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meath county council



MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

MAY 2024

Meath

The place & space
to thrive





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A message from Chief Executive Kieran Kehoe

In the heart of Ireland lies County Meath, a region rich in history, culture, and potential. As we continue on the journey of shaping the economic future of our county, it is imperative to recognise the unique assets that define our landscape as well as the many advantages there are for businesses and residents who choose to locate in the county.

These advantages include:

1. Strategic location – proximate to the airport, ports, with easy access to skilled workers, suppliers and customers
2. Infrastructure & Amenities – modern infrastructure and amenities that support those who decide to make Meath their place and space to thrive
3. Highly Skilled Workforce – Young population with a strong education system that produces highly skilled graduates
4. Business Friendly Environment – Meath encourages entrepreneurship and innovation, offering a range of supports and incentives to help businesses to start, grow & succeed
5. High Quality of Life – unique blend of historic and natural attractions, as well as a thriving arts, cultural and recreational scene
6. Strong Economic Sectors – diverse economy with strong sectors in industries such as Food and Agri, Tourism and Technology

The Vision is for Meath to be an economically vibrant and sustainable County that enables our people and businesses to thrive, and this action plan will assist us in continuing to shape our future.

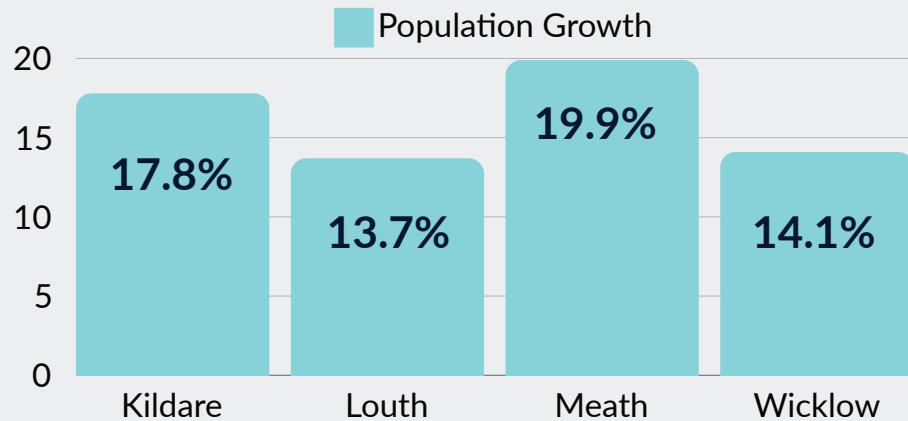
This Strategic Action Plan serves as a roadmap for the short to medium term, aimed at fostering sustainable growth, attracting investment, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents of County Meath.

The actions identified will form the strategic goals of the organisation over the next two to five years with the plan outlining the ambitions of Meath County Council in relation to job and opportunity creation and economic growth. The actions will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and a progress report will be delivered.

I would like to thank the Meath Economic Development Forum under the chairmanship of Mr. Colm O'Rourke for their ongoing contribution, advice and support. I also wish to thank the Council's Senior Management team and our Economic Development team.

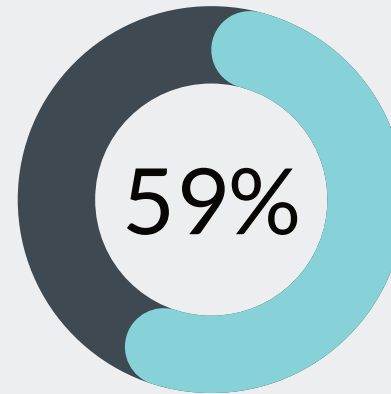
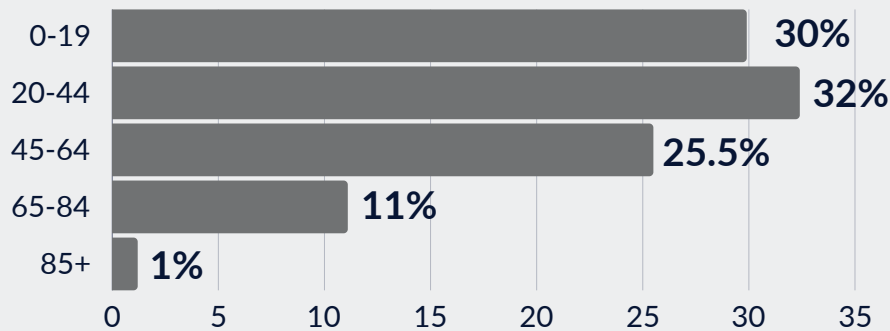
We look forward to progressing the actions outlined in the plan, working in partnership with a range of external organisations, education providers and state agencies to create exciting opportunities for business growth and investment, as well as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work and play.

