



Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

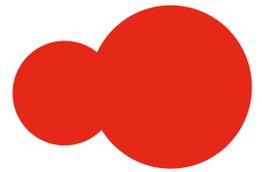
Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

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Preface

Regional Spatial and Economic Planning are married together for the first time in Ireland in the shape of an implementing strategy for the National Planning Framework (NPF). The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region marks this new departure.

The RSES provides the framework through which the NPF's disruptive vision and the related Government policies and objectives will be delivered for the Region. In line with international best practise, the RSES adopts a territorially differentiated and place-based approach to regional planning and economic development.

We live in an interdependent, highly connected, modern society, where successful strategy formulation and plan making needs to respond to the needs of citizens, society and the global challenges we face. Planning deliberately to safeguard our environment and our futures, while keeping to the fore the principle of equality augur's greater success for us all.

In making the RSES, we recognise that effective regional development is about embracing the spatial development opportunities specific to our Region. This requires choices to be made which reflect the differing needs and potential of the Region.



Cathaoirleach's Message

'No man is an island' rings true down the centuries and is a lyrical expression of the acknowledged interdependency of society. Our community bonds remind us of our human, geographic, and cultural connectedness. It prefigures our want and desire to plan for our future. A future that strives for the betterment of the quality of life for all of our citizens. It is through this constant quest to improve and address disparities, that we as a Region can realise our individual and collective potential. Our ambition is for a humane, fulfilling society, one in which "scientific advance is used to enhance quality of life, rather than to increase production".

Irish people traditionally identified with parish and county, characterised by a strong sense of belonging. This consciousness and sense of belonging has informed and shaped the RSES. Connectedness is immeasurably important to any community. It plays a part in safeguarding the health and well-being of citizens. Placemaking is about improving the economic competitiveness, physical infrastructure and social fabric of the Region. We want to tackle the challenges we face, play our part in addressing climate change, strengthen and safeguard our rich rural and urban fabric, to increase the Region's appeal as a place to live, work, study, invest in, trade with and visit. Ireland is no longer a homogenous society, isolated off the coast of continental Europe, we are globally connected, enriched with a diverse, young and educated population. We live in exciting and fast-moving times. Our unique proposition as a nation, as a Region, is firmly vested in our people and in our collective vision and values.

Ní neart go cur le chéile.

Councillor Joe Carroll Cathaoirleach



* Gray, J. (2016) *Gray's Anatomy: Selected Writings*, Penguin.

Director's Introduction

The National Planning Framework and its regional translation in the RSES is poised to benefit the State and its Regions. It seeks to unlock the latent potential of less developed areas while increasing the competitiveness of the more developed areas. Quality of life for all and safeguarding our environment for future generations is at the heart of its ambition.

The Members and Executive of the Southern Assembly are primed and anticipating the opportunity presented to implement the RSES. We have a strong vision for our Region. To realise that vision, we aim to create and nurture the conditions that support our people and our places. We view the strategy as a means to harness the Region's full potential, for achieving economic prosperity, for improving the quality of life for all our citizens, and as a vehicle to promote the Region as a sustainable, innovative, healthy and green region and ultimately help us to realise our ambition to be the world's most liveable Region. It also provides a means to address the challenges we face including climate change.

The RSES is an ambitious project. It needs to be to keep pace with the accelerated rate of technological, social and economic change. The Assembly recognises the significant challenges facing our Region and the need for decisive leadership and an effective regional strategy underpinned by strong National policy interventions to address those challenges. We want to secure a sustainable future; therefore, it is imperative we avoid a piecemeal approach to strategy formulation. Critically, spatial planning must be informed by environmental, economic and social needs. The overarching principle of the protection of the environment combined with an impetus to improve social equality, will serve to guide us in our endeavour to copper-fasten and safeguard our future.

Mr. David Kelly Director





Introduction



1.1 | What is the RSES?

A Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The Southern Region faces an era of great change, challenge and opportunity. Over the next 20 years, our population will grow by nearly 400,000, our age profile and our family structures will be transformed. We face rapid global change, technological developments and the dramatic impact of climate change. We need a new approach to manage our future in a planned productive and sustainable way.

This document - the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) - is a 12-year strategic regional development framework to guide this change. It establishes a broad framework for the way in which our society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve. It includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and

Waterford and a regional strategy for our Key Towns, towns, villages and rural areas.

The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) of the ten local authorities in the Region.

While informed by national, EU and international policies, the RSES is driven at the local level by elected members, local authorities, stakeholders, community groups and individual citizens who have shaped this shared strategy.





SCOPE

The RSES embraces many factors which determine quality of life, including:

- The location of future population growth;
- Provision of housing;
- Improving the qualities of cities, towns and rural areas;
- Education and lifelong learning;
- Creating and sustaining quality jobs;
- Supporting rural development;
- Identifying priorities for infrastructure investment, including educational, healthcare, social, community, sporting and cultural facilities;
- Preserving and protecting the environment, its amenities and landscape qualities;
- Transportation, water services, energy and communications networks, and waste management facilities;
- Addressing climate change;
- Promoting sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas; and
- Enhancing economic performance.

It should be noted that the RSES is a strategic document and identifies high-level requirements and policies. It does not provide every detail for each matter, nor does it cut across areas that are appropriately the responsibility of local authorities. It does however set out the high level statutory framework to empower each local authority to develop CCDPs, Local Area Plans (LAPs) and LECPs that are coordinated with regional and national objectives.

The policies in the RSES are structured under Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Policy Objectives’

Transitional Change

While the RSES process has a long-term vision to 2040, the specific focus of this document is to 2026 and 2031. The level of change required by the NPF cannot be implemented immediately and it will take several cycles of the RSES process to achieve change to long-term patterns of sustainable development. This first RSES is primarily concerned with setting the course to embed long term change.

1.2 | POLICY CONTEXT

Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's overarching policy initiative to make Ireland a better country for all, a country that reflects the best of who we are and what we aspire to be. *Project Ireland 2040* comprises the NPF to 2040 and the NDP 2018-27.

The NPF projects that our national population will grow by one million in the next 20 years. This will require an enormous shift in thinking to plan how and where people live, work, and travel, and to ensure a more balanced growth away from the overconcentration of population, homes and jobs in the Greater Dublin Area.

National Strategic Outcomes and the Strategic Investment Priorities

The NPF sets the context for the RSES through 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's):



Compact Growth involves careful management of sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages to achieve better residential development across the Southern Region.



Enhanced Regional Accessibility is key to the delivery of the NPF, which aims to enhance accessibility and connectivity between the key urban centres and their Regions. Not all routes have to look east and the need to improve connectivity between Cork, Limerick, Waterford (and Galway) and the Regions is essential.



Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities are a strong part of the identity of the Southern Region. Rural areas play a key role in the Region's economy, environment and quality of life, which is reflected by the objectives of the Action Plan for Rural Development.



High-Quality International Connectivity is crucial to the Region for overall international competitiveness, in addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through to investment in our ports and airports. National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy, coupled with high-speed broadband are the chief instruments in consolidating and improving on our Region's international connectivity.



Sustainable Mobility is core to Ireland's Climate Change mitigation plan. A managed transition to electrifying our mobility systems is critical. We need to move away from polluting and carbon intensive transportation systems to technologies such as electric vehicles for public and private transport. In line with the NPF, we need to ensure that our Region will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems by 2040.



A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills requires a competitive, innovative and resilient regional enterprise base. We need to foster an enterprise environment which entices people to live and prosper in the Region. To withstand the external shocks that an open economy can be subjected to, resilience and agility must be the watchwords for a sustainable, healthy and thriving regional economy.



Enhanced Amenities and Heritage enriches and nurtures our community life. By acting as custodians of our wealth of culture, heritage and the arts, we are safeguarding it for future generations. Increased emphasis on attractive place making will require ease of access to amenities and services supported by integrated transport systems and green modes of movement such as pedestrian and cycling facilities.



Transition to Sustainable Energy requires harnessing the considerable on-shore and off-shore energy sources and the roll-out of the National Smart Grid Plan. Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 sets out a vision for transforming Ireland's fossil fuel-based energy sector into a clean, low carbon system by 2050. Policy interventions that promote renewable energy generation through supports such as the public service obligation levy is an example of a measure taken towards achieving this transition and achieving our climate change commitments.



Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources are critical to our environment and well-being. Conserving and enhancing these resources is important for our future planning, including national water planning, regional waste water management, river basement and flood risk management. Collaboration between national, regional and local public bodies is crucial to ensuring our water and environmental resources are managed properly for the future, including incorporating a circular economic approach.



Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services is key to meeting the demands of an increased population, starting with early childhood care and education, investment in schools and third level institutional infrastructure. Education is central to our ambition as a nation and requires careful planning and coordination across national, regional and local public bodies. The future of the Health Service is addressed by Sláintecare, a 10-year plan for health reform which aims to deliver a universal, high-quality, and integrated healthcare system.

National Development Plan 2018-27

Current and planned infrastructural investment across the Southern Region will be delivered under the NDP 2018-27. The NDP is aligned to drive the implementation of the NPF over the next 10 years and thereby the RSES. The NDP comprises a €115bn programme to upgrade the State's infrastructure in anticipation of significant population increase.



UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The UN 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. The plan sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that integrate the three indivisible dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. Since 2015, Ireland is a signatory to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and this is heavily reflected throughout the NPF and the RSES.



European Green Deal

The European Green Deal is a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. It is about improving the well-being of people, making Europe climate neutral and protecting the natural habitat which will be good for people, the planet and the economy. The aims of the Green Deal are: for Europe to become climate-neutral by 2050; to protect human life, animals and plants by cutting pollution; to help companies become world leaders in clean products and technologies; and to help ensure a just and inclusive transition.

City & County Development Plans

The ten City and County Development Plans are a key component of the RSES process and will provide the detailed and coordinated plans to guide and shape the development of communities.

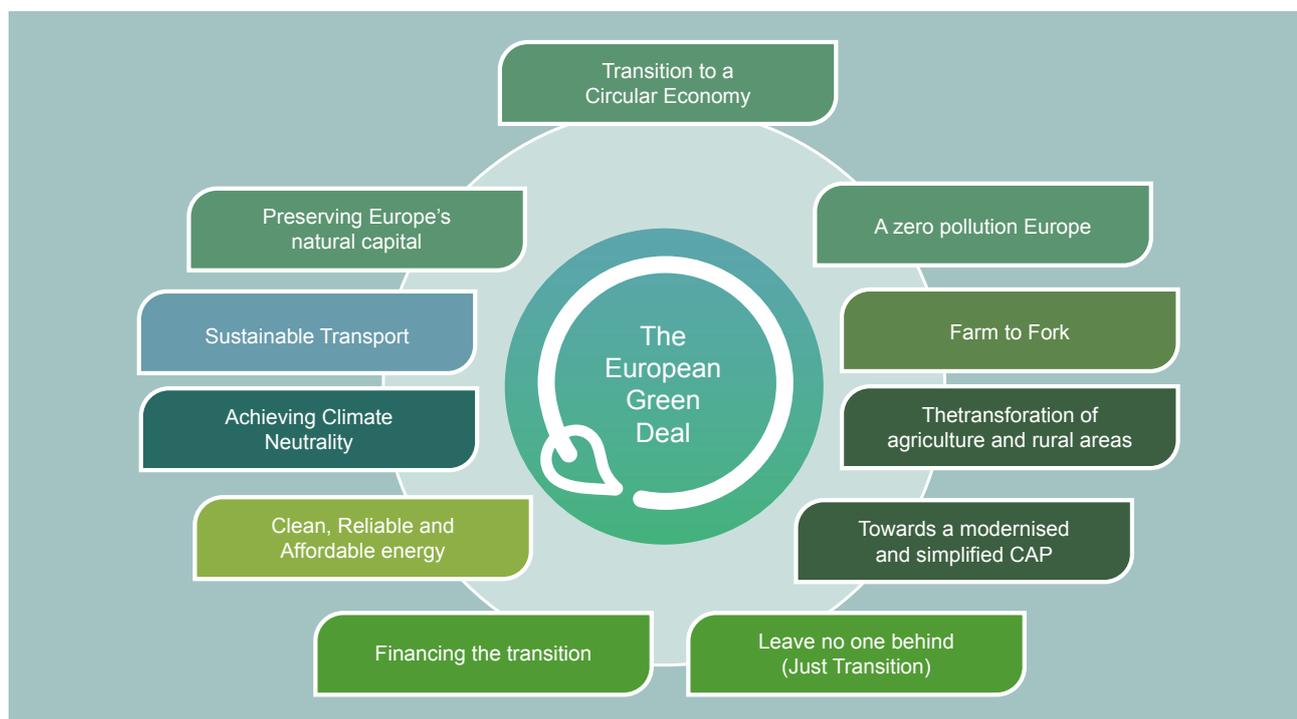
Local Economic & Community Plans

Reflecting the important role of Local Community Development Committees and Public Participation Networks (PPNs), the RSES incorporates the LECPs for each local authority in the Region. The LECPs identify strategic assets, high-level goals, sustainable objectives, priorities and actions at local community level.

The NPF, RSES, the CCDP and LECP processes are part of a multi and interrelated tiered approach to the broadening role of Local Government in planning and in economic and community development spheres.

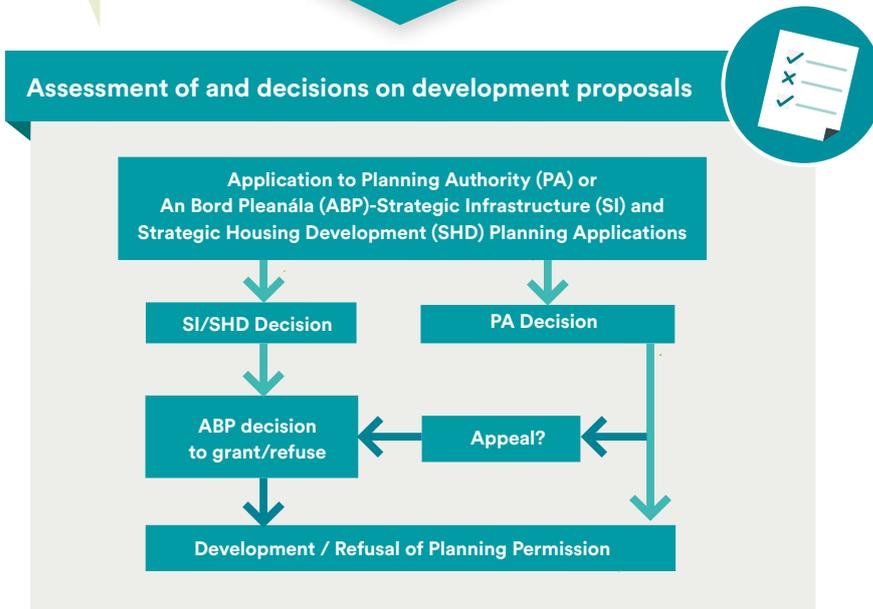


SOURCE | United Nations



Irish Planning System

An Overview



SOURCE | NPF 2040

What Project Ireland 2040 means for the Southern Region

The NPF projects that the population of the Region will grow from between 340,000 to 380,000 people by 2040, bringing our population to almost two million and an additional 225,000 people in employment (880,000 in total).

The challenge for the RSES is to implement a strategy to ensure that this growth is managed in a sustainable way. No place or community is left behind by the RSES. A dual-track strategy is pursued that builds on the cities, metropolitan areas as significantly scaled engines of growth, and supports a sustainable competitive advantage by repositioning the Region's strong network of towns, villages and rural areas in an imaginative and smart manner.

An innovative approach is taken to securing long-term transformational and rejuvenation-focused city growth through **Metropolitan Strategic Area Plans (MASPs)** for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas and the identification of Key Towns. The principles of compact growth and unlocking the potential of centrally located sites will be key deliverables of the MASPs. Developing underutilised land to boost population and economic outputs of city centre areas and our strong network of towns is pursued. In turn the accelerated development of our urban areas will act as economic drivers for the wider Region. Developing their combined strengths will create an effective complement to the economic strength of Dublin.

Equally the focus must be on ensuring a balanced approach and realising the much-underutilised potential in rural towns and dispersed communities. There is a key focus on strengthening our smaller towns and villages as well as rural areas. Responding to the challenge of Climate Change is a priority.

A responsive Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), along with the roll-out of the national high-speed broadband programme, is key to safeguarding the sustainable growth of the Region. Further promotion and development of attractions and capacity to capitalise on latent potential in tourism and local enterprise is essential. Growing the dividend from the Region's clean renewable energy and tourism potential is clearly identified in the NPF, as is the development of a more integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways to support diversification of rural and regional economies, thereby promoting more sustainable forms of travel and activity-based recreation.

The NPF places an emphasis on consolidating the development of places that grew rapidly in the past decade or so with large scale commuter driven housing development. It has a focus on addressing local community and amenity facility provision through targeted investment. Actions to support significant city, rural town and village and rural rejuvenation include support from the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds.



1.3 | REGIONAL PROFILE

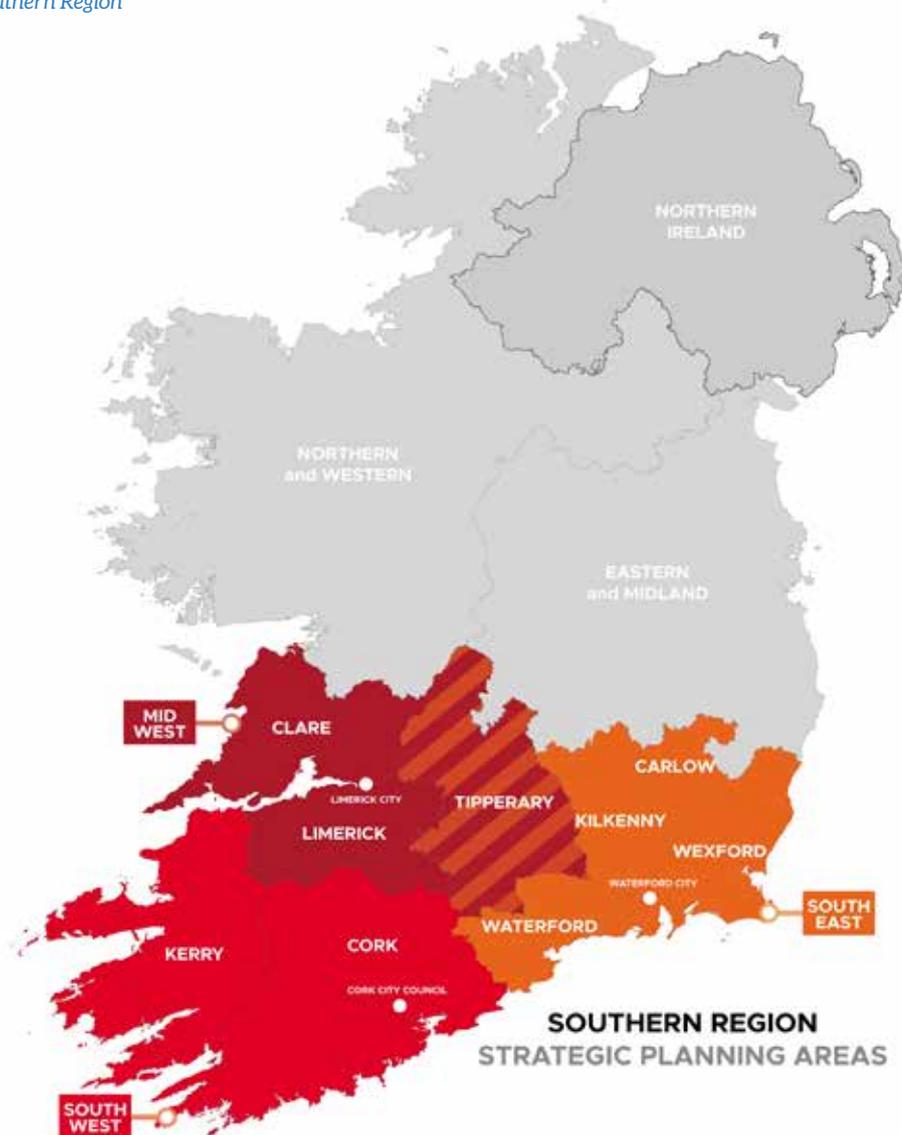
The Southern Region has an area of 29,590 sq.km, which represents over 42% of Irish state territory and in 2016, the population was 1,589,906, representing one third of the state's population. With three of the country's five cities - Cork, Limerick and Waterford and a network of large towns, the Region has a strong urban structure. It remains largely a rural Region with contrasting rural landscapes that range from the Atlantic seaboard to rich productive lands and river valleys.

The Region has nine counties Cork (which includes Cork City Council and Cork County Council), Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford and is administered by 10 local authorities.

It is also divided into three sub-regional areas, called Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs)¹ - the Mid-West, South-East and South-West.

The Region has a wealth of natural, cultural and heritage assets of national importance and is a significant tourist destination. Natural, cultural and heritage assets include, Gaeltacht areas, Cliffs of Moher, King John's Castle, Lakes of Killarney, Fota Wildlife Park, Blarney Castle, The Rock of Cashel, Copper Coast Geopark, Waterford Crystal, Kilkenny Castle, Carlow Garden Trail, Hook Lighthouse and the Dunbrody Famine Ship, to name a few.

Map 1.1 | Southern Region



1. The Map of the Region shows the three Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs) – the Mid-West, the South-East and the South-West SPAs. County Tipperary is located within both the Mid-West and South-East SPA. It should be noted that a separate classification of sub regional structures is in place for statistical purposes. This is the NUTS 3 regional level in terms of EU Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) created by Eurostat and used by the CSO. The Mid-West NUTS 3 region includes the entirety of County Tipperary.

Population

With one-third of the State's population (1.6m), the Region is the second most populated Regional Assembly area. All 10 local authority areas have experienced growth at varying levels since 2006.

Between 2006 and 2016, the highest rates of population increase were in commuter areas near to Cork and Limerick Cities and in areas close to other larger settlements. Areas associated with the Dublin commuter belt in Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford also saw large population increases.

Population decline was also experienced, primarily in rural and peripheral areas, with the largest decreases recorded in areas of Clare, Kerry, Limerick and Cork. Population decline was also evident in areas within Cork, Limerick and Waterford Cities.

The overall age structure for the Region mirrors that of the State. Population projections anticipate large increases in the 15-24 year (+26%), 45-64 year (+14%) and 65+ year (+56%) age groups between 2016 and 2031. The 0-14 year and 25-44 year age groups are projected to decrease by approximately 14%. This changing age profile will impact how we plan for the Region's future. Detailed demographic analysis is available in the SRA Socio-Economic Evidence Baseline Report 2018.



Settlement Structure

The Region boasts a strong network of urban centres with three cities in each of the three SPA's and 13 Towns with populations of over 10,000. The Region is further served by 15 towns with populations between 5,000 and 10,000, and 45 settlements with populations between 1,500 and 5,000 that act as key service centres for their hinterlands.

In 2016, the three cities and suburbs accounted for 22% of the Region's total population. Growth in the cities and suburbs outpaced overall Regional and State level growth from 2011-2016, showing encouraging signs that our cities are strengthening their population base.

There is evidence of significant decline in some smaller towns and villages in the Region. Investment and policy support is urgently needed to bolster and consolidate these vital settlements to arrest the decline and the consequent depletion of the physical fabric and provision of services in these areas.

