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**12**

**Rural**



## Rural Strategy

### 12.1 Introduction

In contrast to recent demographic trends towards urbanisation experienced by other counties, Cavan remains, in population terms, a predominantly rural county with 70% of the population living in rural areas and small settlements. This illustrates the longstanding rural demographic and economic base within the county, with Cavan home to a diverse range of uses including agriculture, forestry, renewable energy, the equine industry, the extractive industry, local food production, micro and home enterprises, recreational and tourist activities, as well as rural housing. The sustained social and economic fabric in Cavan's rural areas combine to provide residents and visitors with a quality environment to live, work and recreate.

Advances in technology and the increased roll out of communication infrastructure such as fibre and mobile broadband, as well as the provision of key tourism infrastructure such as greenways and trails, have revitalised rural areas and facilitated increased levels of rural diversification in areas which had largely been dependent on farming as the main employment source. The restrictive workplace measures introduced to combat the COVID-19 pandemic have illustrated the effectiveness of remote working as a viable alternative for many to traditional office-based employment, and the advances in remote working technologies will ensure that home-working will be an increasingly significant workplace for many into the future. Such trends will have a significantly positive impact on sustaining and revitalising rural communities, with issues such as quality of life, reducing personal carbon footprint and health benefits featuring more prominently in the choices in relation to where people live and work.





Over the past decade the government have placed greater emphasis and increased the levels of support available to rural areas. Numerous government initiatives have been introduced to help sustain, protect and promote rural areas, ranging from local transport links to greater environmental measures and more recently to initiatives to promote and assist enterprise within rural areas, such as Town and Village Renewal. The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises the “role rural areas play in driving our economy and our high quality environment” and seeks to encourage and attract entrepreneurship and innovation development in these areas. In order to facilitate future employment opportunities in the rural economy, measures are required to support rural entrepreneurship and innovation. At a local level these are provided by the Local Enterprise Office in Cavan County Council, Breffni Integrated, SOLAS and ETB. The NPF also references the important role of telecommunications in the development of the rural economy and the delivery of high speed broadband services.

## 12.2 Policy Context

### 12.2.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) acknowledges that ‘rural areas have a major role to play in Ireland 2040 and encourages Local Authorities to ensure that connectivity gaps are addressed and that planning and investment policies support job creation in the rural economy’. Improved coordination of existing investment programmes dealing with social inclusion, rural development and town and village renewal are sought, as is planning for the future growth and development of rural areas. National Strategic Objective (NSO) 3 identifies traditional pillars of the rural economy, such as the natural resource and the food sector, as being key to future economic development as well as those emerging from improved connectivity and broadband access which has the potential to yield further rural economic development opportunities.





It is the policy of the NPF “to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the sustainable diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and in particular those with a low or zero carbon output”. This plan allows the development of a rural economy that offers viable and sustainable employment for its communities. The need to strengthen the provision of services, regenerate rural communities and promote the economic development of rural areas. This manifests itself in the need to both acknowledge the need for, and promote the development of, small scale enterprises in rural areas. The County is ideally located to attract and grow new and innovative employment sectors into its rural areas.

### 12.2.2 Realising our Rural Potential – Action Plan for Rural Development 2017

This government strategy introduced in 2017 (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs) is aimed at delivering real change for people living and working in rural Ireland. It places a focus on creating sustainable rural communities through a framework of supports at national and local level. The objective of the Action Plan for Rural Development is to

‘unlock the potential of rural Ireland through a framework of supports, at national and local level, which will ensure that people who live in rural areas have increased opportunities for employment locally, and access to public services and social networks’. This action plan adopts a coordinated approach across Government to both the economic and social development of rural Ireland. The Plan inter-alia outlines the key requirements to strengthen rural communities by supporting agricultural-diversification, tourism and opportunities for rural economic growth. A number of key initiatives proposed as part of the Strategy include the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and the delivery of the 2014-2020 EU LEADER Programme. It is the objective of Cavan County Council to align the key objectives of this plan and support rural regeneration and the viability of rural towns and villages as attractive alternative to one-off rural housing.

### 12.2.3 Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy (2014)

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) was established in 2012 following the severe impact of the economic downturn on rural areas. The REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) initiative was a recommendation contained within the CEDRA



and is intended to complement the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and cater for projects between the towns and surrounding hinterland that maximise local assets in areas such as tourism, culture, heritage and other areas that support rural economic activity.

CEDRA's task was to identify strategic initiatives that would ensure rural areas contribute to sustained and sustainable national economic growth and development into the future. The process confirmed that there is an abundance of natural, physical, human and capital resources and a wide variety of high quality, (including dormant assets) in many rural communities that could be leveraged to support national economic growth and the development of these communities. The need for higher speed broadband is supported. CEDRA recommendations relate to building of community capacity, integrated rural town planning, development of the social economy and supporting the growth of indigenous renewable energy businesses.

#### 12.2.4 Food Wise 2015-2025

Food Wise 2025 sets out a strategic plan for the development of the agri-food (including seafood) sector for the period up to 2025 and is the successor to the Food Harvest 2020 Strategy. Food Wise 2025 identifies growth projections for the

sector including:

- 85% increase in the value of agri-food exports to €19 billion;
- 70% increase in the value added in the agri-food, fisheries and wood products sector to in excess of €13 billion;
- 65% increase in the value of Primary Production to almost €10 billion;

23,000 additional direct jobs in the agri-food sector all along the supply chain from primary production to high valued added product development. Food Wise 2025 has five cross-cutting themes: sustainability, human capital, market development, competitiveness and innovation.

#### 12.2.5 Delivering a Connected Society – A National Broadband Plan for Ireland (2012)

The National Broadband Plan (NBP), together with its intervention strategy document, '*Connecting Communities*' (2015), is the government's initiative to deliver high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland. This will be delivered through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State, in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest. The State Intervention area includes:

- 537,596 premises
- 1.1 million people
- Over 54,000 farms
- 44,000 non-farm businesses
- 695 schools

The NBP is a key aspect of government strategy across a number of key areas including climate, agriculture, education, transport, tourism, sustainable growth, jobs and health. A key principle of the NBP is to support and stimulate commercial investment. Since the publication of the NBP in 2012, the commercial telecommunications sector has invested over €2.75 billion. This was spent primarily on upgrading and modernising networks which support the provision of high speed broadband and mobile telecommunications services.

Significant additional investment is expected over the coming years. Today over 1.78m or 75% of premises in Ireland can access commercially available high speed broadband services. The roll out of high-speed broadband access, to be completed by 2026, represents the largest investment in rural Ireland since rural electrification.

### 12.2.6 Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032

The Northern and Western RSES gives regional expression to the policy and objectives contained within the NPF in providing a long-term, strategic development framework for the physical, economic and social development of the Northern and Western Region and subsequently gives direction to policy making decisions at a local level through the County Development Plan.

The Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) recognises the major contribution that rural areas make towards regional and national development in economic, social and environmental terms. The RSES aims to strengthen the fabric of rural Ireland, supporting rural towns and communities as well as the open countryside, improving connectivity, and supporting job creation, particularly in a more diverse range of sectors. The RSES supports the consolidation of the town and village network, to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, level and pace in line with the Core Strategies of County Development Plans. It requires that planning for rural areas must provide a balance between managing demand



in the most accessible rural areas in proximity to larger towns, whilst supporting the sustainable growth of rural economics and rural communities. It also highlights the fundamental importance of planning the distribution of activity (for example where people live and work) in a manner which reduces the need to travel and achieves a move towards a low carbon society having regard to the impact which transport has on carbon emissions.