KEY STATISTICS



Meath had the highest population growth of any county in the state during 2011 - 2022

30% of Meath's population is aged 0-19 years, highest in Ireland 2022 - illustrating future skills pipeline



Highest percentage of population at work of any county in Ireland in 2022

Outbound commuters from Meath have very high third-level educational attainment (66% in 2022).



Reflecting the skills base in Meath, over one-third of the people living in the County in 2022 were in the social class 'Managerial and technical', 17.5% were in 'Non-manual' and 15.3% were in 'Skilled manual' - the highest rates in the State.

Record number of people at work in County Meath in 2022

55,195



MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2024

OUR VISION: AN ECONOMICALLY VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COUNTY THAT ENABLES OUR PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES TO THRIVE

ACTION 1

Establish a County Meath Centre of Business Excellence in Navan to provide supports to businesses to facilitate their growth and expansion both nationally & internationally. (Timeframe: Short Term)

ACTION 2

Acquire suitable lands for economic development purposes to provide serviced sites for both indigenous and FDI businesses. (Timeframe: Medium Term)

ACTION 6

Develop a structured and effective engagement plan with key state agencies and other stakeholders to provide opportunities for employment creation in the county. (Timeframe: Short Term)

ACTION 3

Engage an experienced PR and Marketing Consultant to promote the economic development profile of the county on a national & international level. (Timeframe: Short Term)

ACTION 5

Complete an analysis of the business profile of the county to include a full breakdown of the various business sectors & employment by occupation. (Timeframe: Short Term)

ACTION 4

Appoint a Business Relationship Manager (BRM) to understand client's needs, signpost businesses towards the various supports available and act as a connector between internal and external stakeholders. (Timeframe: Short Term)



FOOD & AGRICULTURE

ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE MEATH FOOD AND AGRI BUSINESSES TO DIVERSIFY INTO NEW MARKETS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES



ACTION 1

Timeframe: Short Term

Produce a Food Strategy with a Meath specific action plan to promote the Boyne Valley as a centre of food excellence and target business tourism opportunities



ACTION 2

Timeframe: Short Term

Deliver a "showcase/meet the buyer" event at an international level in 2025



ACTION 3

Timeframe: Short Term

Support Meath Enterprise in promoting the Boyne Valley Food Hub project to ensure full occupancy and in turn enable start-up and existing food businesses to grow



ACTION 4

Timeframe: Short Term

Promote and encourage "The Future of Food" including food sustainability and innovation – such as advances in digital technology, agricultural technology and science for food and food service industries



ACTION 5

Timeframe: Medium Term

Enable and expedite the development of the Centre of Food Culture in the Boyne Valley and the development of training programmes open to both national and international students



ACTION 6

Timeframe: Medium Term

Support pilot projects and plans to remediate the River Boyne water quality and promote the Boyne and its hinterland as an attractive location for tourism and economic activity



INDIGENOUS & MICRO

CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AN ECOSYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS THE GROWTH AND CREATION OF INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES AND SME'S IN COLLABORATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE AND ENTERPRISE IRELAND



ACTION 1 Timeframe: Short Term

Showcase Meath businesses promoting the green and circular economy by embracing sustainability and climate friendly practices in their systems and processes



ACTION 2 Timeframe: Short Term

Deliver a pilot programme with Enterprise Ireland to support circa 10 x Meath Businesses to commence/grow their export journey



