array of services and supports will be needed. The objective looks to address issues and needs highlighted during the consultation process in relation to accessing services including healthcare, transport, education and employment. This will include building on the good work completed to date and continuing to identify and deliver specific supports to meet community needs for those from vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged groups including the travelling community, those with disabilities and refugees. Similarly, the objective will seek to ensure that necessary services are available to support the young and old to live healthy and fulfilling lives in the County. Enhancing public transport, particularly to rural areas, will also be an important element in relation to meeting community needs under this objective.

Objective 1.2 Improve the health and wellbeing of all the people in Leitrim

Linked directly to Objective 1.1, this objective looks to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Leitrim. Improving the health and wellbeing of the county will require a collaborative, multifaceted approach with inputs required from a number of different stakeholders. It will include empowering individuals to make healthy life choices including through Healthy Ireland initiatives, continuing to support the development and uptake of sports and recreation throughout the County regardless of location or background, and encouraging and ensuring access to creative and cultural activities across all communities. The implementation of initiatives to enhance inclusion and integration will also be an important contributor to community wellbeing including through the Peace Plus and SICAP programmes.

Objective 1.3 Increase community engagement and collaboration in the development of their local community and County

This objective seeks to encourage the public to become more involved in the development of their local areas and County. It looks to address findings from the consultation process that highlighted a particular need for enhanced support to the community and voluntary sector and the need to attract new volunteers. It will include promoting and encouraging involvement with Leitrim's many community and voluntary groups that provide vital services and supports that contribute to community wellbeing across the County. It will also include enhancing capacity building and training for community and voluntary groups in areas related to administration, regulation and funding applications. Furthermore, it will look to raise awareness and foster collaboration between the various community and voluntary groups in the County to realise opportunities for shared resources and funding.



Goal 1 Key Desired Outcomes

1. Improve the County's Pobal HP Deprivation Index score to pre-2011 levels i.e., above minus 2.00.
2. Increase the percentage of people indicating that they enjoy good or very good physical health
3. Record an increase in the levels of volunteering.
4. Obtain recognition for initiatives related to Health and Wellbeing, and Diversity and Inclusion.
5. Enhanced public transport provision in relation to routes and schedules.
6. Increase the population in line with expected targets for 2031.

7.3 Goal 2, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Goal 2 – Leitrim will embrace climate action to increase the sustainability of its communities and unlock the benefits of the green economy

As highlighted in the consultation process, Leitrim’s natural environment and landscape is one of its greatest assets. The diverse and beautiful landscape contributes not only to Leitrim’s appeal as a tourist destination but also to an excellent quality of life and the wellbeing of communities across the County. It is vital that the natural environment, its ecosystems and habitats are protected for future generations. As such, it is essential that the County is proactive in embracing sustainability, raising awareness on climate action, and driving a just transition to a low-carbon economy. This presents challenges, but also significant opportunities. Embracing sustainability can unlock new opportunities for economic growth and development under the green economy, while ensuring that Leitrim remains a healthy and attractive place in which to live and work.

In pursuit of this goal, the County will need to strive to realise national, regional and local goals towards developing and supporting climate action to create sustainable communities and support national objectives

to reach Net Zero emissions by 2050. As such, this goal is fully aligned with the UN SDGs and the National Climate Action Plan 2023. It is also consistent with specific objectives on the environment and climate outlined in Leitrim’s County Development Plan, the NWRA RSES and the NPF.

Objective 2.1 Implement climate action initiatives to reduce emissions and support the transition of Leitrim to a carbon neutral county through community engagement, energy efficiency and the sustainable development of renewable energy.

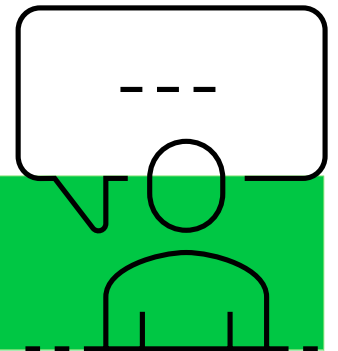
This objective seeks to reduce emissions and ensure that Leitrim transitions to a more sustainable County. It aligns with views put forward during the consultation process in relation to the opportunity to become carbon neutral and with the national Climate Action Plan 2023 which has a target of reducing emission by 51% by 2030. Achieving this objective will require a collaborative effort and behavioural shifts from across society in Leitrim. It will include Leitrim County Council taking a leading role to raise awareness of and drive climate action initiatives in all areas of life, establishing a baseline of emissions to assist in understanding the County’s progress towards sustainability and encouraging a shift to more sustainable and active modes of transport including walking and cycling. It will also look to build on the good progress made to date in the agricultural sector and will continue to support Leitrim’s farming community in a “just transition” to enhanced sustainability. Furthermore, it will continue to support the sustainable development of renewable energy in line with regional and national targets.

Objective 2.2 Ensure the protection of the environment and biodiversity for future generations

Leitrim is a place of great natural beauty. Its diverse landscape contains a variety of different ecosystems and habitats, including the Shannon-Erne Waterway, Lough Melvin and Lough Allen, Aghavoghil Bog and the Dough/ Thur Mountains. The County's natural environment helps define Leitrim and contributes to the quality of life and wellbeing of all our communities. This objective, at its core, looks to protect Leitrim's natural environment for current and future generations. This will include implementing initiatives that help to protect and enhance Leitrim's biodiversity, continuing work to identify, understand and preserve habitats in the County, and directly addressing issues that may pose challenges to the County's environment.

Objective 2.3 Involve communities in climate action by raising awareness of environmental issues and sustainable practices.

This objective seeks to ensure that all of Leitrim's communities are encouraged and empowered to become involved in climate action initiatives in the County. It is important that communities are empowered and supported to implement new and progress existing initiatives in their local areas. Dedicated capacity in the areas of sustainability in the Council will assist with enhanced outreach and awareness-raising around environmental issues and sustainable practices for communities and the private sector (businesses). This will include education and awareness raising around existing initiatives, grants, training programmes and other resources. It is also hoped that greater participation and awareness of climate action and sustainability initiatives in the community will help to inform innovative solutions and contribute to a just transition to a more sustainable society.



Goal 2 Key Desired Outcomes

1. Reduce emissions by 51%.
2. Strive to ensure that the county does not suffer a net loss of biodiversity/ habitats.
3. Record an increase in those using sustainable modes of transport.
4. County Council fleet to be powered by 100% sustainable sources (where applicable) by 2029.