It emphasises that rural areas in this region are well placed to benefit from new market opportunities that are emerging in sectors such as the food economy, the green economy, circular economy and the bioeconomy. It further notes that these sectors have the potential for job creation and to attract people to live and work in rural areas.

### 12.3 The Future of Rural Economic Development in the County

Given the significant and important contribution of rural areas to the county, it is critical that the economic development of rural areas is promoted whilst protecting our rural environment. This includes promoting the regeneration of rural areas and the retention and promotion of rural services and enterprises. There are currently a variety of small, medium and large-scale enterprises operating in rural areas throughout the County, which not only provide employment, but contribute to the diversification of the rural economy. It should be noted that the development and maintenance of Cavan's rural economy is a complex issue. The landscape changes dramatically between the west and east of the County, each with its own opportunities and challenges.

The Council recognises the importance of supporting sustainable sources of income and enterprises, such as rural tourism, farm diversification, forestry, extractive industry, rural based enterprise to complement the agri-food sector and an increasing potential for the growth of the renewable energy sector. In terms of rural settlement, the Cavan countryside is a living and lived-in landscape, with supporting rural economies and rural communities. There is a continuing need to balance housing need for people to live and work in the countryside, while at the same time avoiding unsustainable patterns of development and protecting the environmental and ecological integrity of our landscapes. Encouragement and support for restoration and refurbishment of the existing built fabric in rural

areas is essential to retain its core identity.

This Chapter sets out the policy objectives required for the sustainable development of rural Cavan, in a manner that is consistent with the guidance, strategies and policies at national and regional levels based on the following principles:

- A focus on supporting vibrant rural communities focused around a network of rural towns and villages.
- Facilitating the transition towards a low carbon and climate resilient society and encouraging a spatial pattern of development which reduces and discourages unnecessary trip generation.
- Supporting sustainable agriculture and food production practices that safeguard the environmental and ecological elements of our rural setting, with a particular focus on encouraging less intensive farming practices and catering for localised food markets in a bid to reduce our over-reliance on overseas food producers.
- Supporting the continued development of eco-tourism in Cavan, including the on-going development of a connected networks of greenways, blueways, peatways, and associated trails.
- Protecting the integrity of key environmental and ecological assets and landscapes from any significantly adverse impacts arising from rural development.
- Recognising the need to provide for a resilient rural economy, that is flexible to changes in typical rural development industries and open to emerging, non traditional sectors which can be adequately accommodated in a rural setting without giving rise to any significant adverse impacts.
- Enhancement of the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services.

### 12.4 Rural Enterprise and Economy

The rural economy of County Cavan has undergone significant change characterised by an increase in the diversification of traditional rural economy sectors such as agriculture. The Council is committed to promoting balanced and inclusive rural communities, to achieving an appropriate scale of development supporting farming and other rural-based economic activity such as agri-

food, forestry, energy production and carbon reduction, tourism, recreation, mineral extraction and/or other new and emerging rural based enterprises. These enterprise fields represent viable sources of income, while also fostering sustainable economic diversification and development in rural areas.

Cavan’s rural towns, villages and the open countryside are vital to sustaining the County’s wider rural hinterland, providing sustainable rural employment including local services provision, appropriate scale commercial enterprises, indigenous industry and micro-enterprise. In general, employment servicing rural areas should be located in the towns and villages catering for local investment and small-scale industry. Within the rural settlements and open country agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, forestry, tourism and rural resources based enterprises should be facilitated.

The promotion and facilitation of micro enterprises is a key area for sustainable employment opportunities in rural areas. The Council will seek to facilitate the development of this sector, by ensuring that incubator units for micro enterprises are provided in small towns and villages. In particular, the reuse of vacant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to cater for such enterprises within an overall farmyard complex will be considered on their individual merits. Moreover, the Council will seek

to facilitate the provision of serviced or serviceable sites in settlements, with the aim of encouraging new enterprise development to further sustain these rural communities.

Cavan County Council will support the location of medium to large scale rural enterprises if it is demonstrated to the Council that the enterprise can be more readily accommodated in a rural setting than provided in a designated settlement centre and subject to compliance with development management standards.

Where established authorised rural based enterprises seek to expand beyond their existing capacity and, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proposed extension would seriously affect the rural nature or amenity of the rural areas and surrounding countryside, they will be encouraged to relocate in serviced zoned lands.

It is also acknowledged that some enterprise and employment uses may not always be appropriately located on Enterprise and Employment Zoned lands. In this regard, some new enterprise and employment projects may require additional sites outside settlements because of their size, type or specific site requirements.



**Rural Enterprise and Economy Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**REE 01** Consideration shall be given to the establishment, or suitable expansion, of small-scale businesses in rural areas where (i) it is demonstrated that the proposal could serve as a valuable addition to the local economy and (ii) normal development management and technical requirements are complied with.

**REE 02** Require proposals for the development, or suitable expansion, of small-scale businesses in rural areas to demonstrate that the proposed location is suitable and that the proposal would not be viable at an alternative location.

**REE 03** In accessing an application for the establishment, or suitable expansion, of a small-scale business in a rural area, the following information shall be taken into consideration and, where necessary, such required information shall be submitted as part of the application:

- Positive contribution that the proposed development will make to the rural economy
- Nature and scale of the proposal.
- Is the business more suitably accommodated at the proposed location than an urban setting.
- Potential impacts on public health, environment and amenity.
- Potential traffic impact on the road network in the area.





<b>REE 04</b>	Support the location of medium to large scale rural enterprises where it is demonstrated to the Council, that the enterprise can be more readily accommodated in a rural setting than in a designated settlement centre and in compliance with development management standards.
<b>REE 05</b>	Support rural entrepreneurship and the development of micro-businesses in rural areas where environmental and landscape impact is minimal and where such development do not generate significant or undue traffic.
<b>REE 06</b>	Support the implementation of the LEADER Rural Development Strategy and any updated Strategy for the County.
<b>REE 07</b>	Consider, on an individual basis, the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to accommodate farm diversification/enterprise within an overall farmyard complex.
<b>REE 08</b>	Liaise and co-operate with statutory, local development, sectoral community / voluntary agencies and groups to develop economic, social and cultural benefits for the rural community.
<b>REE 09</b>	Support and facilitate the work of Teagasc and other farming / local bodies within the county in the promotion of the rural economy, including agriculture development, rural diversification and in the development of initiatives to support farming, create inclusive rural communities and improve access and services in rural areas.
<b>REE 10</b>	Support the provision of a high-quality rural environment, encourage diversification and improved competitiveness of the rural economy, sustain the livelihood of rural communities and promote the development of the wider rural economy, all within the context of the sustainable management of land and resources.
<b>REE 11</b>	Promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.
<b>REE 12</b>	Support farm diversification, where a proposed business initiative is subordinate to the primary agricultural use of the site, subject to traffic and environmental safeguards.
<b>REE 13</b>	Promote resource efficiency and support the shift toward a low-carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors.
<b>REE 14</b>	Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.
<b>REE 15</b>	<p>The development and expansion of appropriate new businesses in rural areas will normally be encouraged where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The scale and nature of the proposed new business are appropriate to the rural area and are in areas of low environmental sensitivity.</li> <li>● The development will enhance the strength and diversification of the rural economy.</li> <li>● The development involves the use of redundant or underused buildings that are of value to the rural area.</li> </ul>
<b>REE 16</b>	Support the rural economy and initiatives in relation to diversification, agri-business, rural tourism and renewable energy so as to sustain employment opportunities in rural areas.

