



GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2024



**County Kildare
Chamber**
Advancing business together

Forward

The world is experiencing significant geopolitical shifts, with notable impacts in Ireland and among our closest partners in the UK, America, and Europe.

These changes present both challenges and opportunities for County Kildare, which has emerged as a dynamic and rapidly growing region.

According to the 2022 Census, Kildare boasts the fourth largest population in Ireland and the fourth highest growth rate in the country.

With the population expected to continue its upward trajectory, strategic planning and ambitious leadership are more critical than ever.

As Kildare prepares for the future, we call upon our nine newly elected TDs to represent our two constituencies with vision and determination. Their role will be pivotal in driving regional development and societal growth over the next five-year Dáil term.

County Kildare Chamber, represents 400 members, who in turn employ 52,000 people throughout the county and the Mid-East region. We are committed to working closely with our elected officials.

We urge the next Dáil to collaborate with our Chamber's membership and the wider business community, matching the ambition of our businesses and fostering an environment that supports sustained economic prosperity and innovation.



Sinéad Ronan
CEO, County Kildare Chamber

2024 Election Priorities

1

Investment in Infrastructure

County Kildare's strategic location within the mid-east region and its proximity to Dublin make it an ideal location for business development. However, addressing capacity issues with water and electricity is crucial. Investments in water, wastewater, and grid connectivity are vital for the county to continue to function, grow, and attract more businesses. Enhanced infrastructure, including reliable utilities, will unlock Kildare's potential, making the county more competitive and attractive to investors.

Prioritising the enhancement of water and grid infrastructure through projects led by Irish Water and Eirgrid, is crucial to support the county's growing population and business needs. These improvements will ensure the sustainability of business operations and improve the quality of life for residents. Compared to other areas within the mid-east region, Kildare has a large capacity for development, with ample space for potential development.

Addressing these infrastructure needs will position Kildare as a prime destination for economic activities.

2

Transportation Enhancements

Continued support and prioritisation for the Dart+ South and West projects are essential. The electrification of the rail network to Kilcock, Newbridge and Kildare Town is vital for enhancing connectivity within the county. Improved rail services will facilitate easier commuting, reduce traffic congestion, and promote sustainable travel options. This investment not only benefits residents but also makes Kildare a more appealing location for businesses looking for efficient transport links.

Enhancing transportation infrastructure is crucial for the long-term growth and development of Kildare. By investing and prioritising projects like Dart+ South and West, the county can ensure that its transport network meets the needs of both businesses and residents. Improved connectivity will attract more businesses to the area, create job opportunities, and support sustainable economic growth. This strategic investment will also help reduce the county's carbon footprint by promoting public transportation over private car use.

3

Education & Skills Development

A well-educated and skilled workforce is vital for economic growth. We ask that funding for education and skills development programs is prioritised, including vocational training, apprenticeships, and partnerships with local educational institutions. These initiatives can help bridge the skills gap and ensure that businesses have access to a talented workforce, fostering innovation and competitiveness in the region.

Improve access to and increase funding for early learning schemes, such as the Early Childhood Care & Education programme and the expansion of breakfast clubs and after-school childcare programmes. Expand mentoring programmes, like “Better Start”, that focuses on improving the quality of childcare and early education.

This commitment to education will attract businesses looking for a skilled labour pool and contribute to the overall economic development of the county.

This approach will enhance the quality of life for residents and make Kildare more attractive to new businesses and residents alike.

By focusing on strategic land zoning and public transport enhancements, Kildare can address housing needs while promoting efficient and sustainable urban development. Delivering affordable housing is critical to the future success of Kildare, and should be a priority for the next Government. We ask that at least 15,000 housing units are built within the Kildare commuter areas of the GDA.

This integrated approach will help reduce traffic congestion, lower emissions, and create vibrant, liveable communities. Investments in public transport infrastructure will also ensure that residents have access to reliable and convenient transportation options, supporting the county's growth and development.

4

Land Zoning & Public Transport

Land zoning for housing and its linkage to better public transport facilities are critical, especially in urban centres like Naas, Newbridge, and Maynooth. Properly planned housing development, coupled with improved public transport, will support population growth and ensure sustainable urbanisation.

5

SMEs and Diversified Economy

Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is crucial for economic growth and job creation. We are calling for stronger future focused support for SMEs, whether they be global focused or domestic, providing financial assistance, training, and mentorship programs.

By fostering a diversified economy, Kildare can build resilience against economic fluctuations and create a more balanced economic environment, ensuring long-term prosperity for the county.

A robust SME sector is essential for a vibrant and dynamic economy. Promote collaboration and partnerships between SME's and R%D institutions to drive innovation. Support also needs to be given to Local Authorities to grow regional innovation hubs and to support domestic enterprise. Ireland needs to continue to expand on the provision of upskilling grants for SME's, enabling small businesses to support continued workforce development.

Sustainable development practices will not only benefit the environment but also enhance Kildare's attractiveness to eco-conscious investors and consumers. Our lack of renewable energy infrastructure and restrictive regulation, has meant that investment and growth opportunities for domestic and FDI clients across the County and the region, has been effectively removed.

This approach will ensure that Kildare's growth is both economically and environmentally sustainable, securing a prosperous future for the county.

6

Sustainable Development

Promoting sustainable development is key to ensuring long-term economic prosperity. Ireland can look at unique initiatives from other countries, such as the Dutch circular economy model, which focuses on resource efficiency and waste reduction.

By adopting similar practices, Ireland and Kildare can set itself apart as a leader in sustainability, creating new opportunities for growth and innovation while protecting the environment.





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