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CHAPTER 4
Social Strategy

4 SOCIAL STRATEGY

This chapter incorporates three separate sections dealing with the following topics:

- (A) Social Inclusion
- (B) Social Capital
- (C) Social Wealth

4.1 Background

Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. Sustainable communities require, not only economic development, but also provision of and access to education, health and community support services, amenities and leisure services and a good quality built environment. Communities also require opportunities to meet, interact and form bonds, essential prerequisites to the development of a sense of place and belonging.

In all communities, despite the provision of these services and opportunities, certain groups and individuals tend to remain isolated and face barriers in accessing the same opportunities as others. These groups and individuals require specific policies that assist in overcoming these barriers and enable them to have the same quality of life as the rest of the community. These specific social inclusion policies are essential if inclusive, equitable, communities are to develop.

These key elements in social development can be termed as follows;

Social Inclusion – creating inclusive, equitable communities

Social Capital – creating opportunities for interaction

Social Wealth – providing services, facilities and an attractive place to live

In Kildare, the unprecedented growth experienced over the past 15 years has had a number of impacts on community development. Rapid economic growth has not had an equal beneficial impact on all citizens of the county, with pockets of unemployment remaining. Barriers to accessing the workforce, such as lack of adequate childcare and access to education and training opportunities continue to affect certain groups and areas. Access to services remains difficult for some, particularly for example for people with disabilities or those living in isolated rural areas without adequate public transport services.

The rapid growth has led to a significant influx of new residents into the county. In some areas of the county small, established communities have experienced major expansion in their populations. Often new residents work, or have family and social ties in Dublin and other areas, and can spend most of their week outside of their new community. Opportunities for interaction between new residents and established members of the community can often be few with the result that social bonds and sense of community take longer to develop. The long term impact of this can be isolation from the community and consequently from the structures and institutions that provide services to that community.

The provision of services and facilities can create the environment in which members of the community interact. Essential for health, well-being and social development, the provision of community, leisure and cultural facilities and a good quality environment make places attractive to live in. Throughout the last 10 to 15 years, residential and economic development has facilitated the provision of a range of community and recreational facilities. However, in some areas of the county this provision has not kept pace with the growth of residential development in particular, and the level of community, recreational and cultural facilities remains inadequate to serve the needs and expectations of the local community.

It is in this context that the social development strategy of this Plan is set.

4.2 Strategic Goal

To make Kildare an attractive place to live and work by building strong, inclusive communities that have a sense of place and belonging, with adequate provision of and access to services and facilities to meet the needs of the county's growing population

Fig. 4.1 Key determinants in creating attractive and vibrant urban and rural communities in which to live



4.3 (A) Social Inclusion

4.3.1 Goal

To reduce levels of social exclusion in the county by promoting equality of access to services and facilities and assisting in the removal of barriers to full participation in society

4.3.2 Objectives

- (1) To promote equality of access to public and social services for all members of the community.
- (2) To facilitate equality of access to education and childcare services so as to remove barriers to the workforce and to provide for full participation in society.
- (3) To develop targeted policies to improve equality of access to infrastructure for specific groups in society.
- (4) To promote local employment opportunities and enable people to live and work locally.
- (5) To provide in Local Area Plans, where practical, for the provision of education, healthcare, nursing homes and creche facilities in appropriate locations.

4.3.3 Policy Statement

4.3.3.1 *Equality of Access to Public and Social Services*

It is the policy of the Council:

- ES 1 To work with other relevant organisations, through the County Development Board, to facilitate the provision of public and social services in areas of identified need throughout the county.
- ES 2 To promote the delivery of services in these areas by means of supporting;
- IT kiosks and information points in libraries, schools and local shops/post offices.
 - local public service centres in appropriate settlements.
 - development of existing rural shops, libraries and post offices into points of service delivery in appropriate rural settlements and locations.
- ES 3 To promote the development of integrated rural transport services to meet the needs of rural communities.

4.3.3.2 *Education and Training Facilities*

Kildare County Council and other relevant agencies are currently undertaking an Audit of Education Provision in County Kildare. This Audit will ascertain the capacity and extent of provision within current education facilities in the county from pre-school to adult and further education.