## 12.5 Agriculture

County Cavan is a largely rural county, agriculture is the primary land use and remains a crucial part of the economy of the county. Reflective of the county's rural nature and historic economic trends, "agriculture, forestry and fishing" industry is particularly strong, employing 11% of the working population in County Cavan, compared to a national average of 4%. Agriculture remains a significant sector and catalyst for a number of indirect, agri-food related jobs in the County and the wider region, in relation to the provision of feedstores, livestock marts, meat and dairy processing plants, agriculture machinery sales and maintenance and animal welfare amongst many other indirect employment sources.

The work of enterprise agencies and education providers play an important role in supporting innovation. Teagasc is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry. They deliver courses through their colleges and local centres, with higher-level courses also being delivered in partnership with third-level colleges. Demonstrable examples across the region include Ballyhaise Agricultural College, which is one of the five Teagasc colleges nationally. This centre is well placed to provide regional food incubation space and new levels of innovation to support employment growth.

Throughout the country over the past decade agriculture has experienced a revival, it has been boosted by a number of initiatives, in particular, by the abolition of milk quotas in 2015, which has led to an expansion in dairy output. Agriculture like all industries must continue to adapt and modernise in order to stay sustainable and grow. Current challenges facing the sector include modernisation, restructuring, market development and the increasing importance of environmental issues and climate change. Cavan County Council recognise the important role agriculture plays in the county for employment, amenity and production and will continue to support initiatives which will sustain rural communities in the changing economic climate, through farm diversification and new employment opportunities. Cavan County Council will promote the County's thriving agri-food sector with a view to using indigenous resources to create new enterprise and employment opportunities and explore opportunities to further develop competitive advantage in such areas.

## 12.6 Farm Diversification

As it aims to expand output in the years ahead, the agriculture sector faces a number of challenges. Low profitability of some farming activities leaves the sector exposed to potential negative shocks such as Brexit or possible future reductions in the CAP budget. Taking into account the potential challenges within the rural economy, including profitability, Brexit, reform of CAP and climate change, there is a need to promote farm diversification and new employment opportunities to ensure the viability and sustain existing rural communities.

More recently, significant focus has been placed on reducing the environmental impacts of such intensive practices with a focus on steering subsidies towards less intensive agricultural measures, cultivating higher biodiversity values within landholdings and compensatory measures to offset more carbon intensive agriculture measures.

These measures coincide with a cultural shift in agricultural practice across the EU and in Ireland, where rural diversification and specialised agricultural practices are gaining popularity and providing more sustainable forms of agricultural employment, whether as standalone businesses or complementing existing traditional farming practices. These include non-traditional farming practices relating to aquaculture, rural tourism, horticulture, organic farming, herb cultivation, renewable energy generation and the cultivation of biomass energy crops.

The Council will support diversification of the rural economy and in particular seek to develop the potential of the agri-food, forestry, the sustainable exploitation of natural resources and consideration of alternative on-farm and off-farm activities.

Such development initiatives provide additional income to top up declining incomes from agricultural outputs. Diversification will be facilitated, provided the proposal is related directly to the agricultural operation engaged on the farm or the rural nature of the areas. It must not negatively impact on the landscape and character of the area and is compatible with the existing infrastructure in the area.



### Farm Diversification Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

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01

Support appropriate rural diversification and specialised agricultural practice and their associated development in the county.

## 12.7 Agri Food Sector

The Irish food sector is one of the most vibrant in the world and makes a significant contribution to employment in rural areas, being a pivotal source of enterprise creation and opportunities. County Cavan's tradition of beef and dairy production has formed the basis of an expanding and vibrant agri-food sector. Although primary agriculture accounts for a small share of overall national output, the broader agri-food sector (including food processing) makes a sizeable output and employment contribution. Over the last two decades, a strong, diverse and vibrant food business community has started to emerge in County Cavan. There are now over 50 food production and 100 food service businesses based in the County Cavan food sector, between them, employing more than 1,500 people locally. Cavan County Council has helped to develop the local Cavan food sector through a range of supports such as; the provision of food incubation units, food training programmes, mentoring and various other financial supports. These include the hosting of the very successful Taste of Cavan food festival, which has grown exponentially since it first started in 2012. All of this has greatly assisted in establishing a vibrant Cavan food sector.

The Cavan Food Strategy was commissioned by Cavan County Council in the summer of 2016. This strategy aims to build upon such individual events to support the ongoing emergence of a strong culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among food companies in County Cavan and to further support and nurture this important sector of the Cavan economy.

Through the implementation of this food strategy, it is hoped to support, promote and develop local food businesses and raise the profile of County Cavan as a 'home of great food'. The potential impacts of Brexit and COVID 19 cannot be underestimated and cognisance must be taken of this.

It is a policy of the development plan to support the sustainable growth and expansion of food enterprises and associated development subject to the conservation and protection of the rural environment as appropriate.

The RSES has acknowledged that the Agri-Food sector is vital to the region and particularly to Counties Monaghan and Cavan. *"Whilst the sector is well established in the Central Border Region, there is undoubtedly room for further growth in the area with annual economic growth at 4%. Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) will provide much of this growth over the next 10 years, and these types of businesses must be supported. Given the majority of these companies are located outside of our main identified Urban Centre's, sectoral expansion in agri-food must be facilitated in our Rural Towns, and Villages, where it is already well established in places such as Bailieborough and Virginia with the existing agri-food cluster of Glanbia and AW Ennis feeds".*





### Agri-Food Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

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01

Support the agri food sector and its associated development in the county at appropriate locations.

AF  
02

Support and encourage growth of the rural economy and initiatives in relation to diversification, agri business, rural tourism and renewable energy so as to sustain employment opportunities in rural areas.

AF  
03

Support the viability of farms and best quality land for agricultural and related uses, whilst at the same time supporting alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.

AF  
04

Ensure that proposals for economic development associated with the agri food industry give due consideration to the conservation and protection of the rural environment.

AF  
05

Encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into agri-businesses such as organic foods, rural tourism, ICT-based industries, those addressing climate change and sustainability and small to medium sized enterprises, subject to the retention of the holding for primary agricultural use and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

AF  
06

Support agricultural development as a contributory means of maintaining population and sustaining the rural economy, whilst maintaining and enhancing the standing of the rural environment through application of the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Habitats Directive.

AF  
07

Support the operation and expansion of Ballyhaise Agricultural College which is one of the five Teagasc colleges nationally, which provides Research, Development and Innovation support to the sector. Support Ballyhaise Agricultural College as a regional food incubation space with innovation to support employment growth.

AF  
08

Support the implementation of the Cavan Food Strategy.

AF  
09

Facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby natural waters and watercourses, wildlife habitats, conservation areas and areas of ecological importance and other environmental assets are protected from the threat of pollution, and where development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside.