ACTION 3 Timeframe: Short Term

Deliver a "showcase/business conference" event in 2024/2025



ACTION 4 Timeframe: Short Term

Produce a business support pack (hardcopy and digital version) for existing and potential Meath businesses outlining supports, grants funding and other stakeholder supports available



ACTION 5 Timeframe: Medium Term

Form a panel of experts/mentors that will support businesses in relation to green, lean, digitalisation and strategic direction



ACTION 6 Timeframe: Medium Term

Deliver a business park that enables indigenous businesses to expand and grow within the County



ACTION 7 Timeframe: Medium Term

Establish regular focused engagement with Enterprise Ireland to increase the number of jobs provided by EI clients within the county by 10%



EDUCATION & SKILLS

WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOUTH MEATH EDUCATION TRAINING BOARD AND THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION PROVIDERS TO DEVELOP AND DELIVER RESPONSES TO FUTURE SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS



ACTION 1

Timeframe: Short Term

Forge mutually beneficial linkages and educational partnerships with accessible third level institutions with particular focus on Maynooth University & Dundalk Institute of Technology, existing and future businesses, and the Council



ACTION 2

Timeframe: Short Term

Identify, review and monitor the future skills requirements and trends in key focused sectors



ACTION 3

Timeframe: Medium Term

To work with and support the delivery of a further education facility in Dunboyne with LMETB



ACTION 4

Timeframe: Medium Term

To promote the sustainable use and development of the Dalgan Park Campus, compatible with the proposed provision of an educational campus



