

About this document

Section 1:

Provides an overview of the project and the strategic objectives and goals in developing the Future Hubs Location Strategy for Kildare.

Section 2:

Outlines the background and context to the strategy and highlights the key policy drivers and objectives that relate to the Hub landscape in an enterprise and regional development context. This section also provides an overview of the national hubs classification framework which supports policy and resource allocation to different types of hubs.

Section 3:

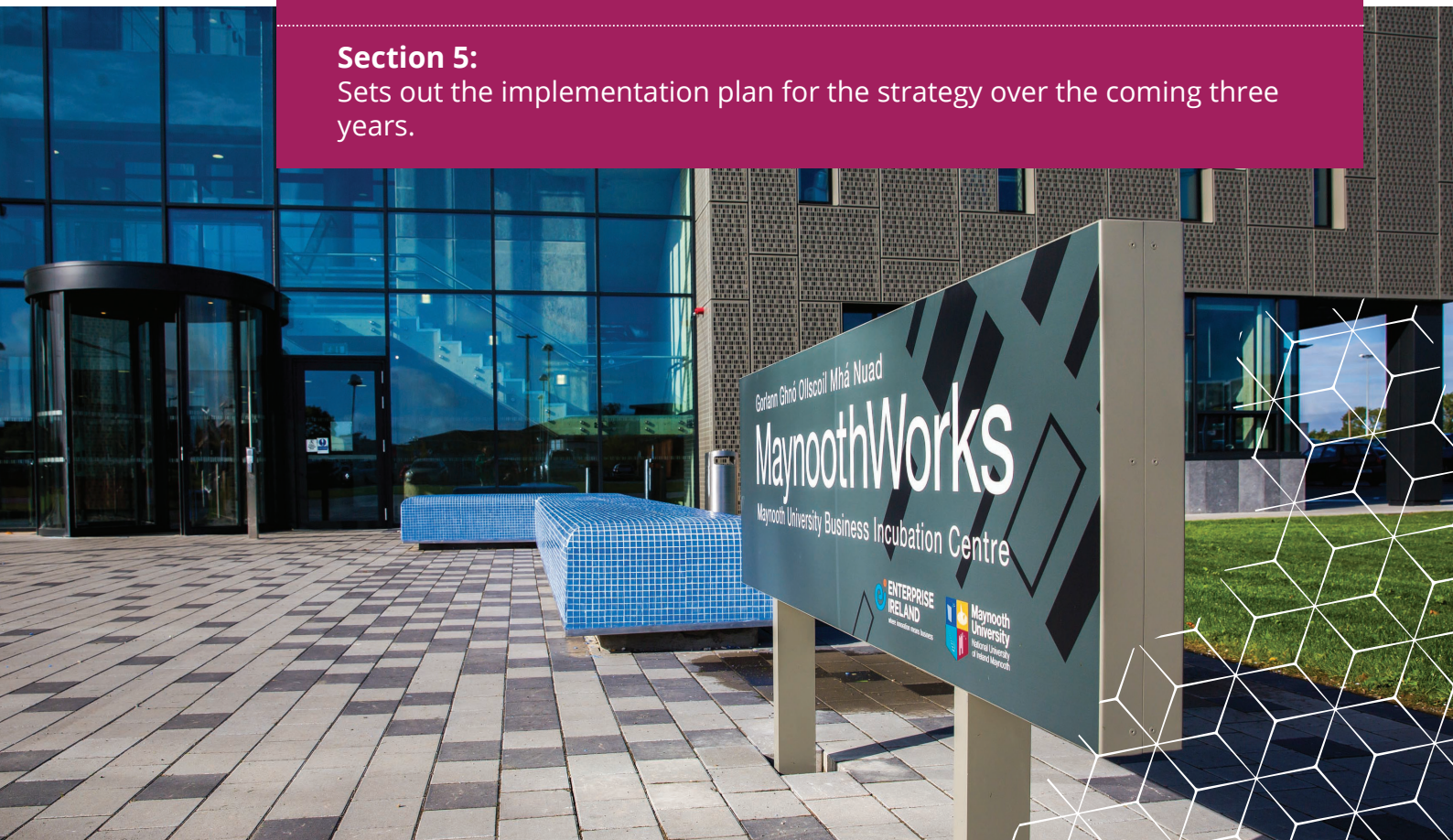
Presents a summary of the research, consultation and analysis behind the strategy. Provides an analysis of the hubs infrastructure and the enterprise landscape in Kildare and sets out the results of the audit of hub facilities and their services across the county.

Section 4:

Details the strategy itself including vision, values, strategy pillars and actions.

Section 5:

Sets out the implementation plan for the strategy over the coming three years.



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Executive Summary

Business Barn, Leixlip www.businessbarn.net

Requirement for a Strategy

This strategy, commissioned by Kildare County Council, sets out a number of cornerstones for the coherent development of the hubs infrastructure in Kildare and the network over the next three to four years. The strategy is focused and specific on addressing issues common to the majority of hubs. It will deliver valuable solutions in practical and innovative ways that will have a direct impact on the capacity and operational efficiency of the hubs and ultimately their long-term sustainability. The development of this strategy and the K-Hub Network will provide key learnings and insights as well as a policy test bed that has the potential to provide significant benefits in both rural and urban locations in Kildare and across the Mid-East Region.

Key issues that the Hubs Strategy will address

Hubs and Coworking spaces have an expanded and important role to play in this new flexible work model by providing entrepreneurs and workers with office or desk space and shared facilities close to their homes and when they need them. Hubs also provide aspects of the social entrepreneurial network or the 'ecosystem' for clients and their staff and valuable services such as reception, meeting rooms, canteen facilities, storage and parking. Hubs also play an important societal function in promoting a quality of life and healthy work / life balance for individuals and families.

TOWN CENTRE LIVING

Adding activity and vitality to town & village centres by addressing premises reuse, mixed use development & shared services / facilities.

LOW CARBON FUTURE

Hubs can promote walking, cycling and car share thereby reducing emissions and open up space for pedestrianisation, planting and recreation in urban areas.



LOCAL RETAIL & SERVICE

Remote working will increase local footfall and demand for unique and personal retail & service experience. Public realm will enhance this town centre vibe.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & LEISURE

Hubs will connect people back into their locality and community and stimulate demand for and participation in local cultural scene.

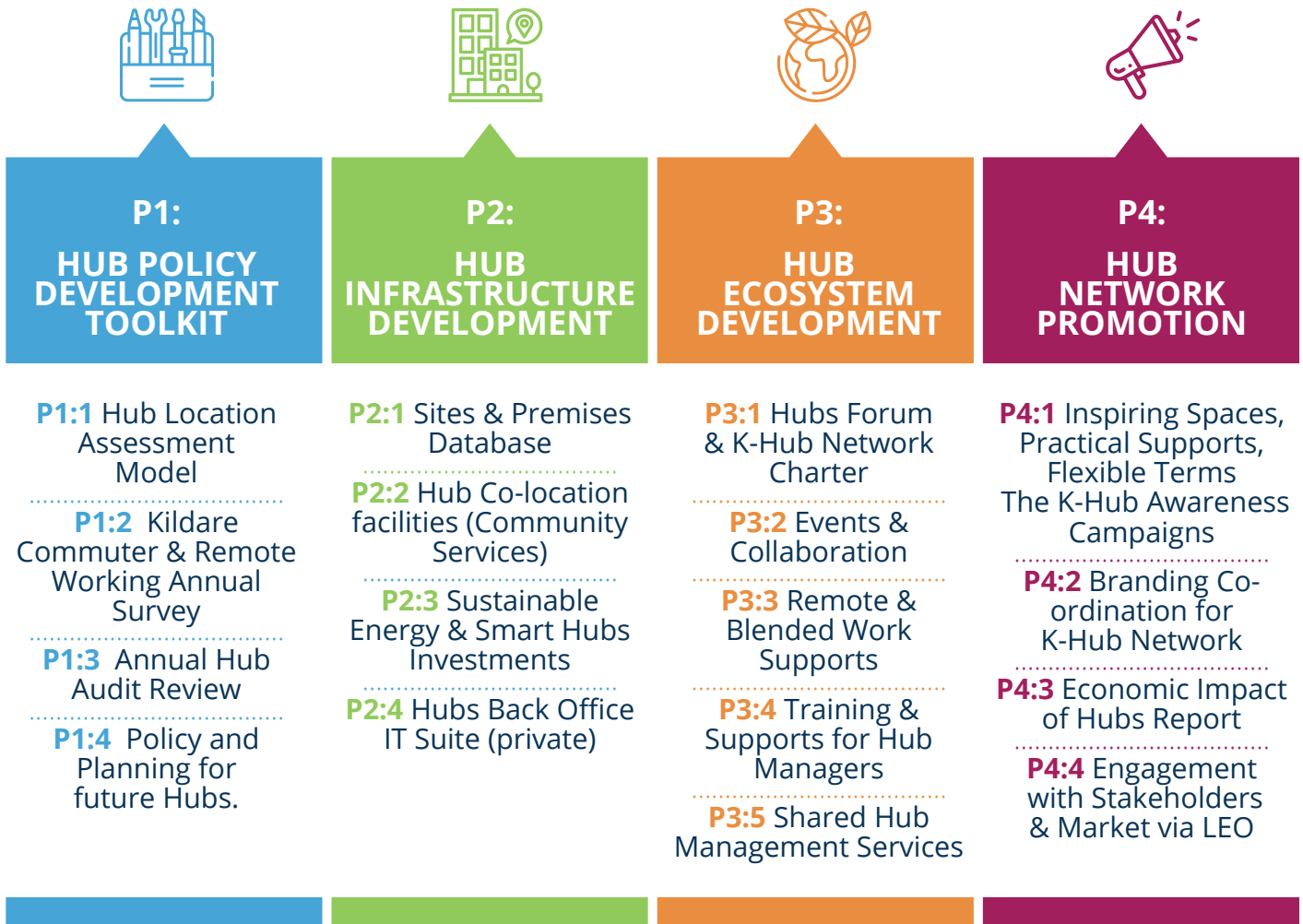
Hubs have the potential to act as catalysts for local regeneration and town and village centre renewal schemes through reuse of dormant buildings or sites. Hubs also add vitality to local regeneration by creating enterprising communities in localities that were, in the past, blighted by the exodus of workers on their daily commute to larger urban centres. With its growing and young population, its proximity to Dublin and traditional commuter flows and its industrial structure, Kildare must now plan for this new future of work and enterprise.

Role of Hubs in the Enterprise Ecosystem

Hubs are much more than workspaces for remote workers. They are the conduits for entrepreneurship, enterprise creation and innovation and a key instrument in enterprise and industrial policy. The incubation cycle means that our enterprise hubs can continuously produce high value employment as clients start, grow, scale and exit. Hubs are a primary instrument in stimulating indigenous enterprise and promoting innovation across the local SME base. Hubs can also play a useful role in the enterprise ecosystem by building partnerships with FDI operators and HEI's to create second sites for expansion projects or placing teams in an innovation and collaboration environment.

How will we do this?

The strategy will rest on four thematic pillars of activity. The graphic below provides a summary illustration of the pillars and actions contained in the strategy.



Collaboration & Integration

The strategy will leverage from existing networks of stakeholders from the enterprise support community and across the K-Hub Network. This network infrastructure, which will be led by Kildare County Council and Kildare Local Enterprise Office, will include regional development organisations such as EMRA, Mid-East Regional Enterprise team, the Mid East Regional Skills Forum, Kildare & Wicklow ETB together with Kildare Chamber, and a range of sector based organisations for the collaborative delivery of projects and activity contained in this strategy. The key delivery partners will be the K-Hub Network group of Hub owners and managers across Kildare.