AF  
10

Support those who live and work in rural areas and who wish to remain on the landholding. Favourable consideration will be given to on-farm based diversification, which is complementary to existing agricultural practices, is operated as part of the farm holding and is intended to supplement existing farm income such as:

- Specialist farming practices e.g. horticulture, equine facilities, poultry, mushroom growing, specialised animal breeding and bee keeping and honey production;
- Farm enterprises such as processing, co-ops, farm supply stores and agri-business;
- Production of organic and speciality foods to meet the increase in demand for such products;
- Conversion of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner-run enterprises, such as agri-tourism.

AF  
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Encourage proposals for farm shops where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- the products to be sold are primarily produce grown on the farm holding;
- the scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not harm the viability or retail facilities in any nearby town or village; and
- the proposed shop is operated by the owner of the farm and is ancillary to the main use of the property for agricultural activities.

AF  
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Support sectoral expansion in agri-food, where it is already well established in places such as Lakeland Dairies in Bailieborough and Killeshandra, and Virginia with the existing agri-food cluster of Glanbia and AW Ennis feeds.

## 12.8 Agricultural Buildings and Structures

The provision of well located structures and facilities necessary for good and environmentally sound agricultural practice shall be supported by the Council. In the assessment of this type of application, the Planning Authority will consider safe access, visual impact, environmental impact, waste management and need for the building.



**Agricultural Buildings and Structures Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**ABS 01**

Facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby watercourses, habitats, areas of ecological importance and environmental assets are protected and development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside.

**ABS 02**

Ensure developments do not impact on archaeological or heritage features of importance.

**ABS 03**

Require buildings to be of a design, appearance and material specification that is compatible with the protection of rural amenities.

**ABS 04**

Require an effective means of farm waste management.



## 12.9 Forestry

It is the policy of Cavan County Council to promote the appropriate development of the forestry industry to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the economic and social well-being of the county, but does not negatively impact the environment, local communities, heritage, landscape, natural waters or biodiversity of the area.

Forests and woodlands play an important role in terms of supporting rural employment and rural diversity, climate change management and carbon sequestration, biodiversity and as a source of renewable/alternative energy sources. Forests and woodlands also have a significant recreational and amenity value, for example Killykeen and Dun na Rí.

The introduction of large-scale forestry areas, particularly conifers can have negative impacts on an area if they are not in harmony with the surrounding environment. They provide low biodiversity and ecological value if dominated by one single species. Therefore, forestry activities must be appropriate in terms of nature and scale to the surrounding area, so they are not visually obtrusive or cause damage to important habitats or the ecology of the area. Planting of native woodlands will increase biodiversity value in the landscape. Accordingly, forestry is encouraged in appropriate areas, where it will not significantly impact upon designated habitats, archaeology, high amenity areas, protected views or scenic routes, be unacceptably obtrusive in the landscape, or present a risk to sensitive ecosystems or water quality.

This plan aims to support the sustainable growth of forestry as an economic activity, whilst affording maximum protection to the rural environment, landscape and its ecological integrity. This plan acknowledges the tourism and amenity potential of afforested lands. This Plan supports the development of tourism and amenity facilities at such locations, subject to obtaining all relevant consents and the satisfaction of other technical planning requirements. In addition, the Council will encourage the provision of public access to new forests through walking and bridle paths, recreational areas and other similar facilities.



### Forestry Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

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01

Encourage the development of a well managed sustainable forestry sector, which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European Sites (SACs and SPAs); and is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the 'Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality'.

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02

Promote forestry development of appropriate scale and character while ensuring that such development does not have a negative impact on the residential amenity or the countryside, (including public access/rights of way, traditional walking routes and recreational facilities), or cause pollution or degradation of wildlife habitats, natural waters or areas of ecological importance.

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03

Avoid deforestation or commercial afforestation within European Sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.

F  
04

Encourage the provision of public access in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to new forests through walking and bridle paths, recreational areas and other similar facilities.

F  
05

Encourage private forestry developers to provide access through their forests for walking routes, bike trails, bridle paths, and other non-noise generating activities as part of an integrated development.

F  
06

Encourage the planting of diverse and native species to ensure rich and varied biodiversity value, particularly in areas where there is evidence of a dominant species planted cumulatively within the landscape.

F  
07

Ensure that buffer zones or exclusion zones are applied to aquatic zones and sites of archaeological importance respectively as deemed appropriate by the planning authority.

F  
08

Ensure that all applications for commercial afforestation clearly set out the following:

- Impact of development on Local Biodiversity and the ecological balance of the area
- Demonstrates the risk of and measures taken to ensure there is no increase to the risk of introduction of invasive species
- Details the social and economic impact of the development on the area.
- Detailed impact of the development on daylight and shadow projection of local communities and dwellings
- Outline and assess the impact of the development on any resultant isolation of communities or dwellings arising from the development
- Submit in detail the impact on visual amenities of area
- Full details of felling proposals and treatment of site following same to ensure that the felling process does not endanger local habitats, be unsightly and injurious to visual amenities of the area
- Have regard to existing levels of afforestation within a DED

F  
09

Ensure any commercial afforestation proposals in the Geopark area is cognisant of the unique biodiversity and ecology of the area.

F  
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Support the development of appropriate and sustainable tourism development within forestry locations, while retaining adequate tree cover in the general area.



## 12.10 Horticulture

The production of fruit, vegetables and plants, or horticulture, is a significant element of the national economy, with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) sources estimating that the Horticulture Industry was worth €477m (farm gate value) in 2019. This is the 4th highest sector in terms of gross agricultural commodity output value with only beef, dairy and pigs larger sectors. This sector is expected to grow further as the demand for fresh local produce increases.

Further development in horticulture and in value added food and agricultural production in the county could provide opportunities for growth in this highly sustainable sector. This is particularly the case in the context of traditional intensive farming practices coming under increased scrutiny in terms of carbon emissions and adverse environmental and ecological impacts from such practices. Cavan County Council acknowledges the importance and the growth opportunities of the horticultural industry to Cavan's rural economy. Local farmer and country markets also make important contributions to the food sector and local economy with markets held throughout the county on a weekly basis.



**Horticulture Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**H  
01**

Encourage the development of environmentally sustainable horticultural practices, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside and that watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.

**H  
02**

Support the horticulture and nursery stock industry as a means of diversifying agriculture and contributing to maintaining population in the rural area.

**H  
03**

Support the development of country and farmers' markets as key trading areas for the sale of local agricultural and craft produce and to support their role.



## 12.11 Equine Industry

Although the equine and bloodstock industry is not a major employment sector in Cavan’s rural economy, this plan recognises the potential of the bloodstock industry, both in land use and in terms of direct and indirect employment generated by it. The Council will support and encourage the development of a vibrant bloodstock industry.



**Equine Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**E  
01**

Support equine related activities (e.g. farriers, bloodstock sales etc.) of an appropriate size and at suitable locations.

**E  
02**

Ensure that equine based developments are located on suitable and viable landholdings and are subject to normal planning, siting and design considerations and related establishments.

**E  
03**

Protect the equine industry from inappropriate development which would adversely affect its continued operation.

