

Fact sheet for planning levels

Planning level	Type of plan					
Local	County development plan					
Planning system of Ireland						
Planning level	Planning instrument	Content of plan	Legal basis	Policy maker	Legal impact	Scale
National	Project Ireland 2040 1. National Planning Frameworks 2018 2. National Development Plan 2018-2027	National spatial & economic framework public capital investment plan to guide development and investment	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part II, Chapter IA	Houses of the Parliament (the Oireachtas) Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DH, LGH)	Binding on lower order plans through the RSE/Es and the core strategies of the county and city development plans	National
Regional	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) EMRA (2019-2032) NWRA (2020-2032) SRA (2020-2032)	Regional spatial & economic development framework including Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASSPs)	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part II, Chapter III	Regional Assemblies	Binding on the core strategies of the county and city development plans and on local area plans	Regional
Local	County and city Development Plans	Policy framework with land use zoning maps and legend	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part II, Chapter I	County Councils, City Councils and City & County Councils	Core strategies of the county and city development plans and on local area plans	County, city
Local	Local Area Plans (LAPs)	Policy framework with land use zoning maps and legend	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part II, Chapter II	County Councils, City & County Councils and Municipal Districts	Development proposals assesses against the policies and objectives including land use zoning	All towns with population of 5,000 people or greater, discretion at lower population level
Other	Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)	Planning Scheme (urban design master plan)	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part II	Local Authority or dedicated development agency	Provisions binding on development proposals for permission	Area-based planning at district level

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Facts: Louth County Development Plan

Legal basis

- Planning and Development Act 2000, (Part II, Chapter I - Development Plans) (principally as amended by Planning and Development (Amendment Act) 2010 (inserted / substituted 5.10.2010) and the Planning and Development (Amendment Act) 2018 (inserted / substituted 22.10.2018)) [See Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (updated 15 January 2021) (<https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2000/act/30/revised/en/pdf>)]

Competences

- The development plan is the basic planning document for local authorities. All planning authorities must prepare a development plan for their functional areas. The Louth county development is currently under review and a draft Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 has been prepared. The timeline for adoption of the draft plan by the elected members of Louth County Council is Q4 2021.
- The plan must be externally consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) (P&D Act 2000 (as amended) Section 12(18). It must also be internally coherent and comprise ‘an overall strategy’, and cannot consist of disparate policies and objectives brought together in a single document. The plan is prepared in accordance with EU requirements regarding the Strategic and Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).
- A statement must be appended demonstrating how the planning authority has implemented the policies and objectives contained in Section 28 Ministerial guidelines.

Binding force

- The policies and objectives of any local area plan (LAP) must be consistent with the development plan. An LAP must contain a statement that clearly shows compliance with the settlement hierarchy of the development plan.
- All development proposals are assessed against the policies and objectives including land use zoning.

Tasks and contents

- The development plan sets out the overall strategy and specific objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the entire functional area of the planning authority.
- The plan includes a number of mandatory and discretionary objectives, which include inter alia spatial, infrastructural, environmental, economic, social, heritage, cultural, amenity and civic objectives. For example, zoning is a mandatory objective.
- The plan must incorporate the objectives and policies of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).
- The draft Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 contains a core strategy (see figure above), which provides for an evidence based settlement hierarchy to guide population and employment growth aligned with national and regional population targets.

Process, duration, participation

- The local authority is mandated to prepare a development plan every six years (P&D 2000 (as amended), Section 9). The review of the development plan must commence four years after the adoption of the previous plan. The draft Louth County Development Plan 2021–2017 is currently at stage 2 of a three-stage process comprising: pre-draft consultation (stage 1); preparation of the draft plan (stage 2) ; the adoption or amendment of the draft plan by the elected members of the planning authority (councillors) (stage 3).
- The plan-making process provides for the preparation of issue papers to focus the public consultation and a draft plan display period with an invitation for written submissions by stakeholders and the general public on any matter.

Duration of validity

- The time frame for a development plan is six years.

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Details of the plan

The County of Louth is one of 31 local authorities in Ireland. It is located north of Dublin on the border with Northern Ireland within the Eastern and Midland Assembly (EMRA) area. This strategic location within the Dublin-Belfast corridor means that two of the five national regional growth centres are located within the county. The Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027) sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Louth. The draft plan is prepared in accordance with the requirement for the review of the development plan every six years. The draft plan will incorporate the objectives and policies of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). It contains a core strategy, which provides for an evidence based settlement hierarchy to guide population and employment growth aligned with national and regional population targets.

Characteristics

Location of the area

County Louth is one of 31 local authorities in Ireland. It is geographically located on the east coast of Ireland to the north of Dublin within the Eastern and Midland Assembly (EMRA) area. Louth borders Northern Ireland and is strategically located within the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor between the two major population centres on the island of Ireland. The county contains two of the five national regional growth centres at Drogheda and Dundalk.

Initial situation

The draft Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 replaces the Louth County Development Plan 2015–2021.

Particularities of the procedure and/or contents

The Supreme Court has described an adopted development plan as ‘an environmental contract between the planning authority, the council, and the community, embodying a promise by the council that it will regulate private development in a manner consistent with the objectives stated in the plan’ (Berna Grist 2012).

Hints and links

Source: Louth County Council

<https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/publications/development-plans/draft-louth-county-developmentplan-2021-2027/>