Athy Community Enterprise Centre www.athycec.com

Policy Alignment

The Kildare Hubs Strategy has been conceived and crafted from a wide spectrum of existing policy domains. The Kildare Economic Development Strategy Kildare 2025 Strategy and the Local Enterprise Development Plan sets the policy and strategic framework for the Kildare Hubs Strategy. Both documents make specific reference and recommendation to the need for a Kildare Hubs Strategy to support future identification of need and the specific conditions and approaches to the future location of hub infrastructure. However, the Kildare Hubs Strategy also aligns with a host of other national, regional and local policies and plans from the National Development Plan and National Planning Framework to the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy to the Mid-East Regional Enterprise Plan and Powering the Regions Enterprise Development Strategy.

Implementation

The implementation and management of the strategy will lie with the Economic Development & Enterprise Team in Kildare County Council with oversight provided by the Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee. Project planning, appraisal, approval and reporting will flow from this group while operational management will rest with the executive team.

The delivery of actions will be a mix of time scheduled projects, ongoing management activity and review, monitoring and evaluation activity. For example, the development of Blended Work supports (P3.3) or Branding Coordination for K-Hub Network (P4.2) will be early actions with specific outputs that enable and drive the strategy, whereas the Annual Commuter & Remote Work Survey (P1.2) or Training for Hub Managers (P3.4) will be ongoing over the lifetime of the strategy. Towards the end of the strategy there will be some strategic review projects including the Economic Impact of Hubs Report (P4.3) will be conducted in order to measure success and provide pointers for future action and support.

Introduction



Venture House, Crookstown www.venturehouse.ie

Project outline

The factors and drivers for the creation of a Kildare Hubs Strategy are longstanding and multifaceted and reflective of the shifting nature of the enterprise landscape in Kildare. Increasing rates of entrepreneurship, self-employment, and contract working are all leading to a growing flexibility around how, where and when our work is performed. Technology has opened limitless opportunities for virtual work and virtual collaboration, reducing the need for travel and commuting.

Kildare County Council has identified the need and opportunity through its Economic Strategy - Kildare 2025, and the Local Enterprise Development Plan to 2024 to provide a hubs strategy to guide future policy and planning for this critical enterprise infrastructure.

It will act as a means of supporting new enterprises, harnessing entrepreneurial talent and skills and investment through hub provision. Kildare County Council is among the first local authorities in the country to provide an integrated strategy for hub infrastructure and supports. The Hubs Strategy has been presented to the Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee at draft and final stage for response and commentary.

Since 2018, Kildare County Council and its partners have been actively developing a network of hubs to meet the growing demand for co-working and innovation spaces in the county. Given its proximity to Dublin and its expanding network of hub infrastructure, the county is well placed to benefit from the increased relocation of workers and companies. This strategy will provide a rationale for the location of future hubs in Kildare.

Role of Hubs in the Enterprise Ecosystem

Hubs are much more than workspaces for remote workers. They are the conduits for entrepreneurship, enterprise creation and innovation and a key instrument in enterprise and industrial policy. The incubation cycle means that our enterprise hubs can continuously produce high value employment as clients start, grow, scale and exit. Hubs are a primary instrument in stimulating indigenous enterprise and promoting innovation across the local SME base. Hubs can also play a useful role in the enterprise ecosystem by building partnerships with FDI operators and HEI's to create second sites for expansion projects or placing teams in an innovation and collaboration environment.

Enterprise Hubs, Innovation Centres, Digital Hubs, and Coworking / Remote Working Hubs all have a strong role to play in meeting these goals as part of the wider regional and local development agenda. They also support other strategic development objectives including decarbonisation, town centre renewal, digitalisation in SME's and building strong communities of entrepreneurs. Strategically, Enterprise Hubs are a key mechanism for supporting priority sectors in Kildare including the knowledge/tech economy; advanced manufacturing; Agri-Food; the Equine sector and the Green Economy.

Hubs and Coworking spaces have an expanded and important role to play in this new flexible work model by providing entrepreneurs and workers with office or desk space and shared facilities close to their homes and when they need them. Hubs also provide aspects of the social entrepreneurial network or the 'ecosystem' for clients and their staff and valuable services such as reception, meeting rooms, canteen facilities, storage and parking. Hubs also play an important societal function in promoting a quality of life and healthy work / life balance for individuals and families.

Hubs are often catalysts for local regeneration and town and village centre renewal schemes through reuse of dormant buildings or sites. Hubs also add vitality to local regeneration through creating enterprising communities in localities that were, in the past, blighted by the exodus of workers on their daily commute to larger urban centres. With its growing and young population, its proximity to Dublin and traditional commuter flows and its industrial structure, Kildare must now plan for this new future of work and enterprise.

Business Barn, Leixlip www.businessbarn.net





National Equine Innovation Centre @ The Irish National Stud

Influencing Factors

The Covid-19 Pandemic has rapidly accelerated and expanded the evolution of remote working across the globe. Individuals, business and industries have had to rapidly adapt the way they work the way we work during this unprecedented challenge. In spite of the emergency nature of this change, the initial transition has been well received, with a number of major companies reporting stable or increase productivity and outlining plans to develop a long-term remote working culture. The return to office will be gradual and partial following the lifting of workplace restrictions and public health advice and will contain a strong degree of remote working in any future workplace policy.

The pace of change in technology is redefining many job roles, new workplace functions are emerging as others are disappearing. Where people carry out that work is also changing. We are now seeing the emergence of a hybrid or blended model of working where employees and contractors mix their working time across home, hub and host organisation.

This Blended Working Model can accommodate certain functions that remote workers can't do from home but also offers a 'dispersed office' solution for their employees with appropriate elements of support and control. This model also has potentially significant savings in terms of cost, time, congestion and carbon. More widely, the development of a strategically coherent hub network can serve as an asset to support local authorities and their community partners to drive the regional economic recovery and support a **'Smart or Digital Recovery'**.

Climate Action and a drive towards lower or neutral carbon targets are increasingly compelling employers and employees to seek ways of reducing emissions and promoting energy conservation. In this critical endeavour local innovation and coworking hubs can have a positive impact on decarbonisation through reduced carbon emissions associated with less car based commuting while simultaneously contributing to local enterprise and regeneration especially in town and village centres. The pursuit of a better work life balance will also feature strongly in remote working and relocation strategies at the enterprise or individual level.

Policy & Context- Local & National

Key Policy towards Hubs

The role of Hubs as a key piece of economic infrastructure has become widely recognised and enshrined in public policy in recent years. In particular, enterprise and sector development policy, regional development policy and research & innovation policy all place enterprise hubs, as an important part of the infrastructure for local and regional competitiveness. The policy towards hubs is also influenced by wider societal objectives such as Placemaking, Smart Communities and Climate Action and Decarbonisation.

Some of the **key policy frameworks** that relate to hubs:

- Kildare Economic Strategy - Kildare 2025
- Kildare Local Enterprise Development Plan 2021 to 2024
- Kildare County Development Plan (Vol 2 revision 2021)
- Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (EMRA 2019)
- Powering the Regions (Enterprise Ireland)
- Regional Enterprise Plan for Mid-East (DETE & Regional Stakeholders 2018 to 2020)
- Regional Enterprise Plan for Mid-East (DETE & Regional Stakeholders 2021 to 2024)
- Making Remote Work - National Remote Working Strategy (DETE 2021)
- Our Rural Future and Connected Hubs (DRCD 2021)
- National Planning Framework 2018 – 2030 & Revised National Development Plan 2021
- Future Jobs Ireland - Remote Working report 2019
- National Recovery Plan 2021
- National Broadband Plan 2019

1. Kildare Policy Framework

The Kildare Economic Development Strategy Kildare 2025 and the Local Enterprise Development Plan (2021 – 2024) set the policy and strategic framework for the Kildare Hubs Strategy. Both documents make specific reference and recommendation to the need for a Kildare Hubs Strategy to support future identification of need and the specific conditions and approaches to the future location of hub infrastructure.

The Kildare Enterprise Development Plan 2021 to 2024 is the strategy and action plan for the development and delivery of all enterprise facing supports over the 4-year period. This plan make specific provision for the Future of Work which will see the creation of a network of connected Innovation and Digital Hubs in the county.

This policy around the future of work also recognises the changing nature of ‘the workplace’ and flexibility and the movement towards remote and blended working models. In this regard the plan will analyse the sectors most suitable or those with a greater tendency to accommodate and promote remote working. The policy also seeks to assist towns and town centre regeneration through any future hub provision where possible and practical. Kildare 2025 has created a blueprint for achieving the development priorities and focus areas for the county over the coming five years including the provision of enterprise hubs, many of which are already in development or delivered.

Kildare 2025 specifically references the provision of ‘live-work’ communities in which employment, residency and sustainable transport facilities are in close proximity to each other to reduce long-distance commuter trends and congestion. It also makes provision for supporting the use of town centre locations for new service focused enterprises and the need to identify suitable locations and support for the provision of coworking facilities, digital hubs/eHubs and eWorking centres throughout the county.

It is envisaged that these Hubs will function as outreach facilities for city-based employers and promote flexible and remote working. The hubs in the county connected through the K-Hub Network were identified as an action to kick-start the development of a wider Hubs Strategy for Kildare.

The indigenous SME community is a central piece of the strategy for Kildare in supporting its local business base to innovate and digitalise in order to make productivity gains, compete regionally, nationally and globally and to build resilience to cope with future change and shocks to the economy and markets



2. Local & Rural Policy – Digital & Smart Communities

Local Digital Strategies

The key focus areas for Local Digital Strategies include implementation of the National Broadband Plan; enhancement of the digital economy, employment and enterprise through digitalisation and innovation and technology transfer; and the development of digital & ICT skills in the labour force and among citizens. Local Digital Strategies will be Local Authority led and will support Smart Community Initiatives and Smart Cities along with a range of citizen or client facing service innovations like acceleration of e-service delivery and digital transformation in the public service and the adoption of digital applications and technologies to help decarbonise and support the Climate Action targets. Kildare County Council is currently preparing for the development of its first Digital Strategy.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) is leading on policy and supports for the **Smart Communities Initiative** in conjunction with the Department for Rural & Community Development (DRCD), Local Authorities and a wide range of regional and local stakeholders. The aim of the Smart Communities Initiative is to bring exposure to digital content and technology into a community, while highlighting the supports available locally and the opportunities provided by embracing technology. One of these opportunities is the chance to promote rural areas as a remote working locations through their hub facilities.

Alongside the Smart Communities Initiative, DRCD is using the Digital Innovation Programme to stimulate local action and collaboration around digital adoption and innovation in local resource management.

The **Digital Innovation Programme** has a specific focus on collaboration across local authorities groupings or between local authorities and third parties, such as social enterprises or educational institutions. DIP Projects must be local authority-led and, where assets or infrastructure will be established, favour rural and isolated areas.

In addition to the establishment of new hubs and hub networks, work is also underway to transform existing centres of communities to encourage entrepreneurship and participation on a local level. This is the primary aim of the Work Matters at Your Library initiative. The strategy provides for the adapting of library buildings space and layout to accommodate a full range of facilities, equipment and technologies required to underpin library services and support all types of users – for example, study spaces, adult learning zones, assistive technologies, innovation spaces, digital suites and hot-desk facilities.



