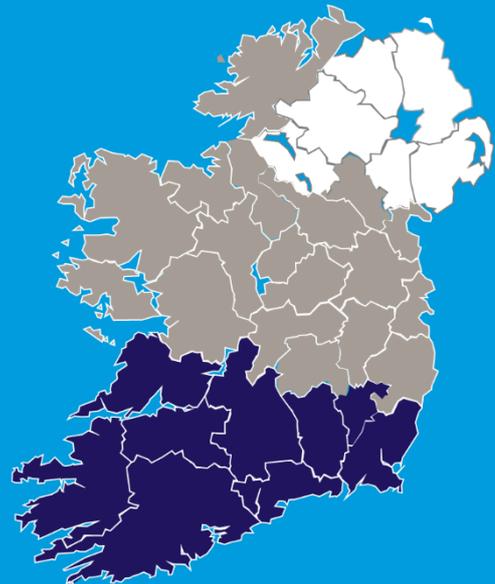




**Planning a better region:  
It's everyone's business**  
**Response to the proposed  
material amendments to  
the Draft Southern Regional  
Spatial and Economic Strategy**



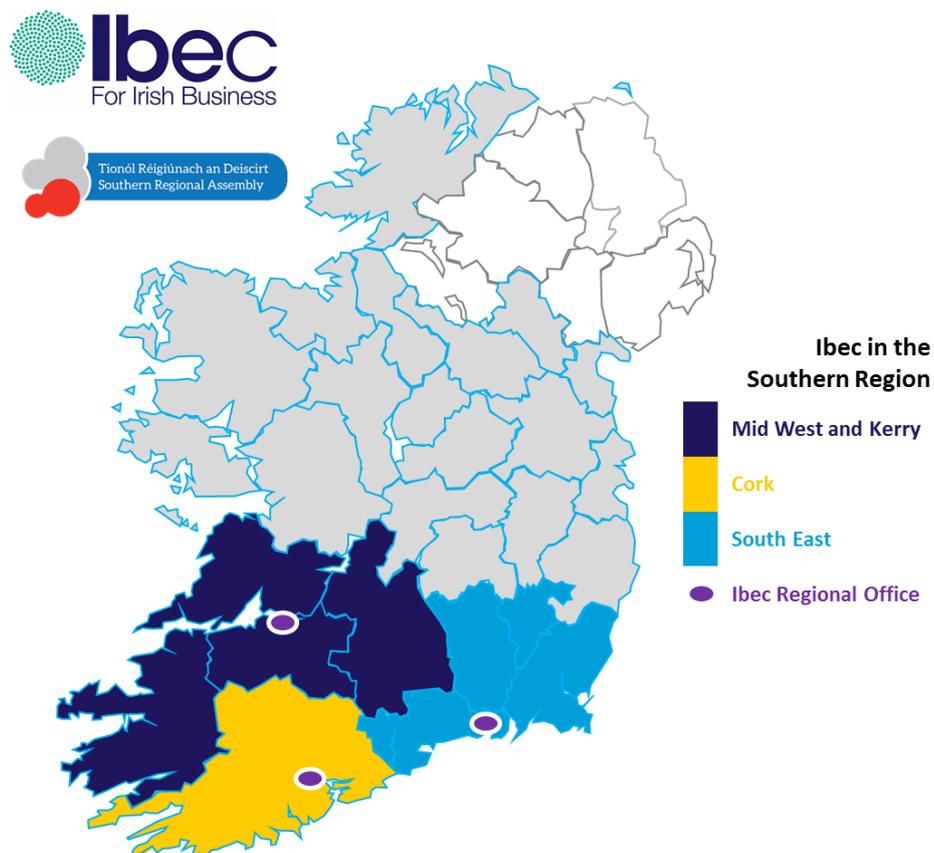
October 2019

## Introduction: Ibec in the Southern Region

Ibec is a national organisation with a strong regional structure. This includes a network of eight regions, with members supported by six Ibec offices across the country. Ibec's regional network ensures that members are serviced regionally in addition to Ibec's national and international services.

A key driver of regional business priorities are the Ibec Regional Executive Committees. Ibec Regional Executive Committees are made up of nominees from Ibec member companies operating within the regions including both multinational and indigenous companies and reflect the diversity of business in terms of business sectors and company size. The committees work to shape, guide and influence business policy priorities for the regions that contribute to sustainable economic growth and employment. Ibec Regional Executive Committees are led by a Regional President. Regional Presidents are also members of the Ibec National Council which provides an important point of contact between the organisation and the respective regions.