## 12.12 Quarrying

The County contains a wealth of natural resources including many raw materials critical to the construction industry. The Council acknowledges the need for extractive industries in terms of supply of aggregate materials for the construction sector. This industry material yields an important contribution to the economy. Such material is a significant natural resource and it is important to safeguard this material for future use, whilst also ensuring that impacts on the environment and the community are acceptable. Cavan County Council will ensure that all natural resources are exploited in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

Section 261 and 261A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, afforded County Councils the opportunity to regularise the quarry industry, with regard to compliance with Planning Legislation, Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and the Habitats Directives.

Mineral extraction, such as working with stone, sand and gravel, can generate environmental capacity problems for the surrounding areas. As such, applications for mineral extraction must account for issues including noise, dust, vibration, visual intrusion, water pollution, traffic generation and rehabilitation proposals for the site. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will be required as part of a planning application where certain thresholds are exceeded and in other cases where extraction is likely to have significant effects on the environment as determined by the Planning Authority. The cumulative effects of work in a given area will also be considered when assessing a planning application.



**Quarrying Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**Q  
01**

Safeguard for future extraction of all identified locations of major mineral deposits in the County.

**Q  
02**

Promote development involving the extraction of mineral reserves and their associated processes, where Cavan County Council is satisfied that any such development will be carried out in a sustainable manner, that does not adversely impact on the environment or on other land uses. Consideration in this regard shall be given to the impact of the development on the local economy.

**Q  
03**

Facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the County and the wider region while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation.

**Q  
04**

Ensure that projects associated with the extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive and comply with all relevant Environmental Legislation as required.



Q  
05

Facilitate the exploitation of the County's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development, including rural housing, taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality of the area.

Q  
06

Support the extractive industry where it would not compromise the environmental quality of the County and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided.

Q  
07

Seek to ensure that the extraction of minerals and aggregates minimise the detracting from visual quality of the landscape and does not adversely affect the environment or adjoining land uses.

Q  
08

Ensure that development for aggregates/mineral extraction, processing and associated processes does not significantly impact on the following:

- Existing and proposed Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Areas
- Existing and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.
- Areas of importance for the conservation of fauna
- Areas of significant archaeological potential
- Recorded Monuments
- Sensitive landscapes
- Public Rights of Way, Walking/ Cycling Routes
- Drinking Water Supplies
- County Geological Sites

Q  
09

Ensure that all quarrying activities and projects associated with the extractive industry comply with all relevant Planning and Environmental Legislation including the Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry.

Q  
10

To encourage the rehabilitation of disused quarries and extractive sites to possible uses including habitat restoration, agriculture, recreation/ amenities, commercial, industrial, and residential or a combination of same, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.

## 12.13 Rural Housing

Rural Areas for the purpose of this Plan are defined as areas outside of the designated Towns and Villages as per the Core Strategy. Rural Cavan is home to a diverse range of land uses including agriculture, local food production, recreational and tourist activities, established un-serviced villages and rural housing.

It is a goal of this plan to respect the long tradition of people living in rural areas in County Cavan and promote sustainable rural settlements as a key component in achieving strong and vibrant rural communities.

The Plan aims to:

- Sustain and renew established rural communities in the small towns and villages and wider countryside areas.
- Strengthen the established structure of villages and smaller settlements in rural areas to support local economies and to accommodate additional population in a way that supports the viability of local infrastructure and services.
- Avoid the creation of additional access points from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads for single houses, to which speed limits greater than 60kmph apply.
- Ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and the natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic viability.
- Review the Rural Housing Policy and Typologies pending updated Section 28 Guidelines for Rural Housing.

It is necessary to carefully manage rural housing development. The provision of more sustainable housing options for rural communities will be facilitated by the plan through building up the capacity of our rural villages and Community Nodes to accommodate future housing needs of rural dwellers.

### 12.13.1 Rural Community Nodes

Rural Community Nodes are largely un-serviced rural areas with limited social and community infrastructure. Examples of these rural community nodes include Ballymagovern, Ballymahugh, Bunnoe, Canningstown, Cloverhill, Corlough, Cross, Drung, Finnea, Glangevlin, Killinkere, Killydoon, Larah, Lavey, Maghera, Maudabawn, Milltown, Mountainlodge, Munterconnaught, Tierworker and Tullyvin. These are designated for limited development at a sustainable scale for immediate local need through development of clusters. It is anticipated that each Rural Community Node can cater for a small population increase from their current population base over the period of the plan. The function of these settlements is recognised as a critical component of the social, community and cultural identity of the County. It is recognised that the strengthening of rural community nodes is essential to ensure the survival of their unique character.

Rural Community Nodes comprise of a defined network of small unserviced settlements, within which there may be one or more of the following community facilities or local services; church, community centre, sports ground, school, small convenience shop. These areas provide valued local services to the surrounding agricultural community. The Planning Authority recognises the importance of a vibrant rural community and of sustaining such smaller community areas in the long term.

Residential development in these areas is only suitable at a small scale, reflective of the character of the existing settlement where there is an identifiable physical association with such communities. Individual or small groups of dwellings and appropriate retail or service facilities may be suitably located within such communities.

Rural community nodes have been identified as Tier 5 – Rural & Local Stores in the County Retail Strategy. Rural and local shops play a vital role in catering for the daily or casual needs of neighbouring residents or of those passing by. Primarily convenience outlets, they provide a readily accessible service to basic goods, especially for the less mobile members of the local communities. It is the policy of this development plan to support and maintain rural communities and local shops.



#### Rural Community Nodes Development Objectives It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

RCN  
01

Support and encourage the development of Rural Community Nodes to ensure that local services are sustained in the rural community settlements.

RCN  
02

Support the viability of dispersed rural community nodes which have small scale clustering around one or more focal points which may include a crossroads, a shop or a church. It is considered that there is scope for some additional dwellings which may consolidate existing focal points and utilise existing services in the area subject to the normal planning considerations. It is anticipated that the majority of development taking place will be individual dwellings or small scale developments.

RCN  
03

Developments in Rural Community Nodes shall take cognisance of existing scale of development and comply with the County Cavan Rural House Design Guide.

RCN  
04

Promote new and expanded facilities in smaller community nodes like shops, childcare and community and recreational facilities.

RCN  
05

Continue to monitor and review rural community nodes in the County, across the lifetime of the Plan, in order to ensure compatibility with environmental protection objectives.



### 12.13.2 Rural Housing

#### Definitions - Rural and Urban Generated Housing

In accordance with the 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities,' it is necessary to define rural and urban generated housing.

- Housing in rural areas, within an established rural community sought by persons working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas can be described as rural generated housing.
- Housing in rural locations sought by persons living and working in urban areas can be described as urban generated housing.

#### Rural generated housing

The Planning Authority considers that the following broad categories constitute a rural generated housing need.

A.

- Persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community who have strong social or economic need to live in the area and who are an intrinsic part of the rural community,
- That the dwelling is their first home in the locality.
- Returning emigrants who lived for substantial parts of their lives in rural areas, then moved abroad and who now wish to return to reside near other family members, to work locally, to care for elderly family members, or to retire

- Persons currently residing in the local rural area and who can demonstrate a social or economic requirement for a permanent residence there.
- Persons who need to reside near elderly parents so as to provide security, support and care, or elderly people who need to reside near immediate family.

B.