3. Powering the Regions

'Powering the Regions' is Enterprise Ireland's response to the ambitions set out in Project Ireland 2040 and the Future Jobs Ireland strategy. It sets out the development of an overarching National Plan which is underpinned by nine Enterprise Ireland Region specific plans to grow and sustain jobs, and to expand the reach of the Enterprise Ireland client base in every county and region in Ireland.

The plan proposes six new national initiatives which aims to enhance productivity and resilience, drive new entrepreneurship, develop urban centres of growth and support the expansion of scaling companies in the regions outside of the Greater Dublin area. Within this framework of enterprise & innovation objectives there is specific measures for investment in infrastructure such as enterprise hubs, coworking¹ and specialist facilities like research centres,

digilabs, creative studios and other sector based innovation hubs. A number of specific measures contained in the plan relate to Kildare Hubs including a reference to MERITS innovation space in Naas, Maynooth University's role in regional innovation and stimulation of new start-up's, knowledge businesses and supporting the Food & Drink sector through innovation facilities and other enterprise supports. In total the plan anticipated that 10 such smart working hubs would be delivered across the three counties of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow Mid-East region over the period of the plan.

The Regional Enterprise Plan's are being revised at time of this report being produced. However, it is anticipated that the role of Hubs in enterprise creation and scaling will feature prominently as well as coworking and remote working facilities to promote a sustainable 'blended work' model among the workforce.



¹ (Worksmart Initiative seeks to provide 10,000 additional incubation and co-working spaces in the regions with 1,300 in the Mid-East region alone)



The Hub at Ballymore www.ballymorehub.com

4. National Broadband Plan (NBP)

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) was signed in November 2019 with National Broadband Ireland (NBI) to build, operate and maintain the network. This is the final piece of the investment in the ICT infrastructure of Ireland and will see fibre brought to the last remaining business premises, households, schools and community facilities in the difficult to reach and commercially unviable locations of the state. The NBP rollout will be fibre to the premises (FTTP) network in the Intervention Areas which will be capable of delivering a high-speed broadband network. Mobile 5G services are recognised by industry as being complementary to the high-speed broadband service that will be provided via the NBP.

In the first stage fast fibre infrastructure will be delivered to over 300 community centres, schools, library, hubs and local sports facilities in the intervention areas, known as Broadband Connection Points (BCP's). The BCP's will enable communities to quickly get free public access to high speed broadband while the NBP itself is being rolled out to individual homes, businesses and other facilities. Kildare has 3 designated BCP's at Crookstown ETB Training Centre; Bigstone Community Centre near Castledermot and a public wifi network at Lullymore Heritage Park.

Hubs Classification and Diversity

The hub classification system presented in Table 2.1 is the recently adopted typology by the Inter Departmental Group in central Government for a wide collection of Hubs infrastructure under the Connected Hubs Network. The classification emerged from detailed research and engagement with over 100 hubs across the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) between 2019 and 2020. The AEC Hubs Network strategy 2020 is an initiative of the WDC and DRCD with extensive input from all enterprise agencies, regional development partners, local authorities and other government departments as well as the hub owners themselves.

The classification system builds a profile of the variety and diversity of hub infrastructure and the dynamic nature of hub clients and users and their support needs. The Classification of the Hubs Network provides a map for understanding the diversity of the Network across Kildare. By developing a common typology for hubs this framework will facilitate collaboration between hubs and provide policy makers with specific alternatives and options to help target the right type of facility and service in the right location. The Classification system also assists the network operators (the Hubs) to drive strategy. It will allow hubs to self-assess and identify their strengths and their market, and plan future direction, resources and investment.

Hub Service & Support Packages

In addition to the hub classifications or 'Hub Categories' above there is a second layer of factors that must be considered which is the hub support & service offering or 'Packages of Support'. There are also 5 key categories of Support Package identified which are overlaid with the 5 Hubs Classifications providing an insight into the operational profile of the hubs and their areas of focus and client services.

These 'Service & Support Packages' describe, in a menu type format, what is actually offered to the clients and stakeholders. These groups of Support Packages are the client facing piece and will allow hub owners and stakeholders to self-assess and classify their facility within the local or regional hub network. Appendix 2A provides a detailed list of services and facilities that are most commonly found across each of the five hub types.

The Classification of Hubs provides a clear framework for accommodating the diversity of the Network. The Classification system also assists hub operators to build local strategies. It will allow hubs to self-assess and identify their strengths and their market, and plan future direction, resources and investment.

It will equally help to identify gaps and weaknesses in the offering and find fitting solutions, address competitiveness and collaboration opportunities in a sectoral or geographic context and avoid duplication or displacement effects. The classification framework is a qualification and quality control process to ensure hubs 'do what they say on the tin'. The accompanying Service & Support Packages matrix above provides detail on the typical or ideal service solutions to overlay on a local hubs infrastructure plan. Some hubs will reach for a higher level of service to clients and stakeholders by virtue of the classification, especially if funding and incentives apply / whilst other hubs will step back from service provision and refer clients to more specialised hubs.



The Hub at Kildare Chamber, Naas www.countykildarechamber.ie

HUB TITLE	DESCRIPTION	SERVICE PACKAGES
Enterprise Hub	Local enterprise driver providing space, facilities and services for start-up, HPSU's, remote workers. Hosting events and acting as a connector for entrepreneur networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central shared services & management; • Business Support; • Client networking / events.
Scaling Hub	A step up from a general enterprise hub with strong focus on post start-up clients being supported through scaling and investment stages. High level services for acceleration and export development. Global entrepreneurship events and programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and specialist business supports; • Incubation space & supports; • Accelerator programmes
R&D Hub	Specialist Hub usually attached to HEI with focus on clients in early stages of R&D of new products and services. Provides office or desk space and access to meeting rooms, laboratories etc. A full time manager and other staff are employed to support business development through incubation and acceleration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology & Innovation resources and expertise; • HEI research capability; • Access to R&D funding; • Graduate placements; • Entrepreneurship pathways.
Coworking Hub	Provides clients with private offices or desks with access to meeting rooms and event space. Offers clients plug & play facilities but not business support. Often co-located with other facilities and shared management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared facilities; • Flexible desk / office terms; • Smart assess and booking; • Fast broadband.
Community & Enterprise Hub	A step up from a general enterprise hub with strong focus on post start-up clients being supported through scaling and investment stages. High level services for acceleration and export development. Global entrepreneurship events and programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and specialist business supports; • Incubation space & supports; • Accelerator programmes

Hub Classification System - Table 2.1 (AEC Hubs Classification)

Research & Analysis of Kildare Hub Landscape

03

A Comprehensive Process – Our Methodology

The Kildare Hubs Strategy, commissioned by Kildare County Council, was conducted between July and October 2021 deploying a set of sequential tasks to build up market intelligence and insights, validate information and data, best practice research and policy analysis. A number of strands of consultation, research and analysis have informed the findings of the Kildare Hubs Strategy work, including:

- 01** — K-Hub Hubs Survey and Audit of provision including mapping exercise and case studies of selected Hubs. This element of the primary research was conducted initially via an online questionnaire and followed up with individual consultations with hub owners and managers.
- 02** — Desk review of literature, policy and best practice models in enterprise support structures, hubs classification systems and trends in the hub model. This strand of the work analysed trends in Coworking; Incubation Supports; Hub Management Models; Start-up Programmes and supports and a range of other trends and developments in the enterprise hubs landscape.
- 03** — Stakeholder Workshops and one-to-one consultations with Hub Managers, Local Authority managers and key enterprise and economic development partners. These stakeholder consultations and workshops were conducted throughout August and September. There were over 30 consultees engaged with in total throughout the course of the study.
- 04** — Several separate analysis sessions between consultants and Economic Development & Enterprise team at Kildare County Council.



Osprey Hub, Naas www.ospreyhotel.ie/osprey-hub

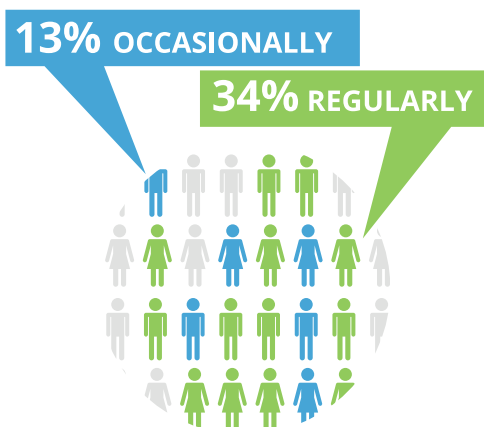


Key Findings from the Research

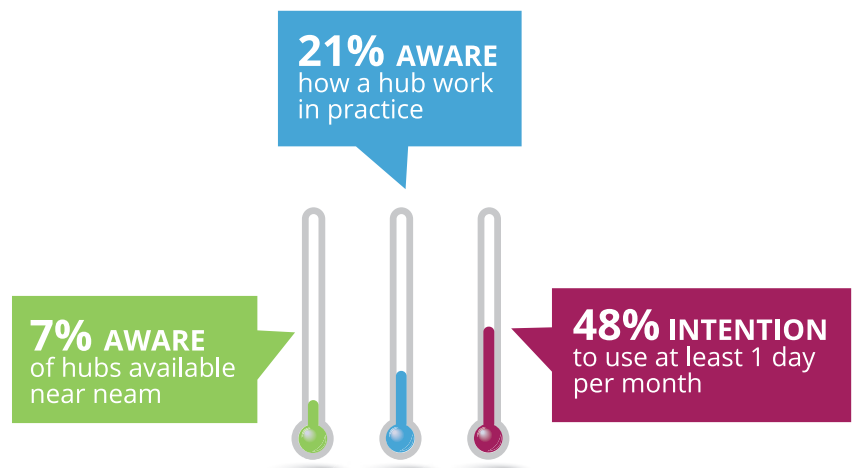
County Kildare has specific demographics and socio-economic dynamics that also provide relative context for hubs. Kildare has a rapidly growing population (fifth largest local authority in the state by population at over 225,000). The county also has a relatively young population with higher representation in the working age cohorts. From a sectoral perspective, Kildare has higher employment concentrations in some of the sectors that will translate into entrepreneurship and remote work practices such as technology, financial and professional services and technical and managerial occupations in other key industries. Kildare also has a high proportion of the workforce commuting into the Greater

Dublin metropolitan area including the towns of Naas, Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge to access their employment.

The **Kildare Commuter Strategy 2019**, commissioned by Kildare County Council and conducted by **Interactions Ltd** prior to the outbreak of the Covid pandemic and the remote working revolution but shows relatively significant levels of engagement in remote work and interest in the use of hubs as a means of facilitating a better work life balance and reducing commute time and cost. The graphics below provides an overview of some of the key findings in relation to remote work trends and incidence of hub working.



Remote Working



Hub Awareness & Attitudes

The survey results were also ‘workshopped’ through sample users groups of commuters who had some experience with remote working and or hub users. The focus groups were led in discussions around some of the ideal features of hubs to make them more attractive as an alternative to either commuting to the office or working from home. In this series of discussions a number of themes emerged as either ‘important’ or ‘nice to have’ features of hubs with security (both physical and data) and privacy of space coming out on top as important features whereas access, comfort and culture are all seen as nice to have features for hubs.

The Clarke Workforce Survey 2021 shows a profile of remote working activity in Kildare prior to and during Covid 19 workplace restrictions shows the transformational shifts in remote working. However, even prior to the pandemic, 18 per cent of employers allowed full remote working and a further 41 per cent allowed occasional remote working among staff.