Three of Ibec's Regional Executive Committees (Cork, Mid West & Kerry and the South East) cover the same geographic area as the Southern Region. Each Regional Executive Committee has actively participated throughout the development of the National Planning Framework. Our members views and experiences across each region have been developed this response to the initial public and stakeholder consultation issues paper on the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. With this in mind, Ibec has compiled joined up regional analyses from our Regional Executive Committees to match for their respective Regional Assembly areas. Each offers opportunities to be capitalised on and challenges to be addressed.



## Structure of the Response to the Proposed Material Amendments

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is a new and important concept in Irish planning. It brings together the spatial and economic factors necessary for sustainable regional in one all-encompassing strategy. Ibec welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposed material amendments to the draft RSES published by the Southern Regional Assembly

We have participated in the preparation of the document through our recent submission on the draft RSES in March 2019 and previously through submitting the views of business on the issues paper in February 2018. Prior to this, our members were actively engaged throughout the development of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan published as Project Ireland 2040.

Our response to the material alterations are set out in a sequential order following the layout and as they appear in the consultation document. We have structured this submission to provide our response to the material amendments proposed and recommendations specific to the proposed amendment. We have confined our response to priority areas requiring attention.

This submission consists of suggested amendments to the proposed material amendment. These are identified in green, bold text. We identify important changes that should be supported and we suggest areas that require specific clarification or additional supporting text to be included in the final RSES.

# Ibec Response to the Proposed Material Amendments

## Chapter 3 People and Places

### Section 3.3 Cities – Metropolitan Areas

#### 3. New RPO A: Planning for Diverse Areas

##### Ibec response:

The ultimate objective of the RSES must be to allow the entire region to develop to its full potential. This includes ensuring the region has the right enabling infrastructure and services to drive sustainable development, meet economic goals and improve the quality of life. Skills, talent, connectivity and quality of life are critical to the region's productivity and a key part of a value proposition to attract and retain businesses and workers to the region. This requires better infrastructure and service provision, ranging from transport, energy and water infrastructure through to healthcare, social services and investment in education.

The draft RSES sets out a sustainable placemaking framework and tailored response. Core to effective placemaking is fully leveraging the assets on hand from a strong enterprise base, education and skills, culture and natural heritage. This must be planned and supported by infrastructure and housing provision. Sustainability must also be at the core of the plan to deliver compact, smart growth. However, prioritising the metropolitan areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford does not mean the region's other urban areas are devalued.

The three metropolitan city regions must become more competitive, resilient, and inclusive. Cities are more than just places where people work. It is time to correct past underperformance and turn the three metropolitan areas into the Region's competitive advantage. The Southern Region's economy relies heavily on Cork, Waterford and Limerick-Shannon. Enabling them to become better functioning, more sustainable and vibrant will ensure economic growth and social advancement. The three metropolitan areas and the Region's other large urban centres are targeted to house a growing population.

The region's other urban centres from the 14 'key towns' to rural towns and villages will also play an important role as regional drivers of growth. Towns across the region will benefit significantly from the effects of agglomeration. This allows for a deeper pool of labour, knowledge spill-overs, and supply chain integration between centres of economic activity. Population and economic growth can be effectively shared across the region. Ultimately, the output of the RSES must be an adequate supply of commercial and residential property, attractive and quality areas to live, availability of skills, underpinned by sustainable development and the required infrastructure. These will underpin each respective local and regional value proposition.

##### Recommendation

Support amendment.

### Section 3.4 Cities – Metropolitan Areas

#### 4. New RPO B: Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas

##### Ibec response:

The Southern Region must be enabled to play a bigger role in future national economic success. Providing the necessary infrastructure to allow greater collaboration to occur is essential to support effective and sustainable regional development objectives set out in the draft RSES. The

metropolitan areas as employment hubs and key population centres must be better connected physically.

The three metropolitan areas arguably have better physical connectivity with the greater Dublin area than they do with each other. Each has a direct motorway to Dublin, and relatively straightforward rail connections. However, transport infrastructure is not orientated towards comprehensive intraregional connectivity. This undermines the concept of a strong regional metropolitan network that could offer a counterweight to Dublin. The RSES offers an opportunity to create a network of interconnected cities driving growth across the region as a counterbalance to Dublin's economic strength.