#### Persons working full-time or part-time in rural areas

- Persons working in fulltime or parttime farming, forestry or other agricultural related occupations.
- Persons whose work is intrinsically linked to rural areas, or other persons whose work predominantly takes place within rural areas.
- Persons who are employed in the rural area and can suitably demonstrate that they will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Subject to satisfying normal planning considerations relating to siting and design, the planning authority will look favorably upon an applicant's proposal for an individual house in a rural area where the applicant comes within the development plan definition of a rural generated housing need.



#### Rural Housing Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

RH  
01

Ensure rural generated housing needs should be accommodated in the locality in which they arise and where the applicant comes within the development plan definition of need, subject to satisfying good planning practice in matters of location, siting, design, access, wastewater disposal and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value.

RH  
02

Ensure urban generated housing needs is accommodated in areas identified for housing in the adjoining towns and villages.

RH  
03

Deliver at least 20% of all new housing in rural areas on brownfield sites.

RH  
04

All rural housing planning applications, in all rural area types, shall be required to complete a "Rural Housing Application" form. The purpose of this form is to ascertain the need for housing in rural areas and to allow the Planning Authority to monitor trends to ensure effective decision making.

RH  
05

Applications in rural areas shall be for individual dwelling houses only and must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwellinghouse.

**RH 06** Apply occupancy condition of 7 years

**RH 07** Applicants shall submit evidence of their rural generated housing need at the particular location they are seeking permission. Rural generated housing need generally refers to

- Persons who are actively engaged in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, bloodstock and peat industry.
- Persons employed locally whose employment would provide a service to the local community
- Persons who have a social or economic tie within the area, including returning emigrants.
- Persons who wish to return to farming and who buy or inherit a substantial farm-holding which is kept intact as an established farm unit. Where there is already a house on the holding, reestablishment of this house is the preferred option.

**RH 08** Ensure new rural housing comply with the Design Guide for Single One-Off Houses within Cavan Rural Countryside with respect to Site Selection, House Design, Landscaping, Sustainability and Design Statement.

**RH 09** Implement a programme to monitor the operation of settlement policies on an ongoing basis to avoid excessive levels of inappropriately located development.

**RH 10** Prevent ribbon development extending out along radial roads from the towns in this area.

**RH 11** Urban generated housing development shall be directed into towns and villages.

### 12.13.2.1 Rural Area Types

In accordance with the NPF and the ‘Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines’, it is necessary to identify rural area types within the county that require tailored settlement policies in the development plan. These are as per Map in Appendix 21.

1. Areas under Strong Urban Influence
2. Stronger Rural Areas
3. Structurally Weak Areas

#### 1. Areas under Strong Urban Influence

These areas are located around Cavan Town and in the South East of the County and exhibit characteristics such as;

- Proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of Cavan, Navan and the Greater Dublin Area.
- Rapidly rising populations.
- Evidence of considerable pressure for housing development due to proximity to such urban areas or to major transport corridors with ready access to urban areas.

- Pressures on infrastructure such as local road networks, water supply etc.

It is the aim of this Plan to facilitate the housing requirements of landowners and their immediate family only, subject to satisfying site suitability and technical considerations, whilst directing urban generated housing need in areas identified for housing in the adjoining towns and villages.





**Areas Under Strong Urban Influence Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**SUI 01**

That development within 'Areas under Strong Urban Influence' shall be restricted to landowners and their immediate family members only with a demonstratable social or economic need.\*\*

**SUI 02**

Accommodate rural generated, housing need from individuals for permanent residential development in strong urban influence who have strong social or economic need to locate in the area and who are an intrinsic part of the rural community, subject to good planning practice, in matters of location, siting, design and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value, environmental carrying capacity and landscape protection consideration.

**SUI 03**

Apply an occupancy clause of a minimum of 7 years.

\*\*Satisfied by the following criteria:

Landowner is defined as an individual with a land holding of a minimum of 10 hectares.

Applicants not meeting the criteria of ownership of a minimum of 10 hectares will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

**2. Stronger Rural Areas**

In these areas, population levels are generally stable within a well-developed town and village structure and in the wider rural areas around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong agricultural economic base and the level of individual housing development activity in these areas tends to be relatively low and confined to certain areas. These areas correspond with the large and medium sized towns within the County which are drivers of growth and development. The rural population has an important role to play in support of these towns as service users, employees and providers of rural goods and services.

Capacity exists within these towns for the development of housing which would be a viable alternative to rural dwellings. It is the Local Authority's intention to facilitate the development of such dwellings. The main issues in this area are (a) ensuring that the urban generated housing needs are catered for in the towns and villages and (b) avoiding ribbon development extending out along radial roads from the towns.



**Stronger Rural Areas Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**SRA 01**

Facilitate rural generated, social or economic housing needs subject to good planning practice in matters of location, siting, design and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value, whilst directing urban generated housing need to areas identified for housing in the adjoining towns and villages.

**SRA 02**

Apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years

**3. Structurally Weak Areas**

These areas exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline, as well as a weaker economic structure as demonstrated in the indices of income, employment and economic growth. These areas also have a weaker urban structure.

These areas, to a large extent, correspond with the designations of high visual and scenic amenity and otherwise vulnerable areas such as EU Designated Sites, See chapter 10 for more details. The capacity of the landscape to absorb development will be a major consideration in the assessment of proposals in such areas.

It is the aim of the Plan in Structurally Weak Areas to promote real and long term community consolidation and growth. To accommodate any demand for permanent residential development, as it arises, subject to good planning practice in matters of location, siting, design, access, wastewater disposal and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value.

To achieve these aims the Council will protect

against the indiscriminate construction of individual, dispersed housing that will only achieve short-term demographic gain.



**Structurally Weak Areas Development Objective.**  
It is the development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**SWA 01**

Facilitate proposals for permanent residential development subject to good planning practice in matters of location, siting, design and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value.

### 12.13.2.2 Rural House Design

Notwithstanding the applicant’s demonstration of compliance with the rural housing criteria as set out above, applicants are also required to satisfy visual impact, design standards, environmental and traffic safety issues. The design of rural housing development requires careful design consideration to ensure that all new development sensitively integrates into the landscape. Important factors to consider includes site selection, design, scale and form of the proposed development. New rural housing applications shall comply with the Rural House Design Guide for County Cavan as contained in Appendix 22.

Developments must integrate with the receiving landscape by selecting naturally sheltered and screened sites and with the proposed building being of a simple built form complemented with the use of materials that are reflective of traditional vernacular. External finishes and materials used in designing a rural dwelling should be materials that reinforce the texture and colours of the surrounding landscape and neighbouring and existing buildings and dwellings.



**Rural Housing Design Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**RHD 01**

Ensure new rural housing comply with the Design Guide for Single One-Off Houses within Cavan Rural Countryside with respect to Site Selection, House Design, Landscaping, Sustainability and Design Statement.

**RHD 02**

Encourage design elements in all new dwellings to incorporate the concept of Lifetime Homes.

### 12.13.2.3 Wastewater Treatment in Rural Areas

In un-serviced areas and outside the main towns and villages, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary systems.

In order to protect human health and water quality from the risks posed by domestic wastewater treatment systems the EPA’s National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2018-2021 now requires each local authority to develop a local site selection plan, which documents the application of the site selection methodology and outlines the justification for the selection of priority areas and individual sites.

