



# County Kildare CHAMBER

IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

## County Kildare Chamber

### Pre-Draft Submission: Naas Local Area Plan 2018 -2024

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017

#### Background

County Kildare Chamber is the business organisation of choice in Kildare. With a membership of 400 businesses that employ 47,000 people in the county, we understand and represent the concerns and views of business throughout the county.

Representation is key and the Chamber is represented on the following key groupings in Kildare and the Mid-east region:

- Action Plans for jobs – Mid east region
- Region Skills Forum – Mid east region
- Kildare Local Community and Development Committee
- EDEN Advisory Board, Maynooth University
- Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board
- Strategic Policy Committees, Kildare County Council
- County Kildare Economic Forum
- Board of Chambers Ireland
- Employment, Workplace and Skills Policy Council, Chambers Ireland
- Ratepayers and Local Government Council, Chambers Ireland

#### Our vision:

“To make Kildare the location of choice for existing and potential business enterprise”

This ensures that we work closely with our colleagues in Kildare County Council, LEO Kildare, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Chambers Ireland, Local and Central Government.

Our offices are based in Naas Town Centre and the majority of our business activities are centred within Naas, our capital town in Kildare.



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## **Our Vision for Naas 2018 – 2024**

Location of choice for existing and potential business enterprise in the county

Sustainable, educated, skilled, confident, and entrepreneurial community

Connected regional, national and international infrastructure enabling growth

A town excelling in its quality of life and place

## **Location of choice for existing and potential business enterprise in the county**

Naas, already home to companies such as the Queally Group, Kerry, Enfer Scientific, State Street and Green Isle Foods is well placed to house further enterprise. Naas is home to Millennium Park, which has approximately 340 acres of zoned available land ready for development. The zoning structure enables Millennium Park to become a totally integrated development comprising office, enterprise, residential and health/ leisure facilities. Ladytown, Tougher Business Park and the M7 Business parks are economic drivers in the town and are home to high profile companies.

Naas is well served with excellent road and rail networks and our close proximity to Dublin City, its port and airport makes Naas a key destination for business.

This Local Area Plan must ensure we have sufficient land zoned for enterprise development to meet the demands that the Chamber expect in the forthcoming years. With the impending M7 Naas to Newbridge Bypass Upgrade, M7 Osberstown Interchange and R407 Sallins Bypass, Naas will see an increase in foreign direct investment and indeed in companies looking to relocate from other counties in Ireland to the town.

Naas has performed strongly in economic terms over the past 6 -10 years. There is an ambitious, educated, young population and diversity to the growth that promotes economic resilience and lays the path for future investment. Yet, it is well known that our capital town, based on its natural advantages such as scale and critical mass, has the strongest and most immediate possibilities as a location with significant growth potential in the coming years.



# County Kildare CHAMBER

IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

## *Bigger picture issues to consider*

**Brand Naas** – Naas **will** deliver in employment and enterprise in the period 2018 – 2024. We need to be ready and **Brand** the town and promote the town locally, nationally and internationally as the location of choice for existing and potential enterprise.

**Connect Naas** – Complete our road projects and ensure that initiatives such as linking commuters from Sallins Train Station to Millennium Park and to Naas become a reality.

## **Sustainable, educated, skilled, confident, and entrepreneurial community**

For our economy to thrive, we must invest in our workforce. The quality of education and research institutions in our region with their capability and track record of adapting to the current and emerging needs of industry is excellent. Our relationship with Maynooth University must develop further and engagement with business and education provider also must improve. The landscape is changing and changing fast. The future education needs are likely to be significantly different going forward given the pace of changes within technology. This Local Area Plan must deliver on the urgent need to zone land for education use. We must look at land in our town centre that may become available. Education is a key driver of the economy. Employment in Kildare will increase by 33,000 in the next 5 years. Is Naas ready for this influx?

## *Bigger picture issues to consider*

A dedicated **apprentice and traineeship centre** will assist business needs in Naas.

A **third level campus** linked to Maynooth University will enable our population to study in the town.

## **Connected regional, national and international infrastructure enabling growth**

Naas is well connected by road and rail. The M7 Naas to Newbridge Bypass Upgrade, M7 Osberstown Interchange and R407 Sallins Bypass will be completed by 2021. Our close proximity to



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IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

Dublin Airport and Port is a competitive advantage when promoting the town. The wastewater treatment plant in Osberstown has recently been enhanced.

Building on the strengths of our existing infrastructure, and aligned with proposals for an increased population and employment density in Naas, we endorse an integrated town public transport corridor that will link Sallins Train Station, Millennium Park with Naas Town Centre. We encourage smarter travel and look forward to a changing Naas in the period 2018 – 2024. The Chamber will work with all key stakeholders to ensure that people both living in the town and working in the town enjoy a smarter way to commute.

### ***Bigger picture issues to consider***

Naas is on Dublin's Doorstep. We need to promote Naas as the **most connected town** in Ireland. Forward thinking and forward planning will ensure Naas continues to thrive as the capital town in Kildare. This Area Plan must ensure that Naas is connected in a sustainable manner. It must ensure that it seeks to improve the safety, capacity and efficiency of an integrated transportation infrastructure in the town.

The plan must address the need to pedestrianise the main street (or part of) of Naas. Our town's services are partially underground and this needs to continue to ensure the town does not lose its appeal.

### **A town excelling in its quality of life and place**

The landscape of Naas is ever changing. The upgrading of Poplar Square and further upgrades in the main thoroughfare in the town are welcomed and encouraged. Our town area plan should introduce policies that protect the rural landscape and our town landscape whilst helping preserving open space, protecting air and water quality, providing places for recreation and creating tourist attractions that bring investments into the local economy.

Naas is a hub for business, community and civic life. They are critical for supporting the vast array of diverse activities such as arts, heritage, culture, retail, hospitality, tourism, leisure and housing. A



# County Kildare CHAMBER

IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

town excelling in the quality of life and place will mean an attractive town where people will want to live and work in and it lays the foundation for inward investment and for the attraction and retention of talented people.

The Area Plan when at draft stage will need the full engagement of the population of Naas. The town excels in so many of its offerings and will need full engagement of its people to produce a Plan that the town can be proud of.

### ***Bigger picture issues to consider***

Our local Area Plan must identify all community assets and create a plan to take strategic advantage.

Full engagement of all key stakeholders required to produce a Plan that everyone supports and believes in.

On behalf of County Kildare Chamber

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