Mobility and accessibility between cities and major urban centres should be a priority for regional development. Upgrades to the road network such as the M20, N21, N22, N24, N25, N27, M28, M11, N69 – which are all listed in the National Development Plan – will significantly advance growth across the entire region, including improving the feasibility of interurban bus services. Completion of these projects and advancement of the Atlantic Economic Corridor will help improve interurban and interregional connectivity and offer greater accessibility to metropolitan and urban centres across the Southern Region and beyond.

### Recommendation

*Amend as follows:*

It is an objective to establish a collaborative approach between Metropolitan Areas of Cork, Limerick/Shannon, and Waterford (together with Galway): that they lead in partnership with each other to harness their combined potential as viable alternatives to Dublin. The Southern Region's Metropolitan Areas should be prioritised for focused and long-term investment as the region's most significant economic engines to ensure regional parity (together with Galway) and to act as an effective counter-balance to the unbalanced growth of Dublin. Central to the success of this collaborative approach is the early delivery of **inter-metropolitan projects listed in the National Development Plan such as the M20 and the M24.**

## **Section 3.8      Cities – Metropolitan Areas**

### **23.                      New RPO C: Inter-Urban Networks as Regional Drivers of Collaboration and Growth**

#### **Ibec response:**

Ensuring the region's urban areas are networked would contribute to greater prosperity. Promoting urban connectivity would result in a network of prosperous metropolitan cities, towns and other key urban areas. This approach would reap the benefits of agglomeration. Each urban centre would have wide catchment areas, inter-connected and inter-twined with one another. The benefits are not purely economic, spatially it is an effective measure towards tackling the twin problems of urban sprawl and ribbon settlements.

The three metropolitan areas are hubs of high-skilled employment, productivity, and innovation. Focused investment and long-term planning would allow them to develop economically and attract more businesses and skilled workers to their regions. Metropolitan, 'key towns' and other urban areas would enjoy:

- Better national and international connectivity (e.g. faster/shorter travel times, access to ports/airports);
- Access to wider talent pools and skills development (e.g. Cluster of higher and further education, research centres etc);

- Increased commercial and business links (e.g., supply chains/cluster development);
- Additional cost-effective opportunities for (re)locating public facilities (e.g., social/health care).

A network of strong urban centres across the Southern Region would be attractive areas to live and work, acting as an effective counter-balance to Dublin.

Recommendation

Support amendment.

## 24. Limerick-Waterford Economic and Transport Corridor

**Ibec response:**

Development of transport corridors across the Southern Region would create an economic network connecting key urban settlements across the region to one another. Upgrading of the N24 to the M24 is an example of such a project. It would facilitate the extension and connecting of the Atlantic and Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridors, not just through point-to-point motorway access between the region's three cities and Dublin. Effective regional development within the Southern Region also requires the advancement of economic corridors through a series of key infrastructural projects recognised in the National Development Plan such as the M20 Cork to Limerick and the N25 Cork to Rosslare road. The Limerick-Waterford Economic and Transport Corridor project has the potential to be further complimented by a further North-South link strategy. This envisions a central spinal corridor through the Midlands to provide a pathway for the efficient movement of goods and people between the country's main economic centres. Connecting ambitious projects to the RSES will better enable sustainable regional growth.

Recommendation

*Amend as follows:*

**Limerick-Waterford Economic and Transport Corridor**

The Limerick - Waterford Economic and Transport Corridor links key regional cities and towns by rail and road and is one the primary networks and economic drivers for the Southern Region. The RSES support enhanced connectivity between the MASP cities by the M24 (potential upgrade of N24 to M24), enhanced rail services including development Limerick Junction as a National Freight Hub. **It would complement prioritised investment in other inter-urban economic and transport corridors such as the M20 Cork to Limerick and N24 Cork via Waterford to Rosslare road projects.** The Corridor is uniquely placed in the centre of the region with a number of large towns in Tipperary along its corridor - Clonmel, Carrick on Suir; Tipperary and Cahir all of which have strong economic, social and cultural associations. The network has been developed and supported through a number of intraregional economic and tourism initiative including the Munster Vales, Butler trail, Historic Town Walls and the River Suir Blueway. The Corridor is also unique in that it connects the Atlantic Economic Corridor and the Eastern Economic Corridor. **It has the potential to form a central North-South transport spine.** The RSES will support the further development and investment in this corridor, building on its connectivity; strong urban framework and economic clustering of activities.

## Chapter 4 A Strong Economy – Innovative & Smart

### Section 4.4 Our Region's Economic Engines

#### 30. New RPO D: Eastern Corridor

##### **Ibec response:**

Developing a network of economic activity must not be just a priority for the urban centres along the Atlantic coast. The Dublin-Belfast corridor is a cluster of high growth and strong performing centres and cities. It is important that the draft RSES recognises the need to connect to it with a by extending the corridor from Rosslare Europort to Larne which would include Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford as strategic locations along it.