Wastewater treatment systems should be located, constructed and maintained to the highest standards to ensure minimal impacts on water quality. Details of proposed means of surface water disposal shall be requested at planning application stage in order to prevent surface water accessing the public roadway. Where existing clusters of septic tanks in vulnerable areas are augmented with additional septic tanks, the risk of pollution increases significantly and therefore the protection of these areas is paramount.



**Wastewater Treatment in Rural Areas Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**WTR 01**

Ensure proposals involving the installation of an on site wastewater treatment system are in accordance with the requirements of the ‘EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses,’ (2009) or any subsequent Code of Practice which supersedes it.

**WTR 02**

Ensure proposals shall be accompanied by a Site Characterisation Form which has been properly completed by a suitably qualified person.

**WTR 03**

Proposals for significant extensions will be required to ensure that existing effluent treatment systems are adequate to cater for any additional loading that may result from the extension.



**WTR  
04**

Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with EPA's Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE. ≤10) (EPA 2009), as may be amended.

**WTR  
05**

Protect against development proposals, involving individual treatment systems, which would increase effluent loading within existing housing clusters located within areas of high groundwater vulnerability.

#### 12.13.2.4 Private Wells

The use of private wells to provide water to single houses remains the responsibility of the householder. Private wells are not regulated under the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 and Irish Water has no role in relation to private water supplies. The Local Authority is responsible for providing advice and guidance in relation to the protection of the supply. Applicants will be required to connect to mains or Group Water Supply water sources where available.



**Private Wells Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**PW  
01**

Support householders, through advice and guidance, to ensure that private wells are to acceptable drinking water standards.

#### 12.13.2.5 Water Quality and Groundwater

Groundwater is water located beneath the ground surface in pore spaces and fractures of geologic formations. If the geologic formation can yield enough water for a significant water supply, then the term aquifer is often used. Water is usually abstracted from these aquifers by pumping from wells or boreholes, although water may also seep to the surface via springs. Well depths in the bedrock aquifers typically range between 30 - 100m below the surface. The water from well or borehole abstractions is generally a composite of water from all fractures and/or conduits throughout the total length of bedrock in the borehole.

There are risks posed to water coming from private wells. Just because the water comes from underground does not mean it is acceptable to drink. Polluting activities such as domestic wastewater treatment systems or septic tanks, farmyards and land-spreading of slurry and grazing cattle may pose a risk to well water.

In addition, groundwater can contain toxins that occurs naturally in rocks (e.g. heavy metals) which dissolve into groundwater. These can be persistent and difficult to treat.

Therefore, it is essential that water is fully tested prior to being used as drinking water. Where available, applicants will be required to connect to large public and group scheme water supplies where the water supply is regularly tested.



### Water Quality and Groundwater Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**WQG  
01**

Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of the plan. Development proposals shall not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands.

**WQG  
02**

Collaborate with Irish Water in contributing towards compliance with the S.I. No. 122/2014 - European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 *and any regulations made thereunder* and compliance of water supplies with the parameters identified in these Regulations.

**WQG  
03**

Contribute towards, as appropriate, the protection of existing and potential water resources, and their use by humans and wildlife, including rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater and associated habitat and species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC). The European Union (Water policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended), the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations 2010 (as amended) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same).

**WQG  
04**

In conjunction with Irish Water, have regard to the EPA 2020 *'Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2019'* (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the County.

**WQG  
05**

In conjunction with Irish Water, support recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failures to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA's Remedial Action List.

**WQG  
06**

Ensure that in assessing applications for development, that consideration is given to the impact on the quality of surface waters having regard to targets and measures set out in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 and any subsequent local or regional plans.

**WQG  
07**

Ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.

**WQG  
08**

Discourage the over concentration of individual septic tanks and treatment plans to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.

**WQG  
09**

Support the preparation of Drinking Water Protection Plans and Source Protection Plans to protect sources of public water supply, in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.



### 12.13.2.6 Access and Sightlines for Rural Applications

All applications shall include at planning application stage comprehensive details of the way in which safe access and egress to the site can be achieved.



**Access and Sightlines for Rural Applications Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**AS 01** Existing roadside hedgerows and trees shall be retained as much as possible. The entrance shall be carefully considered to achieve the required sight distance with the removal of a minimum extent of existing hedgerow.

**AS 02** New access points onto the public road network shall generally be subject to sight line visibility standards as set out in Cavan County Councils document Sightline Visibility Requirements for Junctions and Direct Accesses, contained in Appendix 4 of this Plan.

**AS 03** Restrict the creation of additional access points from new developments or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads, to which speed limits greater than 60kmph apply.

### 12.13.2.7 Boundary Treatment in Rural Areas

Appropriate and sensitive boundary treatment is a key component to successful integration of developments in rural locations. Removal of front boundary hedgerows, walls or ditches is not encouraged, and applications should be submitted outlining full details of all boundary treatments of applications in rural areas. A simple splayed or bell mouthed opening is encouraged. Hedgerows add to visual attraction and new planting shall comprise of native species and pollinator plants only. Evergreen non native species is not permitted. New entrance walls, gates and piers shall be sensitive in their design in terms of height, scale, finishes and full details should accompany planning applications.



**Boundary Treatment in Rural Areas Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**BT 01** Boundary treatment shall reflect local traditions. Traditional dry-stone wall construction or limestone walls with lime mortar, and/or post and wire/ timber fencing back planted with indigenous hedging and pollinator species in accordance with Appendix 23 are encouraged.

**BT 02** The design of entrance gates, walls and piers shall be in character with the rural location of the proposed development in terms of height, scale and finish.

### 12.13.2.8 Replacement Dwellings

In recent years, there has been a tendency to replace established rural dwellings and structures, rather than upgrading or modernising older buildings. Planning permission will be considered for a new replacement dwelling only in instances where a dwelling is not considered by the Council to be vernacular or where it does not provide a positive/important contribution to the local character or heritage of the surrounding area. Furthermore, planning permission will be considered for a replacement dwelling in cases where an existing habitable dwelling has been destroyed recently by fire or by accidental occurrence. Accordingly, it is the Council's policy to seek to retain vernacular dwellings and structures and promote their sympathetic renovation and continued use, rather than replacement. With carefully designed extensions and sensitive restoration, these houses can be brought up to standard capable of meeting modern day demands. Where a new building is necessary, the original building should be retained for ancillary uses. For this reason, there will be a presumption against the demolition of vernacular dwellings and structures, where restoration or adaptation is a feasible option.



**Replacement Dwellings Rural Development Objectives**  
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**RDR  
01**

Encourage the sensitive refurbishment of existing vernacular buildings unless it is clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that it is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound and adapted for modern living standards.

**RDR  
02**

A replacement dwelling shall be located within the curtilage of the dwelling to be replaced, except where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that the siting of the replacement dwelling represents an improvement in siting or provides benefits in respect of the amenity, environment, heritage or the landscape and/or access arrangements for the development on site.

