



Mountmellick Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



ISSUES PAPER January 2024

Why prepare a Local Area Plan?

Why Prepare a Local Area Plan For Mountmellick?

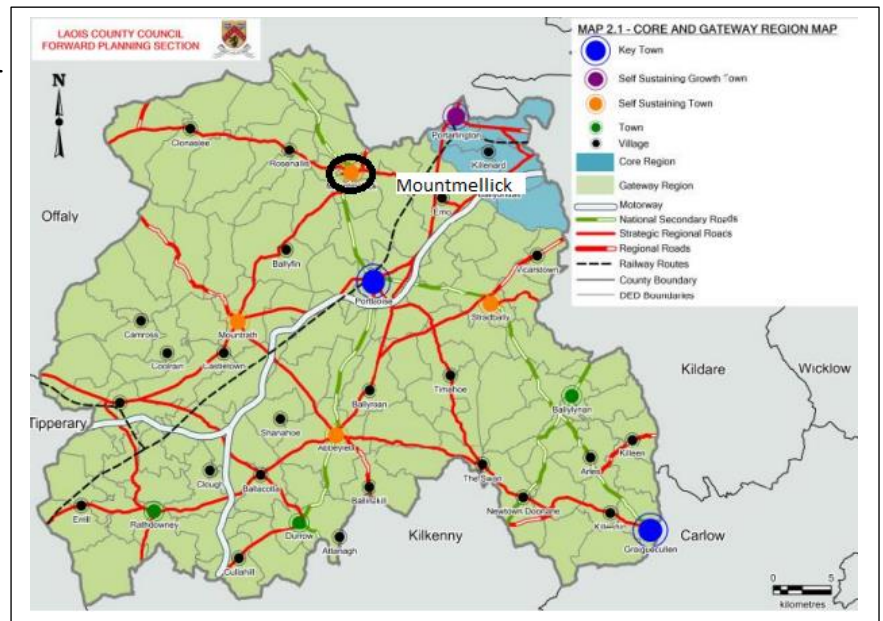
Laois County Council is legally required to prepare a Local Area Plan for Mountmellick every 6 years, to guide and control development.

The plan will contain policies and objectives, which the Council will promote and prioritise, in order to ensure that a high-quality environment is provided for residents, workers and visitors to the town.

It is important that the future development of Mountmellick is plan-led, so that its existing heritage, character and vibrancy is maintained and enhanced when planning for the current and future needs of the town.

This is our opportunity for ideas to be heard and to help shape the future development of Mountmellick.

Laois County Council has commenced the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Mountmellick and intends to publish a Draft Plan for public display and comment in Q1 2024.



The preparation of the new Mountmellick LAP will allow for an updated assessment of the current situation of the town and the formulation of a series of responses that reflects changing economic and social circumstances.

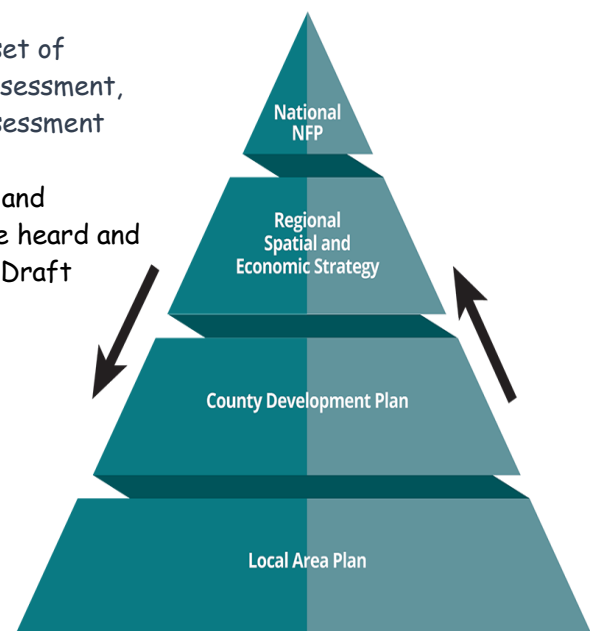
The preparation of the LAP must be informed by a set of environmental assessments - a Strategic Environmental Assessment, an Appropriate Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

The Council is now seeking initial feedback from residents and stakeholders, to ensure that local ideas and opinions will be heard and taken into consideration as part of the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan.

Strategic Planning

The preparation of the Mountmellick Local Area Plan will be informed by policies and objectives in higher level planning documents including the National Planning Framework, The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Strategic Planning Hierarchy



Stages of the LAP process!

STAGE 1 - Pre-Draft

Information Gathering

Stakeholder Consultation

Screening and Scoping as
part of Environmental
Assessments

Preparation of the Draft
LAP and associated reports

STAGE 2 - Draft

Formal commencement of the
LAP process

Publication of the draft LAP

Public Consultation

Preparation of the Chief
Executive Report on submissions
received

Elected Members resolve to
make or amend the LAP

STAGE 3 - Proposed Amendments

Publication of the 'Material
Alterations'

Public Consultation

Preparation of the Chief
Executive Report on
submissions received.

Adoption of the final LAP

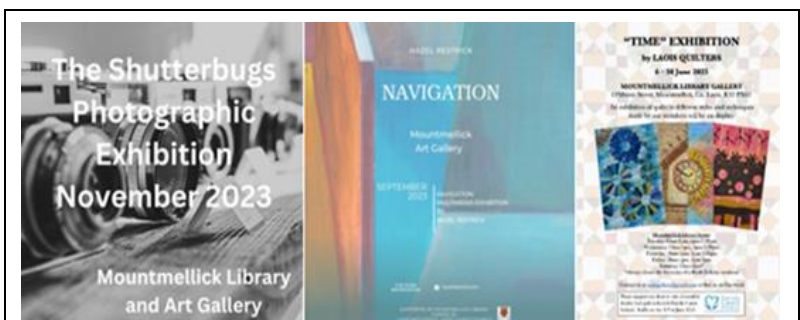
LAP takes effect 6 weeks after
adoption

Mountmellick..... Location in Context!