It is the policy of the Council:

- ET 1 To support existing educational facilities and facilitate the provision of adequate, quality, infrastructure for education and training throughout the County, accessible for all members of the community.
- ET 2 To promote the provision of dedicated facilities for adult and community education in recognition of the growing demand for life-long learning opportunities and the perceived shortage of such facilities at present.
- ET 3 That new or additional educational facilities are designed, located and have adequate management arrangements in place so as to enable the greatest possible use by the wider community, consistent with the needs of the educational establishment.
- ET 4 To actively pursue the location of a third-level outreach facility in the central/southern parts of the county so as to improve access to further education and provide a greater range of opportunities for members of the community.
- ET 5 To investigate, in co-operation with relevant agencies, the possibility of maximising the use of existing educational facilities for community and non-school purposes, where possible.
- ET 6 To support the development and reasonable expansion of the educational facilities at Herbert Lodge Arts Centre, the Curragh.
- ET 7 To adopt the recommendations of the Barcelona Declaration Team when finalised, in order to:
 - (a) promote disability awareness,
 - (b) proof policies against their impact on equality/disability,
 - (c) develop relevant consultative processes, and
 - (d) provide people with disabilities access to the social and physical environments as well as services.

4.3.3.3 *Childcare Facilities*

The provision of childcare facilities, in its various forms, is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate more fully in society, particularly in accessing employment, education and social networks. The Council will have regard to the criteria specified in the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities published by the DoEHLG, 2001 or as subsequently amended. Childcare facilities also provide valuable employment opportunities and can act as an important focal point for communities.

In addition, and most importantly, early years care and education through formal childcare provision plays a crucial role in the holistic development of the child in terms of early education, socialisation and development of practical life-skills.

A County Childcare Strategy has been prepared by Kildare County Council and endorsed by the County Development Board; this provides the over-arching policy framework for the provision of childcare in the county. A Census of Childcare Provision in the county has been prepared and will influence the location of childcare facilities. Kildare County Council are working with Kildare County Childcare Committee, through its role on the CDB, to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the county.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Council:

- CC1** To require the provision of childcare facilities, of an appropriate type and scale, at appropriate locations throughout the county. In particular, the development of childcare facilities at the following locations will be required:
- 1) at Business Parks and major employment centres;
 - 2) at neighbourhood and district retail centres;
 - 3) at large scale retail developments;
 - 4) in, or in the vicinity of, schools and major educational facilities;
 - 5) in rural villages and other appropriate rural locations;
 - 6) in, or adjacent to, community centres and facilities;
 - 7) adjacent to public transport nodes; and
 - 8) within new and existing residential developments.
- CC 2** To facilitate the provision of childcare in a manner, which is compatible with land-use and transportation policies, and adhere to the principles of sustainable development.
- CC 3** To promote and encourage the provision of a network of childcare facilities that reflect the distribution of the residential population in the county in order to minimise travel distance and maximise opportunities for disadvantaged communities.
- CC 4** To require the provision of childcare facilities in all new large residential developments (75 houses or more), including local authority and social housing schemes. In accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines, at least one childcare facility to cater for 20 places shall be provided in developments of 75 houses, and having regard to cumulative effects of permitted development, (unless it can be demonstrated that having regard to the existing geographic distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area that this level of childcare facilities is not required). Without substantial cause, it is the policy of the Council not to allow a change of use of this premises within five years.

- CC 5 To assess, in conjunction with the Kildare County Childcare Committee, the continuing needs around childcare and related facilities and review progress on the provision of some during the period of this Plan, through the mechanism of the County Childcare Census and having regard to the County Childcare Strategy.
- CC 6 To take account of relevant guidelines and identify suitable locations for childcare facilities in future reviews of Local Area Plans and future Action Area Plans, where this is feasible.
- CC 7 In so far as possible, the provision of childcare facilities should be adjacent to, or co-located with, other facilities required for other community use.
- CC 8 To co-ordinate with Kildare County Childcare Committee and the County Development Board to establish a policy within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, to ensure that affordable childcare services are provided in new developments.

4.3.3.4 Older People

It is the policy of the Council

- OP 1 To facilitate residential day care for the elderly at appropriate locations especially in proximity to public transport and relevant community and social services.
- OP 2 To continue to work with the Health and other service providers to promote the well being of older people in the community.

4.3.3.5 People with Disabilities

The Council adopted the Barcelona Declaration on 10th June, 2002, and therefore has committed itself to;

- promoting disability awareness;
- proofing policies against their impact on equality/disability;
- developing relevant consultative processes; and
- providing people with disabilities access to the social and physical environments as well as services.