7.4 Goal 3, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Goal 3 – Leitrim’s towns and villages will continue to be revitalised and regenerated as attractive places to live, work and visit

Leitrim’s towns and villages are essential to the community and economic function of the County providing vital services and social outlets not only for their urban populations but also for their wider rural hinterlands. In recent years, the importance of our local areas has been further highlighted in relation to providing valuable amenities and services and has opened up new opportunities around remote working. However, across the state, towns and villages are facing significant challenges in relation to high levels of commercial vacancy, dereliction and more generally rural decline with large numbers of young people leaving for bigger settlements. Left unchecked, these issues may lead to further economic and community decline.

Under this goal, Leitrim will work to address these issues through supporting the continued regeneration and revitalisation of towns and villages across the county, ensuring the development of vibrant and resilient communities. Furthermore, it will look to build on the good work already underway and aims to address the regeneration of Leitrim’s settlements as attractive places to live, work

and invest. This goal is consistent with the County Development Plan, the NWRA’s RSES and the UN SDGs as well as being aligned with other national policies such as the Town Centre First policy.

Objective 3.1 Pilot new and innovative approaches to support regeneration and revitalisation

A forward-looking imaginative approach is required to tackle challenges and drive the revitalisation and regeneration of our towns and villages. This objective will seek to create an ecosystem that supports engagement and innovation across communities and sectors in developing solutions to contribute to the revitalisation and regeneration of areas across Leitrim. This will include identifying approaches, partners and locations to implement pilot initiatives that can drive footfall into our town and village centres, bring buildings back into use and support the local economy both during the day and in the evening. This objective will not only support local economic development but also help to provide an evidence-base for sustainable long-term use strategies. The objective will also seek to progress existing innovative initiatives with local community and voluntary groups across the County.

Objective 3.2 Implement the Town Centre First Policy and reduce vacancy and dereliction in towns and villages

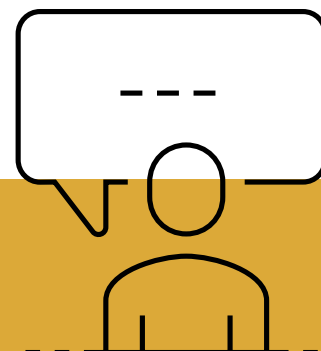
This objective seeks to implement and avail of the opportunities under the national Town Centre First Policy and reduce the level of vacancy and dereliction across Leitrim. The national Town Centre First Policy represents the Irish Government’s commitment to supporting the development of vibrant, attractive and sustainable towns and villages. Achieving this objective will require engagement with communities to identify specific gaps in amenities and services and empowering those

communities to drive the revitalisation and development of their local areas regardless of size or location. Similarly, vacant and derelict buildings must regularly be identified, and owners encouraged to bring such sites back into use with awareness raised on the grants and incentives available to assist in this process.

Objective 3.3 Ensure there is adequate housing capacity in the County to meet demand

With the growth rate of housing in Leitrim behind national levels and strong population growth recorded in the most recent census, ensuring housing capacity can adequately meet future housing demand is essential to creating a sustainable future for Leitrim and its communities. While there does appear to be some capacity in the County's housing stock owing to strong housing growth in previous years (early 2000s) which is also evident in

the level of residential vacancy recorded in the County, it is vitally important that the level of housing available is closely monitored to ensure it continues to support Leitrim's growing population and economic development. To support this and aligned with Objective 3.2 above, there will be a need to continue to engage with owners of vacant and derelict properties (commercial and residential), to assist and encourage them to bring properties back into use. Similarly, it will be important to liaise with the private sector (businesses) to ensure that housing supply meets demand in the County over the 6-year timeframe of the plan.



Goal 3 Key Desired Outcomes

1. Reduce the commercial vacancy rate at a County level to below 15% and increase productive use or occupancy for vacant/derelict buildings.
2. Obtain recognition for innovative approaches to regeneration.
3. Housing capacity in the County remains adequate to support population and jobs growth.

7.5 Goal 4, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Goal 4 – Leitrim will be recognised for its educational attainment, life-long learning and training opportunities

This goal seeks to ensure that all the community of Leitrim have the opportunity to access education and training to support their development and enhance their everyday lives. Lifelong learning and upskilling are key elements in the personal development and career advancement for many people. It also contributes to the well-being of the community through increasing employability and the associated potential for a reduction in unemployment and poverty. Therefore, this goal must be pursued in a wholly inclusive manner with opportunities promoted, encouraged and facilitated across communities regardless of location, background, age or ability.

Furthermore, ensuring that Leitrim has a skilled workforce that aligns with employer needs will ensure a competitive economy that can attract investment into the future. This will include skills in jobs of the future such as retrofitting and renewables and traditional trades that support the economy. As such, key stakeholders across the County and in the region will need to work collaboratively to enhance educational outcomes and upskilling

across the County. This goal is aligned with regional and national policy objectives relating to education, skills and inclusion as well as the UN SDGs.

Objective 4.1 Improve the County’s education performance and enhance the employability of our people

Improving the County’s educational attainment, including in relation to marginalised groups and communities, is a primary facet of this objective. With the County’s attainment levels for 3rd level education below the national average, ensuring all communities and groups have the opportunity to access education, from primary to secondary and into further and 3rd level education will be essential to both improving the county’s educational performance and providing communities in the county with a broader horizon of employment opportunities.

Similarly, to achieve this objective, it will be important to understand the skills gaps in the County. This will assist education and training providers to align their provision with the needs of the private sector (businesses) and in turn increase employability in the community. Furthermore, it will also be necessary to enhance links between the private sector (businesses), the community, and training and education providers, to improve awareness and understanding of the opportunities for employment and careers in Leitrim.

Objective 4.2 Increase the level of digital and IT skills across all ages

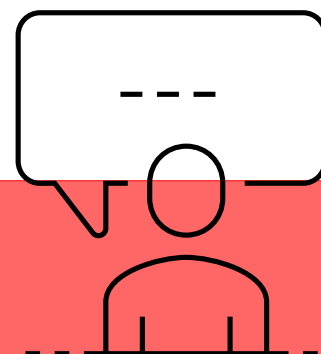
With advances in technology and digital innovation increasing at a fast pace, keeping up with these changes and innovation has become a key component of planning for rural and urban Ireland. With Leitrim’s population becoming older over the previous Census period, preventing the development of a digital

disparity between the County’s young and old will support Leitrim’s overall development as a smart, educated and resilient place. As such, this objective will promote the uptake of digital skills among all age groups, including through programmes such as the Digital Skills Support Service for Older People and working with existing groups to establish computer learning clubs for primary school students such as CoderDojo. Furthermore, implementing Leitrim’s existing Digital Strategy will also be a cornerstone of this objective, which aims to promote digital literacy across all ages and capitalise on new technologies and innovations to further improve the quality of life experienced by all those living and working in Leitrim. As such, this objective will also contribute to the development of a smart region as set out in the NWRA’s RSES.

seeking to increase the provision and up-take of apprenticeships and training, particularly through enhanced provision of in-county courses. Opportunities highlighted during the consultation process included areas related to the green economy such as retrofitting, renewables, and sustainable construction as well as the traditional trades. Similarly, although the County does not currently have any third level providers, an opportunity exists to enhance links with regional providers and explore the potential for the establishment of a presence in the County. Furthermore, to assist those that are accessing training or education remotely, the provision of space (e.g. study spaces for remote learning in libraries or similar) to assist in accessing such courses will also be important.