Table 1.1 | Settlement Size



Table 1.2 | Census 2016 population^{2,3}

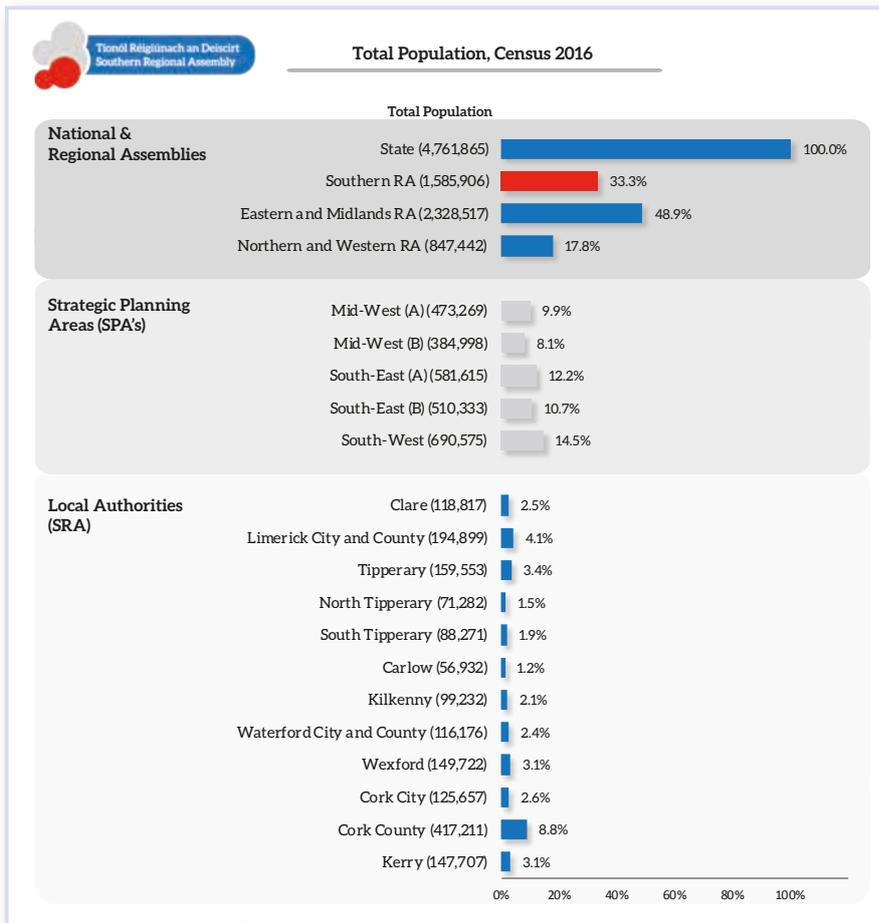
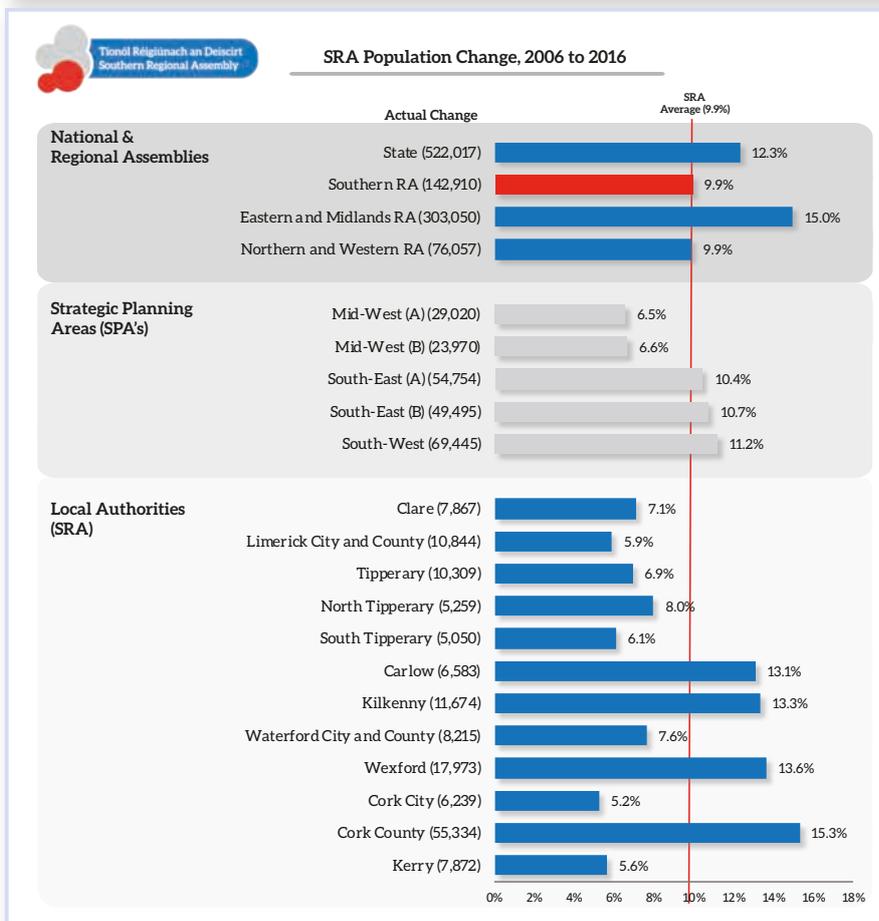


Table 1.3 | County population change 2006 – 2016^{2,3}



- Note the figures for Cork City and County refer to pre boundary extension.
- Based on the Strategic Planning Areas and NUTS 3 sub-regional classification as defined on page 13, the following configurations apply to the above table: Mid-West (A) refers to Clare, Limerick and All of Tipperary, Mid-West (B) refers to Clare, Limerick and Tipperary North, South-East (A) refers to Waterford, Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny and All of Tipperary, South-East (B) refers to Waterford, Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny and Tipperary South

Economic Activity

With employment nearly back to the levels seen before the economic crisis, the Region's enterprise base is currently well-diversified.

In 2016 there were 78,000⁴ active enterprises in the Region, both indigenous and foreign-owned companies operating across a wide range of sectors including – agri food, ICT, and Pharma. The headquarters of a wide range of multinational companies are located in the Region, particularly around the main cities. Enterprises supported by Enterprise Ireland and the IDA employ over 138,000 people, contributing nearly 20% to total employment in the Region. There is evidence of strong growth within business and financial services, and a decline in 'traditional manufacturing'. The Region's Universities, Institutes of Technologies, Colleges and research centres are an instrumental asset in supporting our innovation potential. In overall terms the Region has a strong basis for future economic development.

Environment and Environmental Appraisal

The Region has a wealth of environmental assets from Ireland's highest mountains, dramatic coastlines, and remote rural areas to fertile agricultural landscapes. Our rich urban environment includes a strong and historic network of cities, towns and villages. These have associated flora, fauna, biodiversity and cultural heritage assets, many of which are protected through European and National legislation, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas.

The RSES includes environmental assessment documents, on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and also a Strategic Flood Risk Appraisal (SFRA). Feasibility studies will be carried out to support decision making in relation to RSES objectives, including robust site/route selection processes to consider potential effects on the environment and Natura 2000 Network.

The RSES is the regional tier within the planning framework, guided at the national level by the NPF, it will be supported by further robust local level planning through CCDP and LECPs. These in turn will be subject to appropriate statutory SEA and AA processes.

At the project level, all applications for development consents for projects emanating from any policies that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment will need to be accompanied by one or more of the following, as relevant:

- Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA);
- Environmental Report;
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report - if necessary, under the relevant legislation;
- Natura Impact Statement - if necessary, under the relevant legislation.

4. CSO Business Demography by Activity, County, Year and Statistic

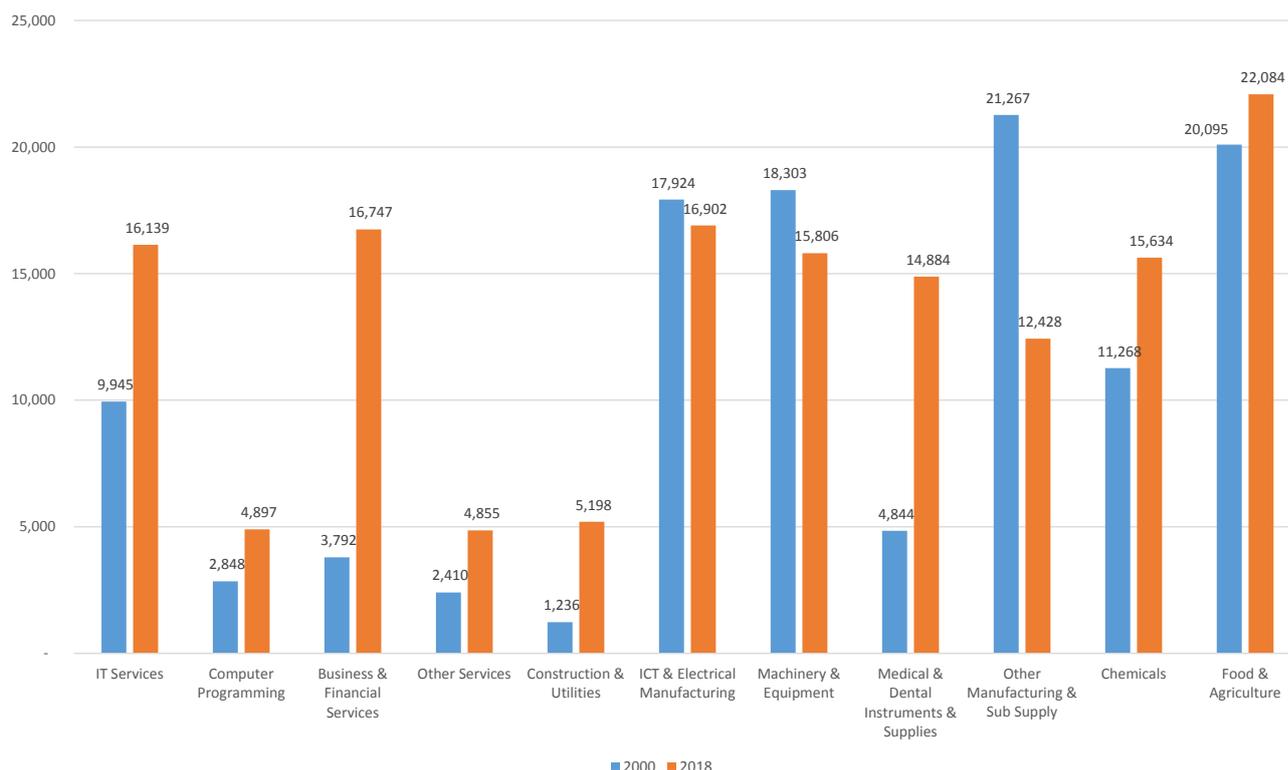
RPO 1

Environmental Assessment

- a. Any reference to support for all plans, projects, activities and development in the RSES should be considered to refer to 'environmentally sustainable development' that has no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites and no net loss of biodiversity, that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints such as landscape, cultural heritage, the protection of water quality, flood risks and biodiversity as a minimum), environmental assessment including EclA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate
- b. The RSES seeks to protect, manage, and through enhanced ecological connectivity, improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Southern Region.
- c. RSES support for other plans/programmes (and initiatives arising) is on the basis of appropriate SEA, SFRA, EIA and AA processes being undertaken in order to ensure the avoidance of adverse effects on European Sites and ensure implementation of mitigation measures where required.
- d. Development Plans shall include an objective for the protection of European sites and Natural Heritage Areas (designated and notified proposed NHAs).



Table 1.4 | Southern Region - Employment in Agency Supported Firms 2000-2018



1.4 | STRUCTURE OF THE RSES

Volume 1

Chapter 2 sets out the overarching Strategic Vision for the Region.

Chapter 3 sets out the overall spatial development pattern for the Region, focusing on the strengthening of our cities, towns villages and rural areas.

Chapters 4 to 9 cover topic-based policies and implementation:

- **Chapter 4** A Strong Economy - Innovative and Smart
- **Chapter 5** Environment including responding to Climate Change.
- **Chapter 6** Connectivity
- **Chapter 7** Quality of Life
- **Chapter 8** Water and Energy Utilities
- **Chapter 9** Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Volume 2

Volume 2 contains the three MASPs for Cork, Limerick - Shannon and Waterford.

Volume 3

Volume 3 includes appendices including a summary profile of Strategic Planning Areas.



Strategic Vision



2.1 | Setting the Context for our Region's Vision

The RSES vision for the Southern Region is led by the need for transformative change. By 2040, the population of the Region will most likely grow by 380,000 people to reach almost two million. This growth will require new homes and new jobs. It also raises questions as to where our future population will live and work, what kind of quality of life will we enjoy and how we can adapt to the challenges we face such as climate change, regional disparity and global uncertainty. An unchecked “business as usual” scenario will diminish our quality of life, our environment, erode our competitiveness and compound regional disparity. There is a need for a different approach to planning for the future.

The RSES builds on our strengths and potential to become a more prosperous, sustainable, climate resilient and attractive region for the benefit of all its people. The Region is well-placed to capitalise on this fresh approach. We have a diverse region with significant assets for building sustainable population and economic growth, improved quality of life and place, regional parity, and a sustainable environment.

Our society is constantly changing. We are more outward-looking and globally-minded. Our population structure is changing, our households are getting smaller, women are having children later in life, and we are living longer. A considerable portion of our population is international and all of these factors will contribute to the forecasted economic and population growth.

We also face significant challenges. The current trajectory toward sprawling, low density growth has been detrimental to many of our places and people. Other challenges include ongoing migration of people, jobs and services to the Greater Dublin Area, continued environmental challenges, disparity between where people live and work, household deprivation in urban and rural areas and exacerbated rural and village decline. Our rural areas face considerable problems supporting employment in the face of declining services.



The provision of houses and stemming decline in our cities, towns and villages are key priorities of the RSES.

We need to take account of international risks, including climate change and geopolitical uncertainty, such as Brexit. While advances in technology present significant opportunities, it also can pose threats such as the negative impact of online retail on the fabric of our cities, towns and villages. Resilience and adaptability must be watchwords for our Region to ensure we are agile and responsive to change.

Despite these challenges, we are in a position of strength and long-term trends indicate sustained population growth and economic recovery. In any event, we should plan for a more resilient society and the next 20 years present a window of opportunity to address challenges, broaden our economic base and work towards a more sustainable and prosperous region with a high quality of life enjoyed by all. In order to maximise our potential, strategic choices need to be made to ensure long-term beneficial dividends for the Region.

The **RSES Vision** is to:

- Nurture all our places to realise their full potential;
- Protect and enhance our environment;
- Successfully combat climate change;
- Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens;
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Make the Southern Region one of Europe's most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions.

Climate Change

Climate Change represents the most serious threat to human life and the environment. If action is not taken on a global scale, global warming will continue to change weather patterns, cause sea levels to rise, threaten the future of entire nations and pose wider risks in terms of degradation of biodiversity, and the planet's ability to provide adequate food and shelter for the human population.

Ireland and the EU are signatories to the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international agreement to restrict global temperature rises to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to limit any increase to 1.5°C to significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. Ireland's international commitments also extend to the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 13, to 'take action to combat climate change and its impacts.'

These commitments are enacted nationally by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015 which provides the statutory framework to pursue decarbonisation by 2050, and the Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 to integrate effective climate action measures into national policies, backed by the Climate Action Fund.

The Southern Regional Assembly (see Chapter 5) supports the implementation of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2019, and the RSES has identified three priority areas for action to address climate

change and to bring about a Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society:

- Decarbonisation;
- Resource Efficiency;
- Climate Resilience.

All global risks of climate change are risks to the Southern Region. The Southern Regional Assembly is committed to play its role to put in place a high-level regional strategy for transition to a low carbon economy and society across all sectors.

The RSES prioritises action on climate change across all strategic areas and in all economic sectors. Achieving action on climate change will require a combined effort between all local authorities and their communities, government departments and state agencies to implement objectives for Compact Growth, Sustainable Travel and Placemaking to reduce the travel demand between residential areas and centres of employment and education.

The targets for reduction of emissions across different sectors will be further developed, including key targets for 55% movement by sustainable transport modes. This will be supported by a robust implementation of time-bound and measurable objectives on climate action for the Southern Region.



1,585,906

with over a third of the State's total population living here.

Population



3 Cities of national and international significance

Cork, Limerick & Waterford projected as amongst the fastest growing locations in the State over the next 20+ years.

over 648k

almost a third of the State's total at work in the Region.

Labour Force



2 UNESCO Learning Cities - Cork & Limerick



3 WHO Healthy Cities



3 Smart Gateway Cities



Productive agricultural region with good quality farmland and high agricultural yields



All Tier-1 and Tier-2 ports outside of Dublin located in the Region

Universities

2



2

State Airports

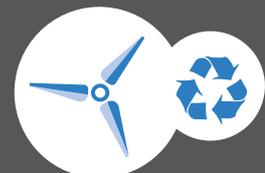


5

Institutes of Technology

Regional Airports

2



Clean Renewable Energy Potential

Diverse Industrial Base with established clusters and specialisms



Strong rural areas supported by a significant network of towns and villages



Extensive coastline with significant marine resource potential



All three national tourism areas are present in the Region - Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands



2.2 | The Strategy

A key component of the RSES is to strengthen the settlement structure of the Region and to capitalise on the individual and collective strengths of our three cities, our metropolitan areas, and our strong network of towns, villages and rural communities.

Our cities are the pillars on which to base the RSES settlement and economic strategy. They can play a significant role, individually and collectively, to rebalance the disproportionate growth of the Greater Dublin Area. All three are targeted for significant growth by at least half, i.e. by 50-60% to 2040, whereas Dublin has a planned growth of just above the national average (20-25%) to 2040. Cork is the State's second city and the largest urban settlement in the Region. With almost a fifth of the State's population located in the Cork Metropolitan Area, it is larger in scale than the Limerick-Shannon, Galway and Waterford Metropolitan Areas combined. The NPF recognises this, stating that "Cork is emerging as an international centre of scale and is well placed to complement Dublin, but requires significantly accelerated and urban focused growth to more fully achieve this role".

Limerick is the largest urban centre in the Mid-West with notable strategic assets including its location between Cork and Galway on the Atlantic Economic Corridor with excellent connectivity to Dublin, to Shannon International Airport and to the port and energy related facilities of the Shannon estuary. Waterford, the principle urban centre in the south east, is unique in being connected to a network of large and strong urban centres. Both cities are also very important drivers of national growth, are of international significance, are key regional centres and require significant investment and growth.

Each of our three cities has very significant potential individually - however, the combined potential of our cities (together with Galway) is a powerful proposition for regional and national transformation.

The emphasis on urban growth in the RSES is driven by wider economic benefits and, for environmental reasons, to make the most efficient use of resources. This requires a focus on compact growth. The RSES also focuses on growth of settlements throughout the Region to improve accessibility, to conserve energy and to maintain the role and character of smaller towns and villages. It is essential

for smaller settlements to maintain their role and character through public and private investment. Care is needed to match proposed rapid growth with adequate, accessible and timely new services.

The RSES also aims to improve the quality of life in our diverse rural communities, valuing them as dynamic, resilient and outward looking areas of potential. A healthy, broad-based economy is essential to resource a high-quality environment and to realise the potential of our Region, both rural and urban. To a significant extent, the success of the RSES can be achieved through businesses and communities already in the Region. Our cities provide a basis for the international economies of scale to compete on a global basis and employment opportunities will be encouraged in and around our cities, towns and rural areas.

Safeguarding our environment is an important strand of the RSES, to benefit future generations and to promote quality of life. In the long run, both development and protection of the environment must go hand in hand to safeguard the quality of life in the Region and attract new activities. The RSES welcomes appropriate development to bring about beneficial changes in the way our cities, towns, villages and rural areas relate to each other, the natural environment, and the population they serve.

The combined effort of the local authorities and their communities, economic sectors, government and state agencies is needed to achieve action on climate change - to implement objectives for Compact Growth, Sustainable Travel and Place-Making to reduce travel demand between residential areas and centres of employment, education and commerce.

The RSES takes a progressive approach to conserving and enhancing the natural and built heritage and the natural resources of wildlife and landscape. Our most valued assets must be protected from overuse and pollution. Equally, it is important to care for the general countryside, coastline and urban environment. A ready supply of development land at appropriate locations throughout the Region will ease the pressure on vulnerable assets while encouraging economic progress.

The Region's dispersed settlement pattern and its peripheral location in Europe makes it particularly dependent on efficient communications - good rail, road, sea, air and telecommunications links are of the utmost importance. The RSES seeks to enhance public transport and improve communications across the Region.

Our cities are the pillars on which to base the RSES settlement and economic strategy.

Implementation

The vision and overall strategy of the RSES requires early planning to put in place effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation structures which will measure progress at set milestones. These implementation structures will involve stakeholders including government departments and state agencies, local authorities and their communities, public representation organisations and elected members. Accessing funding opportunities to progress this vision and strategy is central to success across all Regional Policy Objectives and MASP Policy Objectives.

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Strategy Statements

Bringing these components together leads to the Strategy – these are the **11 Statements** of the **Strategy** to build a Strong, Resilient and Sustainable Region.

.....



Strategy

THE SOUTHERN REGION'S STRATEGY IS TO BUILD A STRONG, RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE REGION BY:



1. Compact Growth

Strengthening and growing our cities and metropolitan areas; harnessing the combined strength of our 3 cities as a counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area, through quality development; regeneration and compact growth; building on the strong network of towns and supporting our villages and rural areas.



2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility

Enhancing regional accessibility through upgraded transport infrastructure and digital connectivity allied to transformed settlement hierarchy.



3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

Strengthening the role of and improving quality of life in the Region's diverse rural areas and communities and valuing our rural Region as dynamic, resilient and outward looking.



4. Sustainable Mobility

Transforming our transport systems towards well-functioning, sustainable integrated public transport, walking and cycling and electric vehicles.



5. A Strong Economy

Building a competitive, innovative and productive economy.



6. High-Quality International Connectivity

Optimising our international connectivity through investment and increased capacity in our ports and airports and provision of high-quality digital connectivity throughout the Region.



7. Diversity, Language, Culture and Heritage Enhancement

Strengthening and protecting our Region's diversity, language and culture, our recreational assets, and our natural and built heritage.



8. Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society

Safeguarding and enhancing our environment through sustainable development, prioritising action on climate change across the Region, driving the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.



9. Sustainable, Planned and Infrastructure-led Development

Providing infrastructure and services in a sustainable, planned and infrastructure-led manner to ensure the sustainable management of water waste and other environmental resources.



10. A Healthy and Learning Region

Achieving improved education, health and public services and facilities for all citizens and communities.



11. Inclusive International Region

Building an inclusive outward looking international Region on the global stage.

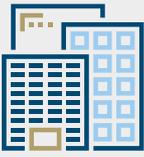
Our Strategy



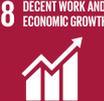
Key Enablers

Our Strategy for building the Region as one of Europe's most Creative and Innovative, Greenest and Liveable Regions focuses on Key Enablers to transform the Region:

- **Connecting our Region** – enhanced infrastructure from **North to South** and **East Coast to West Coast**, connecting to the **Atlantic Economic Corridor** & developing an extended **Eastern Corridor to Rosslare Europort**;
- Delivering ambitious and sustainable growth targets for our cities, developing and consolidating our Key Towns, creating the **Greenest** and **most Liveable Metropolitan Areas** for diverse communities, culture and enterprise - developing the Cork Docklands, regeneration of Limerick-Shannon, including the Limerick Northern Distributor Route/ Smart Travel Corridor, and achieving a balanced 'concentric city' model north of the river in Waterford with development of the North Quays and adjoining lands in Kilkenny;
- Creating an inclusive and **Learning Region**, building on our internationally competitive, learning partnerships, higher education institutions including establishing the new technological universities of MTU and TUSE, a new Learning Region Network and developing a Smart Region which recognises the advantages of a multilingual society and the value of using Irish both inside and outside the Gaeltacht areas;
- Investing in **Public Services** to tackle legacies, support planned population and employment growth; providing education, health, transport, community and social services and infrastructure;
- Positioning the Southern Region as **Ireland's International Gateway** at Cork, Shannon, Kerry and Waterford Airports and our sea ports;
- Making the most of **Cork and Waterford Harbours** and the **Shannon Estuary** – our natural maritime assets;
- Improving and protecting **the quality of the environment** and our rich **heritage** as custodians for future generations along the Wild Atlantic Way, into Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, through Ireland's Ancient East, the Gaeltacht and islands, and along the Blueways and Greenways;
- **Revitalising our urban areas and spaces** through creative and regenerative placemaking, to deliver on **Compact Growth and Housing Need**, and provide new vitality for City and Town Centres;
- **Revitalising Rural Areas** through readapting our small towns and villages and increasing collaboration between networks of settlements to seek higher value, diversified jobs for a higher quality of life;
- **Taking the rights steps** towards more sustainable travel, energy and in bio-economy to **lead on Climate Action** in the transition to a Low Carbon Society.