The Regional Co-working Analysis study was undertaken in September 2020 jointly by the three Regional Assemblies (EMRA, SRA and NWRA). The analysis recognises the role of virtual working and technology assisted remote working very much becoming part of normal working patterns in certain sectors, it is clear that such changes have the potential to open up an array of economic and environmental opportunities for all regions. It uses data from the Labour Force Survey along with other research specific to remote work practices subsequent to the onset of the Covid Pandemic and therefore captures the sudden and alarming impacts on work patterns and employment. It not only provides a framework for future analysis of remote working post pandemic but also a set of considerations and mapping of infrastructure and supports to enable remote working as part of economic life in all regions. Remote Work in Ireland / Future Jobs Ireland 2019 had developed priorities and policies to encourage remote working and hub-working

pre-pandemic. It notes data from the 2018 CSO pilot survey on remote work activity, that 18 percent of the workforce were working remotely one or two days per week, mostly from home. It also pointed to a significant increase in job portal searches for remote work-related positions in recent years and enterprises increasingly engaging in remote working solutions. These arrangements are more prevalent in larger companies, especially those in digital and tech sectors, financial services and other professional services. As engagement from enterprise has increased, more roles have been created which are either fully remote or have remote elements.

The 2020 Eurofound³ Survey shows Ireland to have 2nd highest rate of ‘Remote Only’ working in EU after Belgium with 47 per cent of the workforce exclusively working from home or remote office including hubs. A recent survey by NUIG in May/June 2021 found that 95 per cent of respondents are seeking some element of remote work in the longer term with 52 per cent indicating a preference for remote working several days per week and 32 per cent indicating a preference to work remotely on a full-time basis ongoing. The survey is the second annual investigation into remote work in Ireland and notes the significant increase in preference to work fully remotely from the first national survey conducted in April 2020, from 12 per cent to 32 per cent.

The study also revealed that close to one in 10 people have already relocated or moved house, as working from home gave them more options. Almost one in five of respondents said they would consider relocating based on their experience of remote working since Covid-19. While much of this new ‘dispersed workplace’ profile has resulted from the pandemic there was a growing segment of the workforce already engaged in flexible, coworking or remote working practices reflecting entrepreneurship and self-employment and the gig economy.

³ Eurofound is the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions is an agency of the European Union which focuses on managing research, gathering information, and communicating its findings.

Key Findings from Consultation

COVID IMPACT

Covid impact on workforce from a commuter society to remote worker society has been marked in Kildare. The post Covid 'return to office' policies will determine the level and nature of hub demand in the longer term.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration across the hub landscape and stakeholders and especially with the recent establishment of the K-Hub Network emerged as a central theme and the potential for the Hubs to cooperate and collaborate around future funding; management / admin resources; events production; marketing & promotion; client services and technology.

DIVERSITY

Diversity in the Hub network – The K-Hub Network is a very broad church that reflects local factors and circumstances in which each hub operates. Going forward matching the right type of hub provision with market demand will be a critical factor in hub viability.

EVOLVING MODEL

Evolving Model at present. Kildare can develop a powerful and sophisticated hub proposition by reflecting the different hub types and target user groups. This spectrum spans the hub classification framework from a very specialised R&D / Innovation Hub to Coworking & Remote Working Hubs for rural and urban dwellers seeking a blended work model. A rounded offering will be essential to drive investment and regional growth.

THE COMMUNITY

The Community is key to hub success especially when launching a hub. Engagement with the local / target community from the outset is key and build a model that is relevant to users and informed by them.

FUNDING KPI'S

Funding KPI's and outputs may not look out far enough for benefits and impacts and therefore small rural hubs are potentially being overlooked or ineligible for support. It takes time to build momentum and the community before outputs are produced.

FUTURE WORKING TRENDS

Future working trends are demanding more responsive and flexible services – easy in / easy out; 24/7 access; plug & play; network community etc. will all be important functions of the Hub model in attracting future clients.

STRUCTURE & MODEL

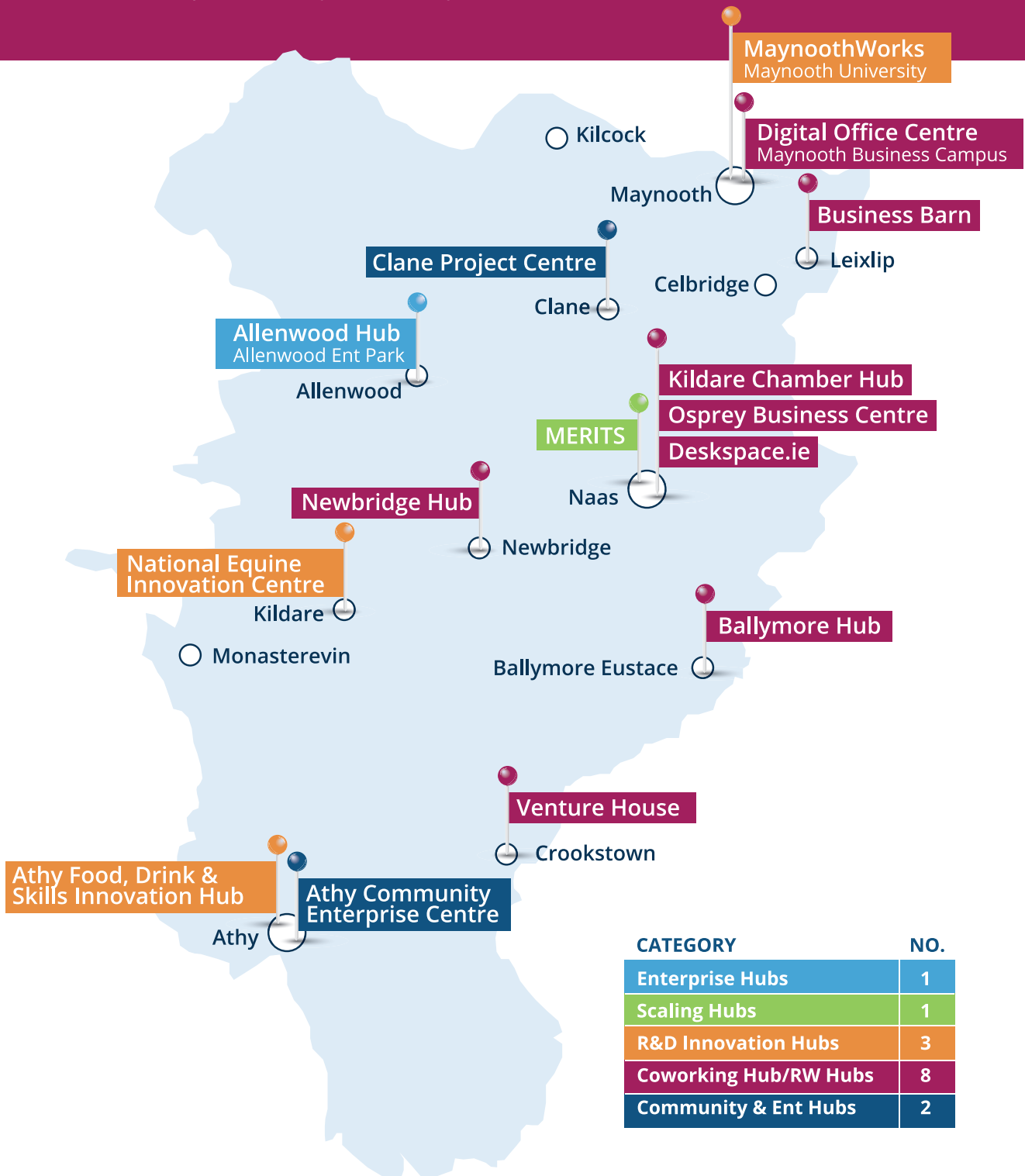
Structure & Model of Hub including ownership, governance & management will be a critical element in future sustainability especially in small rural hubs. The model will determine how well a hub performs especially in early stages.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Local Connections including local business community, local authority, diaspora, digital champions and other stakeholders will bring benefit and visibility to the individual hubs and the network.

Audit of Hub Provision in Kildare

Kildare county has a strong spread of hub facilities by type and location especially when the recently established sector hubs are considered. These hubs have emerged over time through a wide and diverse set of partners, stakeholders and users. Ownership structures vary from community organisations to local authorities, HEI's, statutory agencies and also private ownership and partnership models. The hubs can be found in both urban and rural settings and often reflect the sectoral make up of industry in the subject location.



Kildare Hubs Network Mapped (Audit of hubs conducted in September 2021)

This section provides an assessment and profile of the hubs infrastructure across Kildare. The information and data have been compiled from the survey findings, consultations with K-hub Network members and other desktop research into the physical infrastructure. The Hubs Classification system is used as part of the assessment methodology as a frame of reference for the different types of hubs across the county. It is acknowledged here that many hubs will address or fit more than one of the types but for the purposes of the mapping the leading function of each hub is matched to the five-type classification.

CATEGORY	NO.	HUB NAME
Enterprise Hubs	1	Allenwood Hub
Scaling Hubs	1	MERITS Hub, Naas
R&D Innovation Hubs	3	MaynoothWorks, Maynooth University National Equine Innovation Centre Athy Food & Drink Innovation Hub
Coworking / Remote Work Hubs	8	Kildare Chamber Hub, Naas Osprey Business Centre, Naas Deskspace.ie, Naas Digital Office centre, Maynooth Business Barn, Leixlip Ballymore Hub, Ballymore Eustice Venture House, Crookstown Newbridge Business Centre, Newbridge
Community & Enterprise Hubs	2	Athy Community Enterprise Centre Clane Project Centre

Table 4.1: Hubs listed by type and status

Location	Population (2016)	No. of Hubs	Hubs Space (s.q.m)	No. CW/RW desks	No. Incub desks	Small Offices	Medium Large Offices	Conference Training Rooms
Athy	9,677	2	2,250	30	12	8	5	2
Allenwood	981	1	450	15	0	2	3	1
Ballymore	873	1	250	8	0	2	1	1
Clane	7,280	1	800	10	0	8	6	2
Crookstown/Ballitore	793	1	500	10	0	3	3	2
Kildare	8,634	1	140	0	15	0	0	1
Leixlip	15,504	1	300	12	0	5	0	1
Maynooth	14,585	2	5,500	40	30	15	22	4
Naas	21,393	4	3,500	70	20	8	10	4
Newbridge	22,742	1	650	10	0	4	6	1
Kildare Libraries		5	n/a	15				2
Kildare BCP's	1,000	2	n/a	5	1			
Totals		15	14,340	225	77	55	56	22

Table 4.2: Overall Hub Infrastructure & Facilities in Kildare

CR/RW desks refers to Coworking and Remote Work desks including short term flexible lets 'hotdesks'

As per Table 4.2 we have included the enterprise and employment facing facilities and services provided by non-hub entities including the Library Service across 8 of its premises in Kildare and the two physical Broadband Connection Points (BCP's) i.e. Crookstown ETB Training Centre and Bigstone Community Centre near Castledermot.

This information was gathered throughout the summer of 2021 and may be subject to some change as hubs reopen and reallocate space to different user groups or clients. For example, a coworking hub may decide to shift more of their overall space to private office suites or vice versa depending on demand for specific space and facilities. This factor is likely to be a constant over time and as new hubs enter the marketplace.

From the data and information in table 4.1 and 4.2 above the following points summarise the key findings from the hubs infrastructure audit and mapping exercise.