Objective 4.3 Further develop the provision of education and training in the County

This objective looks to enhance the provision of education and training in Leitrim. Providing good access for all to education, life-long learning opportunities and training courses in Leitrim is imperative to creating an educated and skilled workforce. As such, this objective is linked directly to objective 4.1. This will include



Goal 4 Key Desired Outcomes

1. Increase the number of people attaining further and higher-level qualifications so that the County is in line with the national average.
2. Reduce unemployment levels across the County.
3. The proposal for a Leitrim College for further education is at an advanced stage
4. Education and training provision enhanced and links to providers increased.

7.6 Goal 5, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Goal 5 – Leitrim will strengthen and diversify its innovative economy, create meaningful employment and promote sustainable enterprise

This goal looks to support Leitrim’s existing businesses, while diversifying and strengthening the economy. While the County has a strong culture of entrepreneurialism and a number of existing clusters, it does have a relatively narrow base of economic activity. Therefore, expanding the employment base and creating further job opportunities will be important to Leitrim’s success moving forward. This will include attracting new investment, encouraging the development of innovative home-grown companies and creating a seamless business environment with infrastructure, services and supports that foster growth and innovation. As a designated Key Town in the RSES with ambitious growth targets, Carrick-on-Shannon will remain an important economic driver for the entire County in this regard.

This goal will contribute to a wide range of areas and highlights the interconnected nature of the community and economic elements of the LECP. It supports and is related to other elements of the LECP including in its role to reduce unemployment and poverty and in

its need for a talented and educated workforce to support the development of a competitive, resilient and sustainable County. This goal is aligned with the UN SDGs and consistent with the objectives relating to economic development and employment outlined in the County Development Plan and the NWRA’s RSES.

Objective 5.1 Continue to work with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the LEO to attract investment, increase employment and develop indigenous enterprises

This objective is focused on ensuring that Leitrim continues to attract and develop new and innovative companies that can create meaningful and sustainable employment in the County. A number of opportunities exist to build upon both new and current sectors including agribusiness and food (including organic farming), the creative sector, tourism, the green economy (e.g., retrofitting and renewables), Medtech and Industry 4.0. To achieve this objective, a collaborative approach to driving economic development across the County will be required by key stakeholders such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the LEO. It will also include the development of more targeted approaches to attract businesses to the County and enhanced access to mentoring and training supports for new businesses and start-ups. Similarly, it will seek to raise awareness of the opportunities that exist in the County and Leitrim’s value proposition in relation to its key advantages over competing locations in the region and further afield.

Objective 5.2 Support existing businesses in key sectors across the County

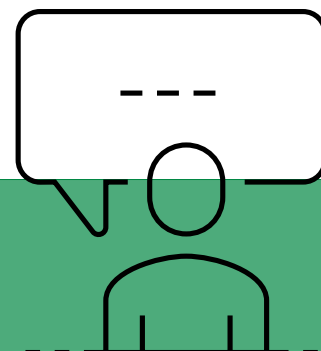
While objective 5.1 looks to develop and attract new businesses to the County, this objective specifically aims to support and strengthen Leitrim’s existing businesses and industries. This includes the important retail and hospitality

sector that provides vital services in Leitrim as well as the many other sectors present in the County including agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing. The Council and its partners will look to achieve this objective through a number of different approaches. This will include reviewing and promoting incentives to assist businesses, increasing awareness of supports and access to international best practice, continuing to support the night-time economy and the retention of the County's purple flag, and promoting local businesses and produce. Furthermore, it will look to support and further develop the growing creative economy as well as social enterprises that contribute to the overall wellbeing and prosperity of the County.

Objective 5.3 Improve the business environment and actively promote the County as an attractive business location

Linked to objective 5.1 and 5.2 above, this objective seeks to continue to enhance the

business environment and actively promote the County through highlighting its strengths to potential investors. This will support both existing businesses through the creation of a better operating environment as well as contributing to the attraction of new companies to the County. Improving the business environment will include working to progress key infrastructure projects that provide the space and services required for the development of an innovative economy and ensuring that adequate business supports and incentives are in place with easily accessible information on how they can be availed of by interested parties. The promotion of the County will require a unified approach and brand that highlights not only the key advantages of the County in relation to its business environment and success stories, but also its strengths around its quality of life, excellent natural environment and sense of community.



Goal 5 Key Desired Outcomes

1. Increase those at work in the County by a minimum of 1,000 people.
2. Record an increase in the number of IDA and EI supported businesses in the County and an increase in those employed by such businesses.
3. Purple Flag Award in relation to the night time economy retained.
4. Key projects to improve the business and innovation ecosystem completed.

7.7 Goal 6, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Goal 6 – Leitrim will champion its natural and cultural environment and support the development of the county as a tourism destination in a sustainable and balanced manner.

As previously mentioned, Leitrim is a place of great natural beauty with its natural environment and landscape being highlighted as some of the County's greatest assets. The County also has a rich heritage and vibrant creative sector that contribute to Leitrim's sense of place, wellbeing and the economy. Combined, these strengths, as well as the County's strategic location along the Wild Atlantic Way and as part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, also highlight the immense potential for tourism in the County. Therefore, Leitrim is ideally positioned to further develop its tourism offering and fully realise its potential as a sustainable tourism destination. As such, this goal looks to harness this potential, while championing, protecting and strengthening Leitrim's natural, built and cultural heritage as well as its creative sector, for future generations.

This goal has clear synergies and linkages with both economic and community elements of the LECP including a number of the goals and objectives outlined above. The goal will contribute to the overall development of the

County and the health and wellbeing of the economy and community including employment, regeneration and inclusion. As such, the goal is aligned and consistent with objectives in the NPF, the NWRA's RSES and the County Development Plan as well as the UN SDGs.

Objective 6.1 Enhance Leitrim as a sustainable tourism destination and further develop a range of high-quality experiences across the County

This objective seeks to enhance Leitrim as a sustainable tourism destination and further develop a range of high-quality experiences to attract visitors, increase dwell time and grow revenues from the tourism sector. With concepts such as regenerative and sustainable tourism becoming an increasingly powerful part of a visitor's motivations for where they visit, Leitrim is well placed to further benefit from its tourism potential. Pursuing this objective will include enhancing outdoor activities such as through greenways and blueways, exploring the feasibility for water-based activities and the potential to open up/designate new recreational areas in the County. It will also seek to encourage and ensure adequate provision of services and infrastructure that can support the sector and related economic activity including in relation to accommodation and hospitality.