National Strategic Outcome	RSES STRATEGY	UN Sustainable Development Goals
 <p>Compact Growth</p>	 <p>1. Compact Growth Strengthening and growing our cities and metropolitan areas; harnessing the combined strength of our 3 cities as a counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area, through quality development; regeneration and compact growth; building on the strong network of towns and supporting our villages and rural areas.</p>	
 <p>Enhanced Regional Accessibility</p>	 <p>2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility Enhancing regional accessibility through upgraded transport infrastructure and digital connectivity allied to transformed settlement hierarchy.</p>	
 <p>Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities</p>	 <p>3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities Strengthening the role of and improving quality of life in the Region's diverse rural areas and communities and valuing our rural Region as dynamic, resilient and outward looking.</p>	
 <p>Sustainable Mobility</p>	 <p>4. Sustainable Mobility Transforming our transport systems towards well-functioning, sustainable integrated public transport, walking and cycling and electric vehicles.</p>	

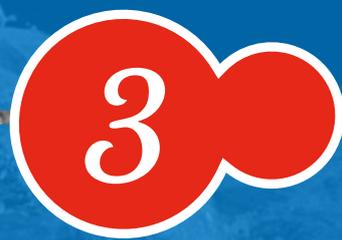
National Strategic Outcome	RSES STRATEGY	UN Sustainable Development Goals
 <p>A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills</p>	 <p>5. A Strong Economy Building a competitive, innovative and productive economy.</p>	
 <p>High-Quality International Connectivity</p>	 <p>6. High-Quality International Connectivity Optimising our international connectivity through investment and increased capacity in our ports and airports and provision of high-quality digital connectivity throughout the Region.</p>	
 <p>Enhanced Culture, Amenity and Heritage</p>	 <p>7. Diversity, Language, Culture and Heritage Enhancement Strengthening and protecting our Region's diversity, language and culture, our recreational assets, and our natural and built heritage.</p>	
 <p>Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society</p>	 <p>8. Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society Safeguarding and enhancing our environment through sustainable development, prioritising action on climate change across the Region, driving the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.</p>	

National Strategic Outcome	RSES STRATEGY	UN Sustainable Development Goals		
 <p>Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and Other Environmental Resources</p>	 <p>9. Sustainable, Planned and Infrastructure-led Development Providing infrastructure and services in a sustainable, planned and infrastructure-led manner to ensure the sustainable management of water waste and other environmental resources.</p>	 <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>	 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	 <p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p>
 <p>Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services</p>	 <p>10. A Healthy and Learning Region Achieving improved education, health and public services and facilities for all citizens and communities.</p>	 <p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	 <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>	 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>
	 <p>11. Inclusive International Region Building an inclusive outward looking international Region on the global stage.</p>	 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	 <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	 <p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p>
		 <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	 <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	 <p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>
		 <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	 <p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	





People & Places



3.1 | Introduction

This Chapter sets out the overall approach to development for the Southern Region and takes forward the RSES Strategy particularly:



1. Compact Growth



3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities



9. Sustainable, Planned and Infrastructure-led Development

It builds on the requirements for transformative change set out in the NPF including regional parity.

As the largest centres of population, employment and services, our three cities Cork, Limerick and Waterford provide the focus to drive the development of the Region. However it will require the combined potential of all three (and Galway) to be realised at an unprecedented rate to achieve this ambition and to create a viable alternative to Dublin. This can only be achieved with a strong network of towns and rural areas providing a basis for sustainable growth.



Key principles in developing the strategy are:

- No place or community is left behind by the RSES. A dual-track strategy is pursued that builds on the cities and metropolitan areas as significantly scaled engines of sustainable growth, and supports competitive advantage by repositioning the Region's strong network of towns, villages and rural areas in an imaginative, sustainable and smart manner;
 - The need to provide an adequate supply of quality housing to meet existing and future demand, including addressing the current housing crisis and homelessness;
 - Invest in and deliver infrastructure to improve the liveability and quality of life of urban and rural areas;
 - Regenerate and develop existing built-up areas as attractive and viable alternatives to greenfield development;
 - Use quality urban design to enhance the character of a place and to ensure development is respectful of the existing physical, social, environmental and cultural context;
 - Tackle legacy issues, such as concentrated disadvantage in urban areas through social, economic, recreational, cultural, environmental and physical infrastructural regeneration;
 - Link regeneration and development initiatives to environmental protection and climate action measures;
 - Provide strong regional policy support for local level policies and initiatives which achieve national policy targets for renewal and compact growth;
 - Provide strong regional support for policy and local initiatives which restrict urban generated sprawl, strengthen the urban fabric and role of settlements servicing hinterlands, consolidate existing settlements, and protect the environment and resources of rural areas from haphazard, urban-generated housing patterns.
-

3.2 | Sustainable Place Framework

The NPF projects that the population of the Region will grow by 380,000 to almost two million by 2040, with around 225,000 additional people in employment. There will be between 196,000 and 235,500 additional people up to 2026 and between 280,000 and 343,500 additional people up to 2031. This will require up to 86,000 new homes by 2026 and 125,000 by 2031 and additionally, to cater for our changing population, such as social housing, upgrading and replacement of older and poor quality stock, housing for smaller families and an ageing population, additional housing responses will be required.

Table 3.1 sets out a summary of the key regional targets for structuring overall regional population growth and a further breakdown to the local authority level is included in Appendix 1. The NPF Implementation Roadmap also expands on the growth figures for the Region. The RSES recognises that the level of change required by the NPF cannot be implemented immediately. It will require several RSES/Development Plan cycles to change long-term patterns of development (which has traditionally been considered in terms of greenfield development) and the lead-in time required for infrastructure to achieve change. There are also practical factors such as the stock of existing permissions which may be built over the next 5-10 years and which are not based on the strategy.

Table 3.1 | Regional Distribution of Growth⁵

SPA	2016	2026	2031
South-West	690,500	784,000-802,500	823,000-854,500
Mid-West	385,000	436,000-446,000	460,500-475,500
South-East	509,500	561,000 - 572,000	581,500-598,500
REGION	1,585,000	1,781,000 - 1,820,500	1,865,000 - 1,928,500

3.3 | A Tailored Approach

The settlement typology set out in Table 3.2 is a tailored response to the challenges the Region faces. It is a framework based on the pillars of our three cities, supported by a network of strategically located Key Towns, towns and villages and rural areas. The RSES also identifies key networks between our settlements, and the other two regions, to capitalise on our shared strengths.

The RSES is committed to supporting people and places throughout the Region - all communities both urban and rural.

5. "Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework". See Circular FPS04/2018

RPO 2

Planning for Diverse Areas

The RSES recognises the strategic role played by all areas, both urban and rural, in achieving the set regional and national targets and objectives. The RSES supports sustainable enterprise growth, services, physical and social infrastructure investment and the sustainable growth of all communities in the Region. The overall strategy builds on cities and their associated metropolitan areas as engines of growth and seeks, in parallel, to re-position the Region's strong network of towns, villages and diverse rural areas in an economically resilient, imaginative and smart way to foster sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 3.2 | Settlement Typology

Category	Attributes	Place	Policy Level
Cities - Metropolitan Areas	Metropolitan Areas – accessible with national and international connectivity, strong business core, innovation, education, retail, health and cultural role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cork • Limerick-Shannon • Waterford 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPF • RSES • MASP • Development Plans • Local Area Plans
Key Towns⁶	<p>Large population scale urban centre functioning as self-sustaining regional drivers.</p> <p>Strategically located urban centres with accessibility and significant influence in a sub-regional context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kilkenny • Ennis • Carlow • Tralee • Wexford • Clonmel • Killarney • Mallow • Nenagh • Thurles • Newcastle West • Clonakilty • Dungarvan • Gorey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSES • Development Plans • Local Area Plans
Towns & Villages	Towns and villages of above 1,500 which provide a housing, employment or service function. The category is broad and ranges from large commuter towns to more remote towns and villages.	To be identified in Development Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Plans • Local Area Plans
Rural⁷	Rural villages less than 1,500 and the wider rural region.	To be identified in Development Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Plans • Local Area Plans
Networks	Groupings of towns and villages (incl. cross boundary) which share geographic, economic, resources and contribute specialisms which if combined provide a strategic opportunity to drive the regional economy.	To be identified in Development Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Plans • Local Area Plans



6. The Regions network of Key Towns strengthens the urban structure across our Region, align with NPO 7 of the NPF and are a complement to the three pillars of our cities and metropolitan areas which are the primary drivers of population and employment growth in the Region.
7. In identifying settlements under 1,500 as “rural” and above 1,500 as “urban”, the RSES reflects the CSO categorisation of settlements which is contained in the NPF. The NPF separately refers to the categorisation of settlements under 10,000 (Rural Regeneration & Development Fund) and above 10,000 population (Urban Regeneration and Development Fund) relating to eligibility for these funding mechanisms. This separate categorisation does not relate to the objectives in Chapter 3.



The settlement typology is based on the following principles for economic growth:

- Harnessing opportunities for economic growth by supporting synergies between talent and place;
- Building on identified assets to strengthen enterprise ecosystems and provide quality jobs;
- Re-intensifying employment in existing urban areas, complemented by strategic employment growth in the right locations;
- Diversifying local and rural economies to better withstand economic shocks and sustain national growth.

Further detail on employment and enterprise enablers and strategic attributes for the cities are contained in the three MASPs. The key linkages between the spatial and economic components of the RSES are set out in Chapter 4 - A Strong Economy: Innovative and Smart.

When allocating for future growth in the Core Strategy of each development plan, the Region's local authorities will have regard to the settlement typology and apply the following guiding principles:

- Scale of population and its existing performance;
- Extent to which a settlement is located inside or outside one of the three defined Metropolitan Areas;
- Scale of employment provision, number of jobs, jobs-to-resident workers ratio and net commuting flows;

- Compliance with the NPF (NPO 72) on a standardised, tiered approach that differentiates between zoned land that is serviced and that which is serviceable within the life of the plan, and the provision of cost estimates to deliver services and infrastructure;
- Linking Core Strategies to an evidence base on the availability and deliverability of lands within the existing built up footprints. Such an evidence base will provide clarity for how sustainable and viable development will be progressed during the life of the development plan, including targeted timelines for addressing infrastructure deficits, delivering public transport improvements, delivering land supply, and transitional steps to achieve compact growth targets;
- Extent of local services and amenities provision, particular higher education institutes, health, leisure and retail;
- Extent to which sustainable modes of travel can be encouraged (walking, cycling or public transport);
- Rate and pace of past development and the extent to which there are outstanding requirements for infrastructure and amenities;
- Accessibility and influence in a regional or sub-regional context;
- Sub-regional interdependencies, e.g. location of a settlement in relation to nearby settlements and scope for collaboration including cross-boundary collaboration for settlements adjoining local authority boundaries;
- Character of local geography and accessibility as a service centre for remote and long-distance rural hinterlands;

- Track record of performance and delivery, as well as ambition and scope to leverage investment;
- Environmental and infrastructural constraints;
- The appropriate density and scale of development relative to the settlement and location, incl. differing rates and nature of development experienced;
- Need for attractive, alternative options to rural housing within smaller towns and villages.

RPO 3

Local Authority Core Strategies

In preparing Core Strategies, local authorities shall determine a hierarchy of settlement and appropriate growth rates in accordance with the guiding principles (including environmental protection) and typology of settlement in the RSES.

RPO 4

Infrastructure Investment

Infrastructure investment shall be aligned with the spatial planning strategy of the RSES.

RPO 5

Population Growth and Environmental Criteria

Increased population growth should be planned with regard to environmental criteria, including:

- Assimilative capacity of the receiving environment;
- Proximity of Natura 2000 sites and potential for adverse effects on these sites, and their conservation objectives;
- Areas with flood potential.



3.4 | Cities – Metropolitan Areas

The strategy for the development of the Region is built on the pillars of our three cities, each incorporating more than one local authority within their metropolitan areas. The RSES includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans to ensure coordination between local authority plans.

A key component of the RSES is about building partnerships and a collaborative approach between the cities and metropolitan areas to realise combined strengths and potential, and to support their development as a viable alternative to Dublin.

Our cities need sustainable planning to ensure that they can absorb a significant scale of development, retain their essential character and ensure quality of life. Compact urban settlements, efficient public transport networks and the provision of essential physical and social infrastructure is required in tandem with achieving projected growth. Responding to the radical change and growth required by the NPF and the RSES will be a major challenge for our cities and metropolitan areas.

Each city has unique strengths and opportunities. Each one is a major centre of employment, has a third-level education presence, healthcare structures, accessible public transport, and interregional road networks and is linked with international gateways of airports and ports. Cork through the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) has an established (non statutory) metropolitan and cityregion planning framework. The newly emerging metropolitan frameworks in Limerick-Shannon and Waterford provide a significant combined proposition for effective regional growth and, at national level, an effective counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area.

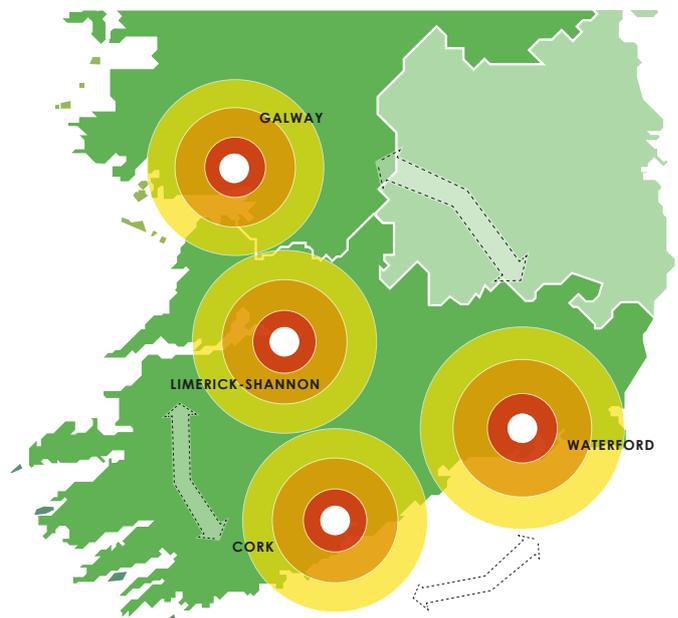
The three cities have extensive areas of influence, as demonstrated by the catchment zone map. The MASPs address these areas for each city and metropolitan area, included in Volume 2. A summary of each MASP is set out in the following pages.

RPO 6

Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas

It is an objective to establish a collaborative intra-regional partnership approach between the Region's metropolitan areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon, Waterford and a similar inter-regional approach with the Galway Metropolitan Area in the Northern and Western Region, that they are prioritised in line with the NPF's strategic objectives and population targets, for focused and long-term investment as economic engines to ensure regional parity. The three metropolitan areas will lead together in partnership to harness their combined potential as viable alternatives to the unbalanced growth of Dublin.

Map 3.2 | Collaboration Between Metropolitan Areas



The following objectives will apply for each MASP:

RPO 7

Delivery and Funding

It is an objective to:

- a. Support sustainable delivery of the Strategic Investment Priorities identified by the NDP for the Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford metropolitan areas and progress co-ordination between the principal stakeholders for delivery to achieve the vision and objectives identified in each MASP.
- b. Promote the sustainable implementation of innovative, collaborative projects through the Urban Regeneration & Development, Rural Regeneration & Development, Climate Action, and Disruptive Technologies funds within the Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas.

RPO 8

Investment to Deliver on the Vision for Metropolitan Areas

It is an objective to:

- a. Identify investment packages at national level as they apply to the Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford MASP areas, and seek further investments for each to deliver on the seven Metropolitan Area Goals;
- b. Prioritise the delivery of compact growth and sustainable mobility in accordance with NPF objectives;
- c. Ensure the investment in and delivery of the Sustainable Place Framework within each MASP area, delivering quality of place attributes as an incentive to attract people to live, work and visit.



RPO 9

Holistic Approach to Delivering Infrastructure

It is an objective to ensure investment and delivery of comprehensive infrastructure packages to meet growth targets that prioritise the delivery of compact growth and sustainable mobility as per the NPF objectives including:

Water services, digital, green infrastructure, transport and sustainable travel, community and social, renewable energy, recreation, open space amenity, climate change adaptation and future proofing infrastructure including flood risk management measures, environmental improvement, arts, culture and public realm.

Compact Growth in Metropolitan Areas

To achieve compact growth, the RSES seeks to:

- a. Prioritise housing and employment development in locations within and contiguous to existing city footprints where it can be served by public transport, walking and cycling.
- b. Identify strategic initiatives in Local Authority Core Strategies for the MASP areas, which will achieve the compact growth targets on brownfield and infill sites at a minimum and achieve the growth targets identified in each MASP. Such strategic initiatives shall comply with MASP Goals to evolve innovative approaches for all MASPs. Initiatives may include:
 - Support the creation and role of Active Land Management Units with a remit to focus on the metropolitan areas and compact growth targets;
 - Tier 1 (Serviced Zoned Land) and Tier 2 (Serviceable Zoned Land) to be identified as part of the review of the City and County Development Plans in the Region;
 - Partnerships with the Land Development Agency to progress housing and employment delivery in city and town centres, focusing on co-ordinating and developing large, strategically located, publicly-owned land banks, reducing vacancy and increasing regeneration of key sites;
 - Support the role of the local authority as a development agency to kick start regeneration processes;
 - Initiatives that facilitate the regeneration of derelict buildings and vacant sites for the provision of high-quality, environmentally friendly Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) affordable housing;
 - Strategic land reserve initiatives;
 - Deliver design briefs for strategic sites;
 - Seek design competitions for key strategic sites that deliver greater density, mixed uses where appropriate, sustainable design, smart technology, green infrastructure and public gain through good design;
 - Active land management within designated site specific regeneration areas under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, and other locations in need of renewal, including the use of site briefs and masterplans for a design led approach to renewal;
 - The identification of public realm and site regeneration initiatives which combine, on an area wide basis, opportunities for regeneration of private owned underutilised sites, public owned underutilised sites, private and public buildings and upgrade of parks, streetscapes and public realm areas;
 - Creation of continually updated databases identifying brownfield, infill sites, regeneration areas and infrastructure packages to enable progress towards achieving compact growth targets. Through active land management initiatives, identify strategic locations for residential growth responding to the growth targets and achievement of compact growth and employment growth.



Cork MASP

Introduction

Metropolitan Cork has existing critical mass and is an emerging international centre of scale driven by the State's second city of Cork at the core, and supported by a network of metropolitan towns and strategic employment locations. As a national primary driver and an engine of economic and population growth, Metropolitan Cork is a principle complementary location to Dublin. Strengthened regional connectivity will enhance integration of the Cork metropolitan area with the Atlantic Economic Corridor. It will regenerate and develop as an international Smart City and metropolitan area with an enhanced high-quality environment, vibrant city centre, compact suburbs and metropolitan towns. The MASP builds on the strong tradition of collaboration in Cork, facilitated by initiatives such as the CASP.

Land Use and Transportation

Sustainable regeneration and growth (particularly compact growth) will be achieved through effective sustainable transport and spatial land use planning. Sustainable higher densities must be delivered, especially at public transport nodal points. Significant investment across a host of agencies will be required to deliver holistic infrastructures for regeneration and growth to achieve the population and jobs targets. The game changer for Metropolitan Cork is the implementation of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS). Strategic residential and employment development must support the delivery of this network including the proposed high capacity Light Rail Transit Corridor. The distribution of growth must follow a spatial hierarchy that underpins delivery of the CMATS. Refer to Cork MASP Vol 2 for further details.

Housing and Regeneration

The sustainable growth of Metropolitan Cork requires consolidation, regeneration, infrastructure led growth and investment in each of the following locations: city centre (including the Docklands and Tivoli), light rail transit (LRT) corridor, strategic bus network corridor and suburban area nodal points and corridors along the Ballincollig to Mahon LRT line, district centres, north and south environs, Glanmire, city and suburban area expansion (sustainable and infrastructure led), metropolitan towns on rail corridor, (Monard SDZ, regeneration of metropolitan towns and urban expansion areas in Middleton, Cobh, Carrigwohill, Blarney) and other metropolitan towns (including Carrigaline).

Employment & Enterprise

Strategic locations and drivers for economic growth in the metropolitan area will include intensification of employment in the city centre, docklands, city suburban areas, Higher Education Institutes (UCC and CIT) and international centres of research and innovation such as Tyndall, Rubicon, MaREI, Cork Science and Technology Park, Mahon, Ringaskiddy, Marino Point, Carrigwohill, Little Island and Whitegate. Strategic assets include Tier 1 Port of Cork, Cork Airport, health infrastructure and Cork University Hospital. The special role of Cork Harbour reflecting its natural and historic heritage, industry, maritime economy, tourism and communities, as a unique driver for the Region is recognised and will be subject to an integrated framework plan.

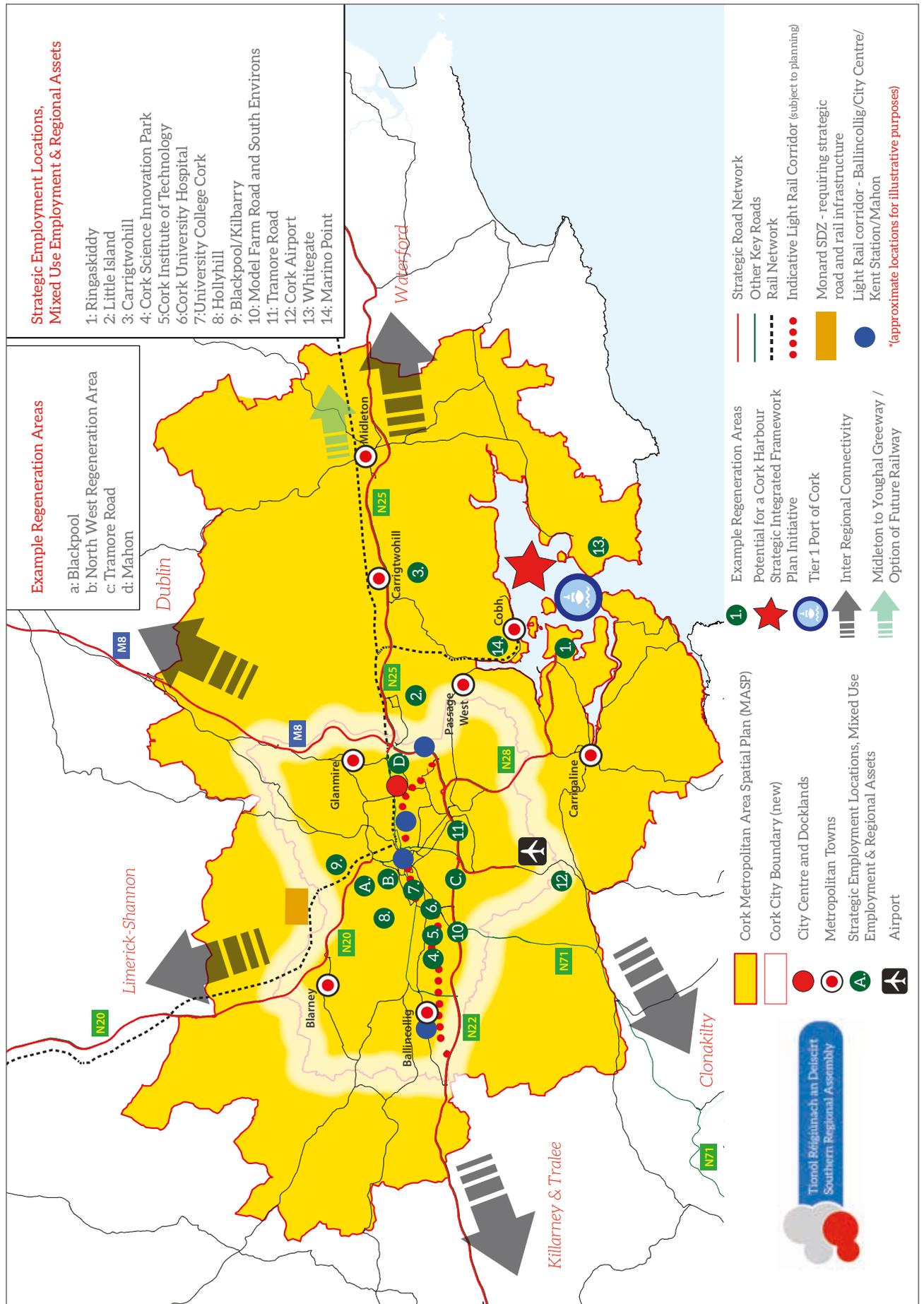
Environment

The Cork MASP seeks to integrate sustainable economic and social development with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment to ensure our transition to a climate resilient society. Objectives seek a healthy, green and connected metropolitan area, green infrastructure, inter-connected parks, sports and recreation facilities and greenways. Placemaking initiatives and public realm enhancements are supported.

Social Infrastructure

The Cork MASP supports on-going collaboration with regional stakeholders to ensure that social infrastructure such as education, lifelong learning and skills, healthy cities, health infrastructure and community facilities are provided. Social inclusion and regeneration of disadvantaged areas are supported.