Extending the corridor from Larne to Rosslare would better support the assets and attributes of the South East. National and international accessibility and connectivity would be improved, particularly in terms of port, road and rail. It would better align the region's towns with inter-regional economic activity, while at the same time allow synergies to be explored and opportunities to be exploited.

The Waterford MASP has identified its "potential connection to the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor" via Rosslare would be a driver of future economic growth (WPO 2). It provides significant spin-off benefits to improving access between Waterford and Rosslare and between Waterford and Cork. If delivered, it would create a coastal economic network connecting key urban settlements across the region to one another. The Atlantic and Dublin-Belfast Corridors would be extended and interconnected, not just through point-to-point motorway access between the region's three cities and Dublin.

##### Recommendation

Support amendment.

## Chapter 6 Connectivity

### Section 6.3.4 High Quality International Connectivity

#### 60. RPO 136: Regional Freight Strategy

##### **Ibec response:**

Rail freight only accounts for 0.4% of total freight tonnage in Ireland – compared to 8.4% in the UK, 14.5% in Portugal and 18.8% in Germany. Increasing the level of freight movement by rail would contribute to a low carbon transport system. Currently, road freight in Ireland is responsible for 26% of all transport emissions respectively. Greater use of Ireland's heavy rail freight network should be supported and innovative approaches to financing investment in regional rail freight capacity should be considered.

##### Recommendation

*Amend as follows:*

To support the development of a RSES Regional Freight Strategy which includes the consideration of rail freight, the asset of our region's rail network and innovations in the freight handling and transport sector to be prepared by the relevant stakeholders through consultation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, National Transport Authority, Local Authorities, Irish Rail, relevant delivery agencies and the port and airport

authorities. Support the feasibility of Limerick Junction having the status of a national rail freight and passenger hub **and the reinstatement of the Limerick – Foynes line as a freight line**. The implementation mechanisms and monitoring structures to be established following the adoption of the RSES will identify the scope and role of the Regional Freight Strategy and the timescale for its preparation. The requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives

## 61. RPO 137: Ports

### Ibec response:

The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary 2013-2020 identified nine strategic development locations for marine-related industry and large-scale industrial development. These are: Innismurry/Cahericon; Moneypoint; Foynes Island; lands to the rear of Foynes; Askeaton; Aughinish Island; Tarbert; Ballylongford; and Limerick Docks. The sustainable development of deep-water ports is to be welcomed. All nine strategic sites should be prioritised in the RSES. The SIFP has identified an additional 1,200 hectares for port development (9 no. strategic development locations). These locations represent a key strategic maritime asset as the strategic development lands adjoin identified sheltered deep-water (>15m depths) sites on the Shannon Estuary.

### Recommendation

#### *Amend as follows:*

To strengthen investment to deliver actions under National Ports Policy and investment in sustainable infrastructure projects that:

- a. Strengthen and develop the strategic international, national and regional economic roles of our Tier 1 Ports (Port of Cork and Shannon-Foynes Port) and Tier 2 Ports (Port of Waterford and Rosslare Europort);
- b. Support the achievement of Ports of National Significance (Tier 1) status for the Ports of Waterford and Rosslare Europort
- c. Strengthen and develop the strategic regional economic role of other regional fishery harbours, ports and harbours;
- d. Support the export, fisheries, marine tourism and marine economy potential of port and harbour assets in the Southern Region as listed in Table 6.2 and support investment in the transition to smart technologies of port and harbour assets.
- e. Support the sustainable development of **the 9 designated strategic development locations adjoining sheltered deep-water** ~~strategically located deep-water ports at Moneypoint and Cahericon~~ in line with the recommendations of the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary
- f. Development proposals will be subject to environmental assessment, implementation of mitigation measures outlined in applicable SEAs and AAs and feasibility studies to establish that any expansions can be achieved without adverse effects on any European sites and within the carrying capacity of the receiving environment of the ports

**65. RPO 145: High Quality International Connectivity - Airports**

**Ibec response:**

As a trade-intensive island at the edge of Europe, Ireland is heavily reliant on international connectivity provided by our aviation infrastructure. Accessibility to airports for high quality international connectivity is of critical importance. It is vital that development is preserved for the primary purpose of facilitating Ireland's international connectivity. Proper spatial planning must facilitate, not restrict, the future sustainable and safe development of our airports.