Objective 6.2 Improve coordination and capability across the tourism sector

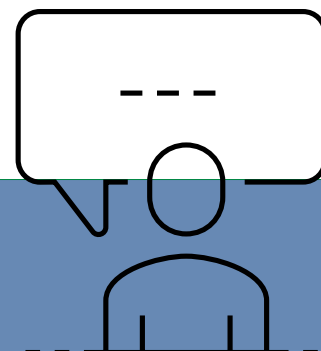
In order to realise Leitrim's tourism potential, enhancing coordination and capability across the County's tourism sector will be essential. This was also highlighted as an important area to address during the consultation process. Achieving this objective will require enhanced collaboration between tourism providers, the Council and other relevant groups, particularly in relation to a more targeted approach to the promotion of the County and in relation to the

planning, development and overall strategy for the tourism sector going forward. Similarly, building capacity within the sector will be important in relation to enhancing the overall tourism offering in the County. This will include a need to develop an evidence-based approach in relation to the sector's development through the accurate capture of data on tourism performance.

Objective 6.3 Champion Leitrim's rich natural, built and cultural heritage and maintain and protect a green, clean and safe environment for everyone

As outlined above, Leitrim's built, natural and cultural heritage are some of the County's key assets contributing to both economic and community wellbeing. As such, this objective aims to promote, support, protect and strengthen the County's heritage for the benefit of all those that live, visit and work

in Leitrim as well as for future generations. This will include supporting existing programmes and strategies relating to heritage, biodiversity and recreation as well as creative projects that celebrate and raise awareness of the County's heritage. It will also include encouraging involvement from across the community in heritage activities (including in relation to music, the arts and the Irish language) and identifying opportunities to enhance the County's festival schedule where feasible and appropriate.



Goal 6 Key Desired Outcomes

1. Substantially increase the revenue generated by tourism and the number of visitors to the County.
2. Obtain recognition for sustainable tourism.
3. Increase participation in Leitrim's cultural and creative sector.
4. Integrated cycling and walking trail (linking greenways and blueways) developed.



8. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation Plan

This chapter outlines the initial Implementation Plan for the LECP. It includes specific actions that will contribute to the achievement of the goals, objectives and outcomes highlighted in the previous chapter. However, there has been an important change in comparison to the previous iteration of the County's LECP with added flexibility built into its design. While the LECP itself covers a 6-year timeframe out to 2029, the Implementation Plan will be reviewed and revised every 2 years as the plan progresses. As such, consideration has been given in the development of the initial Implementation Plan to actions which can be progressed within that timeframe.

This new, more flexible approach provides the Council with an opportunity to identify actions that may not be achieving the desired impact and revise or replace them in subsequent Implementation Plans with initiatives that may be more suited to achieving the goals, objectives and outcomes of the LECP. Similarly, an opportunity now exists to update the Implementation Plan to address issues that emerge over the timeframe of the LECP, meaning that it can remain relevant and aligned to changing circumstances in the County. Key to realising the benefit of this more flexible approach, will be the monitoring and evaluation of progress in relation to the actions of the Implementation Plan.

The initial Implementation Plan contains 44 actions which support the 6 goals, 18 objectives and associated desired outcomes. The actions cover both economic and community elements with many of the actions interlinked and contributing to a number of objectives and goals. Key stakeholders and agencies that will lead and enable the implementation of the actions have been identified along with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to aid the monitoring and evaluation of progress.





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Figure 8.1 UN SDGs

Like the goals and objectives, the actions are aligned with a number of existing strategies and policies including the County Development Plan, the NWRA RSES and the NPF. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 1 of this document, the UN SDGs have been central to the development of the LECP and have

underpinned the formulation of the actions in the initial Implementation Plan. Combined, the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions will work to enhance Leitrim as a more connected, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable County as it moves towards 2029.

8.1 Goal 1



Goal 1 Leitrim will continue to develop as an inclusive, healthy and equitable county that supports wellbeing and is celebrated as a great place to live

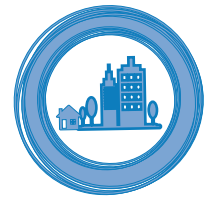
Objective 1.1 Enhance and ensure adequate access to supports and services for the entire community

Objective 1.2 Improve the health and wellbeing of all the people of Leitrim

Objective 1.3 Increase community engagement and collaboration in the development of their local community and County

	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
1	LDC, LCC, PPN, HSE	Continue to consult and engage with those from vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged communities as well as those with specific needs, including refugees, older people, those with disabilities and carers, to identify needs and gaps in relation to the access and provision of services such as healthcare, housing, employment, education and transport.	i. Needs and gaps identified and actions developed
2	HSE, LDC NCYCS, Comhairle na nÓg, PPN	Continue to work collaboratively to meet the needs of young people in the County including through: (a) Developing an early intervention service in relation to mental health (b) Exploring options in relation to the provision of safe spaces for young people to meet up (c) Conducting a study to identify any other youth facilities and services that could contribute to mental health and wellbeing amongst young people	i. Early intervention service established ii. No. of safe spaces for meeting up iii. Study completed and action plan developed
3	HSE	Review and improve pathways to HSE services to ensure a more efficient and effective health service for the community.	i. Pathways reviewed and improvements implemented
4	Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (DVAS)	Support local and community initiatives to prevent and mitigate Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence in accordance with the 3rd National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan.	i. No. of initiatives supported from the National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan

8.1 Goal 1



	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
5	NTA, Local Link, LVC, LCC, TFI	<p>Review current public transport provision to identify gaps and opportunities to enhance services that meets the needs of employers, workers, students and the community. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Piloting of new routes that are scheduled at appropriate times to meet the needs of students and commuters (b) Enhancing provision to rural areas that may be at risk of isolation (c) Exploring options to enhance and develop transport services to regional hospitals for those in need of treatment (d) Providing bus shelters at strategic locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review complete ii. No. of routes added iii. No. of enhancements to schedules made (i.e. alignment with commuter needs) iv. Options identified and enhanced service put in place in relation to those seeking hospital treatment v. No. of bus shelters provided
6	PPN, LVC, LCC	<p>Continue to support community and voluntary groups including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Increasing awareness of, and coordination between, community and voluntary groups in the County through the development of an online portal/app. (b) Holding volunteer exhibition events in key towns across the county to promote interest in the community and voluntary sector and the development of their local community (c) Building capacity within community groups to ensure they are empowered to drive change and development in their own areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Development of online portal and No. of groups registered on it ii. No. of events held and No. of volunteers registered iii. No. of groups that received capacity building support.
7	LCC, LSP, LDC	<p>Explore and support the development of sports and recreational facilities in Leitrim that contribute to health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify potential funding streams for such facilities. ii. No. of actions implemented from Recreational Strategy