Limerick-Shannon

MASP

Introduction

Limerick City is the largest urban centre in the Mid-West and the country's third largest city. The NPF supports ambitious growth targets to enable Limerick City to grow by at least 50% to 2040 and to achieve its potential to become a city of scale. Shannon is a significant employment centre with assets such as Shannon International Airport, Shannon Free Zone and the International Aviation Services Centre (IASC). Limerick City and Shannon are interdependent, with their complementary functions contributing to a combined strength that is a key economic driver for the Region and Ireland.

Limerick Regeneration, the amalgamation of Limerick City and County and the Limerick 2030 initiative have all contributed to enhancing Limerick's growth potential. Shannon has developed into a centre for research and development for autonomous vehicles that complements Shannon's role as a world leader in aviation. Working together with, inter alia, Higher Education Institutions, Regional Enterprise Plan and Regional Skill Forum initiatives, Shannon International Airport and bodies such as Shannon Development and the Shannon-Foynes Port Company, there is capacity to build on recent successes and add to the ambitious vision for this Metropolitan Area.

Integrated Land-use and Transportation

The principles underpinning the MASP include the effective integration of transport planning with spatial planning policies and the alignment of infrastructure investment. The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy will be instrumental in the regeneration and transformation of Limerick City and the wider Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. It will deliver a high-quality, accessible, integrated and more sustainable transport network. A key priority of the MASP is the development of strategic residential areas and the provision of the Limerick Northern Distributor Route (LNDR).

Housing and Regeneration

Regeneration and placemaking are identified as drivers of change and are critical to sustained socio-economic vibrancy. The MASP highlights the need to increase residential density in Limerick City and Shannon through a range of measures including, reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill and site-based regeneration. The MASP supports the densification of Limerick City Centre, the assembly of brownfield sites for development and City Centre rejuvenation and consolidation. Collaborative efforts between local authorities and the Land Development Agency are supported.

Employment & Enterprise

The Higher Education Institutions, ETB and Skills Forum that serve the Metropolitan Area are responsive to the upskilling needs of industry and building economic resilience. Positive examples of industrial clusters and inter-agency collaborations are key strengths in creating a vibrant business ecosystem. Key employment locations include Shannon Free Zone, National Technology Park, IDA Raheen Business Park, Limerick's Dock Road, Annacotty Business Park, Ballysimon and Clondrinagh Industrial Estates with development in progress such in Limerick City Centre (Gardens, Opera, Cleeves) and the opportunity for a South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone at UL. Investment in the creation of 'place', as well as Shannon International Airport and Shannon-Foynes Port, are key to realising the potential to attract and maintain economic activity and talent.

There is an increasing demand for employees to engage in upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning to respond to changing employment patterns and demands by developing skills resilience. The enhancement of linkages between enterprise and higher education and research is critical.

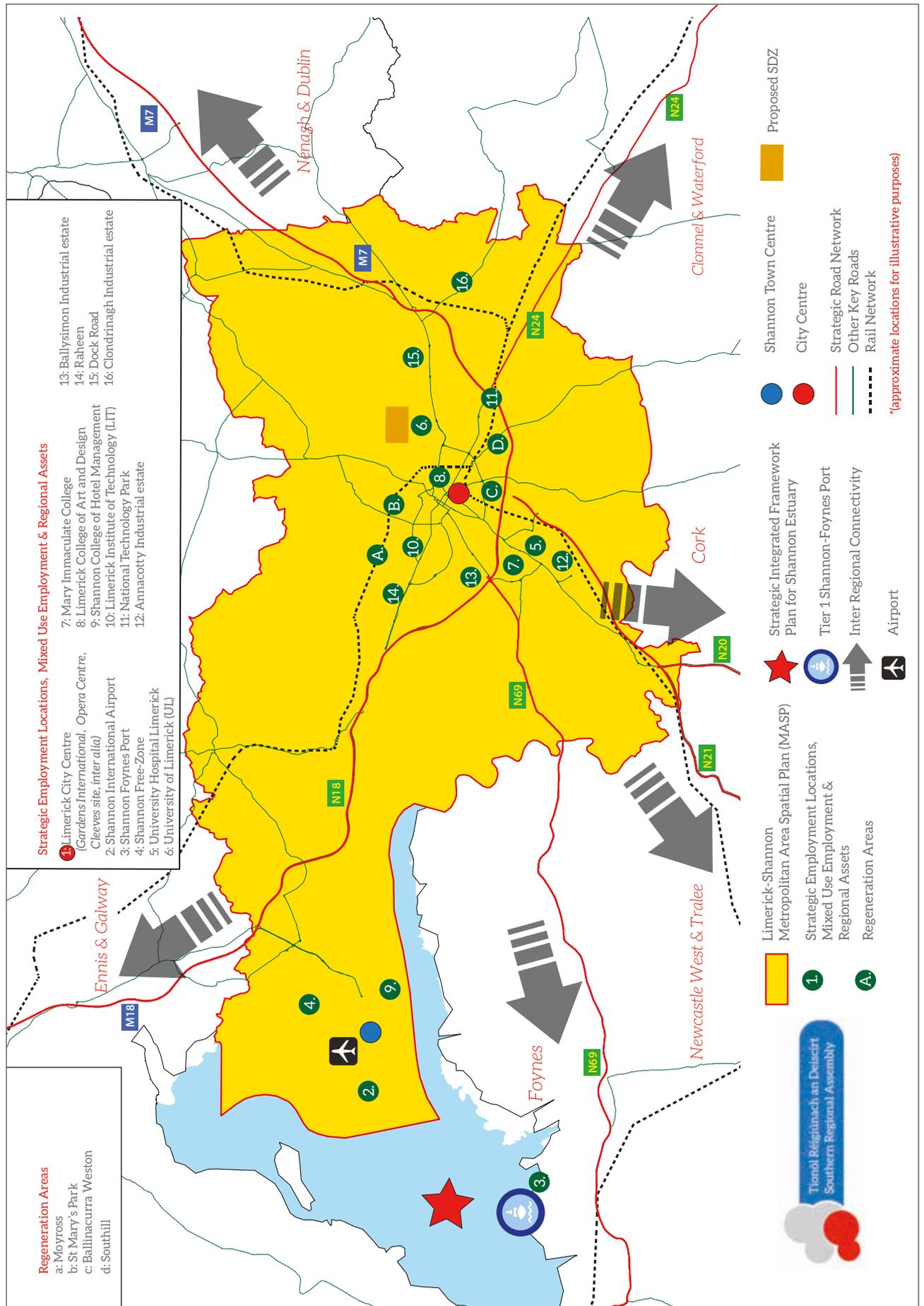
Environment

The Limerick-Shannon MASP seeks to integrate sustainable economic and social development with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment whilst ensuring our transition to a climate resilient society. The better integration of biodiversity into economic and development decisions will ensure better projects and will mitigate against unforeseen negative climate change consequences. Placemaking initiatives will create a more attractive area to live, visit and invest.

Social Infrastructure

To achieve an inclusive Metropolitan Area offering equal opportunities for all citizens and to increase the number of persons active in the labour market, a specific focus is required on access to education and training. Solutions to social disadvantage requires a broad spectrum of responses such as lifelong learning and upskilling. The MASP supports ongoing collaboration with regional stakeholders to ensure that social infrastructure such as education, health and community facilities are provided and, in particular, to ensure opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration.





WATERFORD

MASP

Introduction

Waterford is the largest urban centre in the South-East and the State's fifth largest city and is unique in having a network of large and strong urban centres in close proximity. A port city, it has a diverse industrial and commercial base and has the fifth largest employment base in the State.

The attributes of the Waterford Metropolitan Area are its people, its history as Ireland's oldest city, its maritime location and connections, and its function as the main urban centre in the South-East for business, education, healthcare, retail, leisure and wider public services. The vision for the Waterford MASP is to develop a concentric city both north and south of the River Suir (including areas within County Kilkenny). Development of educational resources and a university in Waterford, recognising the City's people as the heart of its potential, is key to the vision for the Waterford MASP.

Integrated Land Use and Transportation

The Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy which follows the RSES will be instrumental in the regeneration and transformation of Waterford. The development of a concentric city including north of the River Suir - the North Quays and other key locations will be supported by integrated transport investment to create an attractive, liveable city, connecting city and suburbs and building north-south linkages.

Housing and Regeneration

The Waterford MASP identifies key housing locations including city centre regeneration areas, development of the North Quays, development of under-used land and buildings in inner urban areas and new residential development within and adjacent to the existing built-up area. The MASP will require the provision of public and private housing to meet the diverse needs of a growing and changing population.

Employment and Enterprise

The MASP identifies strategic priorities which have the capacity to bring about transformational change including, development of the Technological University of the South-East (TUSE); development of the North Quays Innovation District as part of a strategy for an expanded and vibrant city centre; improved international connectivity through the port and airport; expanded capacity of University Hospital Waterford (UHW);

improved regional connectivity to/from Waterford and sustainable mobility across the metropolitan area; enhanced innovation and enterprise supports and infrastructure.

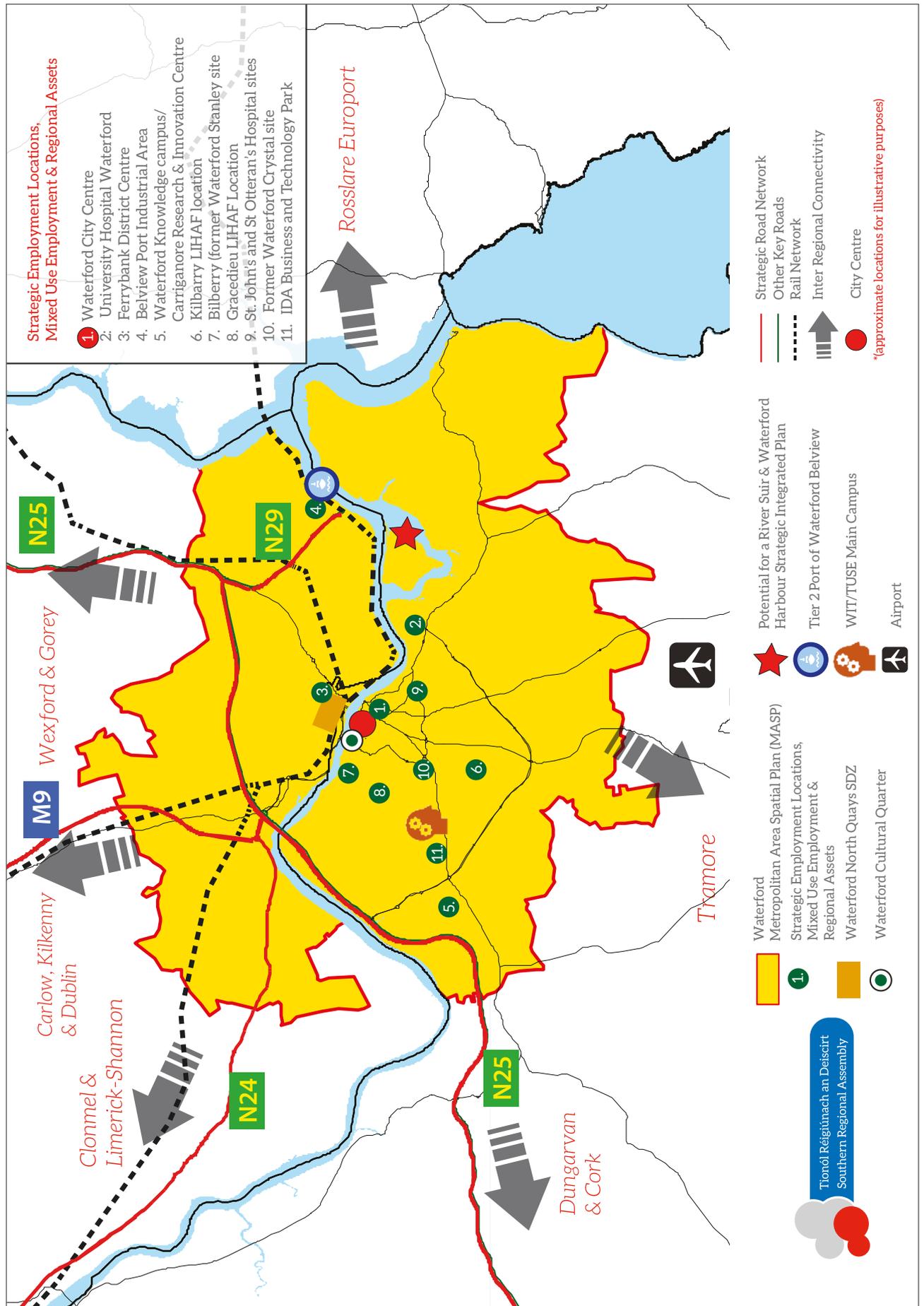
Environment

The Waterford MASP seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment and provide for the recreational and amenity needs of an expanding population through a focus on provision of public open space, green infrastructure and access to the River Suir and Waterford Harbour.

Social Infrastructure

The MASP supports ongoing collaboration with regional stakeholders in education, health and community sectors to advance social and economic development, improve educational opportunity and skills development and to ensure adequate resourcing for University Hospital Waterford and public health services.





3.5 | Key Towns

Based on the criteria set out in the NPF, 14 Key Towns are identified that reflect the differing urban structures across the Region, their strategic role and location.

They each play a critical role in underpinning the RSES and ensuring a consolidated spread of growth beyond the cities to the sub-regional level. It is envisaged that the Key Towns will be a focus for significant growth (more than 30%). The nature, scale and phasing of this growth will be determined by local authorities depending on a capacity analysis of each town. For some, this will result in significant population growth; for others, the emphasis may be on growth of services and facilities with more limited population growth.

Six of the Key Towns have a very significant population scale; Kilkenny City, Ennis, Carlow, Tralee, Wexford and Clonmel. These are major centres for delivery of public

services, with large hospitals, third level institutions, courts, local and national government functions as well as economic and business roles and higher order retail functions. These Key Towns are self-sustaining regional drivers and have a comparable structure to the five regional growth centres identified in the NPF. Given their considerable scope for growth, it is envisaged that local authorities should plan for population growth of more than 30% by 2040.

The large-scale Key Towns are complemented by a network of a further eight Key Towns; Killarney, Mallow, Nenagh, Thurles, Newcastle West, Clonakilty, Dungarvan and Gorey. They will play a significant role in strengthening the urban structure of the Region. This is based on their strategic location and influence, record of performance and delivery, employment and service functions, potential for employment led growth, sub-regional interdependencies and scope for collaboration. Based on capacity analysis (including historic growth levels), it is envisaged that local authorities will also plan for significant growth in these Key Towns.

RPO 11

Key Towns

- a. Local Authorities are supported in targeting growth of more than 30% for each Key Town subject to capacity analysis and sustainable criteria under Section 3.3 A Tailored Approach, RPO 3 Local Authority Core Strategies and the sustainable requirements under the following sub sections of RPO 11 Key Towns. The appropriate level of growth is to be determined by the Core Strategy of Development Plans;
- b. It is an objective to seek investment in holistic infrastructure inclusive of utilities, transportation, social and community, digital infrastructure and smart technologies environmental (including facilitation of climate change mitigation and of biodiversity promotion), climate change adaptation and future proofing infrastructure including flood risk management measures and flood defence schemes, recreational, arts and cultural that will deliver sustainable growth in Key Towns subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- c. It is an objective that a Local Transport Plan will be prepared for all the Key Towns, on the basis provided for in RPO Local Transport Plans in Chapter 6;
- d. To support and promote vibrant, culturally-rich and revitalised Key Towns with enhanced social inclusion, engaged and active voluntary, non-profit and social enterprise sectors, sustainable neighbourhoods and a high level of environmental quality to ensure an excellent quality of life for all;
- e. To support and promote placemaking in all Key Towns to include public realm regeneration and urban renewal initiatives and public private partnership approaches for town centre regeneration;
- f. To seek the sustainable development of tourism facilities that enhance diverse tourism roles for Key Towns and seek investment in services to cater for increased population numbers arising from tourism;
- g. To support learning, education and training initiatives, economic regeneration initiatives and enterprise facilities to address unemployment blackspots;
- h. To support initiatives which seek to strengthen and develop niche retail and mixed-use services in town centres;
- i. That any reference to support for all plans, projects, activities and development in the Key Towns should be considered to refer to 'environmentally sustainable development' that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints), environmental assessment including EcIA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate;
- j. That local authorities consider the carrying capacity of SACs/SPAs, as appropriate, to inform the appropriate growth rates for Key Towns;
- k. To plan increasing population growth in all Key Towns on a phased basis in collaboration with Irish Water, the local authority and other stakeholders to ensure that the assimilative capacity of the receiving environment is not exceeded and that increased wastewater discharges from population growth does not contribute to degradation of water quality and avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of water dependent habitats and species within the Natura 2000 network;
- l. To give due consideration to the suitability of new and/or existing drinking water sources (e.g. hydromorphological pressures) to meet the increased demands on the water supply and prevent adverse impacts on the integrity of water dependent habitats and species within the Natura 2000 network. The National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) will outline how we move towards a sustainable, secure and reliable public drinking water supply over the next 25 years, whilst safeguarding our environment.

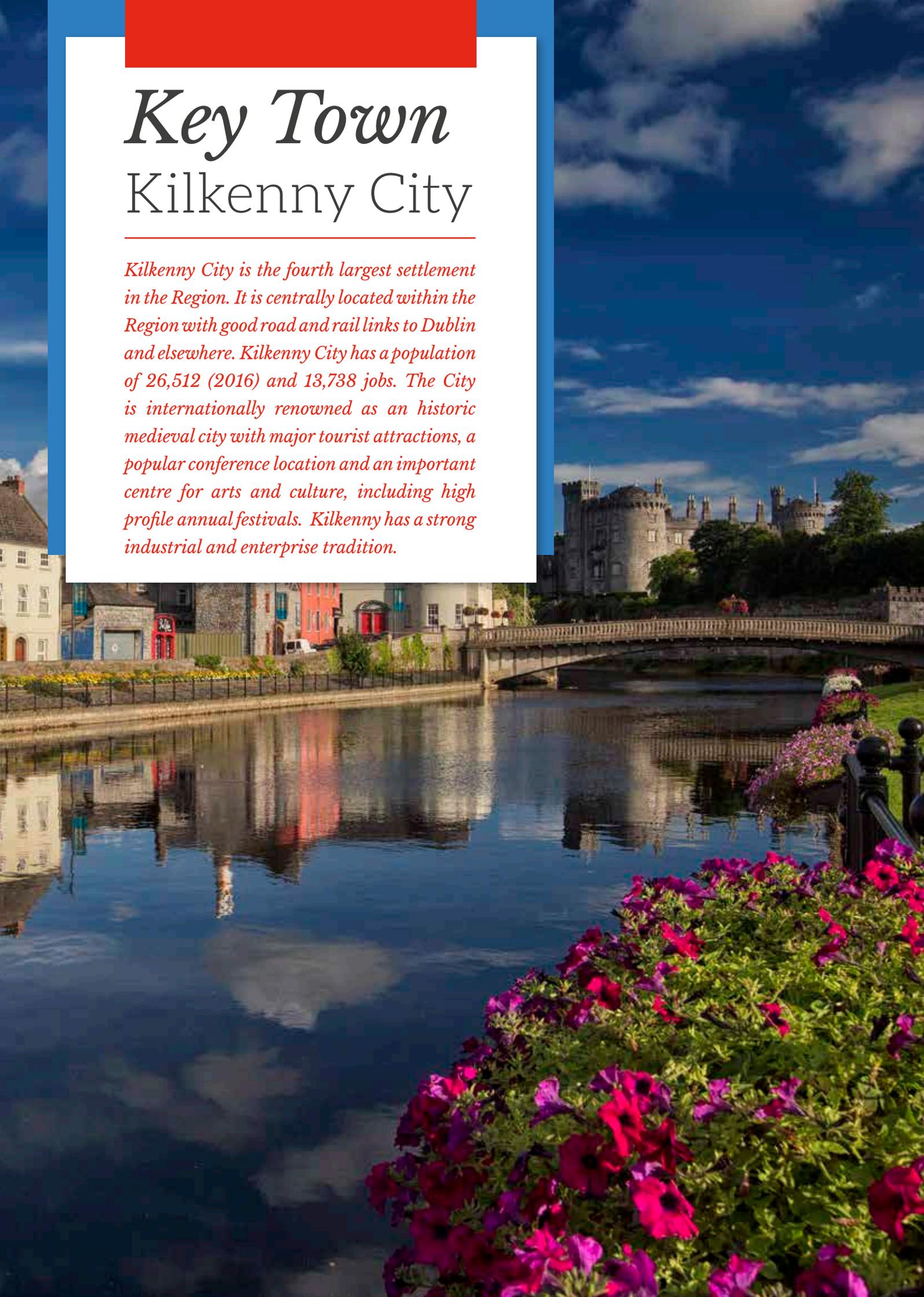
Table 3.3 | Key Towns

SPA	KEY TOWN	Strategic Attributes
South-West	Tralee	Scale, county town, significant zone of influence
	Killarney	Significant sub regional role, key national tourism town.
	Mallow	Significant sub regional role, transport hub.
	Clonakilty	Key sub regional role in network of strong towns, significant employment role with potential enhanced role in combination with other West Cork settlements such as Skibbereen and Bantry as service centres for West Cork.
Mid-West	Ennis	Scale, county town, significant zone of influence, synergy with Limerick, Shannon and Galway.
	Nenagh	Significant Employment Location, county town and major synergies with MASP area.
	Thurles	Significant employment potential, regional and inter-regional connectivity.
	Newcastle West	County town, significant employment location, significant synergy with North Kerry towns.
South-East	Kilkenny	Scale, county town, significant zone of influence.
	Carlow	Scale, county town, interregional role.
	Wexford	Scale, county town, significant zone of influence.
	Clonmel	Scale, county town, significant employment location.
	Dungarvan	County town, significant sub regional role and synergy with East Cork.
	Gorey	Strategic location, sub regional role.

Key Town

Kilkenny City

Kilkenny City is the fourth largest settlement in the Region. It is centrally located within the Region with good road and rail links to Dublin and elsewhere. Kilkenny City has a population of 26,512 (2016) and 13,738 jobs. The City is internationally renowned as an historic medieval city with major tourist attractions, a popular conference location and an important centre for arts and culture, including high profile annual festivals. Kilkenny has a strong industrial and enterprise tradition.



Attributes

- Kilkenny's central location with good road and rail links to Dublin and other key settlements;
- Strong international connectivity with direct access routes to the Ports of Waterford, Rosslare and Dublin, and airports at Dublin and Waterford ;
- The 8th largest employment centre in the State with strong performance in agri-business, finance and tourism/hospitality;
- Growing Regional Centre for Higher Education and Research with St. Kieran's College (part of Maynooth University), the development of the multi-campus Technological University of the South-East (TUSE);
- Development of the 'Medieval Mile' which brings together public realm improvements from the Castle and Parade through to Irishtown;
- Track record in urban regeneration and compact growth, including development of a master plan for the Abbey Quarter (former Smithwick's Brewery site);
- Recreational assets of the River Nore walking route and development of other walking and cycling routes around the City;
- Regional centre for healthcare with St. Luke's Hospital and Aut Even Hospital serving a wide area of the Region.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Priority transport infrastructure for Kilkenny - enhanced rail services and improved line speeds;
- ii. Improved accessibility to the Port of Waterford and Rosslare Europort by road and rail to serve as a viable alternative to Dublin Port;
- iii. Investment in smarter travel projects in support of the compact '10 minute city' concept;
- iv. Investment to support city centre regeneration, including development of the Abbey Quarter;
- v. Upgrading of the water supply infrastructure and additional investment in wastewater infrastructure to support the economic development and anticipated growth of Kilkenny;
- vi. Continued investment in higher education including development of the multi-campus, TUSE.