ACTION 5

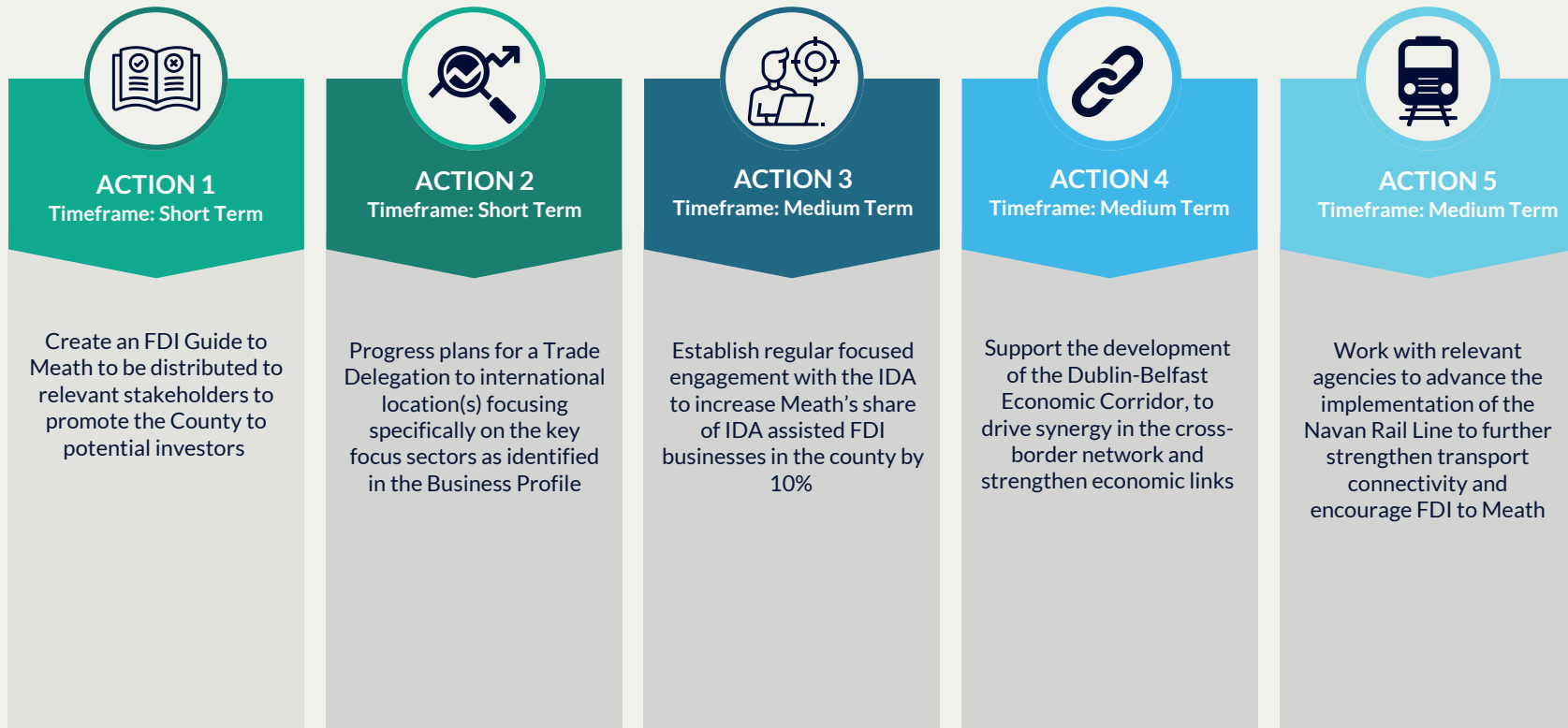
Timeframe: Medium Term

Work in partnership with LMETB to enable the delivery of an Apprenticeship Programme/ Apprenticeship Training facility in Navan



FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

TO DEVELOP AND SUCCESSFULLY COMMUNICATE MEATH'S STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE SELLING POINTS, TO INCREASE THE COUNTY'S ATTRACTIVENESS FOR FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT



HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & RETAIL

POSITION MEATH AS A COMPELLING YEAR-ROUND TOURISM DESTINATION LEADER IN IRELAND, HIGHLIGHTING THE WIDE RANGE OF NATURAL, CULTURAL AND BUILT ASSETS THAT CAN MEET THE NEEDS OF THIS SECTOR ON A NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SCALE



ACTION 1 Timeframe: Short Term

Deliver on the Boyne Valley tourism strategy with a specific action plan for Meath



ACTION 2 Timeframe: Short Term

Facilitate and support collaboration across businesses in hospitality, tourism and retail for a unified marketing promotion of Meath as a tourism destination



ACTION 3 Timeframe: Short Term

Assist with the coordination of an enhanced visitor experience that links hospitality, tourism and retail within the County



ACTION 4 Timeframe: Short Term

Support & encourage arts, crafts and designer initiatives into town centres via market opportunities and collaboration with existing retailers/spaces



ACTION 5 Timeframe: Medium Term

Assist the development of sustainable tourism and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism offerings at the Brú na Boinne National Park



ACTION 6 Timeframe: Medium Term

Maximise the tourism potential of the Hill of Tara, and the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway, and support the delivery of the Boyne Greenway between Navan and Drogheda



ACTION 7 Timeframe: Medium Term

Actively engage with accommodation operators/providers/developers to increase the number of beds available in Meath



MEATH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM MEMBERS



Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Tommy Reilly



Chief Executive
Kieran Kehoe



Chairperson
Colm O'Rourke



Director of Services
Des Foley



Cllr. Stephen McKee
Chair of Strategic Policy
Committee



Paula McCaul
CEO, Meath Chamber



John Horgan
Chair, Kepak Group



Joanne Mallon
Proprietor Ribbon Rouge



John Harkin
Executive Chairman of
MoneyJar



John Gilroy
CEO - College Proteins



Blair Fanning
CFO - Vanguard | UK &
Europe



Valerie Moran
Director, Bective Stud
Ltd.



Conn Murray
Chair of Public Sector
Practice of Ireland



David Geraghty
Investor & Advisor, Former
Board Member Meta
Platforms Ireland Ltd.



Alan Connell
Managing Partner &
Head of Tax at Eversheds
Sutherland Ireland



Martin O'Brien
CE Louth & Meath
Education and Training
Board



Declan Maguire
Managing Director,
CRH Cementitious
Training



Marian Finnegan
Managing Director -
Residential & Advisory,
Sherry Fitzgerald



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