- In total 15 hubs exist in Co. Kildare with a combined gross floorspace of circa 14,200 sq.m. This does not include 5 existing libraries which have some remote working desks and capacity and the two BCP's with same offering.²
- Naas has the greatest level of provision overall in the county by facility type and number of hubs.
- Maynooth stands out on all criteria of assessment due to the presence of the very large Maynooth Business Campus run by Digital Office Centre. MaynoothWorks also adds to the scale of provision in this location and particularly so in the context of incubation deskspace not 'open' to general entrepreneurship base but targeted at University spin- ins & spin-outs.
- Some small population centres contain hubs for a variety of legacy reasons including Allenwood / Crookstown / Ballymore but are providing a highly valuable asset and service to enterprises and citizens in these rural and low population centres.
- The analysis includes all existing hubs and hubs that are coming to the market in 2021 to 2023 including the Athy Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub
- Libraries must be seen in the context of secondary touch points in the community for public access supports including some enterprise & employability services.

² Number of hubs includes those scheduled for opening inside the strategy period.

Key features of Hubs across the K-Hub Network

Considering the variety of hub types and range of functions and supports offered to the client base it is clear that Kildare hubs have a critical role to play in the local and regional economic & enterprise development agenda. Some of the key features and benefits of the hubs are outlined below:

- Focal points for the local start-up and entrepreneurial community.
- Sector specialisms are hosted and nurtured by hubs e.g. Tech/software; Equine; Food & Drink; Green Energy / Economy.
- Coworking spaces that promote collaboration between clients are widespread in Kildare mostly privately owned.
- Hubs are essential focal points for building digital economy networks & ecosystems. A variety of accommodation from desks to large office units is an essential mix to get the spectrum of clients that will create the right dynamic. On a county wide basis Kildare performs well on this diversified measure.
- Many hubs have become the focal point for enterprise training, conferencing and entrepreneurship events across the county prior to Covid but will resume these functions.
- Easy in, easy out flexible terms for clients through licenses rather than lease agreements is essential as well as 'plug & play' facilities / terms.
- Incubation support for clients through mentoring, training, enterprise events access to finance and research support are often packaged for clients of Hubs.
- Hubs can act as catalysts for town and village renewal initiatives in smaller communities that have lost core services and footfall.



01 Case study



(Scaling Hub as per Table 4.1)

MERITS

Mid-East Regional Innovation Think Space (MERITS) is a dynamic new incubation centre for Technology companies, located at Devoy Quarter, Naas.



The Mid-East Regional Innovation Think Space (MERITS) www.merits.ie

Initiated by Kildare LEO, Kildare County Council and Maynooth University the purpose designed 1,200 sq.m facility is the centre point of an active ecosystem for national and international technology companies and entrepreneurs. The project was funded by Enterprise Ireland under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) and Kildare County Council. At full capacity MERITS will host up to 100 employees in the tech sector, across a range of co-working spaces and private offices. MERITS provides mentorship, innovation supports and access to enterprise accelerator programmes such as TechHatch and GoGlobal and other bespoke supports for its members and external HPSU clients from across the region.

It caters for larger companies seeking to place a project team into a creative technology led environment. MERITS also features a range of conferencing and meeting facilities and advanced Audio Visual fitout including large video wall, greenscreen, camera and sound system. A Mixed Reality Lab hosts the latest equipment for Virtual and Augmented Reality. A broadcasting and podcasting studio ensures that the member companies have everything they need at their disposal within the building.



02 Case study



(R&D Innovation Hub as per Table 4.1)

National Equine Innovation Centre

Smart Specialisation & Cluster Development:
The National Equine Innovation Centre will build on Kildare's international reputation as the home of the equine industry in Ireland.



National Equine Innovation Centre @ The Irish National Stud

Kildare is home to an estimated 800 breeders and almost 180 trainers. Key to the county's reputation in the sector is the Irish National Stud, the highly-regarded thoroughbred horse-breeding facility established in Tully in 1946. An initiative of Kildare County Council and Kildare LEO with supporting funding from County Kildare Leader Partnership and Kildare County Council, this brand new facility will have the capacity to host up to 15 equine

based entrepreneurs and start-up's operating in the sector and bringing new products and innovations to the industry.

It focuses on innovation, applied research, commercialisation and learning. By creating this environment in the heart of the Irish National Stud, we aim to fast track the commercialisation of research and capitalise on the growth of equine innovation knowledge-based businesses in Ireland.

03 Case study



(Coworking/Remote Work Hub as per Table 4.1)



Venture House Crookstown

Venture House is a 5,000 sq.ft privately owned and managed Co-Working Hub in Crookstown in the rural south of County Kildare.

The hub is located in Crookstown Business Park, at exit 2/3 off the M9 Motorway 20 minutes from Naas, Carlow and Kildare Town centres and 50 mins from Waterford and Dublin. The Hub consists of private office suites, hotdesk space, conference and meeting space and shared facilities such as kitchen, privacy booths and free car parking. All spaces are fully furnished and ready for immediate occupation and use by a client.

Venture House is a coworking space for entrepreneurs, remote workers and professionals seeking a flexible and managed office solution. The coworking community at Venture House is an important aspect of the hub and members are encouraged to engage with enterprise events and networking.

Venture House also offers high speed gigabit fibre broadband to clients. All utilities and services such as light, heat, cleaning and security are included in the flexible license fees. There is also a gym onsite and ample parking at the wider Crookstown Business Park complex.



www.venturehouse.ie

Client User Profiles

As outlined in the classification system a wide range of Hub types and terminologies has evolved over time and tend to distinguish by the target activity or client base which they set out to attract and assist. Enterprise Hubs or centres have traditionally existed at the heart of every local economic development strategy for decades. However, the model has evolved and specialised to reflect the needs of a more complex entrepreneurial and workforce base. To contextualise this diverse hub offering we provide some hypothetical examples below of hub clients and scenarios that might apply to the hub network in Kildare.

Scenario 1: Technology Start-up

Kildare LEO, Enterprise Ireland and Maynooth University are been assisting Paul with a new AI quantum computing spin-out in the field of robotics in advanced manufacturing. Paul is partnering with European colleagues on product design, testing and simulation work in advance of the commercialisation phase of the venture. The team are looking for the right location and facility to harness the three year commercialisation phase of the project which will be led by Paul but will involve a lot of travel between the 4 R&D sites across Europe. Paul is pitching to MERITS management and Kildare LEO for a package of support to locate the venture in the Naas facility where they expect to expand the team from 2 to 10 by year 3 and then 30 staff by year 5 which will include developers, technical support, design & marketing, business development, finance and administration. Paul currently lives in Mullingar but plans to move to Clane for convenience of access to MERITS and MaynoothWorks where he is presently working from.



Scenario 2: Remote Working

Simon and Maria are a couple with two young children residing in Clane. Simon is a programmer for a global bank based in Dublin city centre and Maria works in finance in south Dublin. Both have been working from home since the Covid workplace restrictions but are seeking a blended work model going forward. Simon plans to book a flexible desk in MERITS in Naas to work 3 days per week and benefit from the smart technology facilities and the tech ecosystem. Maria will mix her working week between the local Project Centre in Clane, home and HQ and have the flexibility to manage the kids school and creche times with ease. Simon gets to spend lots of time minding and playing with the kids in the evenings and a new family routine is mid week meal in Clane town centre rather than a long commute home from Dublin.



Scenario 3: Enterprise Hub Client

Mary was made redundant from the entertainments industry in London during the pandemic and decided to return to Ireland and set up a new online business packaging experiential events for the corporate sector. Mary is a client of Kildare LEO and has accessed a priming grant and TOV and has decided to become a full-time office client in the Kildare Chamber Hub in Naas where she will have a private office suite and access to meeting rooms, canteen, as well as reception services. Mary is originally from Nenagh and her partner Joe is from Dublin. They have decided to live outside Naas to give themselves access to the city and ease of trips to Nenagh on M7.



Scenario 4: Coworking Services

Lisa is looking for a multi site solution for her marketing consultancy business that she set up in 2017 and has been entirely home based since its inception. An increasing part of her business is meeting and presenting to clients and her home office is not suitable nor are the clients business premises. Lisa has decided to select 3 hubs across Kildare where she will book flexible desk space and inspiring meeting rooms in order to facilitate the client base where they are located. She has selected the Business Barn in Leixlip; Venture House in Crookstown and the Newbridge Business Centre. Lisa is also looking to make new contacts and collaborations with other coworkers in the media fields.



Venture House, Crookstown

Recent Hub Development

Much work and progress has been made to date by Kildare County Council and Kildare Local Enterprise Office together with key regional and local enterprise stakeholders towards the creation of a framework and infrastructure that will support its priority and emerging sectors. Leading projects like the MERITS facility in Naas which received funding from Enterprise Ireland's Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) and Kildare County Council will act as a regional Hub for technology start-up's and entrepreneurs. The partners in this facility include EI, Kildare LEO, MaynoothWorks, the Regional Skills Forum and Kildare Chamber.

The K-Hub Network was established in 2021 as a forum of all hub providers across Kildare and includes both existing and emerging hubs. It is a mix of hub types and different ownership structures from fully publicly owned facilities to support specific sectors, to privately owned coworking / flexible office solutions and community led hubs operating as social enterprises for the benefit of the local community. Through the K-Hub Forum hub clients will be able to access services from across the provider network and there will be scope for shared resources and collaborative funding bids and other development initiatives.

Maynooth Works at NUIM is a recently established business incubation and enterprise space for knowledge transfer, innovation and supporting research commercialisation in a range of science and technology fields including Immunology, Electronics, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The new National Equine Innovation Centre (NEIC) at the National Stud in Kildare will play host to new ventures and collaborations in equine science, health and performance of national and international significance.

The Athy Food & Drink Innovation & Skills Hub will be a regional centre of excellence and base for the Agri-Food industry to collaborate and foster new talent and ideas. Other emerging sectors such as the Green Economy are being supported through the Just Transition Fund at the Allenwood Enterprise Park with facilities for start-up's and investors in the future decarbonised economy. Since 2018, over €6m in funding has been secured in Kildare based hubs through a variety of sources including REDF, RRDF, JTF and LEADER.

Kildare LEO has recently launched its three-year Local Enterprise Development Plan to 2024 which sets out specific actions related to hub infrastructure and the delivery of enterprise supports through the network under the title **The Future of Work**. This strategy will advance this key objective through the development of a system for the identification of hub need based on a set of viability factors.



Strategic Framework to 2025

Strategy Rationale

Kildare County Council will use this Hubs Network Strategy to support a number of actions and objectives from the enterprise support community to provide the county with a leading and coherent suite of services, supports and facilities to the start-up community and external entrepreneurs and remote workers across the county. In this context, the strategy will only build on what is already there by adding value through the power and strength of 'the Network'. The Strategy will pave the way for future priorities for hub planning and location and shape how Kildare County Council and its partners allocate resources for a more responsive, innovative, enterprising, creative and low carbon future. This will accelerate the development of the network and its service offering and allow Kildare to win new investment from corporates and footloose entrepreneurs. At the community level the strategy will integrate with exciting developments through Smart Communities Initiatives and Digital Strategies and a range of other collaborative projects where the local Hub(s) will act as a focal point or key venue for activity.

Strategic Objectives

- 01 — Drive Entrepreneurship in our key / priority sectors through the continued nurturing and collaborative environment for start-up's, investors and service providers.
- 02 — Ensure local and regional workforce see Kildare as a responsive and dynamic location for remote working and meeting.
- 03 — Ensure that all existing and future hub infrastructure can achieve a high standard in energy conservation, decarbonisation and promote sustainable and green practice.
- 04 — Build on the strengths of the K-Hub Network and promote best practice and shared resources for management, marketing, events and service innovation.
- 05 — Use the scaling assets and expertise of the network to drive growth of hub clients including export growth.
- 06 — Create a robust methodology and system for assessing need for intervention and investment by the public sector in future Hub provision - Location Assessment Model.