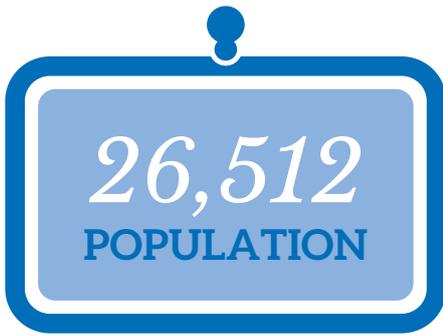


RPO 12

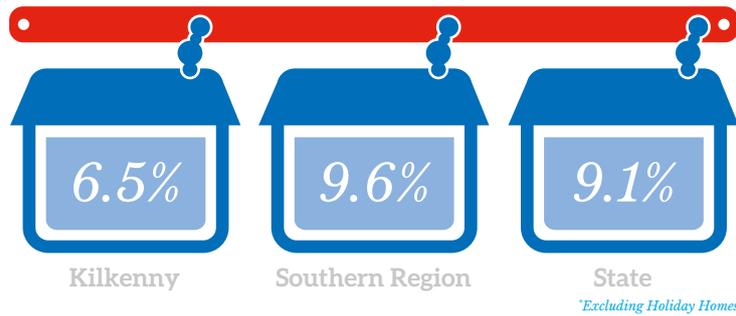
Kilkenny City

- a. To strengthen the role of Kilkenny City as a self-sustaining regional economic driver with significant zone of influence and Key Town on the Dublin – Carlow-Kilkenny Waterford M9 Road/Rail Axis, with links to the Eastern Corridor. The RSES seeks to leverage its strategic location and accessibility to the Port of Waterford & Rosslare Europort, Waterford Airport and to build upon its inherent strengths including the finance, technology and creative sectors, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism, and retail services;
- b. To strengthen a 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times;
- c. To support the development of freight rail services and facilities including rail freight links to the ports;
- d. To strengthen the Education, Research and Innovation Capacity in Kilkenny with ongoing development of St. Kieran's College and development of the Multi-Campus TUSE;
- e. To support urban regeneration through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the Public Realm and regenerate underused land in the City and to support implementation of mitigation from Abbey Quarter Masterplan SEA and AA processes;
- f. To seek investment in sustainable transport measures through a Local Transport Plan including development of Town Bus Services in support of the Compact '10-minute city' concept;
- g. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Kilkenny City including the delivery of the northern extension of the ring road from the N77 Castlecomer Road to the R693 Freshford Rd as part of the western by-pass for the city from the Castlecomer Road to the Waterford Road identified as an objective and assessed under the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan, subject to required feasibility, planning and environmental assessment processes;
- h. Support for the City as a 'Hero site' within the Failte Ireland's branding of Ireland's Ancient East. The 'Medieval Mile' package which brings together public realm improvements linking Kilkenny Castle to St Canice's Cathedral and other significant attractions in between, such as the Medieval Mile Museum, the new Butler Gallery, the Smithwick's Experience and Rothe House;
- i. Support for the Quality of Life offer in Kilkenny City which is renowned as evidenced in its population growth which exceeded the national average over the period 2006 – 2016.

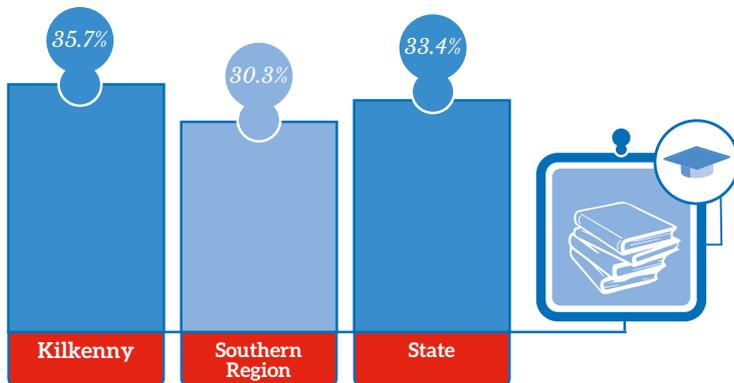
Population Change 2011 - 2016



Housing Vacancy*



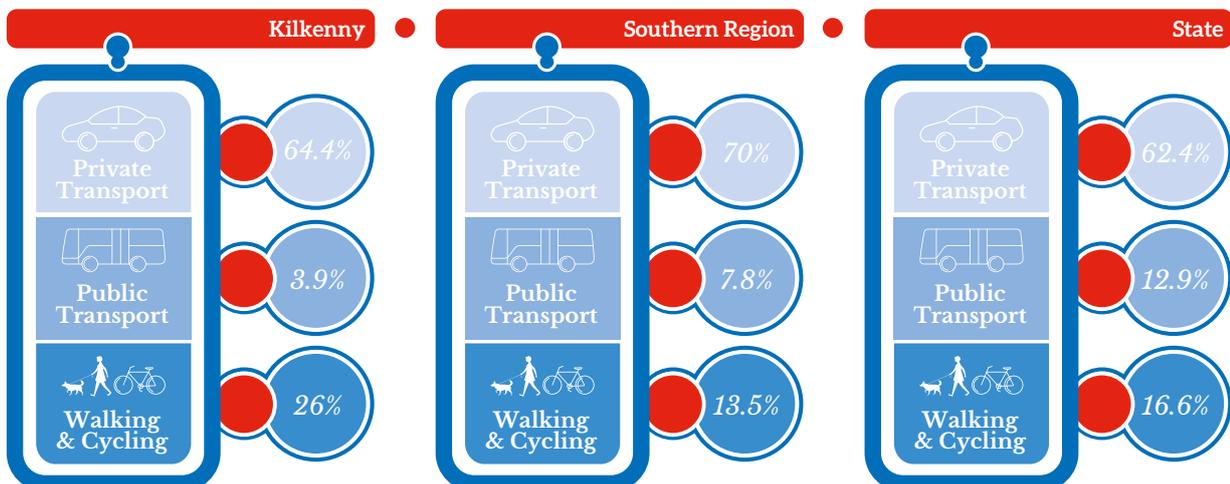
Education Attainment: All Third Level

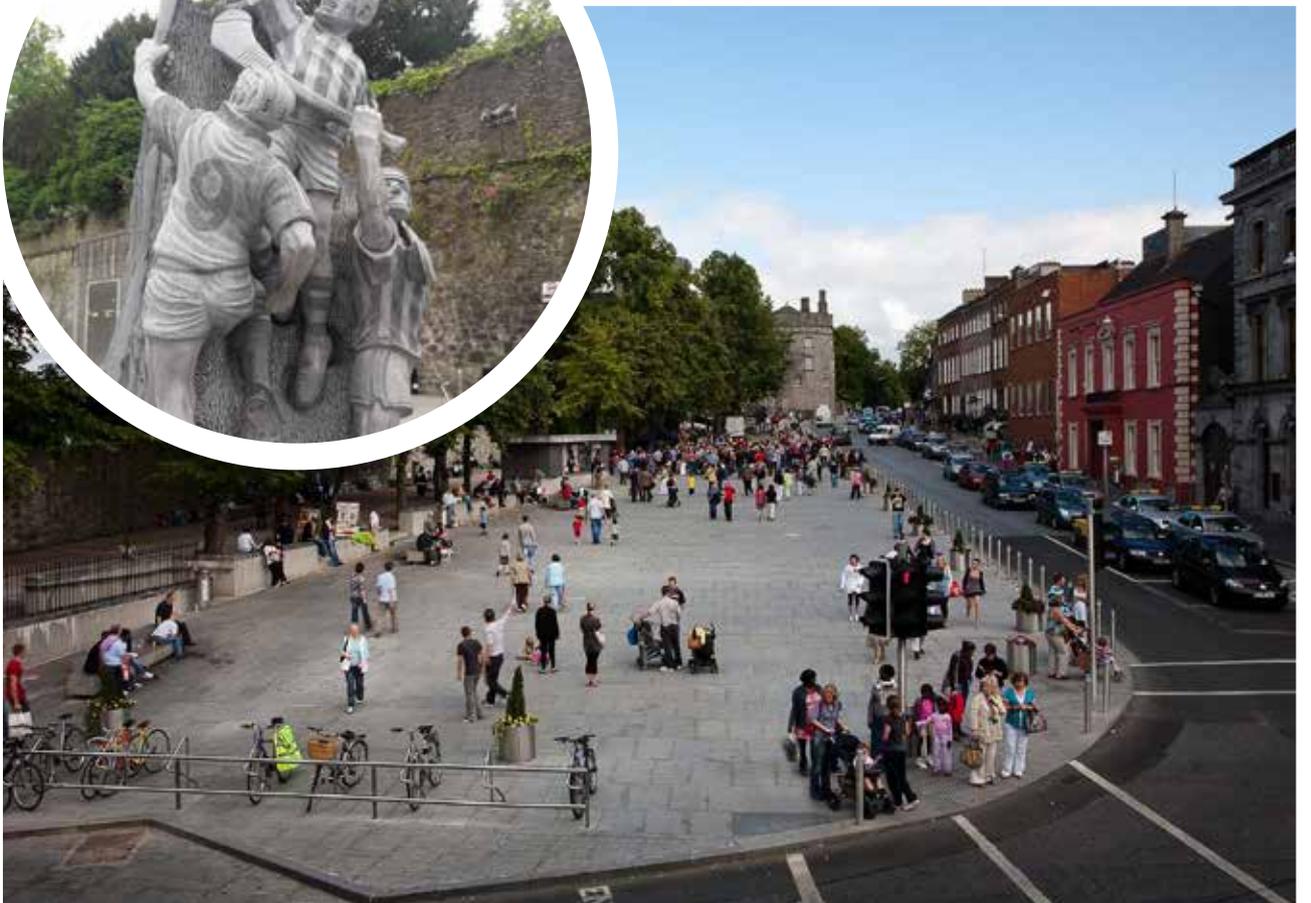


Jobs to Resident Workers



Mode of Travel to Work





Key Town

Ennis

Ennis, with a population of 25,276 in 2016, is the largest town in Munster and the fifth largest settlement in the Region. The triangle of Limerick-Shannon-Ennis is recognised as the economic engine of the Mid-West. The M18 has created a greater synergy and connection between Ennis and Galway and there is potential to attract economic drivers/ infrastructure such as data centres. In this context, Ennis should build on its current talent and skills offer and attract a higher-level education campus. The preparation of the 'Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy' offers an opportunity to create a long-term strategy for the sustainable development of the town.



Attributes

- Strategic location relative to Limerick and Galway Cities and Shannon International Airport;
- Improved synergies between Ennis and Galway due to the M18;
- Rail, bus and motorway connectivity;
- Economic triangle of Limerick - Shannon - Ennis;
- High quality 'dark fibre broadband' and innovation in electronics;
- Availability of various opportunity sites allowing expansion of the town centre;
- Availability of strategic brownfield sites, such as the Roche Site, Clarecastle (23ha);
- Clare Technology Park opportunity site - brownfield site (20.8ha);
- Proximity to internationally recognised tourism assets, including Cliffs of Moher, Burren, Loop Head and to towns and villages in West Clare;
- Centre for culture, music, heritage and tourism;
- High quality of life, attractive town centre and tidy towns winner, boutique capital of Munster;
- Ennis General Hospital and potential redevelopment opportunities in the St. Josephs Hospital campus area.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Provision of a new access to the motorway from the Quin Road to alleviate significant heavy traffic from the town;
- ii. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- iii. Northern Inner Relief road, linking Gort Road (R458) to Tulla Road (R351);
- iv. Link from Drumcliff Road (L4182) to Lahinch Road (N85);
- v. Link from Drumcliff Road (L4182) to Gort Road (R458);
- vi. Link from Clon Road (R871) to Quin Road (R469);
- vii. A Local Transport Plan, including mobility management, to facilitate the delivery/development of key town centre opportunity sites and public realm enhancement initiatives;
- viii. Water and wastewater infrastructure for phased growth;
- ix. Enhance the potential for green infrastructure links between recreational facilities at Lees Road, West Clare Railway line, Ballyallia Lake, the River Fergus and Clarecastle;
- x. Redevelopment of Our Lady's Hospital.



RPO 13

Ennis

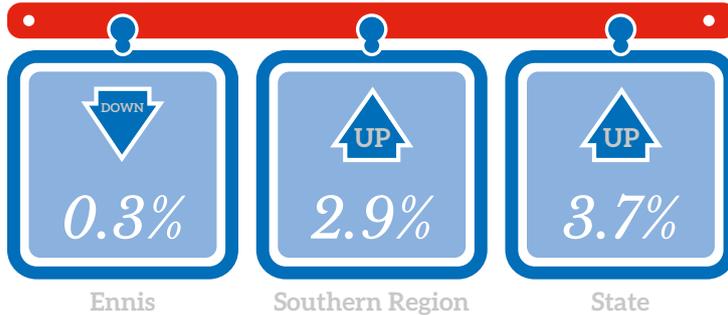
- a. To support Ennis as a self-sustaining, regional economic driver and as a key location for investment choice in the Region, to support its enhanced development based on its strategic location relative to Limerick and Galway Cities and Shannon International Airport, as well as its role as a centre of employment and economic activity within the Region. The RSES recognises that this should be supported and enhanced through initiatives such as the Atlantic Economic Corridor;
- b. To support the implementation of Ennis 2040 to set the long-term economic strategy for the county town with an agreed focus on an economic future and spatial pattern to 2040 and beyond. The RSES

recognises the higher education growth potential of Ennis and its vision to become a centre for lifelong learning;

- c. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Ennis, subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- d. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times.

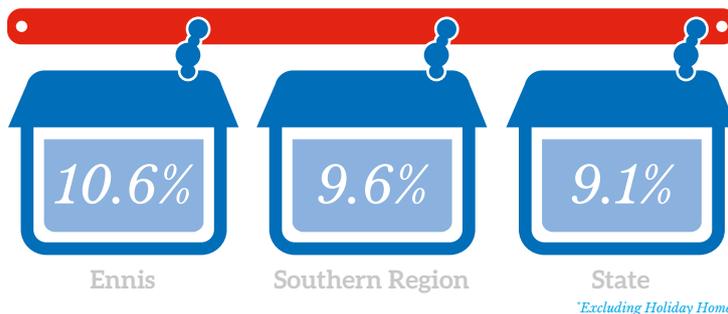
25,276
POPULATION

Population Change 2011 - 2016

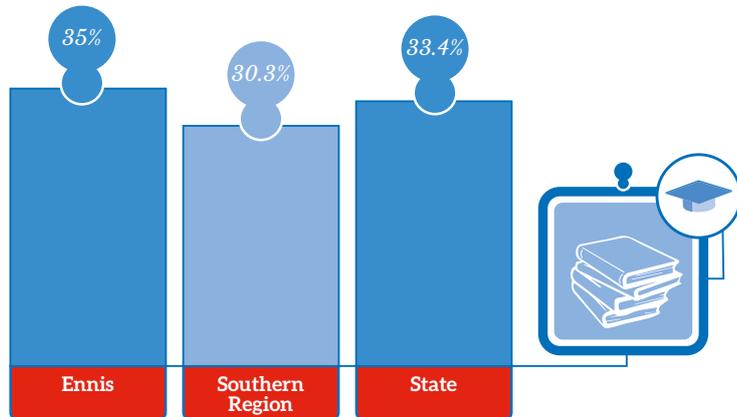


10,172
TOTAL JOBS

Housing Vacancy*



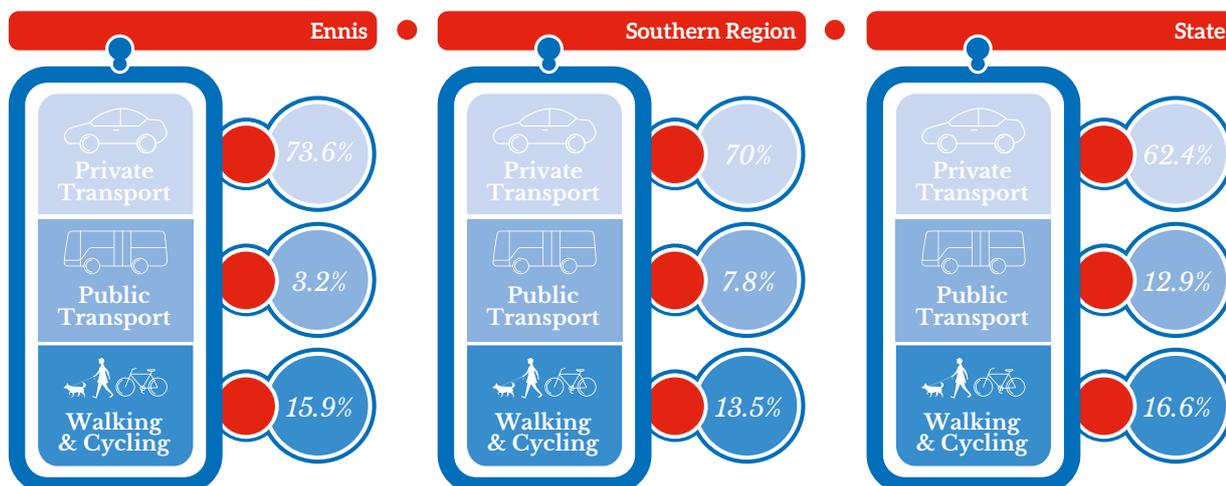
Education Attainment: All Third Level



Jobs to Resident Workers



Mode of Travel to Work

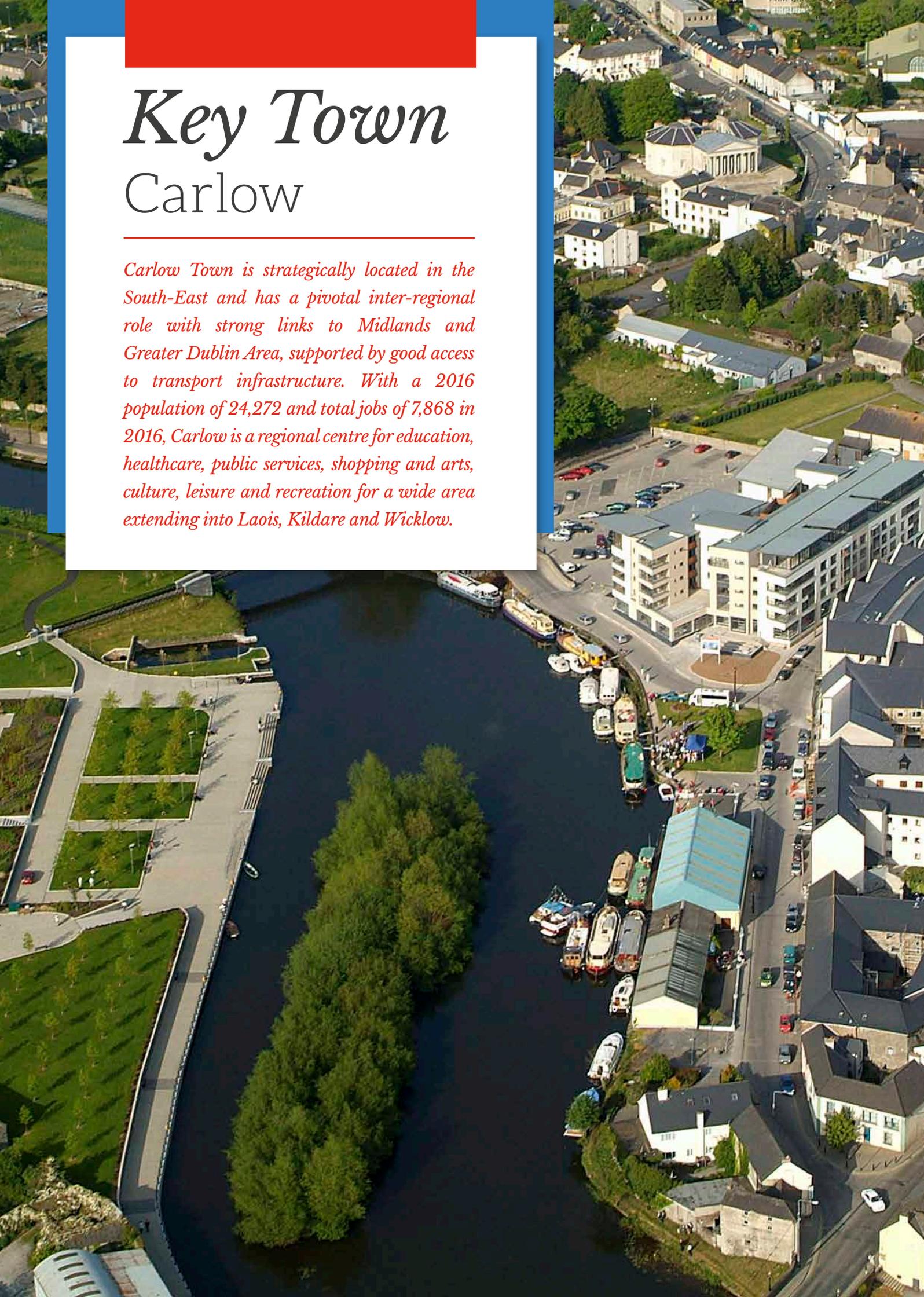




Key Town

Carlow

Carlow Town is strategically located in the South-East and has a pivotal inter-regional role with strong links to Midlands and Greater Dublin Area, supported by good access to transport infrastructure. With a 2016 population of 24,272 and total jobs of 7,868 in 2016, Carlow is a regional centre for education, healthcare, public services, shopping and arts, culture, leisure and recreation for a wide area extending into Laois, Kildare and Wicklow.



Attributes

- Road network connectivity to Dublin, Waterford via M9 and to the Midlands and South-East via N80 can be developed and augmented;
- Rail network connectivity to Dublin & Waterford;
- Strong international connectivity with direct access routes to the Ports of Waterford and Rosslare & Dublin & Waterford Airports;
- Important regional centre of education and research with IT Carlow (ITC) and St. Patricks College located in the town as well as the Teagasc Agricultural Centre. The ITC will become a campus of the Technological University of the South-East (TUSE);
- Diverse employment in pharmaceutical, engineering and finance sectors with notable companies being Merck, UNUM and Netwatch;
- The strong retail sector in Carlow is an important part of the economic base;
- Carlow is an attractive destination for Arts, Culture and Heritage located within Ireland's Ancient East. Significant investment in the arts and cultural offering of Carlow Town, including development of the Cultural Quarter in Carlow Town in an area around the George Bernard Shaw Theatre, Visual Art Gallery, County Museum and Carlow Cathedral;
- A bilingual County supporting cultural, education and commercial diversity;
- Recreational assets of the River Barrow, Oak Park Forest Park & Duckett's Grove in the Carlow Town Environs;
- Important role of St. Dymphna's Hospital/ Carlow District Hospital in health provision.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Priority transport infrastructure - enhanced rail services and improved line speeds, town bus services, Kilkenny Road - Wexford N80-R448 (Southern Relief Road), N80 upgrade as a key inter-regional route and link to Rosslare Europort;
- ii. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to high level to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- iii. Potential location for regional logistics facility to serve the Region along the M9 and/or on the Dublin-Waterford rail line. Rail freight handling facilities to support modal shift from road to rail;
- iv. Development of an economic quarter on lands around the railway station & improved linkages to/from Fair Green & Barrack Street within the town centre;
- v. The upgrading and development of water supply and additional investment in wastewater infrastructure to support the economic development and anticipated growth of Carlow.