Our airports are assets of strategic national infrastructure, underpinning regional development. It is important that we improve accessibility, such as continuing to invest in transport linkages to/from the region's airports. Surface access upgrades to the state airports should be invested, including the N19 and R471 to Shannon Airport and N27 to Cork Airport. We must also fully leverage Ireland's airport infrastructure. International connectivity is recognised as a national strategic outcome in the National Planning Framework (NSO 6). Any constraints on Ireland's airports have the potential to become constraints on economic growth.

The Southern Region is well-placed to leverage their proximity to strategic transport assets, such as the region's two state airports, Shannon and Cork, and the regional airports. Interurban bus routes should include access to the airports to enhance connectivity and accessibility in the region, and beyond. For example, direct bus services between the Galway and Limerick-Shannon metropolitan regions should be coordinated with the arrival and departures of flights.

Recommendation

*Amend as follows:*

To achieve NSO: High Quality International Connectivity, the following airport development actions for the Region are identified subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

- a. Continued development and improvement of enterprise assets, access infrastructure, airport infrastructure and services at Cork and Shannon Airports by the relevant responsible commercial State-Owned Enterprises as key economic drivers, national tourism and national business gateways consistent with sectoral priorities defined through National Aviation Policy;
- b. Continued support for improved international connectivity through the role of our region's airport assets, support for the sustainable development of infrastructures and ~~the safeguarding of safety zones~~ **resisting threats to aviation safety by taking into consideration Airport Public Safety Zones and the findings of the ERM Report "Public Safety Zones, 2005" along with general Airport Safeguarding and in particular the Obstacles to aircraft in flight Order, 2005 (S.I.No. 215/2005) and EASA Regulation (EU) No 139/2014.**
- b. c. Support for continued exchequer assistance support for smaller regional airports under the Regional Airports Programme, support the role of Waterford Airport and Kerry Airports a role for and develop their potential as key tourism and business gateways for their regions as a complement to the services provided by the region's national airport gateways of Cork and Shannon.
- d. Support strategic route development for airports outside of Dublin (such as Public Service Obligations) and support extension of Regional Airports Programme.

- e. Seek strengthened sustainable multi-modal **inter-regional and intra-regional** transport access to/from airports

## Chapter 9 Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

### Section 9.3 Implementation

#### 101. RPO 218: Implementation Mechanism for the Strategy & MASPs

##### Ibec response:

Separate implementation groups are to be tasked with coordinating and monitoring implementation for each of the three MASPs. The precise role of the MASP implementation groups remains vague. Further information is needed on the precise membership of each MASP implementation group. Merely consulting key stakeholders is simply insufficient. The widest expertise should be sought from internal and external sources in transport provision, housing, infrastructure delivery and industry. It is important that the views of business and the wider economy are represented as these are both a 12-year spatial and an economic strategy for three metropolitan regions.

##### Recommendation

##### *Amend as follows:*

Following the adoption of the RSES the SRA will establish ~~implementation mechanisms to oversee progress on the implementation of the MASP for Cork, Limerick–Shannon and Waterford~~ robust structures for the implementation phase to ensure the delivery of the Strategy and the MASPs is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound. **Each MASP implementation group should seek participation of external representatives with expertise in transport provision, housing, infrastructure delivery and industry.** The implementation phase will be guided by action plans that include time bound targets, progress indicators and a set project tracking plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Strategy.

### Section 9.4 Monitoring & Reporting

#### 103. RPO M: Monitoring the Strategy

##### Ibec response:

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is to be reviewed at six-year intervals. The results of each review should be incorporated into the RSES and the MASP. The SRA should play an active role in each review of the NPF to ensure it continues to shape performance within the region. It should also coordinate the views of the constituent local authorities to present one regional voice during the consultation review phase. This is important because the National Development Plan is aligned with the NPF.

The SRA is required by legislation to prepare a progress report on implementation of the RSES. Ongoing performance monitoring metrics should be developed and put in place. This must be evidence-based. Development of baseline data will assist in the preparation of evidence-based strategy development and assessment. This data must be robust, relevant and timely. Everyone should be able to monitor progress of the RSES over its lifetime and to see its implementation right down to the local level. A dedicated portal should be established to allow this to occur. Whilst the data set may only fully change once every four-to-five years such as those based on census data, individual measures could be updated as specific data is available.