Values & Guiding Principles

The guiding principles provide the strategy with a set of reference points to ensure the strategy remains on track and true to its overall objectives and relevant to its stakeholders and clients. The following **5 Guiding Principles** have been set for the Kildare Hubs Strategy.

- 01** — Practical and relevant – tools and systems help hubs and guide future hub planning
- 02** — Entrepreneurial and responsive to client and market dynamics
- 03** — Sustainable & Smart - Digital First, Resource Efficient/LEAN
- 04** — Collaborative – K-Hub Network / LEO & KCC / EI / NACEC / DRCD & Connected Hubs National Network
- 05** — Carbon Neutral / Low Carbon – having a strong energy efficient and low emissions policy



Osprey Hub, Naas www.ospreyhotel.ie/osprey-hub

Key areas of focus for Strategy 2022-2025

Considering the variety of hub types and range of functions and supports offered to the client base it is clear that Kildare hubs have a critical role to play in the local and regional economic & enterprise development agenda. Some of the key features and benefits of the hubs are outlined below:

- County Development Plan and Local Area Plans must contain specific guidance on Hub provision and need based on the methodology of the Location Assessment Model and framework. Other tools and templates to support hubs are also considered including management and governance models and hub feasibility planning templates.
- Kildare Digital Strategy, future LECP and other local policies and strategies can support the Hubs Strategy and recognise the network and resources contained. This cross policy and cross departmental function will be important to embedding hubs as a specific category of infrastructure in the statutory planning process and wider policy framework.
- Recognise the role and importance of community infrastructure such as libraries and BCP's in delivering services and supports to entrepreneurs and remote workers. In some instances and areas, hub facilities can be provided without a stand-alone hub being developed.
- Kildare Hubs Strategy must align closely with key objectives, themes and actions arising from the Kildare Economic Strategy 2025 (priority sectors) and the Kildare Local Enterprise Development Plan 2021 to 2024 (resources and support programmes).
- Align all future provision with key economic and enterprise data that evidences the incidence of need and future demand for space and support including population growth, commuter & remote working trends, sectoral activity suitable to hubs and coworking trends.
- Work with private sector and community sector to identify best local delivery model in each instance and seek to integrate with a wider regeneration initiative e.g. T&V RS / RRDF / URDF or other key placemaking masterplans.
- Hub promoters public, private or community will recognise the need for viability and evidence based demand in their hub planning. Guidance on the feasibility process and application of the assessment model criteria will form a central part of the decision to support future hub proposals or not.

Strategy Pillars

The strategy pillars are where the values, priorities and objectives are turned into action and projects. This element of the strategy framework helps to communicate the strategy and provide channels of projects and activity that can be managed and monitored.

The Enterprise Hubs Network project will focus activity around **4 Strategic Pillars / Enablers**:

- 01** ● **HUB POLICY DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT**
> location assessment model; commuter / workforce data;
- 02** ● **HUB INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**
> including sites & premises; facilities & equipment; sustainable & smart systems; capital assets and central resources.
- 03** ● **HUB ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT (HUB COMMUNITY)**
> activity that supports the network to collaborate and share knowledge, resources and ideas;
- 04** ● **HUBS NETWORK PROMOTION AND MARKETING**
> how the network presents itself and its selling points



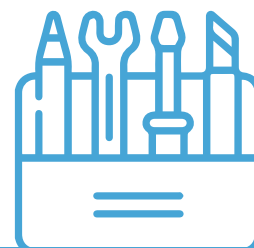
- P1:1** Hub Location Assessment Model
-
- P1:2** Kildare Commuter & Remote Working Annual Survey
-
- P1:3** Annual Hub Audit Review
-
- P1:4** Policy and Planning for future Hubs.

- P2:1** Sites & Premises Database
-
- P2:2** Hub Co-location facilities (Community Services)
-
- P2:3** Sustainable Energy & Smart Hubs Investments
-
- P2:4** Hubs Back Office IT Suite (private)

- P3:1** Hubs Forum & K-Hub Network Charter
-
- P3:2** Events & Collaboration
-
- P3:3** Remote & Blended Work Supports
-
- P3:4** Training & Supports for Hub Managers
-
- P3:5** Shared Hub Management Services

- P4:1** Inspiring Spaces, Practical Supports, Flexible Terms The K-Hub Awareness Campaigns
-
- P4:2** Branding Co-ordination for K-Hub Network
-
- P4:3** Economic Impact of Hubs Report
-
- P4:4** Engagement with Stakeholders & Market via LEO

Pillar 1: Hub Policy Development Toolkit



Ensuring alignment and consistency in the development planning system and generating reliable data to support future hubs provision.

Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P1.1	<p>Future Hub Planning (Location Assessment Model)</p> <p>The use of the Location Assessment Model and framework for defining need and provision type as a policy and objectives scorecard is critical to future planning. The model is designed to help planners and development partners to ensure that their hub proposals are aligned with wider development policy and can play a positive and sustainable role into the future.</p>	<p>Location Assessment Model - see Appendix 1A</p> <p>Hub Policy Development Toolkit - Business Model Canvas for New Hub Proposal- See Appendix 1B</p>	Kildare County Council	Immediate
P1.2	<p>Kildare Commuter & Remote Working Annual Survey</p> <p>Conduct ongoing survey of workforce to understand the changing profile of commuting patterns and remote working and other work and enterprise dynamics. This monitoring tool will provide robust data to guide future planning and policy for existing and future hubs and their market offering. The survey template has been established from the 2019 questionnaire. It will be important to achieve large sample groups from the target workforce populations and get commitment to repeated participation in each years' survey.</p> <p>The future commuter surveys will also help with talent identification and mapping and the profiling sector activity. Each future annual survey will need to contain a strong feature on hub awareness and participation rates and likely future trends from a user experience perspective.</p>	<p>Annual monitoring survey with consistent sample group</p>	Kildare County Council & Mid East regional partners	January / February each year

Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P1.3	<p>Annual Hub Audit Review</p> <p>Data on hub infrastructure, space, facilities and service provision will need to remain fresh and up to date. This will require an annual review of the Hubs Audit. This exercise will also provide an opportunity to expand the information on key indicators such as pricing, occupancy and service uptake.</p>		Kildare County Council & K Hub Network	Q2 each year
P1.4	<p>Policy & Planning Framework</p> <p>The revision of the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans and the development of a Local Digital Strategy for County Kildare will be an important process to embed the Hubs Strategy in local statutory framework and to provide a consistent policy for hubs into the future.</p> <p>These policies and strategies will contain specific objectives and proposals for future hubs and how they are to support the wider enterprise and economic development agenda in Kildare. Included in these objectives will be the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban & Rural Regeneration impacts • Sustainable Transport outcomes • Lower commuter rates • Enterprise growth rates and opportunities for new start-up's • Compact urban growth and higher footfall in town centres • Place making and quality public realm. 	<p>Statutory reference point and conditions for Hub infrastructure provision</p>	Kildare County Council	Q1 - Q2 2022

Pillar 2: Hub Infrastructure Development



Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P2.1	<p>Sites & Premises</p> <p>In conjunction with all P1 activity identify public assets suitable for future hub provision and a facilities standard for each hub type under consideration. This will be specifically for sector based hubs and or strategic investment site plans where a hub facility is deemed appropriate. This property and sites assessment will also identify non publicly owned assets that may be suitable for future hubs.</p>	<p>Shortlist / database of suitable and available sites and premises for future hub provision.</p>	Kildare County Council / LEO	Q3 2022 and ongoing monitoring and updating
P2.2	<p>Hub Co-location (Community Services & Facilities)</p> <p>Explore the potential for future Hubs Plans to incorporate or integrate with other key Community Services in an effort to share resources and reduce capital costs. This could include Childcare facilities; Post Office / Courier Service, Libraries, Rural Resource Centre, BCP's or other fitting complimentary services. Encourage and support the use of existing community or public facilities to accommodate 'space' for coworking in appropriate settings. This will help to avoid displacement, duplication and support viability across all public and community assets.</p>	<p>Location Assessment Model + Hub Management & Feasibility Templates</p>	Kildare County Council	Q3 2022 and ongoing monitoring
P2.3	<p>(a) Sustainable Energy Hubs</p> <p>Assist in the transition to a low carbon economy. Establish a Sustainable Energy Community between the hubs with the support of SEAI and other green energy partners. Retrofit Energy Systems, Solar Panels, eCar charge points, and a range of other renewable energy technologies and installations. This will require funding and investment plan that can potentially benefit from group central funding and procurement.</p>	<p>Smart & Sustainable Hubs sub- group & best practice guide</p>	Hubs Strategy Forum	Q4 2022 – Q2 2023

Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P2.3	<p>(b) Smart Hubs Investments</p> <p>Similarly explore scope for upgrade of Smart Tech systems to assist Hubs in their connectivity, AV / Virtual Conferencing and Cyber security systems and potential for IoT infrastructure and other technologies such as VR. In conjunction with other local and regional technology led plans including Smart Communities Initiative projects; Local Digital Strategies; BCP's; Digital Innovation Funding / Workplace Innovation / Disruptive Tech Fund – develop a tech toolkit for new or upgrading hubs.</p>			
P2.4	<p>Hubs IT Suite – Back Office</p> <p>Central procurement of a suite of cloud based information technology systems to provide the following functionality for individual hubs: Online automated booking engine for hot-desk rental, support & training, network events. Hub management system to assist with hub admin portal, members portal, internal hub network collaboration. A CRM toolkit for external communications and client engagement.</p> <p>These tools will help to promote the hubs, ease the burden of hub management, and facilitate the creation of the hub network community and ongoing participation in it. The network will also help hub managers to support the businesses in the hubs, encourage participation at events and sharing of best practice in hub management.</p>	<p>Demand assessment and specification brief.</p>	<p>Hubs Strategy Forum / K-Hub Network</p>	<p>Q2 2023</p>

Pillar 3: Hub Ecosystem Development



Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P3.1	<p>Hubs Forum & K-Hub Network Charter</p> <p>Establish a governance and strategy forum to include strong representation from K-Hub Network. Establish and incorporate a Practice Standards Framework of guidelines and protocols for hubs to gain network membership and develop a membership charter. Develop policy for vetting potential entrants. Initiate network groups to pool best practice and identify potential growth areas and priority sectors. Plans for ongoing network management; synergies, business development, knowledge exchange and best practice.</p>	<p>Formal Network Charter and terms of reference for Hubs Forum</p>	All hubs and statutory agencies	Q2 2022
P3.2	<p>Virtual Events & Collaboration</p> <p>Client facing schedule of events and networking opportunities to promote collaboration and knowledge transfer across all Hub members and virtual clients. This activity can be delivered in both physical and virtual settings and support presentations and interactive sessions featuring 'Hub success stories' and insights from entrepreneurs that have come through the incubation process and scaled their venture from a local hub. These events should be hosted across the K-Hub Network on a periodic basis and incorporate information on relevant resources such as SFI (Science Foundation Ireland) or KTI (Knowledge Transfer Ireland). A close working relationship with key enterprise partners such as Kildare LEO, Enterprise Ireland and others will be critical to building capacity and maintaining momentum.</p>	<p>Schedule of events and webinars</p>	Hub owners; statutory agencies; network organisations	Ongoing

Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P3.3	<p>Remote Work & Blended Work Model Supports</p> <p>Lead on a Remote Working & Blended Work Model and target appropriate sectors including the public sector and act as facilitator/ promoter for private sector through policy and training initiatives. Develop a collaborative working relationship with appropriate partners and providers e.g. Grow Remote; NACEC; HR & Training providers and other agencies with a remit to support future work practices.</p> <p><i>The Blended Work Model can accommodate functions that remote workers cannot do from home but also offers a 'dispersed office' solution for their employers with elements of support and control. This model also has potentially significant savings in terms of cost, time, congestion and carbon. The national Remote Work Strategy Making Remote Work 2021 set out guidance and targets, recognising that it is likely that the Blended Work model is here to stay. It will take some time to determine how much of a role hubs will play in this future work model and if corporates see the value in part funding hub rentals from some of the reduced office rentals.</i></p>	<p>Development of policy and training initiatives</p>	<p>Kildare County Council/ K Hub Network/ Skills Agencies</p>	
P3.4	<p>Training & Supports for Hub Managers</p> <p>A range of training supports and programmes will be developed and delivered over the coming three years for Hub managers to build their capacity, skills and knowledge. The suite of training will become accredited and recognised as a standard in the field of operating and running a successful enterprise hub. This can be done in conjunction with the National Connected Hubs Network and NACEC. Initially there will be a need for training to help new or inexperienced practitioners to define their operation type (which Hub classification) based on their client base, or potential client base.</p> <p>Suggested modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financia Management • Event Management • Marketing & Promotion • Community Engagement • Critical Thinking & Effective Communication Skills • Digital & Creative Skills 	<p>Schedule of training events and content modules</p>	<p>Hubs Strategy Forum / K- Hub Network / Kildare LEO</p>	<p>Q3 2022</p>

Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P3.5	<p>Shared Management & Information Services</p> <p>Develop a central support resource of materials, manuals, templates, best practice guides, funding information, technical toolkits, database & library resources and a range of other resources that will be common and practical to all Hubs. This will be an ongoing and evolutionary project from the outset.</p> <p>Future funding opportunities coordinated and facilitated via the Hubs Strategy Forum. Service optimisation in the hub network; gathering of data and metrics from the hub network and using this to access EU and national funding. Longer term potential to evolve an outsourced hub management service for future or existing hubs to 'buy-in' management services rather than building a management function for each facility.</p>	<p>Training and practice manual for Hub Management</p>	<p>Hubs Strategy Forum / K- Hub Network</p>	<p>Q3 2022</p>



Pillar 4: Hub Network Promotion



Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P4.1	<p>K-Hub Awareness Campaigns Inspiring Spaces...Practical Supports ... Flexible Terms</p> <p>The translation of Hubs strategy and K- Hub infrastructure into smart and inspiring digital content and channels are just one entry point to connect with and tell the story of the K-Hubs in a way that captures the attention of the multi-dimensional hub's audience. We plan to develop a content marketing approach that focuses on the creation, distribution and circulation of relevant content across the web to positively influence potential consumers along their path to conversion.By leveraging consumer understanding we can deliver the most appropriate messages through the right channels, in a way which maximises efficiency and effectiveness, and serves to present the K-Hub Network members in the most persuasive light and to drive higher participation rates in co-working, blended working and entrepreneurship.</p> <p><i>This project will develop a strong and confident set of materials and content for multi-channel campaign delivery that speaks directly to the potential Hub user.</i></p>	<p>Media plan and creative content resource</p>	K-Hub Network	Q2 2022 and ongoing delivery
P4.2	<p>Branding Coordination for K-Hub Network</p> <p>An early action of pillar 4 and one that must precede any consumer / citizen facing campaigns is the co-ordination, design and application of the K-Hub Brand – the Brand Guidelines. This will allow for an umbrella approach to the marketing and promotion of the Network as distinct from an individual hub and will set out the objectives and approach of where and when this 'umbrella brand' is used for the benefit of its members.</p>	<p>Website and Branding / Design Guidelines</p>	K-Hub Network	Q2 2022

Ref.	Action Item / Project	Output	Stakeholders	Timeframe
P4.2	The key elements of this brand guidelines will incorporate logo design and other brand visuals, website development, brand manual/guidelines and brand launch. A key part of this work will be to engage with all K-Hub members and the funding stakeholders such as Kildare LEO.			
P4.3	<p>Showing the Benefit – Socio-Economic Impact Assessment</p> <p>The production of a technical but accessible market intelligence report into the value and benefit of hubs and having a coordinated strategy towards the hubs network and infrastructure will be an important element in selling the hubs themselves. This Socio-Economic Impact assessment must examine the functioning and role of the hubs and how they are supporting the wider economic strategy of Kildare in relation to entrepreneurship and enterprise growth; remote/blended working; inward investment; knowledge economy and other priority sectors. The report must also examine and estimate the decarbonisation and Climate Action measures and effects associated with the hubs and the strategy interventions..</p>	<p>Economic Impact Assessment Report – with public accessibility</p>	Kildare County Council / K- Hub Network	Q1 2023
P4.4	<p>Engagement with Stakeholders & Market via Kildare LEO</p> <p>The brand guidelines will inform some of the communications strategy for the K-Hub Network but there is a wider engagement and relationship piece to be performed to build network familiarity, awareness and share information on current initiatives and success stories coming from the Hub Network. This will become a focal point through news features, press releases and network events at an industry level. The investor community and investment stakeholders such as IDA will be drawn closer to the activity of the network through this series on going actions, new and events. This network engagement and communications function should extend to Kildare Diaspora groups and target individuals especially in tech and other priority sectors</p>	<p>Communications Plan</p>	Kildare LEO	Q2 2022

Strategy Implementation & Management

The Kildare Hubs Strategy will be delivered over the period 2022 to 2025 inclusive. Naturally, much development activity and capacity building will happen at the front end of the implementation period while repetitive activity will flow in the mid to latter years of the strategy.

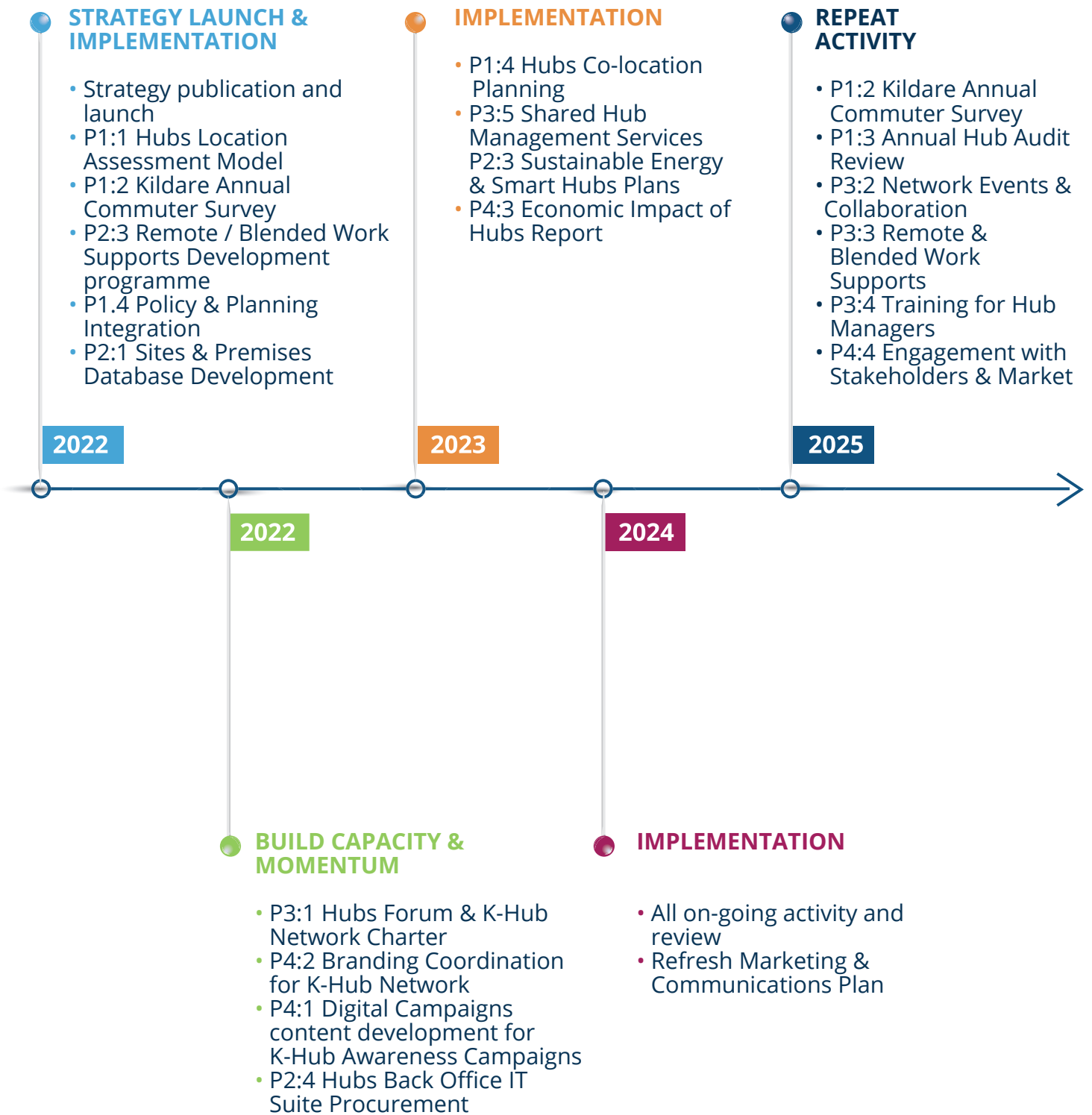
It is therefore anticipated that the project management and delivery function will require significantly more resource time and supports in years 2022 and 2023 than will be the case for years 2024 and 2025. It must also be noted that flexibility around project implementation will be critical and will rely to a certain degree on budgetary considerations and funding opportunities on an annual basis. Key roles and responsibilities for the implementation and management of the strategy will lie with the Economic Development & Enterprise Team in Kildare County Council with oversight provided by the Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee.

Project planning, appraisal, approval and reporting will flow from this group while operational management will rest with the executive team. Aligned to this structure there will be designated sub-groups from the Hubs Strategy Forum to be established as part of the strategy process. It is important that resources and timeframes are coordinated to achieve efficiency and consistency in implementation and targeted results.

The implementation timeline graphic below outlines the activity of the Kildare Hubs Strategy in summary format. The previous section provides details on the project activity, stakeholders and the delivery for the subject activity. Each project will be fully scoped into a project management framework at the final planning and pre-implementation stage.