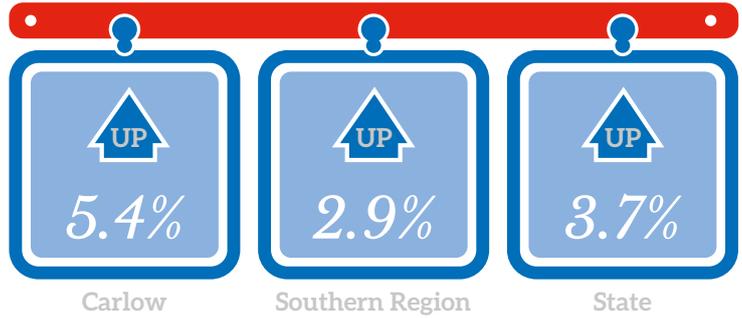


Carlow

- a.** To strengthen and support the role of Carlow Town as a self-sustaining regional and inter-regional economic driver supporting investment in the strategic employment development potential of the town, while promoting and facilitating economic integration between urban centres in the county including Tullow and Muine Bheag (Bagnelstown), other urban centres within the Southern Region and the Eastern and Midlands Region including the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments the following are supported:
- i.** To strengthen the regional and inter-regional role of the Education, Research and Innovation Capacity through development of the Multi-Campus TUSE in the provision of internationally recognised higher education and research opportunities which can facilitate transformational change and act as a key driver and enabler for sustainable future employment growth within Carlow and the Southern Region;
 - ii.** To support the town centre led economic regeneration of Carlow, leveraging its strategic location and accessibility on inter-regional road and rail networks building upon its inherent strengths of education, connectivity, skills, innovation, enterprise, tourism, culture/arts and retail services;
 - iii.** To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the Town Centre through development and connectivity of key urban regeneration locations in the town centre with improved accessibility from the historic town centre to the Railway Station and Fair Green;
 - iv.** To seek investment in water and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate the sustainable development of the town as a regional growth centre;
 - v.** To support delivery of the Southern Relief Road N80 - R448 and completion of the Carlow Southern Relief road to link the N80 within County Laois including the provision of an appropriate crossing of the River Barrow & other transport measures with adjoining local/regional authorities and stakeholders;
 - vi.** To seek investment in sustainable transport solutions, improved walking and cycling connectivity routes throughout the town including provision of a town bus service through a Local Transport Plan;
 - vii.** To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Carlow subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
 - viii.** To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services along the Waterford to Dublin line to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times;
- ix.** To seek investment and support in the delivery of culture, arts, and tourism infrastructure together with other physical and community infrastructural requirements identified for Carlow town and the wider county area;
- x.** To support development of underused lands along the River Barrow as a strategic natural asset for the town. Any future development of underused lands along the River Barrow or proposals for an additional bridge should be subject to further studies to inform the exact nature and intensity that could be accommodated without giving rise to adverse effects on sensitive Natura 2000 habitats and consider any in combination effects arising from proposals for a bridge.
- b.** To support the preparation of a cross-boundary Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP) for Carlow Town by Carlow County Council and Laois County Council having regard to its location within the combined functional area of both local authorities.
- i.** The Joint UAP provides a coordinated planning framework to identify and deliver strategic sites and regeneration areas for the future physical, economic and social development of Carlow to ensure it achieves targeted compact growth of a minimum of 30% and ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to the future growth and development of the town to ensure that it has the capacity to grow sustainably and secure investment as a Key Town. The Joint UAP shall identify a boundary for the plan area and strategic housing and employment development areas and infrastructure investment requirements to promote greater co-ordination and sequential delivery of serviced lands for development. Regard shall be had to the respective housing, retail and other strategies that may be in place. The selection of sites for regeneration and expansion should be supported by a quality site selection process and subject to detailed environmental assessment. This could be achieved through a coordinated management plan in collaboration between EMRA, Laois County Council, IFI and NPWS that could address the key issues of visitor pressure, supporting infrastructure pressure and management of the spread of invasive species;
 - ii.** The Assembly will foster collaboration in the allocation of funds to support and enable cross boundary collaboration in the Greater Carlow and Graiguecullen Urban Area in the delivery of strategic infrastructure;
 - iii.** There shall be consistency of approach on land use terminology across strategies prepared by Carlow County Council and Laois County Council for the cross-boundary Joint Local Area Plan;
 - iv.** The distribution of population between the two local authorities should be decided by both local authorities in the joint local area plan.

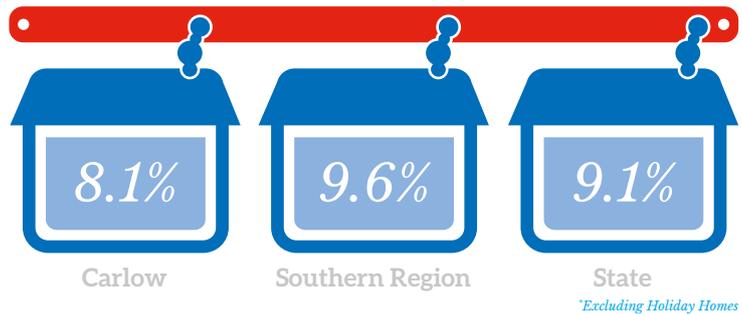
24,272
POPULATION

Population Change 2011 - 2016

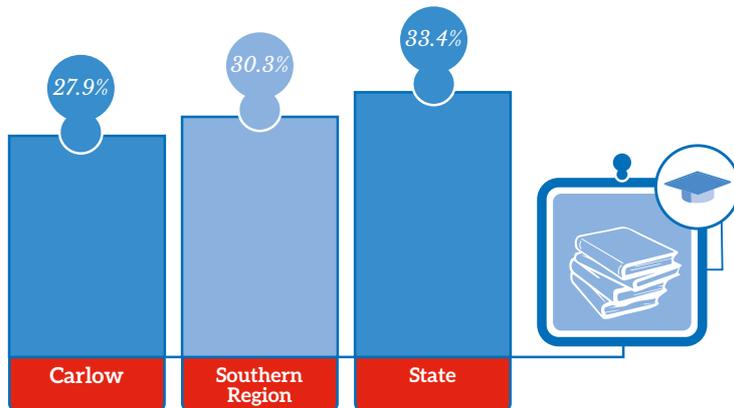


7,868
TOTAL JOBS

Housing Vacancy*



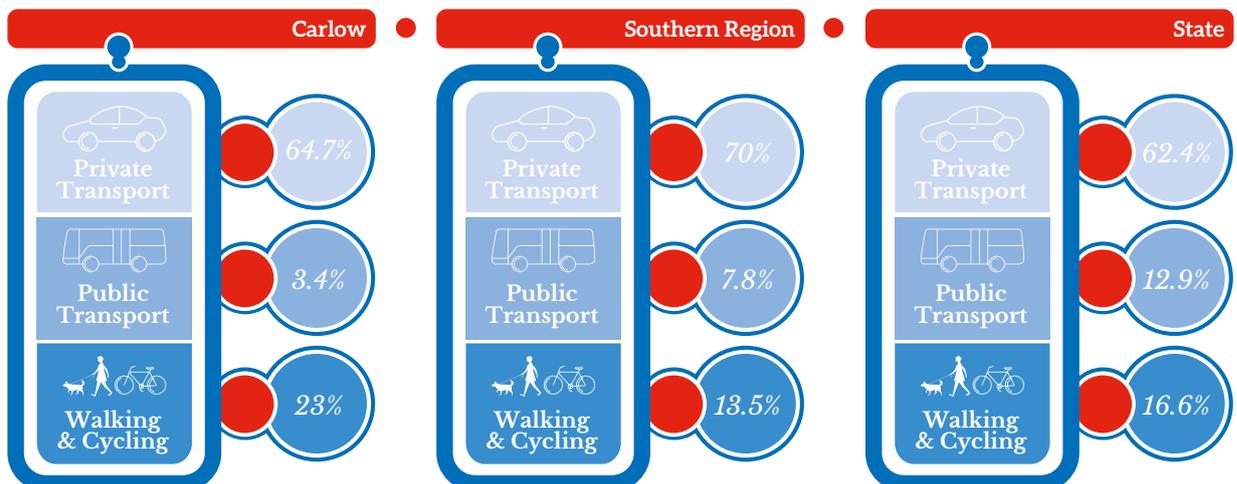
Education Attainment: All Third Level



Jobs to Resident Workers



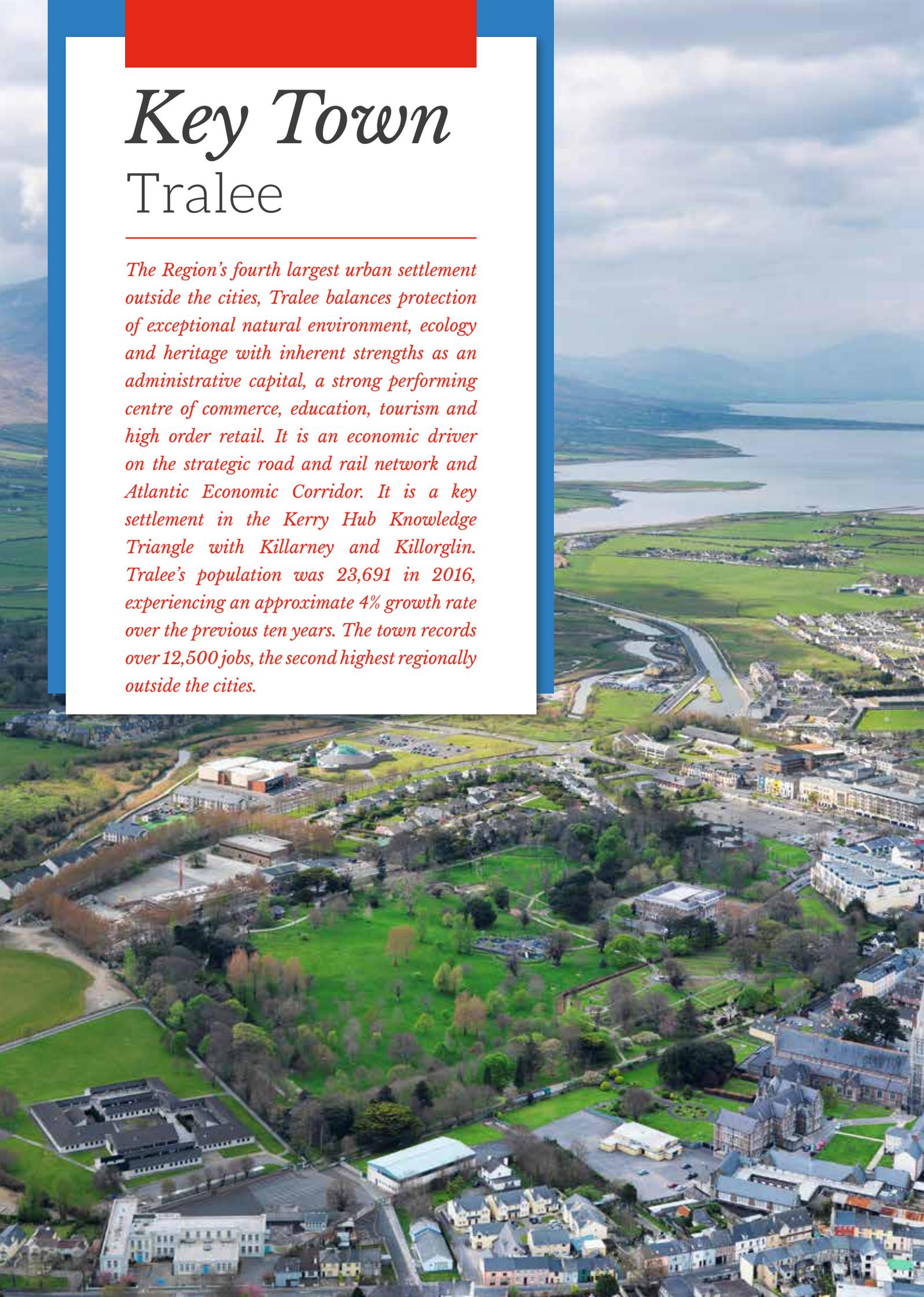
Mode of Travel to Work



Key Town

Tralee

The Region's fourth largest urban settlement outside the cities, Tralee balances protection of exceptional natural environment, ecology and heritage with inherent strengths as an administrative capital, a strong performing centre of commerce, education, tourism and high order retail. It is an economic driver on the strategic road and rail network and Atlantic Economic Corridor. It is a key settlement in the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle with Killarney and Killorglin. Tralee's population was 23,691 in 2016, experiencing an approximate 4% growth rate over the previous ten years. The town records over 12,500 jobs, the second highest regionally outside the cities.



Attributes

- Connected on the strategic road network to Cork and Limerick-Shannon metropolitan areas, Tier 1 Port of Shannon Foynes, Shannon Estuary and wider Atlantic Economic Corridor;
- Rail network connectivity to Cork, Dublin and Limerick via Mallow;
- Kerry International Airport c.20km from Tralee with flights or services to Dublin, UK and Europe;
- Fenit Port (c.13km from Tralee), a significant freight export and marina asset;
- Part of the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle, networked with Killarney and Killorglin;
- Advanced technology building for FDI, Kerry Technology Park and other property solutions;
- High skills base from both the Institute of Technology Tralee transitioning with CIT to become the Munster Technological University;
- Hubs for business innovation, including Tom Crean Business Centre;
- Strong inter-agency co-operation, business networks and collaboration with academia driving successful initiatives, including the European Entrepreneurial Region Award and Regional Enterprise Development Funds;
- On-going active town centre public realm and regeneration, including the EU-funded Island of Geese project;

- Greenway and blueway potential, such as the Tralee-Feint Greenway;
- Attractive location, offering high quality of life and urban coastal tourism while protecting its natural resources, has a focus on capitalising on assets, including the Wild Atlantic Way, Tralee Bay Nature Reserve, nearby beaches, hill walking, Kerry Camino, golf courses, and built tourism infrastructure, as well as being gateway to the Dingle Peninsula;
- Health infrastructure, including University Hospital Kerry and Bons Secours.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Strengthened inter-regional connectivity on the N21/N69, N22, N72 and connections to N20/M20 and N71 corridors;
- ii. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure continued renewal and high level maintenance to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- iii. North and West Tralee Relief Roads (iv) R558 Tralee to Fenit Port;
- iv. Smarter/active travel initiatives and other transport measures through a Local Transport Plan;
- v. Water and wastewater treatment;
- vi. Flood relief.

RPO 15

Tralee

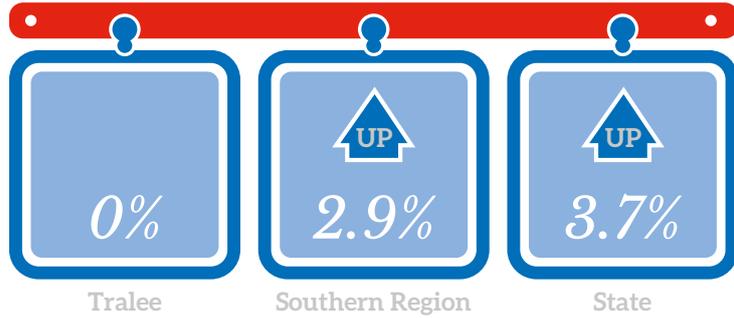
- a. To sustainably strengthen the role of Tralee as a self-sustaining regional economic driver, key settlement in the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle and on the Atlantic Economic Corridor and build on inherent strengths as an administrative capital, centre of skills and education, innovation, enterprise growth, culture and tourism accessible to regional airport, port, rail and strategic road network assets;
- b. To seek investment to sustainably support strengthening these attributes and infrastructures subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments, including key inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) on the strategic road network to the Cork and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas, the Atlantic Economic Corridor and the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle;
- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility

and connectivity;

- d. Future growth of the town should be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with the local authority and Irish Water to ensure that sufficient wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth avoids negative impacts on the nutrient sensitive Lee Estuary;
- e. To support higher and further education and training investment, and investment in the development of IT Tralee's campus and R&D facilities;
- f. To support the regeneration of opportunity sites, such as the Island of Geese, Fels Point, and underused, vacant or derelict town centre lands for residential and enterprise development to facilitate population and employment growth;
- g. To support the development and delivery of infrastructure for the delivery of additional employment through modern office, enterprise and manufacturing space;
- h. To support Tralee as an urban coastal tourism destination while protecting the natural resources on which it relies.

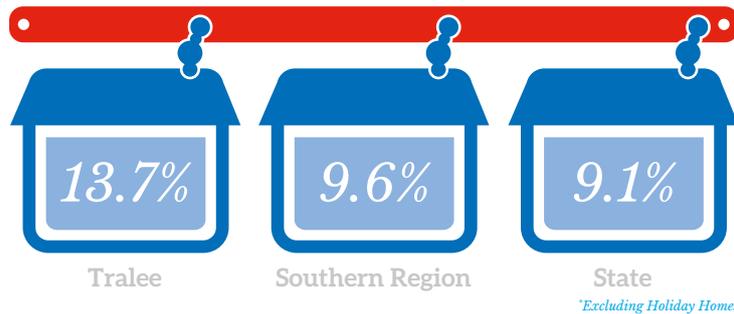
23,691
POPULATION

Population Change 2011 - 2016

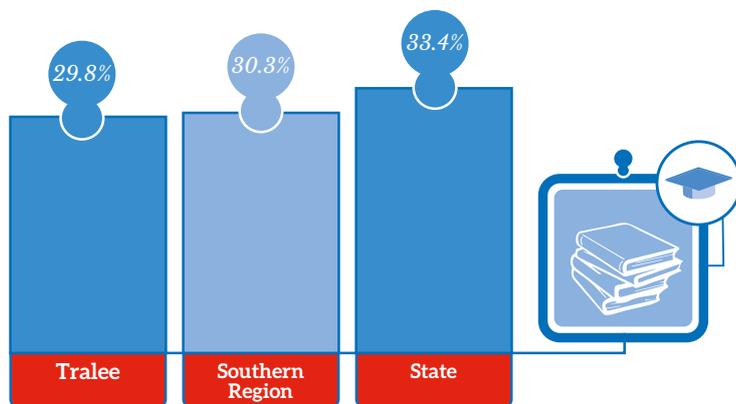


12,517
TOTAL JOBS

Housing Vacancy*



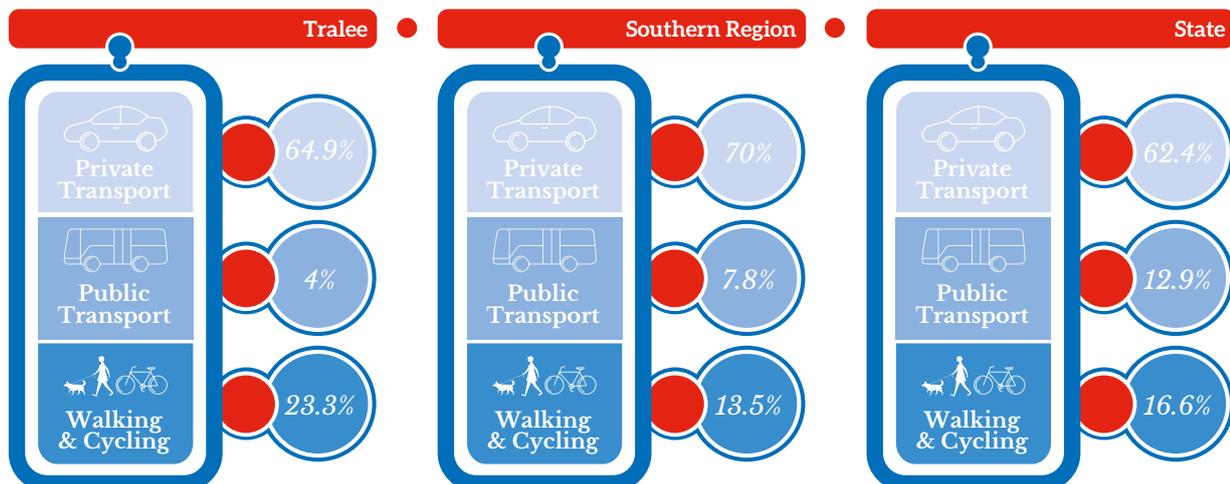
Education Attainment: All Third Level



Jobs to Resident Workers



Mode of Travel to Work





Key Town

Wexford Town

With a population of 20,188 and 11,961 jobs recorded in 2016, Wexford is a regional centre for education, retail, health and public services. The strategic proximity of Wexford Town to Rosslare Europort is significant in the context of extension of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor to establish the Eastern Corridor to Rosslare Europort. The development of Rosslare and access routes to the port will be of national strategic importance for the State, particularly post-Brexit. The town has a vibrant arts and cultural sector with the National Opera House, Wexford Arts Centre and annual festivals.



Attributes

- Good connectivity with N11/M11 Motorway to Dublin, National Roads to Carlow, Waterford and Cork/Limerick and Rail links to Dublin;
- International gateway for the Region and the State with Rosslare Europort, a port of national significance for freight and passenger ferries;
- Major employment centre for finance, life sciences, technology, retail and tourism;
- Centre for Higher Education with IT Carlow Campus in Wexford Town;
- Located in Ireland's Ancient East, Wexford is an important base for tourists with significant attractors including the National Opera House, Vinegar Hill 1798 Site, Hook Lighthouse, Irish National Heritage park, Dunbrody Famine Ship, and JFK Arboretum, Johnstown Castle Estate;
- Recreational Assets of extensive coast and access to beaches, Wexford Trails, Norman Way;
- Regional Centre for Healthcare with Wexford General Hospital & Ely Hospital;

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Improving Wexford's road infrastructure links within the Region, in particular from Rosslare and Wexford to Waterford;
- ii. Improvements to road connections - M11/M25 from Oilgate to Rosslare, the N30 and N80;
- iii. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- iv. Significant investment in port facilities at Rosslare Europort to accommodate larger RORO ships, improved capacity and facilities for freight handling (including rail freight) and improved amenities and services for passengers at the terminal;
- v. Investment to support development of Trinity Wharf as a Strategic Employment Location;
- vi. The upgrading and development of water supply and additional investment in wastewater infrastructure to support the economic development and anticipated growth of Wexford.

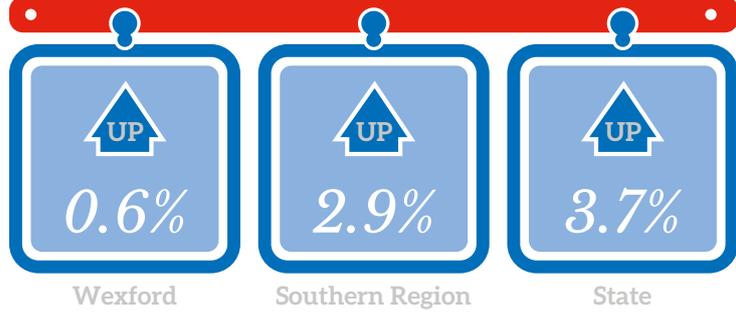
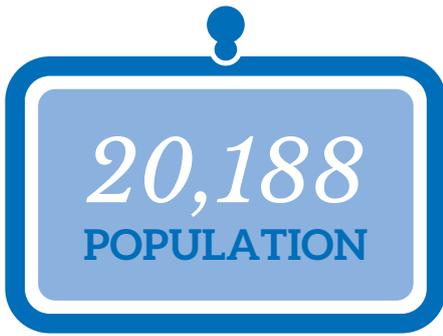


RPO 16

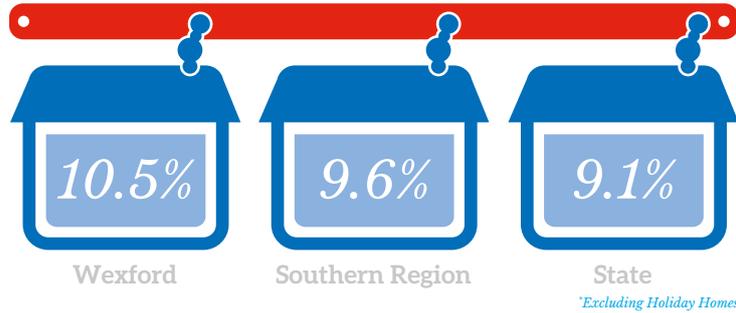
Wexford

- a. To strengthen the role of Wexford as a strategic location, a self-sustaining regional economic driver and Key Town on the Eastern Corridor. The RSES seeks to leverage its strategic location and accessibility to Rosslare Europort and to build upon its inherent strengths including digital connectivity, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism, culture and retail services;
- b. To develop supporting industrial, commercial infrastructure and residential development in Wexford Town for the port function at Rosslare Europort;
- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services including increased line speeds to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times;
- d. To support development of additional capacity at Rosslare Europort and provision of freight rail services and facilities to support sustainable increases in port operations;
- e. Support development of the Wexford Campus as part of the Multi-Campus TUSE is as a key driver for the economic and social development in the town with a focus on educational attainment and lifelong learning;
- f. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Wexford subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- g. To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the Town Centre through urban regeneration of key locations;
- h. Transport measures through a Local Transport Plan including retention and expansion of the town bus network, improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and rural transport services into the town.