Laois County Development Plan 2021—2027

The new Laois County Development Plan 2021—2027 was adopted on 25th January 2022 and came into effect on 8th March 2022. The County Development Plan provides a planning framework for County Laois, identifying the broad locations for the provision of key infrastructure over its lifetime.

Mountmellick is identified as an urban strengthening opportunity in the County and is identified as one of eleven Service Towns for the Midland Region. The new Local Area Plan for Mountmellick will determine where within the town new development and infrastructure should be located.



Mountmellick.....Overview!

Mountmellick is one of eleven “Service Towns” within the Southern Development Area (SDA) of the Midlands Region.

Mountmellick is the largest and most important service town supporting Portlaoise, as emphasised within the Settlement Hierarchy of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

POPULATION BY ELECTORAL DIVISION

2022 (Prelim Census Data):

The Population of Mountmellick has increased by 2.7% from 2016 - 2022.

	Persons 2016	Persons 2022
County Laois	84,697	91,877
Mountmellick	4,777	4,905

✚ **Diverse and multicultural population** with 7% non-Irish nationals residing in the settlement (CSO 2016)

✚ According to GeoView, Mountmellick registered commercial vacancy rates of 20.7% in Q2 2022.

✚ CSO figures for 2022 indicated an unemployment rate of 12.5% in Mountmellick.

✚ The 2016 Census reported that in Mountmellick the majority of persons commute to work, school or college by car (1,628 persons) and have a commute of under 15 minutes (1,079 persons), while 329 persons have a commute of over 1/1.5 hours.

Strengths.....

- Location on N80 and proximity to Portlaoise and Tullamore;
- Water, energy and telecommunications infrastructure;
- High quality social facilities including library and schools;
- Mountmellick Development Association;
- Strong links to rural hinterland and rural enterprises;
- Strong community spirit;
- Architectural and cultural heritage;
- Environment and natural resources;
- Potential for tourism related development;
- Improvement of pedestrian and cycle networks.

Challenges.....

- High levels of out-commuting for work;
- “Passing through” status;
- Declining traditional own centre;
- Poor educational attainment and low skills base;
- Limited employment options;
- Traffic congestion;
- Absence of N80 by-pass;
- Sustainable management of surface water;
- Poor permeability within town centre;
- Improvements to public realm within town centre and without eroding built heritage;
- Poor broadband speeds;
- Rural crime;
- Irish Water infrastructure;
- Flood Risk;
- Climate Change

Progress since the adoption of the last LAP!

Steering group established between the OPW and Laois County Council to progress a **Flood Relief Scheme** to alleviate the risk of flooding for the community. Consultants appointed. and public consultation held.

Funding Allocations Secured.....

Market House:

€67,500 secured from The Town and Village Renewal Scheme to enhance car parking at Mountmellick Community Arts Centre to include resurfacing of accessible car parking facilities, and the installation of smart benches and bike stands.



Heritage Council Community Grant of €11,350 offered to Mountmellick Development Association to greatly improve the visitor experience with storyboards, 2 digital productions for use inhouse/website/Facebook.

SENSORY LIBRARY Laois County Libraries have recently introduced sensory library services and facilities in Mountmellick library including a Sensory room which provides a relaxing, quiet, calming environment with light projections and water feature. Mountmellick library also has on offer a Tovertafel or "Magic table" which consists of a series of interactive light games, specially designed to help those with dementia, autism and learning disabilities. A loanable Toy and Sensory Resource Collection is also available. This is a great way for parents, teachers and SNAs to find what works for them.

Mountmellick.....Matters to Consider!

Housing and Communities

Where is new housing needed and what type?
How can existing community facilities be maximised?
How can social inclusion be promoted?

Economic Development

How can enterprise and employment be promoted and where?
How can town centre vitality and vibrancy be enhanced?

Urban Design and Regeneration

What is your desired vision for Mountmellick?
How can the town centre be revitalised and regenerated?

Movement and Active Travel

What are the key transport issues in Mountmellick?
How can walking and cycling be encouraged?
How can the town be made more age-friendly?

Infrastructure

What are the main infrastructural issues in Mountmellick ?
How can waste reduction be encouraged?

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

What are the important environmental issues for Mountmellick?
How can the LAP best address the challenges of climate change?

Heritage, Amenity and Landscape

How can the LAP encourage heritage-led regeneration?
How can green spaces best be incorporated into new development?
How can the town best capitalise upon its tourism potential?



HAVE YOUR SAY.....

The 1st Stage of the consultation process runs from 9th January until 5pm on 5th February 2024. Submissions or observations must be made by via one of the following options:

POST:

Laois County Council,
Senior Planner,
Áras an Chontae,
JFL Avenue,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.

ONLINE:

Laois County Council: <http://consult.laois.ie>

EMAIL:

Laois County Council:
mountmellicklap@laoiscoco.ie

DATE TO NOTE....

A public information event will be held as follows:

Date: Tuesday 23rd January 2024

Time: 3pm - 7pm

Venue: Mountmellick Library,
O'Moore St, Townparks,
Mountmellick, Co. Laois

NEXT STEPS.....

Following the Pre-Draft consultation process, a report on the submissions received will be prepared and presented to the Elected Members.

Following this, a Draft Local Area Plan will be prepared and published in Quarter 1 2024.

A further period of public consultation will take place and it is anticipated that the Local Area Plan 2024-2030 will be adopted in Quarter 3 2024.