KILDARE HUBS STRATEGY ACTIVITY PLAN



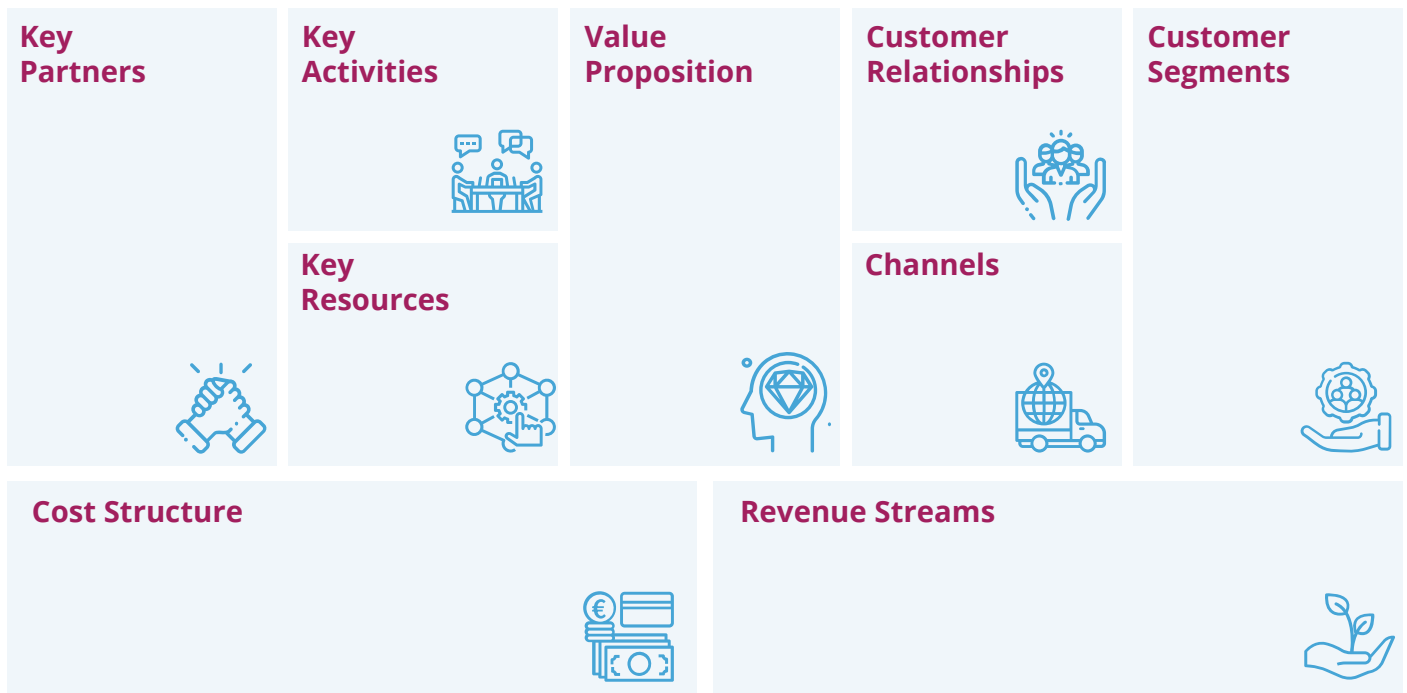
Appendices

1A: Location Assessment Model (Action P1.1)

Assessment Criteria	Hub Type 1 (Enterprise Hub)	Hub Type 2 & 3 (Scaling / R&D Hub)	Hub Type 4 (Coworking / Remote Hub)	Hub Type 5 (Community Ent Hub)
Population & Urbanisation	Population size = > 10,000 Town status (<i>primary / secondary growth town</i>)	Population size = > 20,000 Town status (<i>primary growth town</i>)	Population size = > 5,000 Town status (<i>primary / secondary growth town; employment centres</i>)	Population size = > 3,000 Town status (<i>secondary growth town; employment centres</i>)
Travel to work and commuter flows	Evidence of above average commuter patterns - (<i>Annual commuter / remote working survey</i>)	N/A (<i>Clients of these hub types will have a regional profile / attracted by specialist supports</i>)	Evidence of above average commuter patterns - (<i>Annual commuter / remote working survey</i>)	Rural areas with high outward employment flows;
Enterprise & industrial structure - sector / cluster profile	Employment = LQ value > 1.3 Evidence of growth in units Networking across industry	Cluster evidence or emerging; Strong networks & links; Demand for R&D supports	Service sectors growth; Management, professional, finance occupation profiles	Evidence of mature industry and restructuring in local economy
New start-up activity & inward investment rates	Enterprise creation = VAT regs / CRO inc / Commercial Rates; EI HPSU clients & LEO enquiries	HEI Spin out/in activity IDA projects & EI HPSU clients	Connections to entrepreneurial networks; EI HPSU clients & LEO enquiries	Local activation and connections to enterprise base inc Circular Economy / SE
Regeneration activity / local area plan	Sites & premises availability Masterplan priorities & uses URDF/RRDF ideally	SEZ or similar / brownfield site REDF / DTF / JTF etc	Sites & premises availability Masterplan priorities & us	Sites & premises availability Masterplan priorities & uses (especially T&V Schemes)
Local capacity (org/governance, resources, assets, skills)	Local partners with org structure and governance; Property assets & match funding	HEI Partner and research capability; Meeting reg/nat policy	Private operator or community provider preferably to lead and finance	Local partners with org structure and governance; Property & match funding
Sustainable Transport & Movement	Close to public transport infrastructure; No requirement for additional	Close to public transport infrastructure; No requirement for additional	Close to public transport infrastructure; No requirement for additional	Close to public transport infrastructure; No requirement for additional

1B: Business Model Canvas for New Hub Proposal (Action P1.1)

(SNAPSHOT OF BUSINESS PLAN)



1C: Consultee List

Kildare County Council	Stakeholders K-Hub Network	External Stakeholders
Planning Team	MERITS, Naas	Enterprise Ireland
Economic Development & Enterprise Team	Osprey Business Centre, Naas	IDA
Library Services Team	Venture House, Crookstown	Mid East Regional Skills Forum
Broadband Officer	Digital Office Centre, Maynooth Business Campus	Kildare & Wicklow Education Training Board
Information Systems Team	Ballymore Hub	Kildare LEADER Partnership
Regeneration & Public Realm Team	Allenwood Hub (ACDAL)	Clarke Recruitment (Kildare Workforce Survey)
	Business Barn, Leixlip	Western Development Commission
	Kildare Chamber Hub, Naas	
	Maynooth Works/Maynooth University	
	Premier Business Centres, Maynooth	
	Clane Project Centre	
	National Equine Innovation Centre (NEIC)	
	Athy Community Enterprise Centre	
	Athy Food & Drink Innovation & Skills Hub	

2A: County Kildare Hub Listing (March 2022)

Allenwood

Allenwood Hub, Allenwood Enterprise Park, Station Road, Allenwood

Email
info@acdal.ie

Website
www.acdal.ie

Athy

Athy Food Drink and Skills Innovation Hub, Athy Model School, Dublin Road, Athy

Email
localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie

Athy Community Enterprise Centre, Woodstock South, Athy

Email
localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie

Website
www.athycec.com

Ballymore Eustace

Ballymore Hub, Market Square, Ballymore Eustace

Email
manager@ballymorehub.com

Website
www.ballymorehub.com

Clane

Clane Project Centre, Thompson Enterprise Centre, Clane Business Park, Clane

Email
info@claneprojectcentre.ie

Website
www.claneprojectcentre.ie

Crookstown

Venture House, Crookstown Business Park, Crookstown

Email
hello@venturehouse.ie

Website
www.venturehouse.ie

Kildare Town

The National Equine Innovation Centre, Irish National Stud, Tully, Kildare

Email
localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie

Leixlip

Business Barn, Kellystown Lane, Leixlip

Email
info@businessbarn.net

Website
www.businessbarn.net

Maynooth

Maynooth Works, Eolas Building, Maynooth University

Email
maynoothworks@mu.ie

Website
www.maynoothworks.ie

Digital Officer Centre, Block B, Maynooth Business Campus, Straffan Road, Maynooth

Email
info@docentre.com

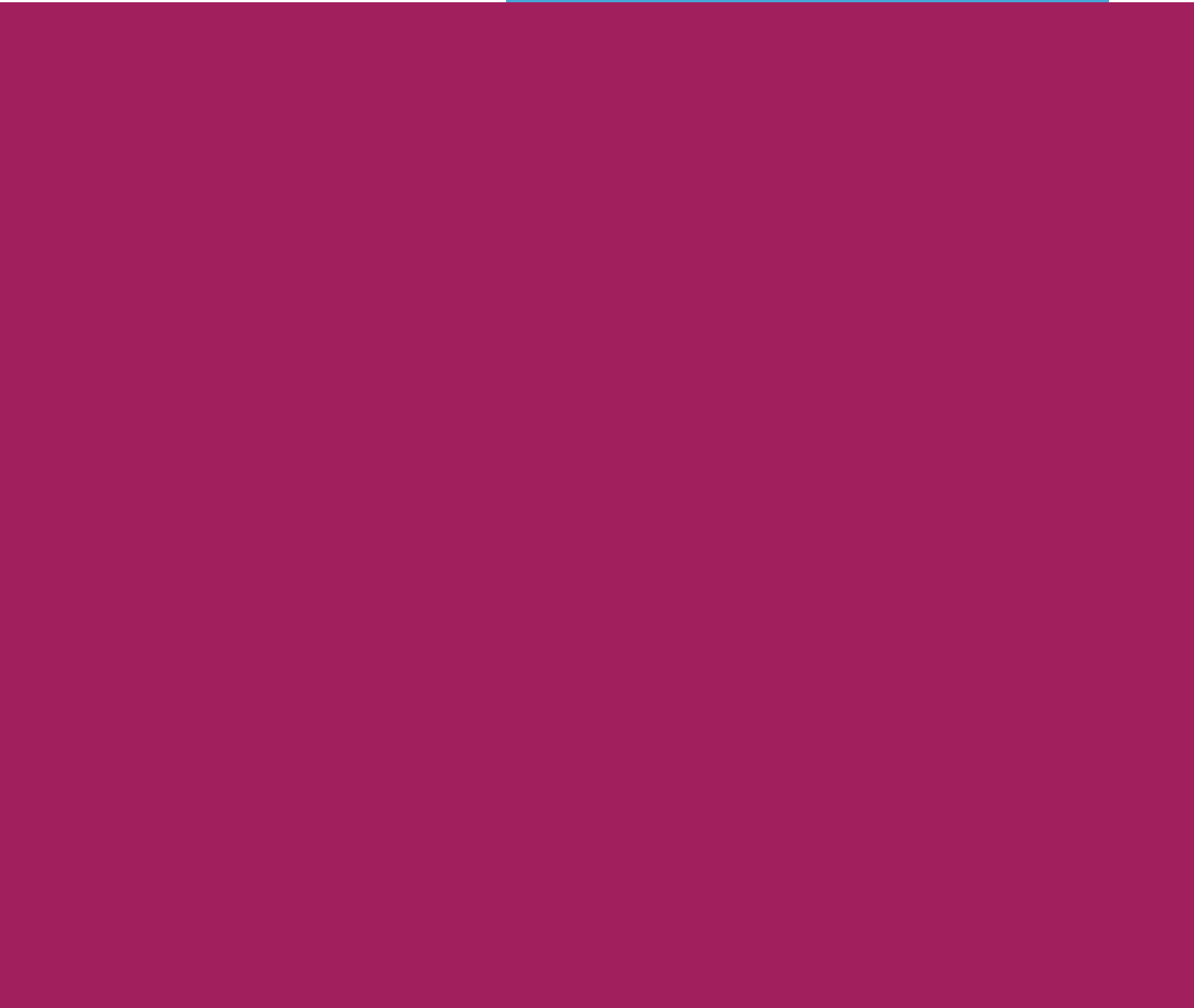
Website
www.docentre.com

Naas

MERITS , Devoy Quarter, John Devoy Road, Naas	Email joinus@merits.ie	Website www.merits.ie
Kildare Chamber Hub , Naas Town Centre, Sallins Road, Naas	Email info@countykildarechamber.ie	Website www.countykildarechamber.ie
Osprey Hub , Devoy Quarter, Naas, Kildare	Email info@osprey.ie	Website www.ospreyhotel.ie/osprey-hub
Deskpace.ie , Unit J1A Naas Enterprise Park Naas,	Email info@deskpace.ie	Website www.deskpace.ie

Newbridge

Newbridge Business Centre , Charlotte House, Charlotte Street, Newbridge	Email sinead@newbridgebusinesscentre.ie	Website www.newbridgebusinesscentre.ie
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Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office Kildare