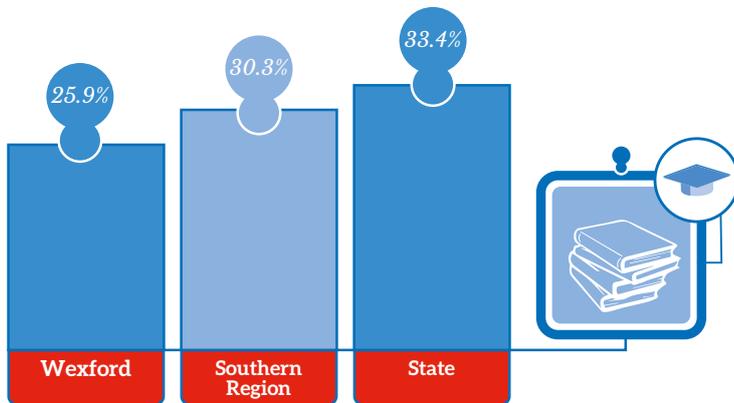
Population Change 2011 - 2016



Housing Vacancy*



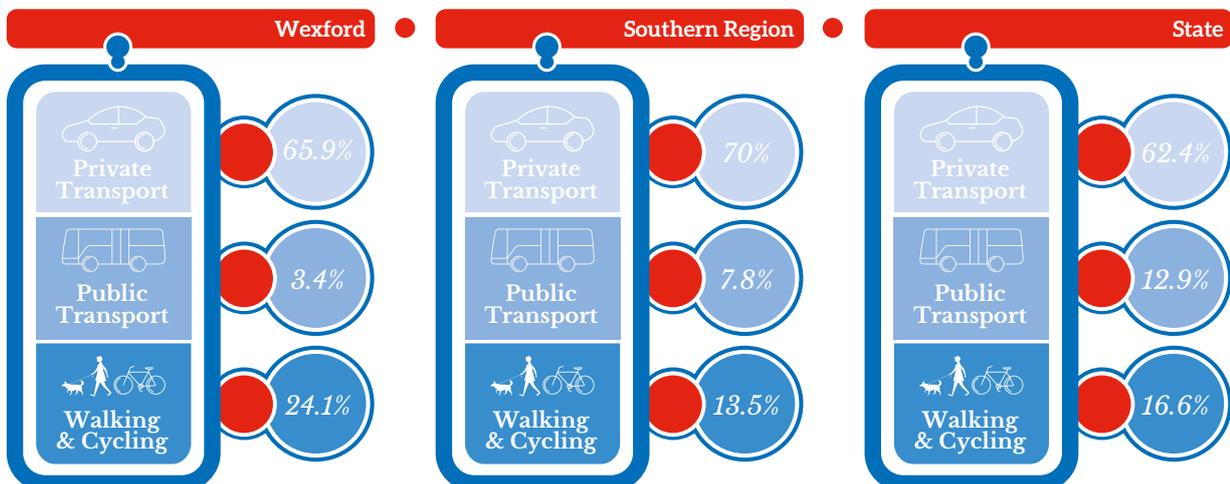
Education Attainment: All Third Level



Jobs to Resident Workers



Mode of Travel to Work

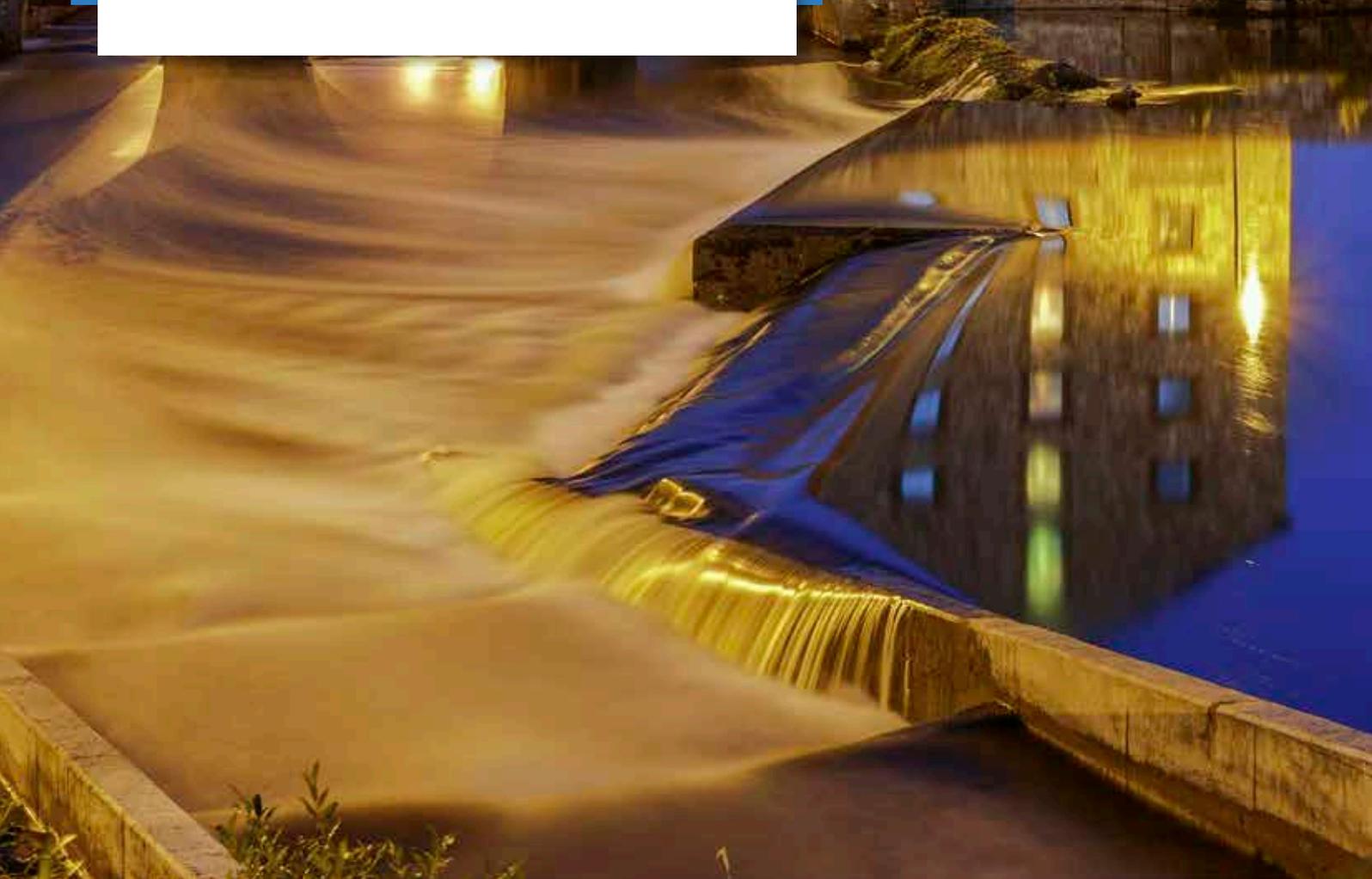
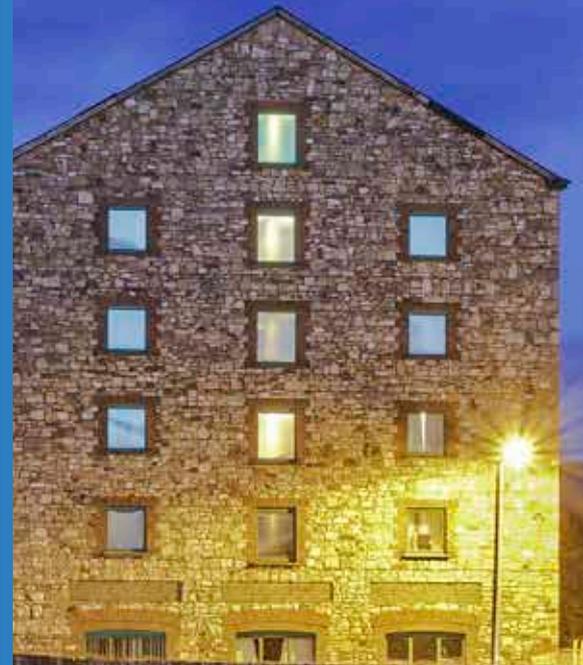




Key Town

Clonmel

Clonmel, the largest town in County Tipperary with a population of 17,140 (2016) and a significant employment location, is situated on the River Suir close to County Waterford. Clonmel is the main centre in a linear network of towns in South Tipperary (Carrick On Suir, Clonmel, Cahir, and Tipperary Town) that form part of the strategic inter-regional road and rail corridor between Waterford and Limerick with a combined population of 35,000. Clonmel is a vibrant and thriving town, a key regional centre for health social and cultural activities with a museum, arts centre, theatre, cinema and numerous sports clubs. The town plays host to regular lively festivals celebrating street theatre and music.



Attributes

- Strategic location on the Waterford-Limerick N24 and rail corridors with onward inter-regional linkages to Mid-West and South-West;
- Good access to Cork, Dublin, Shannon and Waterford Airports;
- Good international connectivity with direct access routes to the Ports of Waterford and Rosslare to the east and Limerick-Foynes and Port of Cork to the west/south-west;
- Key support role of Clonmel to Waterford;
- Major employment centre with total jobs of 7,306 in 2016, including 3,500 FDI jobs and diverse employment sectors including Pharma, Life sciences and Food;
- Strategic employment land banks including Ballingarrane Park;
- Centre for Higher Education at the LIT Clonmel Campus;
- Retail centre for the surrounding towns and hinterland area;
- Tourist centre for Ireland's Ancient East and Munster Vales located on the River Suir Blueway and close to attractive upland and mountain scenery in the Knockmealdown Mountains;
- Recreational assets of the River Suir Blueway and surrounding mountains;

- Important Regional Centre for Healthcare with South Tipperary General Hospital and St. Luke's Psychiatric Hospital located in the town.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

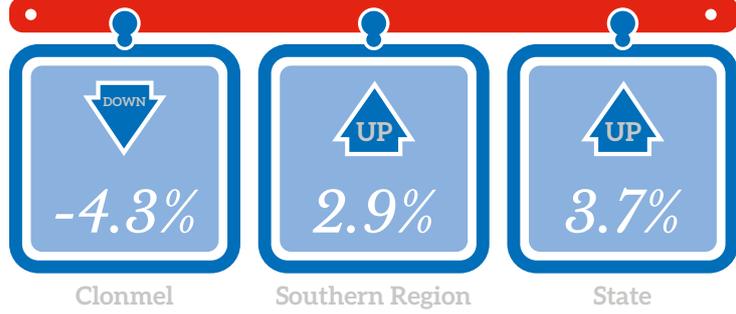
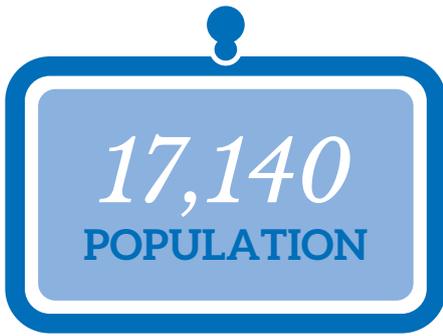
- i. Need to upgrade the N24 linking Limerick and Waterford to enhance east /west connectivity, which will be of benefit to Clonmel as a regional town;
- ii. Investment in infrastructure on the Limerick-Waterford rail line to enable increased line speeds and frequency of services;
- iii. Enhanced provision of bus services to enable improved inter-regional connectivity;
- iv. Transport measures through a Local Transport Plan including continued investment enhancing sustainable transport modes, particularly walking and cycling in the town;
- v. Urban regeneration funding package to develop a 4.5ha town centre site (Kickham Barracks) to enhance the Main Street area;
- vi. Economic funding package for the further development of Ballingarrane Park as a strategic employment location for Clonmel;
- vii. Delivery of planned new water treatment plant to boost water supply for the town.

RPO 17

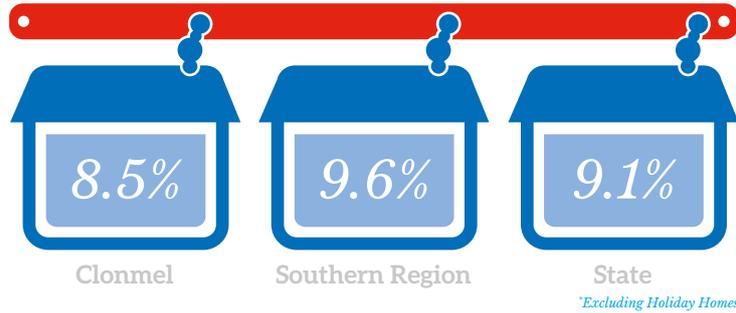
Clonmel

- a. To support Clonmel as a self-sustaining regional economic driver and as a key location for investment and choice in the Region, to support the enhanced development of Clonmel based on its strategic location relative to Limerick-Shannon, Cork and Waterford MASP areas, as well as its role as a centre of employment and economic activity within the Region;
- b. To develop Clonmel's economic synergies and potential within the Limerick Waterford east west axis through improvements and upgrading of the N24 Waterford Limerick strategic route and improvements in public transportation;
- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times;
- d. To support planned place-making initiatives identified – redevelopment of Kickham Barracks and Clonmel Flights of Discovery;
- e. To support the continued development of Clonmel as a Tourist Centre in Ireland's Ancient East and Munster Vales;
- f. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Clonmel subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- g. It is an objective to continue to realise the potential economic benefits of higher education activity in Clonmel and to support existing higher education providers—noting also the potential collaboration with the future TUSE—in further enhancing the impact of higher education on the town and wider region.

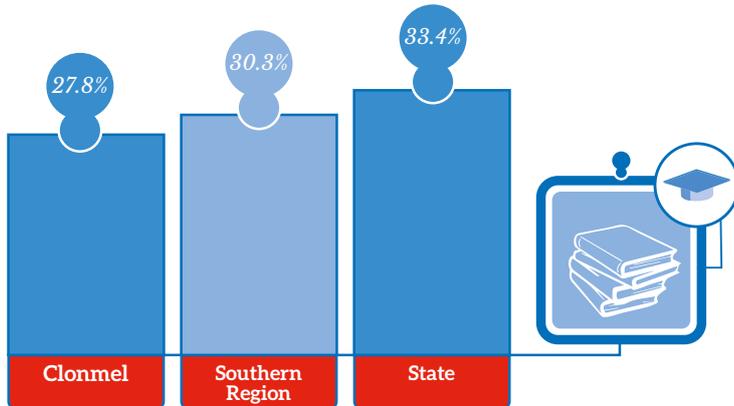
Population Change 2011 - 2016



Housing Vacancy*



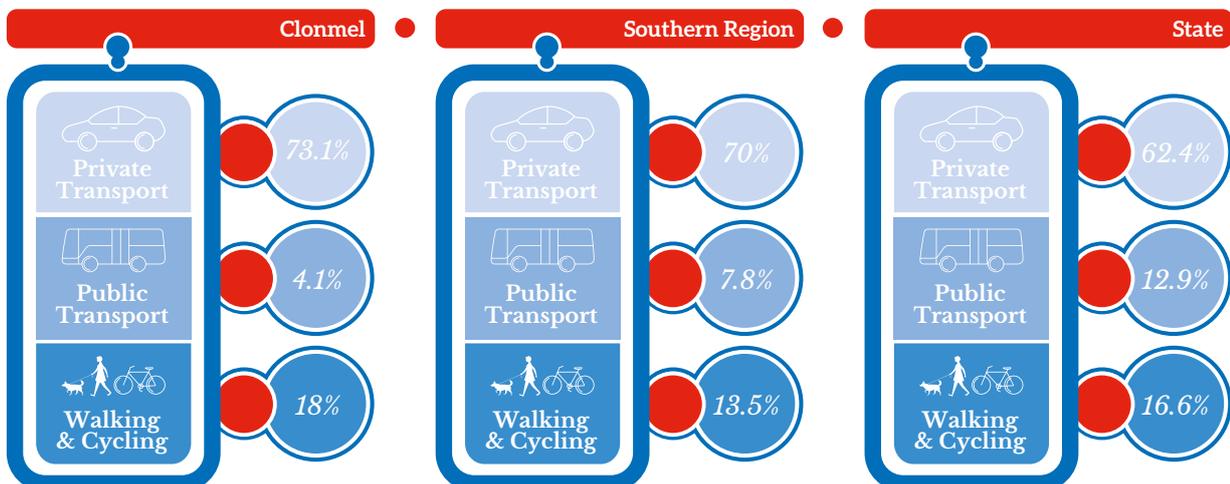
Education Attainment: All Third Level



Jobs to Resident Workers



Mode of Travel to Work





Key Town

Killarney

The Region's eight largest urban settlement outside of the cities, Killarney is a settlement balancing protection of an exceptional natural environment, ecology and heritage with inherent strengths and specialist role in tourism, culture, amenity and other dynamic economic activities. Killarney is a part of the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle with Tralee and Killorglin and on the strategic road network linking with the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Killarney's population was 14,504 in 2016 with 7,108 jobs and a job to resident workers ratio higher than the regional average.



Attributes

- Connected on the strategic road network to Cork and Limerick-Shannon metropolitan areas and through Tralee to the wider Atlantic Economic Corridor;
- Rail network connectivity to Tralee, Cork, Dublin, and Limerick via Mallow;
- Kerry International Airport, c.18km from Killarney with flights or services to Dublin, UK and Europe;
- Part of the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle, networked with Tralee and Killorglin;
- Attractive location for FDI building on infrastructure capacity, skills base from its links with the Institute of Technology Tralee/Munster Technological University and wider regional third level institutions;
- Strong role in specialised engineering and industry with IDA Park and Liebherr, exporting worldwide from Fenit Port;
- Opportunities to develop creativity and cultural hub;
- Opportunities to further support a vibrant, culturally-rich and revitalised town centre;
- Urban renewal and regeneration sites, e.g. St. Finans;
- Strengths to build a sustainable and diversified tourism future;
- Recreational greenways and looped walks;

- High quality of life potential with access to Wild Atlantic Way, natural environment, Killarney National Park, Ring of Kerry, Ross Castle, Torc Waterfall, other significant cultural, tourism, recreation and sports assets including access to lakes, forests and mountains.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Strengthened inter-regional connectivity on the N21/N69, N22, N72, connections to N20/M20 and N71 corridors;
- ii. N22 Farranfore-Killarney Realignment by-pass;
- iii. Southern and Eastern Relief Road schemes;
- iv. Provide both for the resident population and extensive influx of visitors, necessary road infrastructure, car parking and smarter travel opportunities for improved access to the town centre;
- v. Active /smarter travel initiatives through a Local Transport Plan;
- vi. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and high level maintenance to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- vii. Water and wastewater infrastructure.

RPO 18

Killarney

- a. To sustainably strengthen the role of Killarney as a strategically located urban centre of significant influence in a sub-regional context, a centre of excellence in tourism, recreation and amenity sectors, to promote its role as a leader in these sectors, in particular training and education, and strengthen its overall multi-sectoral dynamic as a key settlement in the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle accessible to regional airport, port, rail and road assets;
- b. To seek investment to sustainably support its compact growth and regeneration, attributes and infrastructure, including key inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) on the strategic road network between Cork and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas, the Atlantic Economic Corridor and the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle, subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued

renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;

- d. To support infrastructure investment and the regeneration of opportunity sites including the Sara Lee, Aras Phadraig and St Finians;
- e. To seek investment in infrastructure that provides for both the resident population and extensive influx of visitors;
- f. To support investment in infrastructure and the development of lands to the north of the existing by-pass in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development objectives including the appropriate master plans in consultation with statutory stakeholders;
- g. Future growth of the town should be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with the local authority and Irish Water to ensure that sufficient wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth avoids negative impacts on the downstream freshwater ecosystem in the National Park (River Deenagh, Lough Leane).

Key Town

Mallow

Mallow, a strategically located crossroads in Munster, is well-networked regionally on the Cork-Dublin rail line, the N20/M20 Cork to Limerick corridor and the N72 Killarney to Dungarvan route, giving access to the M8. The town is a strategic population and employment growth centre providing a range of services and employment opportunities to a large urban and strong agricultural rural hinterland and functions as a driver of growth in North Cork and Region. Mallow is the largest town in North County Cork, with a population of 12,459 and over 3,700 jobs in 2016. The town is strengthening its business and economic profile, ensuring employment-led growth occurs.



Attributes

- Frequency of inter-city rail services to Cork City, Dublin and Tralee and inter-regional connectivity on the strategic road network to Cork and Limerick-Shannon metropolitan areas;
- Enterprise assets include engineering and food processing, business and technology, logistics and transport. Property and land assets include the Mallow IDA Business and Technology Park, Quarterstown Industrial Estate, Clyda Business park, Dairy-Gold and Kostal;
- Infrastructure-led phased expansion, such as the North East and North West urban expansion areas;
- Strong town centre retail function and network of neighbourhood centres;
- Strong quality of life offer with sports, recreation, and amenities and future opportunities such as Blackwater Amenity Corridor;
- Tourism and recreation attractions, including Mallow Castle and Town Park, close access to Doneraile Wildlife Park and Mallow Racecourse;
- Located in the River Blackwater Valley, a special conservation area;
- Strong health services with Mallow General Hospital, Mt. Alvernia and primary care centre.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity and improved the quality and potential for more frequent feeder services between Mallow as a Key Town with Rathmore, Banteer and Millstreet;
- ii. Relieve traffic congestion through relief road (Northern Relief Road) and other transport measures through a Local Transport Plan;
- iii. Critical water and wastewater infrastructure for both phased growth and to protect and enhance the natural heritage of the Blackwater Catchment;
- iv. Flood defence measures which take account of landscape conservation in the Upper Blackwater Valley;
- v. Recreation amenities including Blackwater Amenity Corridor;
- vi. Regeneration site initiatives, including Carmichael Lane Car Park, Central Hotel Site, West of Shortcastle Street/North of West End, Corner of Bridge Street, South of West End and Site East of Shortcastle Street and other initiatives;
- vii. Support and improvement of existing health services.



RPO 19

Mallow

- a. To sustainably strengthen the employment-led growth and town centre-led regeneration of Mallow as a regional economic driver, leverage its strategic location and accessibility on inter-regional road and rail networks to build upon inherent strengths, in particular food production and tourism potential, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment of the Blackwater Valley;
- b. Seek investment to support attributes and the sustainable delivery of infrastructure, including enhanced inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) along the strategic road network N20/M20 corridor to the Cork and Limerick-Shannon metropolitan areas and Atlantic Economic Corridor,

subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;

- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- d. Future growth of the town should be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with the Local Authority and Irish Water to ensure that sufficient wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth avoids negative impacts on the nutrient sensitive River Blackwater.

Key Town

Nenagh

Nenagh has a population of 8,968 (2016) and 3,125 jobs. It is strategically located within the catchment of Limerick City, Shannon Airport and the Foynes Port areas. The town has the potential to develop with Limerick, Shannon and Ennis as a core economic driver of the Region. Nenagh is located only 80 minutes from Dublin via the M7. The town and its hinterland has potential as a location for a vibrant and diverse enterprise mix, including major research and development functions, tourism, water-based and outdoor recreation, renewable energy and emerging sectors such as agritech, life sciences, financial services and engineering.



Attributes

- Connectivity - situated on the M7 motorway and the Limerick to Ballybrophy railway line;
- Situated within 40km of educational institutions of UL and LIT;
- High quality of life, strong retail offering, attractive town centre, vibrant cafe and restaurant offering and housing available at an affordable cost;
- Renowned centre for sporting tourism;
- Proximity to Lough Derg and the Silvermines Mountains and tourism-focused settlements, such as Ballina, Killaloe and Dromineer;
- 48 hectares of Phase 1 serviced land, zoned for employment purposes, including serviced sites in the Lisbunny Industrial Park, the Streame site and the former COTY factory;
- Gas and high-speed broadband availability;
- Nenagh General Hospital, providing acute care and services including diagnostics, medicinal, surgical & critical care, and physiotherapy services.

Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Delivery of a Local Transport Plan, Nenagh traffic management plan and associated public realm works;
- ii. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- iii. Upgrade of R498 Nenagh to Thurles Road;
- iv. Provision of a new link road between the N52 and the R445;
- v. Provision of a new inner relief road from the R498 to the R445;
- vi. Upgrade of the Limerick to Ballybrophy railway line;
- vii. Increased commuter rail service on the Nenagh to Limerick commuter line;
- viii. Continued investment and development of the historic core of the town as a key tourism driver and the identification and development of Nenagh as the Gateway to Ireland's Hidden Heartlands;
- ix. Completion of Nenagh Wastewater Treatment Upgrade.



RPO 20

Nenagh

- a. To support and promote the role of Nenagh as a strategically located urban centre of significant influence in a sub-regional context and driver of county and regional prosperity by harnessing synergies to the Limerick-Shannon MASP, Galway MASP, its proximity to the Atlantic Corridor, its strong urban and economic structure and other competitive advantages;
- b. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Nenagh subject to the

outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments. It is an objective to identify a location for a new centre of excellence for sustainable energy;

- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times.

Key Town

Thurles

Thurles is located at the centre of the Southern Region, mid-way between Limerick, Cork and Waterford. The town is one of the most connected towns in the Region with motorway and intercity rail connections. Thurles has a strong sporting tradition, modern sporting facilities and is the founding location of the GAA. It has a population of 7,940 (2016) and 3,369 job with a jobs-to-resident's workers ratio of 1:2. With the 445-hectare site at Lisheen, Thurles will be a significant national economic and employment driver following its designation as one of six sites within the EU for piloting the next generation of the bio-economy, including bio-energy and bio-technology. Thurles will be the focus of associated residential growth and growth in its service and enterprise base. There is also scope for creating greater synergies between Thurles and other Key Towns.