8.1 Goal 1



	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
8	LCC, LSP, LDC, PPN, Rosebank Traveller Group	<p>Continue to develop and support initiatives related to community wellbeing and inclusion including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Implementing structures and services that ensure a more inclusive society for older people (b) Expanding and delivering the disability sport and recreation programme (c) Developing the Youth Theatre programme for children and young people with additional needs (d) Delivering Healthy Ireland programmes to support physical and mental wellbeing (e) Enhancing infrastructure and developing programmes to promote a more prosperous, peaceful and stable society in Leitrim and the Border Region (f) Delivering the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) (g) Promoting reading and literacy development, learning and information, and community and culture in our libraries (h) Developing initiatives to promote the integration of our new communities (i) Re-establishing the interagency working group for the Traveller community (j) Nominating a Traveller Community representative to the PPN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provision of sensory services expanded ii. Delivery of Social Inclusion Disability programme iii. Youth Theatre services for children with additional needs developed iv. No. of Age Friendly services increased. v. Delivery of Healthy Ireland programme including an increase in breastfeeding rates and increase in average no. of remaining years that persons of a certain age can expect to live without disability. vi. New Leitrim Libraries Plan developed vii. Migrant Integration Strategy implemented viii. Traveller Community interagency working group re-established and PPN representative nominated ix. Delivery of the Leitrim PEACEPLUS Action Plan under three core themes 1. Local Community regeneration & Transformation 2. Thriving & Peaceful Communities 3. Building Respect for all Cultural Identities
9	LCC	<p>Continue to support a vibrant cultural and creative sector in the County and place creativity at the centre of people's lives through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Encouraging communities to explore their own creativity through the Creative Communities programme. (b) Ensuring that all young people have access to creative activities (c) Supporting Leitrim arts venues, festivals and organisations to provide access to high quality arts events and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. No. of communities engaged in Creative Communities programme ii. No. of young people engaged in creative activities iii. No. of supports provided to venues, festivals, and organisations



Goal 2 Leitrim will embrace climate action to increase the sustainability of its communities and unlock the benefits of the green economy

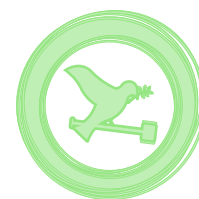
Objective 2.1 Implement climate action initiatives to reduce emissions and support the transition of Leitrim to a carbon neutral county through community engagement, energy efficiency and the sustainable development of renewable energy.

Objective 2.2 Ensure the protection of the environment and biodiversity for future generations

Objective 2.3 Involve communities in climate action by raising awareness of environmental issues and sustainable practices.

	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
10	LCC	To assist in driving climate action and sustainability in the County: (a) Appoint a Climate Action Officer in the Council and establish a Climate Action Committee to coordinate initiatives throughout the County and raise awareness of sustainability supports in the private sector (businesses) and community (b) Develop a Climate Action Plan for the County outlining innovation initiatives to address climate change. (c) Commence the process of the development of a baseline emissions study to understand the current level of emissions in the County which will assist in identifying areas for action and in progressing towards becoming carbon neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Climate Action Officer appointed ii. Climate Action Committee established iii. Climate Action Plan developed iv. Baseline of emissions study for the county progressed
11	LCC	To assist, protect and enhance Leitrim’s biodiversity and natural environment: (a) Appoint a Biodiversity Officer in the Council to drive and coordinate local initiatives (b) Conduct habitats survey within the County as funding and resources permit beginning with a new Hedgerow Appraisal Survey (c) Continue the County Leitrim Wetland Study to ensure that these habitats containing rich biodiversity interest are recognised, recommendations agreed for their future conservation and to raise awareness of their importance and appropriate management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Biodiversity officer appointed ii. Biodiversity and habitats survey completed iii. Phase III of the Wetland study progressed
12	LCC, TCD	Complete the existing pilot study with Trinity College Dublin on a solution to address the issue with water treatment and disposal in the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pilot study completed and report published

8.2 Goal 2



	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
13	Teagasc, LCC	<p>Continue to support and encourage the development of a more sustainable agriculture sector in the County through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Continuing to implement Teagasc’s Sign Post Programme in Leitrim to reduce GHG emissions on beef, sheep, dairy and tillage farms (b) Supporting the Leitrim Sustainable Agricultural Group in their application for Peace Plus funding and their work in relation to working with farmers to protect, enhance and restore habitats (c) Encouraging a results based approach to farming through the ACRES programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. (1) No. of visits to demonstrator farms and No. of farmers involved in the Sign Post Scheme ii. Peace plus funding application submitted iii. No. of farmers involved in the ACRES programme
14	LCC, Local Link, TII	<p>Work to reduce emissions from traffic in the County including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Conducting a campaign to encourage the uptake of more sustainable modes of transport including cycling, walking, and public transport for both commuters and students (b) Increasing EV charging points throughout the Country to support the transition to electric vehicles as outlined in the national Climate Action Plan. (c) Supporting the transition to a more sustainable fleet in relation to Council owned vehicles (d) Implementing “The last green mile” research project on sustainable mobility in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Campaign conducted ii. No. of new EV charging points available iii. No. of Council owned vehicles that are powered by sustainable sources (e.g., electric vehicles) iv. The last green mile research project completed



8.3 Goal 3



Goal 3 Leitrim's towns and villages will continue to be revitalised and regenerated as attractive places to live, work and visit

Objective 3.1 Pilot new and innovative approaches to support regeneration and revitalisation

Objective 3.2 Implement the Town Centre First Policy and reduce vacancy and dereliction in towns and villages

Objective 3.3 Ensure there is adequate housing capacity in the County to meet demand