4.4 (B) Social Capital

4.4.1 Goal

To promote the development of social capital by providing opportunities for interaction, participation and the co-ordinated provision of public services.

4.4.2 Objectives

- (1) To ensure increased participation in policy making for marginalised groups in society.
- (2) To co-ordinate the provision of public services and facilities.

4.4.3 Policy Statement

4.4.3.1 *Co-ordinated public service provision*

It is the policy of the Council:

- CPS 1** To work with the County Development Board and its sub-structures, to advance social inclusion and development by developing the co-ordinated delivery of services and facilities in the county.
- CPS 2** To have regard to appropriate recommendations and observations, that may arise from research initiatives of the County Development Board.
- CPS 3** To co-operate with other relevant agencies in the development of designated area-based social inclusion initiatives, such as the RAPID Programme.
- CPS 4** To work with the County Development Board to devise a model “community impact statement” that assesses the positive and negative impacts on communities of proposed development and which will facilitate the process of assessing applications.
- CPS 5** Applicants for significant developments will be required to submit a social infrastructure assessment, which demonstrates the facilities available to adequately service their development. This should include details regarding the following essential facilities: education, childcare, health and others such as shops, banks, post offices, and recreational facilities.



4.4.3.2 *Participation in policy making*

It is the policy of the Council:

- PAR 1 To develop and implement models of community participation in policy making.
- PAR 2 To support and encourage the establishment of consultation structures, particularly those associated with the CDB, which enhance and enable communities to engage in policy making in the county.
- PAR 3 To support the representative role of Kildare Community & Voluntary Forum and the Kildare Comhairle na nÓg.

4.5 (C) Social Wealth

4.5.1 **Goal**

To develop the social wealth of communities in the county by facilitating the provision of services and facilities and creating attractive physical environments.

4.5.2 **Objectives**

- (1) To promote the provision of community, cultural, recreational and amenity facilities in tandem with residential, commercial and other development.
- (2) To promote the regeneration and improvement of urban and rural areas, in co-operation with local communities where feasible.

4.5.3 **Policy Statement**

4.5.3.1 *Community Facilities*

It is the policy of the Council:

- CF 1 To establish a hierarchy of community facilities and services, in the context of the County Strategy, required to support sustainable communities, and to promote their development and provision through the development process.
- CF 2 To achieve an even spread of community facilities throughout the county that match the needs and size of the population. This will be achieved by encouraging and facilitating the development of community facilities in centres designated in the settlement strategy of this Plan, the precise nature of such facilities shall be determined following appropriate consultation with the local community.

- CF 3 To extend existing cemeteries as the need arises. When suitable land adjoining cemeteries is not available, the Council will seek suitable sites in the immediate vicinity of the existing cemeteries. Where necessary, the Council will exercise its power of compulsory purchase to secure the necessary land. The Council will encourage the involvement of local communities in the maintenance of cemeteries.
- CF 4 To actively promote the provision of community, educational, social and recreational facilities in parallel with future housing development.
- CF 5 To encourage the shared use of community facilities so as to maximise the sustainable use of such infrastructure and promote community cohesion.
- CF 6 To undertake an audit of community facilities to ascertain the spread, range, accessibility and usage of community facilities in the county.
- CF 7 To devise facility plans, in conjunction with local communities, for the provision of new and adaptation of the existing social and recreational needs of local communities.
- CF 8 To review existing sports facilities and services to identify gaps, needs etc. in association with Kildare Sports Partnership and other relevant agencies. The results of this review will guide Council policy on the provision of sporting facilities over the lifetime of this Plan.
- CF 9 To support the integrated redevelopment of Moore Abbey to facilitate institutional, educational and other land uses, having regard to the IFPLUT study for the town of Monasterevin.

4.5.3.2 Play Provision

The Council recognises the provision of play facilities as key infrastructure to all residential developments. The Council acknowledges the overarching role of the National Play Policy 'Ready, Steady, Play', as published by the Department of Health and Children, 2004.