## Submission on the Proposed Material Amendments

Performance monitoring should not be limited to areas that are in direct local control. Many of the included indicators fall outside the remit of local and regional governance structure. They provide an important window to the performance and impact on the ground of national policy. The regional authority should use the indicators developed by Ibec as part of their wider data-inspired performance monitoring approach.

An RSES Monitoring Committee will be established within three months of the publication of the RSES to oversee and monitor progress. It is proposed that the committee will meet at least once every two years, which will assist with performance monitoring. The RSES is itself to be formally reviewed once every six years, in line with the statutory review of the NPF. Further clarity is needed on the role the RSES Monitoring Committee will have in decisions to amend the strategy, including any observations regarding performance or evaluation. It is important the RSES Monitoring Committee includes representatives with expertise in transport provision, housing, infrastructure delivery and industry.

### Recommendation

Amend as follows:

~~Following adoption of the RSES, establish a RSES Monitoring Committee to oversee progress on the implementation of the RSES and to identify opportunities to drive regional development and leverage new funding, partnership and collaboration opportunities in the Region~~

The Southern Regional Assembly will put in place a robust and transparent monitoring system to ensure that the progress of the regional objectives can be tracked against their baseline data at regular intervals during the life of the Strategy. This will include:

- a. making baseline data available as a shared evidence base, as appropriate, for the Region to Local Authorities and other public bodies which will inform the preparation and implementation of City and County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans.
- ~~a.~~ ~~b. it is an objective to carrying out a regular updates of baseline data for monitoring purposes, including integration of baseline data, if available, from other relevant reports, strategies and data repositories. data from EPA State of the Environment Reports and NPWS Article 12 and Article 17 reporting an to make this data publicly available to facilitate evidence-based policy making and evaluation in the Region.~~
- ~~b.~~ c. It is an objective to supporting the establishment of regional working groups to improve the coherence of European Site protection and management, facilitate data sharing and exchange on transboundary sites and to address cross-boundary site and species protection.
- d. A monitoring committee will be established with cross-sectoral and cross-regional representation to oversee progress and contribute to the process. The process will facilitate the involvement of relevant stakeholders throughout the implementation of the RSES to provide input on progress.

## Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The following are specific recommendations and observations of the Ibec Regional Executive Committee on the draft Cork MASP. These should be reflected in the final draft and where possible incorporated into the proposed material amendments (104-119):

- Traffic congestion caused by insufficient road capacity and public transport deficiencies risk undermining Cork's liveability and impacts its ability to attract and retain staff and compete for investment.
- The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy must underpin sustainable population growth and quality-of-life objectives are efficiently and effectively achieved.
- More sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport (e.g. Cork BusConnects) must be prioritised within the metropolitan area to meet increased demand.
- Inter-regional priorities of the M20, N25 and accessibility to 'key towns' must be prioritised in the MASP policy objective for regional interactions.
- Upgrade strategic road infrastructure, including the N8/N25 Dunkettle Interchange, M20 Cork to Limerick, N22 Macroom to Ballyvourney, Cork Northern Ring Road, and N28 Cork to Ringaskiddy.
- Secure the future growth and expansion of Cork Airport and the Port of Cork in the MASP to support the metropolitan economy.
- Develop the Docklands (City Docks and Tivoli) and support urban renewal.
- Target infrastructure spend to unlock sites capable of delivering large-scale housing developments in Cork.
- Facilitate an increase in the supply of good-quality social and affordable housing.
- Deliver infrastructure to improve liveability and the attractiveness of Cork from a cultural, tourism, and economic perspective.
- Accelerate the delivery of NDP priority investment projects in Cork because slow delivery of the plan will hamper the metropolitan area's growth.
- Development of higher and further education should be recognised as a Cork MASP Policy Objective, including strong support for the Munster Technological University as a new type of higher education institution to meet enterprise needs and drive regional development.
- Provide sufficient funding to enable the higher education institutions in Cork to cater for significant population growth and meet growing demand for STEM employment in biopharma, ICT, food, medical technology and financial services.
- Support investment in strategic national innovation enabling assets within the city, specifically the expansion of Tyndall National Institute to the North Mall and the development of UCC's new Cork University Business School in the city centre.
- Recognise the development of the Cork Science and Innovation Park, a collaborative initiative of key stakeholders in the region, as a key hub of economic activity and strategic employment location.

## Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The following are specific recommendations and observations of the Ibec Regional Executive Committee for the Mid-West and Kerry on the draft Limerick-Shannon MASP. These should be reflected in the final draft and where possible incorporated into the proposed material amendments (120-134):

- The stated vision, attributes and the opportunities for Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan area must be more ambitious.
- Prioritise the development of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and assurances must be given that the MASP must be aligned with yet-to-be-developed strategy.
- Promote the implementation of an integrated, multi modal public transport network across the Metropolitan Area servicing strategic residential, higher education and employment growth locations.
- Provide enhanced inter-regional connectivity through improved public transport connectivity from Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, including direct bus connectivity to/from Shannon International Airport to Galway, Cork and Waterford.
- N19 upgrade (approved) and improved layout and junction upgrade on (R471) to facilitate the development of Shannon Free Zone, Shannon Airport and Shannon Town.
- Ensure the MASP and RSES references correctly the Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme (including Adare Bypass) throughout the document.
- Enterprise clusters within the Metropolitan Area should be included in the MASP, reflecting the evolutionary nature of the metropolitan economy.
- Continue to advance the Limerick 2030 project, the regeneration of the Shannon Free Zone and to identify future flagship initiatives.
- Provide for the enhancement of existing linkages between enterprise and the higher education and research, which can be achieved in a variety of ways including the provision of enterprise development programmes, accessing research opportunities in collaborations between enterprise and third-level institutes and the provision of dedicated research centres.
- Ensure delivery of the South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone, a unique opportunity to develop a new large-scale employment centre, which seeks to physically connect enterprise with the generation of knowledge and skills.
- Support the continued expansion of the Metropolitan Area's third level institutions and integration with the wider metropolitan region.
- Provide specific facilities targeted at addressing educational and social deprivation through the integration of third-level institutions.
- Recognise the active and special role of higher education institutions in urban regeneration and facilitating social inclusion such as the planned Community Engagement Gateway at the LIT Campus, which should be supported.
- Reflect the strategic enterprise development role that Shannon (Objective 3) plays in the Metropolitan Area such as continued development of the Shannon Free Zone; expansion of traditional industry sectors such as aircraft maintenance; attraction of new innovative investment by multinational and indigenous enterprise, with further capacity for new growth and role in tourism development.
- Broaden the specific MASP policy objective (3b) for Shannon to include promotion of centre of excellence in R&D for autonomous vehicles; support the continued development of a world-class aerospace cluster; support investment in strategic national transformative initiatives such as a CAV R&D test-bed and micro smart city infrastructure.

- The MASP should include a dedicated educational section with explicit mention of the Shannon Consortium (LIT, UL and MIC) and the NUIG Shannon College of Hotel Management.
- Better articulate the unique attributes of Shannon including its enterprise and skills base, strategic infrastructure and global connectivity.
- Accelerate the delivery of NDP priority investment projects for the Limerick- Shannon area as slow delivery of the plan will hamper the metropolitan area's growth.
- Secure future growth and expansion of Shannon International Airport and support the implementation of funding mechanisms for route development and investment.

## **Section 5.0 Housing and Regeneration**

### **127. New Limerick Shannon MASP Policy Objective N: Housing and Regeneration**

Transport infrastructure, the cost of living, sustainability, and the built environment are all affected by how well space is utilised and they play a role in determining the quality of life. Each of the region's cities have a far lower population density per square kilometre than Dublin. However, Manchester's population density is approximately 12 times greater than Limerick's.

Why is density important? Cities concentrate productivity, innovation and creativity and higher density cities are more successful across these areas. Therefore, increased density is crucial to a metropolitan region's economic future. It can enrich character, place and identity, which boosts attractiveness and overall competitiveness.

Limerick-Shannon will require a significant increase in density. A new pragmatic approach must be taken, supported by all appropriate national guidance to ensure well-designed higher density development can be delivered in specific locations. Higher density development can encourage more affordable housing by spreading construction costs across more housing units within a development, which also increases the viability of site development and works.

The MASP should champion well designed and higher density developments within the metropolitan areas without loss of high-amenity green spaces. The MASP's active land management strategy ranging from metropolitan through to local implementation must fully support the objectives of compact, smart growth through urban infill. For example, the Limerick-Shannon MASP promotes urban infill and regeneration through reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill and site-based regeneration.

#### Recommendation

Support amendment.

## Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The following are specific recommendations and observations of the Ibec Regional Executive Committee for the South East on the draft Waterford MASP:

- Provide a strategic development framework for Waterford supported by an ambitious and clear vision.
- Position Waterford Metropolitan Area as the engine of economic growth in the South East.
- The MASP must provide an overview of the strengths in particular industries and clusters of activity.
- Clearly articulate the relationship of Waterford to the Region's two other metropolitan areas.
- Improve the strategic road infrastructure to provide ready access across the region, including the N25 Rosslare to Cork, the N24 Waterford to Limerick and the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour.
- Facilitate the growth of and accessibility to the Port of Waterford and Waterford Airport.
- Invest in vital public transport across metropolitan Waterford capable of supporting significant levels of population and employment growth.
- Reduce administrative, planning and cost barriers to broadband provision and ensure speedy roll-out of the National Broadband Plan.
- Housing supply in the Waterford Metropolitan Area is a real challenge that makes business expansion increasingly difficult.
- Prioritise the delivery of new housing construction by unlocking sites capable of delivering large scale housing developments.
- Facilitate an increase in the supply of good quality social and affordable housing for ownership and rental.
- Secure UNESCO Learning City status for Waterford, joining Limerick and Cork as the three cities with special designation for lifelong learning in the country.
- The Technological University for South East Ireland will be a transformative catalyst for economic, social and cultural development for the South East.
- Provide sufficient funding to enable the higher education institutions in the South East to cater for rising student numbers and growing skills shortages across a broad range of sectors.
- Ensure priorities in relation to connectivity, skills development and infrastructure provision are realised, to mitigate the impact of Brexit and strengthen the region's competitive position.
- Coordination structures and the MASP implementation mechanism must be sufficient to prevent Waterford falling behind the other two city-regions.

## **Section 5.0      Housing and Regeneration**

### **140.              New Waterford MASP Policy Objective P: Housing and Regeneration**

Increased density is crucial to a metropolitan region's economic future. Waterford's population density is approximately a third of Dublin's. It would support the delivery of other objectives such as housing, attracting new investment, boosting innovation, a diverse enterprise base and encouraging cluster development.

The MASP should champion well designed and higher density developments within the metropolitan areas without loss of high-amenity green spaces. The MASP's active land management strategy ranging from metropolitan through to local implementation must fully support the objectives of compact, smart growth through urban infill.

#### Recommendation

Support amendment.

## **Section 6.0      Employment and Enterprise**

### **141.              New Waterford MASP Policy Objective Q: A Smart Metropolitan Area and Strengths in Attracting FDI**

There is a strong interdependence between the planning, development and creation of an attractive environment and enterprise development. Companies are attracted to invest in locations with access to skills, where people will want to live and work and where the surrounding infrastructure are supportive of business (including, for example, transport and broadband networks; education and training facilities etc). Enterprise agencies such as IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland set ambitious regional targets and goals. It is in the interest of these agencies that enterprise growth can be achieved and sustained in the Metropolitan Area. The Local Enterprise Offices plays an important role in the metropolitan economy by offering support, guidance and training to people who want to start or grow a business. Meeting their objectives in terms of delivering new jobs and investments requires strong regional and local value propositions.

The Metropolitan Areas performs strongly in terms of winning and retaining investment, having continued to attract high profile organisations throughout the economic downturn. More encouragingly still is the increasing level of Irish owned agency-assisted companies providing quality employment opportunities in Waterford and across the Southern Region. This demonstrates Enterprise Ireland's contribution to fostering regional growth and job creation.

Establishing a strong sense of place contributes to the attractiveness factors for entrepreneurship, for business investment, for foreign direct investment (FDI), talent and tourism. Innovation hubs, centres of excellence, availability of incubation space, opportunities for industry-academic collaboration, development zones, clusters and ecosystems are key tools in planning for effective and sustainable economic growth in Waterford.

The focus must be on re-intensification of existing business locations. This strategy aims to create the right conditions for enterprise to thrive, to create wealth and improve quality of life for all. Waterford's enterprise base consists of indigenous and foreign owned companies operating across a wide range of sectors from traditional, ICT, pharmaceuticals and emerging sectors. Key aspects are orderly growth, placemaking, smart specialisation and clustering. Consideration is given to future proofing risk management so that growth is sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient. Skills, talent and innovation are identified as drivers for resilient and sustainable growth.

Recommendation

*Amend as follows:*

New Waterford MASP Policy Objective Q: A Smart Metropolitan Area and Strengths in Attracting FDI  
**for Enterprise Growth**

- a) It is an objective to seek investment in the sustainable development of initiatives of IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland in strengthening enterprise assets, fostering competitive locations and conditions for enterprise growth in the Waterford Metropolitan Area.
- b) It is an objective to implement and develop novel technologies, build a sustainable knowledge base and engage citizens in digital transformation, while minimising the risk of digital inequalities in the Waterford Metropolitan Area.



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