	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
15	LCC, Town Teams	Support ongoing initiatives and work to assist with bringing vacant and derelict property back into use including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Ensuring that all vacant and derelict properties are identified and a process put in place to ensure information is updated at regular intervals in the core town areas (b) Identifying owners of vacant residential and commercial properties and engaging with them to help identify solutions to bring them back into productive use (c) Work with the National Town Centre First Office, established within existing structures, to lead and drive the implementation of Town Centre First actions and actively pursue all relevant funding streams (d) Continue to support and engage with community and voluntary groups in relation to existing initiatives to repurpose and reuse vacant and derelict sites (e) Raising awareness of the grants available and the processes involved to assist people in bringing buildings back into use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vacant and derelict property identified and process put in place to allow for regular updating of information. ii. No. of owners engaged with and properties brought back into use following engagement iii. Town Centre First Plans implemented iv. Funding streams secured v. No. of initiatives progressed vi. Awareness campaign completed with key partners
16	LEO, LCC, Town Teams, LDC	To drive footfall and assist in the regeneration of town centres, pilot an initiative for pop-up shops in vacant buildings with market traders encouraged to take over such buildings for a short period of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pilot initiative implemented
17	LCC, Town Teams, PPN,	Conduct a mapping study of towns and villages in Leitrim to understand where gaps are in relation to amenities including community, sporting, cultural and recreation facilities and potential areas of decline, and to identify opportunities for regeneration that creates spaces that are safe and accessible for all the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mapping study of towns and villages including community, sporting and recreational facilities completed
18	LCC, PPN, LDC	Assist in the establishing of local development groups as a basis for collaborative action and to access funding to improve their local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Towns and villages which require support identified



8.4 Goal 4



Goal 4 Leitrim will be recognised for its educational attainment, life-long learning and training opportunities

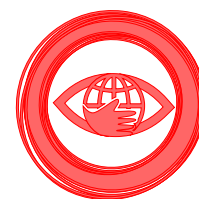
Objective 4.1 Improve the County's education performance and enhance the employability of our people

Objective 4.2 Increase the level of digital and IT skills across all ages

Objective 4.3 Further develop the provision of education and training in the County

	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
19	MSLETB, LCC, PPN, LDC, LEO	Work with organisations to establish innovative learning clubs (including STEAM, maker spaces and coding clubs) for students in schools and other identified locations across the County such as digital hubs.	i. No. of clubs established. ii. Additional CoderDojo programmes developed
20	Teagasc, LDC	Implement education and training courses for farmers including courses such as the Green Cert and raise awareness of the schemes and courses available to farmers in Leitrim.	i. No. awareness raising sessions held ii. No. of courses held and no. in attendance
21	LCC, ATU	Enhance links with the ATU in Sligo and explore the feasibility of establishing an off campus hub/landing space of the ATU in Leitrim.	i. Potential location identified and off campus hub concept considered
22	MSLETB, LCC, LEO, LDC	Promote digital literacy across all ages in relation to tools and software for everyday living (e.g., accessing online services), education and employment and implement Leitrim's Digital Strategy.	i. No. of courses held ii. No. in attendance iii. Digital Strategy implemented
23	MSLETB, LEO	Enhance education and training in the County including through: (a) Increasing the provision and up-take of in-County apprenticeships and training including in relation to areas related to the green economy (e.g., retrofitting) and modern methods of construction (b) Identifying and developing spaces for study to assist those learning remotely and for training courses in existing locations such as libraries, community centres, co-working hubs and BCPs (c) Ensuring that adequate lands are identified and reserved to cater for primary and secondary level educational needs in the County working collaboratively with the Department of Education and other stakeholders. (d) Progressing the proposal in relation to the development of the Leitrim College of Further Education and Training	i. No. of study spaces available ii. Progress made in relation to the realisation of the Leitrim College of Further Education and Training. iii. No. of in-county apprenticeships available and filled

8.4 Goal 4



	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
24	MSLETB, LDC, Regional Skills Forum, ATU, LEO	Work to ensure that skills, training and education align with employer needs including by: (a) Conducting an annual survey of employers to identify skills needs and gaps in training across the County (b) Identifying a mechanism/process to link employers in the County with education and training providers to strengthen the talent pool for employers and highlight local opportunities for graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Annual skills survey of employers in Leitrim established ii. Enhanced links between employers, training and education institutes and graduates.
25	MSLETB, LDC, Leitrim Association of People with Disabilities, Rosebank Traveller Group	Work with relevant stakeholders to establish a pathway to employment programme for marginalised communities including those with disabilities and the traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pathway to employment programme established ii. No. of employers signed up to programme





Goal 5 Leitrim will strengthen and diversify its innovative economy, create meaningful employment and promote sustainable enterprise

Objective 5.1 Continue to work with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the LEO to attract investment, increase employment and develop indigenous enterprises

Objective 5.2 Support existing business in key sectors across the County

Objective 5.3 Improve the business environment and actively promote the County as an attractive business location

	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
26	LCC, LEO, IDA, EI	Plan and develop an annual targeted campaign to attract businesses to the County, identifying key sectors and companies to be targeted, how they will be targeted and when/where they will be targeted (e.g., events, exhibitions, site visits).	i. Annual campaign developed and implemented.
27	LCC, LEO, IDA, EI	Continue to provide a valued proposition for Leitrim to attract new businesses highlighting Leitrim's key advantages over other competing locations including in relation to infrastructure, location and transport (e.g., rail access and distance from Dublin), workforce and skills, and incentives for businesses.	i. Annual review of proposition
28	LEO	Maintain a clear investor/new business journey process and publish the mapped out process on LEO/LCC website indicating the steps and associated forms required to setup a business in Leitrim and the indicative timelines involved in each step.	i. Investor/new business journey process published.
29	LCC, LEO	Progress key infrastructure projects to enhance Leitrim's image as an attractive business location.	i. Progress made in relation to key infrastructure projects across the County
30	LEO, LCC,	Review and widely promote existing incentives for businesses including the Rates Incentive Scheme for newly occupied vacant premises	i. Incentives for business promoted, reviewed and enhanced where applicable
31	LCC	Establish a county-wide mechanism to support economic development through greater collaboration with relevant stakeholders.	i. Mechanism established
32	LEO/EI, LDC	Explore options to increase access to and awareness of mentoring and training supports for businesses. This should include: (a) Specific supports for Women in business (b) Raising awareness of international courses promoting best practice (c) Enhancing level of mentoring and supports for businesses that may have advanced beyond the “start-up” stage but could still benefit from such supports	i. Enhanced supports put in place ii. No. of businesses accessing supports