It is the policy of the Council:

- PP 1 To devise and adopt, in co-operation with other relevant agencies, a play plan for County Kildare which will set out a strategy for the provision, resourcing and implementation of improved opportunities for children to play. The Council will be guided by this multi-agency County Kildare Play Plan in the development of local play policies and in the provision and development of play opportunities over the lifetime of this plan.
- PP 2 To provide play facilities adjacent to other community and childcare facilities, in so far as is possible, and to ensure their proper management and maintenance.

4.5.3.3 *Amenity Schemes/ Parks*

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of a large number of open spaces, amenity areas and the development of parklands in the county.

It is the policy of the Council:

- PK 1 To facilitate and develop a hierarchy of open spaces throughout the county to provide greater opportunities for recreation and amenity.
- PK 2 To encourage and promote the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes and networks linking parks and open spaces to residential developments so as to facilitate recreation and amenity activity.
- PK 3 To continue to support communities in undertaking schemes for the improvement of the general amenity of towns and villages. In this regard, it will be a particular policy of the Council to support the “Tidy Towns” competition.

4.5.3.4 *Public rights of way, Slí na Sláinte & Long Distance Walking Routes*

It is a policy of the Council:

- ROW 1 To prepare an inventory of established public rights of way within the county.
- ROW 2 To seek to protect all existing right of ways particularly those which provide access to archaeological and amenity sites.
- ROW 3 To seek to protect existing and establish new Slí na Sláinte routes.
- ROW 4 To seek to protect the Robertstown long distance walking routes as identified in map 13.1.
- ROW 5 To seek to eliminate urban alleyways that act as a focus for anti-social behaviour.

4.5.3.4 *Arts and Cultural Facilities*

Kildare County Council’s arts service consists of a vibrant development programme, with strategic development initiatives to support and encourage engagement in the arts. The Council recognises that many of the community-based programmes are ‘non-building’ specific. Nonetheless the physical buildings available to the Council are an essential resource for arts development in Kildare.

It is the policy of the Council:

- AC 1 To continue the physical enhancement programme of arts spaces in libraries, including visual arts and gallery, performance and workshop facilities.
- AC 2 To support key facilities including the Riverbank Arts Centre and Cultural Campus

located in Newbridge, the Leinster Printmaking Studio in Clane and advance plans for the development of artists' studio spaces in Ballitore.

- AC 3 To develop and improve the physical infrastructure of cultural facilities countywide, with emphasis on North and South Kildare.
- AC 4 To ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community.

4.5.3.5 Museums

The Council recognises the need to provide facilities for the correct collection, storage and display of items of artistic, natural, historic and scientific objects, within the county. It acknowledges the service provided by existing heritage centres and local museums in the county. Accordingly it is the policy of the Council:

- MR 1 To support the existing Heritage Centres by the establishment of a museum service within the county.
- MR 2 To promote the development of the Quaker Museum in Ballitore.
- MR 3 To develop Kildare Town as a tourism centre within the County and seek the development of a museum in Kildare Town, this museum may be a branch of the National Museum of Ireland and should be centrally located.
- MR 4 To support the provision for a museum in Leixlip to serve the North Kildare area.

4.5.3.6 Libraries

it is the policy of the Council:

- LR 1 To provide an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts, archives and local studies services.
- LR 2 To provide facilities for exhibitions and workshops, lectures and community educational activities in libraries.
- LR 3 To provide new library facilities for the towns of Kildare, Newbridge, Kilcock, Kill, Celbridge and Kilcullen.
- LR 5 To carry out a research project to investigate the delivery of library services to rural villages using public private partnerships, electronic networking and of mobile library units provision.

- LR 6 To investigate the possibility of providing alternative library accommodation in Monasterevin, the Curragh and Clane.
- LR 7 To provide and improve access for the disabled in both proposed and existing library accommodation.
- LR 8 To research possible arrangements between private and commercial entities with a view to improving access to appropriate library services of the council.
- LR 9 To develop links between existing library facilities for third level education and outreach facilities in relation to distance learning.

4.5.3.7 *Good Quality Built Environment*

It is the policy of the Council:

- BE 1 To identify and target areas of need, for urban and rural regeneration and within which to target resources for physical regeneration and re-development to enhance the visual, residential and general amenity of the area.
- BE 2 To work with the local community and voluntary groups, as appropriate, to enhance the environment and amenity of local towns, villages and areas.
- BE 3 To develop a strategy in conjunction with Offaly County Council for the area of North West Kildare/North East Offaly to identify opportunities and potential for development and regeneration.