**RDR  
03**

The Council shall assess applications for refurbishment and/or replacement of existing housing stock in rural areas, having regard to the criteria outlined hereunder:

- That in the case of refurbishment and extension proposals, that the scale and architectural treatment of proposed works are both subservient and sympathetic to the character of the original structure and do not detract from the setting of the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development.
- That in the case of replacement dwellings, the design is appropriate to the site in terms of size and scale and does not detract from the setting of the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development.
- That the overall size of the replacement dwelling does not result in a significant negative visual impact to the character, landscape and heritage of the rural area and shall have regard to local distinctiveness.
- That in the case of replacement dwellings, to require that the original structure was last used as an authorised habitable dwelling and that the roof, and all internal and external walls and windows are substantially intact
- That replacement dwellings are provided at locations where there is safe access to the public road and acceptable wastewater disposal arrangements can be put in place and where specific development objectives or other policies of the Council are not compromised; and,
- That the design of replacement dwellings in rural areas shall have regard to the design, finish and character of the existing building and comply with the 'Cavan Rural Design Guide', or any such replacement document.



### 12.13.2.9 Ribbon Development

The Planning Authority, in accordance with the guidance given in the DEHLG Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, will resist ribbon development, primarily on the grounds of visual amenity, reinforced on occasions by road safety reasons. As per the Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities ribbon development is defined as '5 or more houses exist on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage'. The ribbon may not have a uniform building line, and buildings set back from the road, staggered or an angle to the road will also be considered as ribbon development, where they are visually linked. The exacerbation or addition of ribbon development will be discouraged in the assessment of rural houses.



#### Ribbon Development- Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

RD  
01

Resist development that would create or extend ribbon development.

### 12.13.2.10 Siting and Design

The scale, form, design and siting of the development should be sensitive to its surroundings and visually integrate with the receiving landscape. Planning applications shall be in compliance with the Design Guide for Single One-Off Houses for the County and shall ensure that new dwellings integrate into the landscape in their location, form and design.



#### Siting and Design Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

SD  
01

Require applications for new dwellings in rural locations to:

- Have a simple design forms and materials reflective of traditional vernacular architecture.
- Have consideration to the scale of surrounding buildings.
- A design, siting and orientation that is site specific responding to the natural features and topography of the site to best integrate development with the landscape and to optimise solar gain to maximise energy efficiency.
- Be sited to visually integrate with the landscape, utilising natural features including existing contours and established field boundaries and to not be visually dominate in the landscape by cutting and filling of sites. New buildings should respect the landscape context and not impinge scenic views or skylines as seen from vantage points or public roads.
- Larger houses should incorporate design solutions to minimise visual mass and scale e.g. subdivided into smaller elements of traditional form to avoid bulky structures.
- Use a simple plan form to give a clean roof shape and avoid the creation of a bulky shape.
- Where existing vernacular structures exist on site, consideration should be given to their re-use, adaptation and extension in preference to new build.
- Determine if the proposed development is located on any designated natural heritage, archaeological or architectural heritage site. The existence of any of these designated sites within the proposed development site may have implications for the proposed dwelling.
- Ensure that the detail, texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials of the proposed development should be sustainable and of a high quality, and sensitive to its proposed location.
- Local stone and render such as stucco, traditional lime render or lime wash, rough cast render or napped render finish and glass is encouraged.
- Where contemporary materials are proposed they should complement and harmonise with traditional materials.
- Decorative fascia and box end soffits should be avoided.

## 12.14 Rural Strategy

### Climate Change Context and Development Objectives

In accordance with the format set out in Chapter 5: Climate Change of this Plan the following is an assessment of the content of this chapter in a climate change context and associated actions.

#### 12.14.1 Agriculture

We live in a world with a population of 7.7 billion, expected to rise to 9.7 billion by 2050. Agricultural production will need to increase by an estimated 70% to meet this projected demand. The associated demand for water will also be high, with the United Nations predicting a 40% worldwide water shortfall and a 55% increase in demand within the next 15 years; while 18% of the European population is already water stressed. The Irish Farmers Association (IFA) has announced that feeding the world while addressing climate change will be one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. We must seek to diversify our diets and eliminate food waste, and we must deliver action across all sectors to ensure future food security. The future for agriculture is in the development of sustainably grown, local sourced, predominantly plant-based produce. The current farming model and its related industries consumes almost 40% of the world's habitable surface, whereas a vegan system would require a tenth of that, while reduced CO<sub>2</sub> levels and protecting biodiversity and habitats. In Ireland we continue to import €79 billion of food each year, including foodstuff easily grown. Improving our self-sustainability will leave Ireland in a more resilient position during times of crisis, including those relating to climate change and/or pandemic, akin to the Covid-19 outbreak. Encouragingly, Ireland's climate and grass-based production systems enables it to deliver the lowest carbon footprint of milk and fifth lowest for beef production in Europe. It plays an important role in our economy, employing 7.7% of the population and contributing 7.5% to Gross National Income (2018).

However, this exposure generates a third of Ireland's total GHG emissions, which as a proportion of overall emissions is higher than any other EU member state and expected to rise even further over the next five years. Referenced within the RSES NWRA (2019), the concept of 'Smart Farming' in its application of resource efficiency through cost saving and environmental benefit is seen as an appropriate response at reducing our carbon emissions.

CAP (2019) meanwhile supports the diversification within agriculture and land use to develop sustainable and circular value chains and business models for lower carbon intensity farming, including, organic production, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and water quality, and the production of bio-based products and bioenergy through the Common Agricultural Policy and implementation of the 'National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy' (2018). If current farmland practices shifted to regenerative, organic approaches, 100% of the annual global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would be sequestered.

Teagasc have published 'Improving Farm Sustainability – Practical Tools for Farmers' (2019) setting out the following seven actions to deliver improved 'farm sustainability':

- Improving Economic Breeding Index (EBI) and extending the grazing season;
- Substituting clover for chemical fertiliser;
- Changing to protected urea;
- Reducing losses from slurry;
- Improved energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- Incorporating forestry and hedgerows on farm;
- Using the Agriculture Sustainability Support and Advice Programme (ASSAP) Advisors to help improve water quality.

#### 12.14.2 Forestry

11% of Ireland is covered with forestry, mostly non-native species. The main objective of these forests has been to develop Irish grown timber that can be used for construction, furniture or energy production, and thereby reducing the reliance on wood imports. Ireland's forests continue to play an important role in helping with climate change mitigation, through carbon sequestrations and the provision of renewable fuels and raw materials.

Irish forestry is a major carbon sink and afforestation is the most significant mitigation option that is available to Ireland's land use sector. Ireland is committed to the practice of Sustainable Forest Management, which, under the Helsinki and Lisbon Agreements, is understood to mean: "The stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way and at a rate that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regenerative capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions as local, national and global levels and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems".



CREATED  
IN CAVAN  
FOOD & DRINK MADE LOCALLY

HONESTY  
BOX

A key objective of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s ‘Growing for the Future – A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector in Ireland’ (1996) has remained “to develop forestry to a scale and in a manner which

maximises its contribution to national economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment”.



**Rural Strategy Climate Change Development Objectives**  
**It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:**

- RSC 01** Require high-speed broadband connection for commercial and/or industrial development applications, where proposed in rural areas.
- RSC 02** Seek access permission and use to all existing or planned service access routes and entranceways within a forestry development, for the sole amenity of Local Authority developed trackways or similar, where considered advantageous to improved connectivity across its functional area.
- RSC 03** Support the production of biofuels from biomass (urban and farm waste)
- RSC 04** Support farm diversification and biofuel crop production as a carbon neutral alternative in agriculture.