8.5 Goal 5



	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
33	LEO, LDC, LCC	Hold a number of information events to stimulate and encourage interest in other opportunities in the County including: (a) Social enterprises (b) Organic farming (c) The green economy (e.g. retrofitting, renewables) (d) Tourism	i. No. of information sessions held
34	LCC, LEO, LDC	Continue to support and promote existing businesses in Leitrim including through: (a) Supporting the night time economy (b) Developing further the branding of Leitrim’s food & creative sector and research the concept of a “made in Leitrim” Campaign (c) Conducting an awareness campaign highlighting the success of home grown businesses in Leitrim which can be used to both attract new businesses and a talented workforce to the County.	i. Retain the County’s purple flag ii. Awareness campaign of home grown businesses implemented iii. Commence the process of researching the “made in Leitrim” Campaign
35	LCC	Develop a unified brand for the County that brings together the various existing strands such as Leitrim Business, Tourism in Leitrim and Relocate to Leitrim to develop a more coordinated approach to the messaging and promotion of the County.	i. New unified brand created.
36	LCC, LEO	Develop the Creative Economy as a growing economic sector in and of itself and as a key consideration for inward investment generally by (a) Supporting the professional development of those who work in the creative sector (b) Promoting Leitrim as county with a rich and vibrant creative sector (c) Supporting creativity in the broader economy	i. No. of initiatives put in place to develop the creative economy ii. No. of new creative industries developed iii. Increase in Creative Frame membership
37	LDC, Teagasc, LEO, LCC,	Continue to support the County’s innovative agricultural sector including via Social Farming Ireland, the National Organic Training Skillnet, the Organic Centre and the Food Hub	i. No. of courses held and no. in attendance

8.6 Goal 6



Goal 6 Leitrim will champion its natural and cultural environment and support the development of the county as a tourism destination in a sustainable and balanced manner

Objective 6.1 Enhance Leitrim as a sustainable tourism destination and further develop a range of high-quality experiences across the County

Objective 6.2 Improve coordination and capability across the tourism sector

Objective 6.3 Champion Leitrim's rich natural, built and cultural heritage and maintain and protect a green, clean and safe environment for everyone.

	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
38	LCC, PPN, Heritage Forum	Continue to promote the value and importance of Leitrim's built, natural and cultural heritage and environment by: (a) Encouraging, supporting and highlighting creative projects that celebrate Leitrim's cultural heritage and look to heritage as inspiration for contemporary creative projects (b) Encouraging, supporting and highlighting creative projects that encourage awareness of our built and natural environment. (c) Reviewing the County's festival schedule to identify opportunities for development (d) Supporting the implementation of the actions contained in the Co. Leitrim Heritage Plan 2020-2025, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders (e) Supporting the implementation of the actions contained in the Co. Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders	i. Festivals reviewed and opportunities identified ii. No. and quality of creative projects that celebrate Leitrim's cultural heritage iii. No. and quality of creative projects that encourage awareness of our built and natural environment. iv. No. of actions implemented from the Heritage Plan 2020-2025 and the Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027
39	LCC	Develop a new tourism framework for Leitrim.	i. New Leitrim tourism framework developed
40	LCC, NPWS, NWRA	In line with the County Development Plan, conduct a feasibility study into whether North Leitrim could be designated a National Park/Recreational Area.	i. (1) Feasibility Study completed
41	LCC, LDC, LEO, Waterways Ireland	Continue to pursue opportunities to develop Leitrim's blueways and greenways. This will include: (a) Identifying and sharing best practice in relation to the development of support services and economic activity related to the development of greenways and blueways in the County (e.g. cafes, bike hire shops, hostels, glamping sites) (b) Developing a strategic approach to create a network of linked greenways and blueways across Leitrim. This should include an assessment of international best practice and engagement with relevant stakeholders (c) Supporting the implementation of actions contained in the Recreational Strategy	i. Best practice and guidance collated and shared amongst interested parties ii. Study on strategic approach for greenways and blueways completed iii. Recreational Strategy implemented

8.6 Goal 6



	Enabling Agencies	Action	KPIs
42	Waterways Ireland, LCC	Continue to progress the work to realise the full potential of County Leitrim's waterways including: (a) The development of signature points along the Shannon as envisaged in the Shannon Masterplan (b) Examining the potential for tourism activity at Lough Allen and Lough Rinn (c) Identifying potential sites for glamping and campervans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. No. of signature points developed ii. Tourism potential at Lough Allen and Lough Rinn identified iii. Sites for glamping and campervans identified
43	LCC, tourism providers and other relevant groups	Look to increase coordination and capability across all those involved in the tourism sector in the County through working with Leitrim County Council and tourism providers in an effort to enhance coordination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tourism sector forum established ii. Methodology to accurately capture tourism data in Leitrim developed.
44	LDC, LCC, Coillte	Enhance access to Leitrim's natural environment and attractions including by: (a) Engaging with landowners to ensure access to key attractions in the County (b) Work with Coillte to identify appropriate land that can be opened up to the public for recreational purposes (c) Work to progress and implement the Glenfarne Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. No. of landowners engaged and resolutions achieved ii. Coillte land identified for recreational purposes





9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation

This chapter outlines the Council's high-level approach to the monitoring of the 2023-2029 Local Economic and Community Plan. The monitoring and evaluation of the LECP will be vital to ensure the successful implementation of the plan. As previously highlighted, the evaluation of progress will also be key to realising the benefits of the flexible Implementation Plan which will be reviewed and revised every 2 years.

Leitrim County Council, as the overarching implementing agency, is committed to the regular and accurate monitoring of the performance and progress of the new plan. However, as the LECP is a

shared plan, accurate monitoring and evaluation can only be achieved through a coordinated effort with key stakeholders who are involved in the delivery and implementation of the plan's actions.

The monitoring of progress on the goals, objectives and actions will assist the Council and its partners in adopting a data led and evidence-based approach to decision making whilst increasing collaboration across the County. This in turn will contribute to the appropriate allocation of resources to address the specific needs of the County and assist in ensuring value for money is achieved over the timeframe of the LECP.



9.1 Leitrim LECP Monitoring and Evaluation Approach

The approach to monitoring is designed to be uncomplicated, concise and accurate. It is acknowledged that reporting requirements need to be as time efficient as possible given the various agencies and stakeholders involved in the delivery of the LECP's actions. The foundation of the approach is based around a needs-based approach to monitoring and evaluation (i.e. the opportunity to revise the actions), open and clear communication, collaboration, and a culture of ownership within the Council to ensure the LECP's success.

As outlined in the previous chapters, the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions have been developed and enabling agencies and KPIs identified. Data sources, outlined later in the document, have also been identified to assist in the monitoring of the plan. Leitrim County Council will be responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the plan and will liaise regularly with the various stakeholders and the enabling agencies involved in its implementation. Where relevant for specific actions and in coordination with the Council, nominated points of contact will be identified in the enabling agencies to provide updates on progress by agreed dates.

It is suggested that reports on the implementation of actions from relevant enabling agencies be provided on a quarterly basis, with information on the overall progress of the plan and any lessons learned being circulated by Leitrim County Council as appropriate on an annual basis.



9.2 What is being Monitored

The overall actions and KPIs of the Implementation Plan will be monitored and evaluated for progress with updates sought from the relevant enabling agencies on a quarterly basis. The KPIs vary by nature with some relating to enrolment and participation numbers for courses and training, while others are implementation dependent e.g., in relation to progressing pilot initiatives, feasibility studies, campaigns or establishing working groups or similar. Regardless of the nature of the KPIs, the actions of the initial Implementation Plan should result in clear updates and reports on progress; be it the number of participants enrolled on a course or on what initiative has or has not progressed.

These updates will contribute to the overall evaluation of progress towards the higher-level goals, objectives and outcomes for the entire LECP period. The outcomes also vary in nature with regards to reporting and can be monitored in many instances through statistical data (updated at varying intervals outlined further below) provided by the CSO and other agencies such as GeoDirectory. In other instances, specific data will be held by the Council as well as other key stakeholders involved in the delivery of the LECP such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, service providers (e.g. TFI) and community groups (e.g. Leitrim Volunteer Centre). Due to the higher-level and longer-term nature of the goals, objectives and outcomes, Leitrim County Council will hold the overall responsibility in relation to monitoring their progress.

9.3 What will be Reported

Through their nominated points of contact, relevant enabling agencies will provide short progress related updates on relevant actions and KPIs. Where information or data related to KPIs is not yet available (e.g. annual enrolment figures for courses or similar), this should be noted along with the envisaged date for when such data will be released. Any issues relating to the implementation of the action or reporting on the KPIs should be highlighted in the updates provided. Leitrim County Council will review any such issues and where appropriate, solutions will be identified and implemented.

The goals, objectives and actions have been coded for ease of reference. For reporting purposes, when referring to actions, the action number and where applicable sub-action letter should be referenced. For each action and sub-action, a record should be kept on whether it has commenced, is in progress or has been completed. In instances where actions have not commenced, detail should be provided in the update as to why this is the case and the action's envisaged start date if applicable. Where actions have not been progressed, this should also be recorded and a reason provided. Similarly, where feasibility studies have resulted in ideas or pilots not being progressed, this should be clearly noted and recorded for future planning purposes.

9.4 Data Sources

The below highlights a number of data sources that have been utilised in the development of the LECP and can also be used to support the monitoring of its progress:

Business Demography

The business demography, updated annually, provides information on numbers of enterprises, enterprise births and deaths and survival rates as well as related employment figures. It can be used to update information on employment growth by enterprise category.

Census Information

Statistics and datasets from Census 2022 and future censuses will contribute greatly to monitoring progress in relation to a number of elements, particularly the goals, objectives and outcomes. This includes population information, level of employment, principal economic status, means of travel (e.g. walking, cycling or by vehicle), general health assessment, educational attainment and more.

CSO New dwelling Completion

The CSO's New Dwelling Completions data is based on the number of domestic dwellings connected by the ESB Network to the electricity supply. Updated quarterly, it can assist in monitoring the housing supply in the County and whether it remains adequate to support the County's growth and development.

GeoDirectory

The GeoDirectory provides information on a quarterly basis on commercial and residential vacancy at county and selected town level. It can be used to track changes in the commercial and residential vacancy rates in Leitrim. This can be supplemented with findings from town centre health checks should they be undertaken in the County over the course of LECP timeframe.



HEA Enrolments by HEI Region/Home County

The Higher Education Authority provides information, updated annually, on enrolments by county. This includes data on institution, course level and mode of study amongst other areas.

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

The Labour Force Survey replaced the Quarterly Household Survey and provides labour force estimates in relation to measure of employment and unemployment in the country including by region. It is updated quarterly.

Live Register

The Live Register provides information on a monthly basis in relation to those seeking jobseekers benefit and jobseekers allowance and includes county level information. Notably, it is not designed to measure unemployment as it includes part-time, seasonal and casual workers that maybe entitled to jobseekers benefit and allowance.

Pobal HP Deprivation Index

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index shows the level of overall affluence and deprivation at by ED along with associated deprivation scores. The latest version of the index is based on the 2016 Census. However, it is expected that it will be updated following the full release of the 2022 Census findings.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme Reports (SICAP)

Pobal release annual reports related to the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme by county which includes indicators and identified trends around specific target groups including those from minority groups, the unemployed and older people.





10. APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A

Policy Review List

Below is a list of policies and strategies that have been reviewed and influenced the development of this plan.

Level	Policy
International	UN Sustainable Development Goals
National	Climate Action Plan 2023 Housing for All - A New Housing Plan for Ireland 2021 National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025 Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework 2018-2027 Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A 5-year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector 2019-2024 Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns 2022
Regional	North West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Local	County Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027 Healthy Leitrim Plan 2019-2022 Leitrim Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2026 Leitrim County Council - Culture and Creative Strategy 2023-2027 Leitrim County Council Arts Plan 2023-2027 Leitrim County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2023 (as varied) Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 Leitrim Digital Strategy 2020-2023 Leitrim Heritage Plan 2020-2025 Leitrim Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2021 Leitrim Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2019-2023

10.2 Appendix B

Note on Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment

This Plan has been subject to Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and is accompanied by the following related documents:

- » Screening for SEA Report;
- » Screening for SEA Determination;
- » Screening for AA Report; and
- » Screening for AA Determination.

Screening for SEA is the process for deciding whether a particular plan or programme, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. Screening determines whether the Plan would, or would not, be likely to have significant environmental effects, taking into account relevant criteria set out under the SEA Directive [Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment] and transposing Regulations [European Communities

(Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004) amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011)]; and therefore would, or would not, necessitate the undertaking of SEA.

Screening for AA is the process that identifies any likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts, if any, are likely to be significant. The identification of such impacts would necessitate further, Stage 2 AA (including the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement). Screening or AA for this Plan is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

10.3 Appendix C

List of Acronyms

List of Acronyms	Description
AA	Appropriate Assessment
AEC	Atlantic Economic Corridor
ASG	Advisory Steering Group
ATU	Atlantic Technological University
BER	Building Energy Rating
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CDP	County Development Plan
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DVAS	Domestic Violence Advocacy Service
ED	Electoral District
EI	Enterprise Ireland
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
EV	Electric Vehicle
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GP	General Practitioner
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HIE	Higher Education Institutes
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health Service Executive
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCC	Leitrim County Council
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDC	Leitrim Development Company
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LSP	Leitrim Sports Partnership
LVC	Leitrim Volunteer Centre
MD	Municipal District
MSLETB	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board
NaPTAN	National Public Transport Access Nodes
NCYCS	North Connaught Youth & Community Services
NDP	National Development Plan
NHA	National Heritage Area
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSO	National Strategic Outcome
NTA	National Transport Authority
NWRA	Northern and Western Regional Assembly
PPN	Public Participation Network
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCOT	Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities, Threats
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SLNCR	Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TCF	Town Centre First
TFI	Transport for Ireland
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
UN	United Nations
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
WAW	Wild Atlantic Way
WHO	World Health Organisation



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
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2023 - 2029

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