Attributes

- A connected town with excellent road and rail connectivity;
- The Lisheen/Thurles Centre of Excellence for the bio-economy;
- An educational hub, with primary, secondary (including two boarding schools), third level colleges - Limerick Institute of Technology and Mary Immaculate College (St. Patrick's College Campus), the Educational Training Board's National Apprenticeship Centre at Archerstown;
- Potential to provide significant employment growth serving the cities of Dublin, Cork and Limerick given its strategic location;
- 25.5 hectares Shannon Commercial Properties site at Archerstown;
- A strong retail centre for the surrounding hinterland area;
- A sporting capital which is synonymous with hurling.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Upgrade of R498 Nenagh to Thurles Road;
- ii. Provision of the Thurles Relief Road and other transport measures through a Local Transport Plan;
- iii. Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- iv. Development of infrastructure to ensure that the economic potential of the Lisheen/ Thurles Centre of Excellence for the Bio-economy is met;
- v. Investment and infrastructure for the 25.5 hectares Shannon Commercial Properties site at Archerstown;
- vi. Enhancement of Liberty Square;
- vii. Provision of a gas connection to the town;
- viii. Continued investment in higher education on the campuses in the town, including development of the student accommodation;
- ix. Support for delivery of projects submitted under the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund.



RPO 21

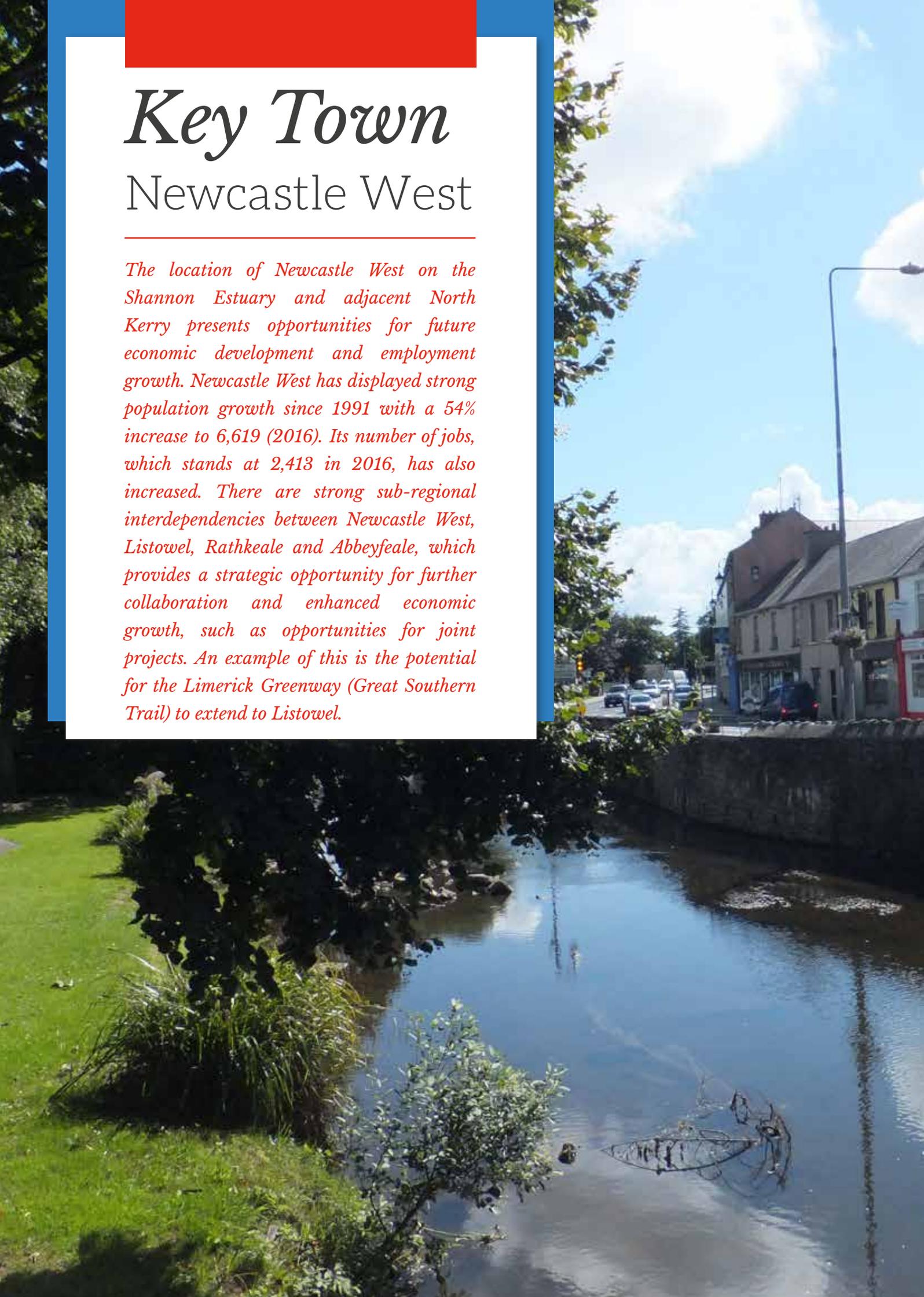
Thurles

- a. To support and promote the role of Thurles as a strategically located urban centre of significant influence in a sub-regional context and driver of county and regional prosperity by harnessing the employment and economic potential of the town together with Lisheen, Thurles National Bio Economy Hub and the emergence of a new economic model focused on two principal pillars: low carbon growth and resource efficiency, while leveraging its strategic location and accessibility on inter-regional road and rail networks;
- b. To support and promote the role of Thurles as a centre for international and national standard sporting facilities. This builds on the opportunities and landholdings available to the third level institutions and sporting bodies within the town;
- c. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Thurles including support for the delivery of projects submitted under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- d. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity including improved frequency and journey times;
- e. Future growth of the town should be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with the local authority and Irish Water to ensure that sufficient wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth avoids negative impacts on the nutrient sensitive River Suir.

Key Town

Newcastle West

The location of Newcastle West on the Shannon Estuary and adjacent North Kerry presents opportunities for future economic development and employment growth. Newcastle West has displayed strong population growth since 1991 with a 54% increase to 6,619 (2016). Its number of jobs, which stands at 2,413 in 2016, has also increased. There are strong sub-regional interdependencies between Newcastle West, Listowel, Rathkeale and Abbeyfeale, which provides a strategic opportunity for further collaboration and enhanced economic growth, such as opportunities for joint projects. An example of this is the potential for the Limerick Greenway (Great Southern Trail) to extend to Listowel.



Attributes

- Close proximity to Shannon Foynes Port and Shannon Estuary;
- Scope for greater collaboration between Listowel, Rathkeale and Abbeyfeale;
- Manufacturing base in healthcare, joinery, food and beverages, and machinery;
- New investment from companies such as Ortec Inc (locating its European headquarters in Newcastle West) and the expansion of Filtertek has created a more resilient employment base;
- Availability of labour – the 20-39-year age group accounts for almost a third of the population and there is a large non-Irish national population, which accounted for 23.7% of the town's population in 2016. This is an important factor in expanding the growth potential of the local economy;
- Development of the Great Southern Trail as a recreational greenway for walking and cycling through West Limerick with the potential of extending to Listowel.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Newcastle West Distributor Road and other transport measures through a Local Transport Plan;
- ii. Wastewater treatment and water services improvements;
- iii. Development of a regional athletics hub to service 9 athletic clubs and 41 primary and post-primary schools in the catchment area of Newcastle West;
- iv. Investment for the development and full utilisation of the Great Southern Trail.



RPO 22

Newcastle West

- a. To support and promote the role of Newcastle West as a strategically located urban centre of significant influence in a sub-regional context. In particular, it is an objective to promote the opportunity for inter-regional collaborations across county boundaries with Abbeyfeale, Listowel and Rathkeale and locations identified in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary, which offer collective strengths and potential for project partnerships to drive sustainable economic growth in the West Limerick/North Kerry area;
- b. To support the initiatives of the Atlantic Economic Corridor to realise the full potential of the Newcastle West enterprise assets to support job creation, improve competitiveness, attract investment and create future economic growth;
- c. To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Newcastle West subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- d. To support and promote the tourism potential of Newcastle West's historical heritage to facilitate the expansion of the existing tourism offer and to develop connectivity to and synergies with Newcastle West and the Great Southern Greenway;
- e. To support the identification of opportunities for investment in incubation and innovation infrastructure for ICT and related companies and capitalise on Newcastle West's ability to accommodate remote working, enterprise start-ups and up scaling companies.

Key Town

Clonakilty

Clonakilty is the largest town in West Cork with a 2016 population of 4,592 and a jobs total of 2,376. The jobs to resident ratio of 1.29, is above the regional average. A vibrant town with strengths in food production and tourism, Clonakilty is a key settlement on the N71 West Cork road network, connected to other settlements including Skibbereen, Bantry and Castletownbere. The inclusion of Clonakilty reflects its key strategic role within the particular settlement network of West Cork, its service role and hinterland interaction with other West Cork settlements, remoter rural areas, peninsulas and islands.



Attributes

- Key settlement on the N71 which functions as a sub-regional road corridor, connecting a network of distinctive settlements, tourism and enterprise assets, ports and fishing harbours with Metropolitan Cork, Port of Cork and Cork Airport assets;
- Significant food and beverage, technology and tourism industries and hosts the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine's National Seafood Centre;
- Strategic property assets include the West Cork Business and Technology Park at Shannonvale with around 1,000 employees, high quality telecommunications and facilities, existing enterprises in software development, e-commerce and finance;
- Excellence in public realm and urban design (such as the award-winning Clonakilty 400 urban design masterplan);
- Exceptional natural heritage and amenities, including Clonakilty Bay and Inchydoney;
- Access to the Wild Atlantic Way;

- High quality of life offer with access to significant cultural, heritage and natural amenities, town and tourism attractions of the Wild Atlantic Way, beaches, walkways and cycleways.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i. Completion of a Northern Relief Road and Western Relief Road;
- ii. For the regeneration of town centres and efficient economic movement on the N71 road corridor, relief roads for the settlements of Skibbereen and Bantry in addition to Clonakilty;
- iii. Multi-modal Local Transport Plan;
- iv. Critical water and wastewater infrastructure for phased growth;
- v. Clonakilty Flood Relief Scheme;
- vi. Regeneration site and public realm initiatives;
- vii. Protect and enhance the natural heritage of Clonakilty Bay.



RPO 23

Clonakilty

- a. To strengthen sustainably the employment-led growth and regeneration of Clonakilty as an economic driver for West Cork, build upon inherent strengths, in particular food production and tourism, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment of Clonakilty Bay;
- b. Leverage its strategic location and accessibility on the N71 road corridor, sharing strengths with other settlements in West Cork, including an enhanced role for Bantry as part of the next County Development Plan review;

- c. Seek investment to support attributes and the sustainable delivery of infrastructure, including enhanced inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) for all key settlements along the N71 road corridor to the Cork metropolitan area, Port of Cork and Cork Airport assets, subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments.

Key Town

Dungarvan

Dungarvan is an attractive coastal and harbour town with a population of 9,227 (2016), which functions as a tourist centre for the Waterford Greenway. A former county town, Dungarvan is an important driver for West Waterford. It has a considerable food focus based on high quality local produce. Dungarvan is located on the Waterford-Cork N25 transport corridor. The town is a significant location for indigenous industry and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with educational and health/community facilities and a vibrant retail and services sector serving the local community and an expanding tourism sector. The town is the Gaeltacht Service Town for the nearby Gaeltacht na nDéise located around An Rinn and An Sean Phobal.



Attributes

- Strategic Location on the Waterford – Cork N25 transport corridor;
- Direct access routes to the Ports of Waterford and Rosslare to the east and Port of Cork to the west/south-west;
- Good access to Cork and Waterford Airports;
- Home of Go Dungarvan Smarter Travel Programme;
- Diverse employment sectors including pharma, hospitality and food. Total Jobs of 3,267 recorded in 2016;
- A Gaeltacht Service Town, Dungarvan is a hub for Gaeltacht na nDéise focused development based on high quality R and D activity and enterprise in the area of media and communications;
- Renewable energy hub supported by industry – GSK involvement in Dungarvan’s Biomass Energy Plant;
- Retail Centre for the surrounding hinterland area;
- Tourist Centre for Ireland’s Ancient East & Waterford Greenway and close to the UNESCO Geocoast and attractive upland and mountain scenery in Comeraghs/Knockmealdowns;
- Recreational assets of the Waterford Greenway and coastal-based recreational activities;
- Centre for healthcare in West Waterford with St Joseph’s Hospital & Dungarvan District Hospital.

Key Infrastructural Requirements

- i.** Upgrade the N25 linking Cork and Waterford (via Dungarvan);
- ii.** Transport measures through a Local Transport Plan including ongoing investment in sustainable transport modes, particularly walking and cycling in the town;
- iii.** Other identified road improvements including upgrading of N72 between Dungarvan and Mallow;
- iv.** Urban Regeneration and Place- Making funding for town centre;
- v.** Upgrades to water and wastewater infrastructure.



RPO 24

Dungarvan

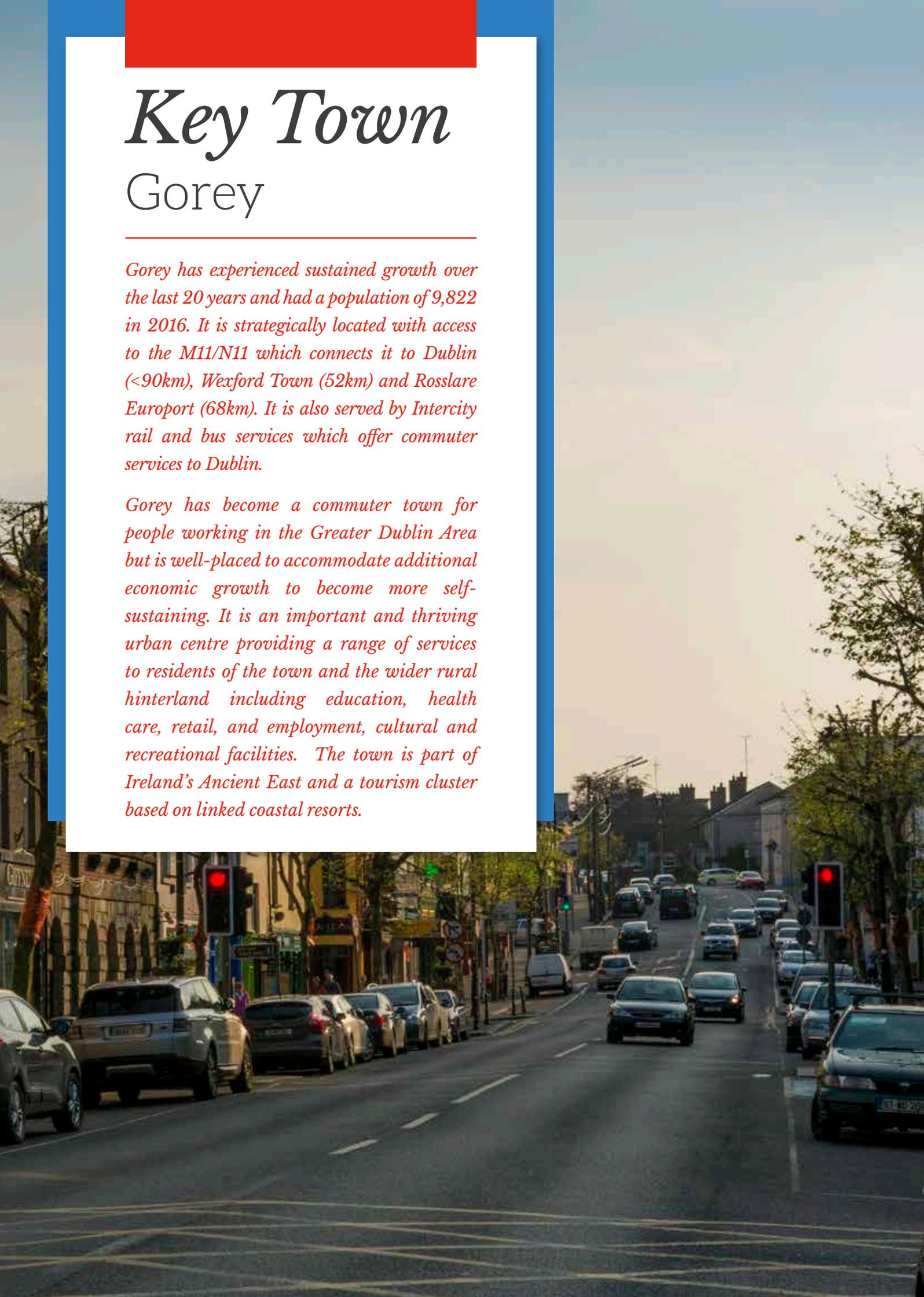
- a.** To strengthen the role of Dungarvan as a strategically located urban centre of significant influence in a sub-regional context and in its sub-regional role as a Gaeltacht Service Town, leveraging its strategic location along the Waterford Cork N25 route and to build upon its inherent strengths including historical, cultural and architectural heritage, digital connectivity, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism (in particular the Waterford Greenway and its potential sustainable expansion), culture and retail services. In respect of its importance to the environment, to tourism, to fishing, and to aquaculture (niche industries supporting rural employment), this RSES supports the environmentally sustainable development and treatment of Dungarvan Harbour and coastline;
- b.** To seek improvements and upgrading of the N25 Waterford to Cork route, the N72 Dungarvan to Mallow and the R672 linking the Key Towns of Clonmel and Dungarvan;
- c.** To support the development of Dungarvan as the Gaeltacht Service Town for Gaeltacht na nDéise”
- d.** To support for enhanced provision of bus services to enable improved intra-regional and inter-regional connectivity to attract more passengers to public transport and away from use of private motor cars;
- e.** To support the continued development of cycling and walking infrastructure as part of Go Dungarvan Smarter Travel Programme and to support the accessibility of the public realm for vulnerable road/footpath users and persons with disabilities;
- f.** To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Dungarvan (including amenities and facilities for the community and voluntary sector) subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- g.** Support the development of Dungarvan as a sub-regional centre for education and training, including lifelong learning, by building on existing links with international third-level education providers and WIT;
- h.** Support investment in flood defence measures.

Key Town

Gorey

Gorey has experienced sustained growth over the last 20 years and had a population of 9,822 in 2016. It is strategically located with access to the M11/N11 which connects it to Dublin (<90km), Wexford Town (52km) and Rosslare Europort (68km). It is also served by Intercity rail and bus services which offer commuter services to Dublin.

Gorey has become a commuter town for people working in the Greater Dublin Area but is well-placed to accommodate additional economic growth to become more self-sustaining. It is an important and thriving urban centre providing a range of services to residents of the town and the wider rural hinterland including education, health care, retail, and employment, cultural and recreational facilities. The town is part of Ireland's Ancient East and a tourism cluster based on linked coastal resorts.



Attributes

- Strong national and international connectivity linking to Rosslare Europort, Dublin City and Airport, towns of County Wexford and Wicklow and the Eastern Economic Corridor;
- Property solutions to facilitate economic development including the M11 Business park/ Hatch Lab, Gorey Business Park and Ballyloughlan Business Park;
- A strong vibrant town centre with renowned fashion retail, food and cultural services;
- Recreational assets of Courtown Harbour and beaches, Marlfield House, attractive countryside, amenities, and good quality of life;
- Affordable housing capacity on serviced lands within the town;
- Wastewater treatment capacity capable of accommodating population and economic growth.



Key Infrastructural Requirements

- N11 Gorey to Enniscorthy including N30 link and N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare;
- Investment in the Dublin-Gorey-Rosslare Europort rail line to protect the line and increase speed and frequency of services;
- Transport measures through a Local Transport Plan which will include investment in sustainable transport modes, particularly walking and cycling in the town;
- Funding of an intermodal transport node to facilitate sustainable travel patterns;
- Delivery of orbital route and bridges over rail line identified in the Gorey Local Area Plan 2017-2023 - Neighbourhood Framework Plans;
- Economic funding package for the further development in partnership with private investors of the M11 Business Campus as a strategic employment location for Gorey;
- Funding to progress the development of the public realm and Market House cultural redevelopment;
- Development of planned Gorey Regional Water Supply program;
- Delivery of educational and amenity facilities to keep pace with recent growth in population and demographic trends;
- Delivery of natural gas to the town.

RPO 25

Gorey

- To strengthen the role of Gorey as an economic driver, leveraging its strategic location and accessibility to Rosslare Europort / proposed connection to the Dublin -Belfast Eastern Economic Corridor (port, rail and road), build upon its inherent strengths including digital connectivity, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism, culture and retail services;
- To encourage and facilitate strategic employment development to allow Gorey Town to become more self-sufficient in terms of employment including development of opportunity sites and property solutions;
- To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to a high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- To seek investment in sustainable transport measures through a Local Transport Plan to include a public transport hub/inter-change , new road bridges over the railway line (at Ballytegan and at Ramstown/ Knockmullen) and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure;
- To improve the public realm and attractiveness of the Town Centre as a place to live, work and visit through key urban regeneration projects / environmental improvement schemes;
- To support the delivery of the infrastructural (including education, amenity, social and cultural) requirements identified for Gorey to keep pace with population growth;
- To support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Gorey subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments.

3.6 | Towns & Villages

Rural towns and villages are the local drivers for their surrounding areas. Their roles and scale vary across the Region from large commuter-based settlements such as Tramore, to towns having a strong service and employment function. A sustainable, infrastructure-led growth approach is encouraged at the appropriate scale for all of these settlement types. Local authorities will categorise settlements and their appropriate growth rates in their development plans to reflect roles, environmental and infrastructural possibilities and limits.

Local authorities may take a targeted approach, such as the application of strategic locations for development within a county context. For example, Cork County Council and Clare County Council are considering an enhanced role for Bantry and Kilrush as service centres for West Cork and West Clare within their development plan reviews.

Decline and dereliction are key issues facing towns and villages, including those above and below the 1,500-population threshold. Table 3.4 below highlights the performance of settlements in the Region by scale since the last Census.

Table 3.4 | Performance of Towns by reference to size

Town Scale (Population)	Number of towns 2016	Total Persons and % of Total Urban Population 2016	Growth*/Decline Trends 2011-2016.
10,000 +	16	583,235 or 61% of total	87.5% growing/ 13% declining
5,000 to 9,999	15	109,271 or 11% of total	80% growing/ 20% declining
1,000 to 4,999	70	149,129 or 16% of total	77% growing/ 23% declining
500 to 999	94	60,050 or 6% of total	67% growing/ 33% declining
Less than 500	201	56,350 or 6% of total	54% growing/ 46% declining

SOURCE | Statistics derived from analysis of CSO Census 2016

* Growth rate also include Static figures i.e. it includes towns recording 0% growth.

While many settlements have recorded growth, a greater proportion of smaller-scale settlements record a decline.

Challenges include:

- Increasing building vacancy in rural towns and villages;
- Demise of the historic vibrancy of town and village centres;
- Loss of services, including schools, pubs, shops, garda stations and post offices;
- Lack of available sites and services;
- Preference to live outside settlements.

This is a significant issue nationally, it also requires a major policy response at regional and local authority level. The RSES aims to strengthen the Region's urban and rural fabric by supporting vibrant towns and villages. Investment will be sought for infrastructure and refurbishment initiatives to support the economic, administrative and social functions of these settlements.

A sustainable place framework will enable further renewal of our towns and villages through:

- Development of a “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative across the Region;
- Investment in town and village renewal initiatives that improve their capacity, services, environment and liveability to attract population and enterprise growth;
- Coordination between local authorities, Irish Water and other stakeholders to deliver investment in the sustainable development of water and wastewater treatment services for rural towns and villages.

Development plans should include appropriate guidance for new homes in small towns and villages and renewal initiatives to assist an evidence-based approach to identifying appropriate sites for housing, social and physical infrastructure, including water and wastewater infrastructure. Tipperary County Council's Design and Best Practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages is an example of good practice.

The RSES recognises the important roles that towns and villages perform along the Region's three tourism corridors - the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Hidden Heartlands - and aims to develop the infrastructure that sustainably services growth from tourism which also protects the distinct natural, cultural and historic heritage of these towns and villages.

The objectives in the RSES for the Region's urban and rural settlements and networks serve as a support for stakeholders in applying for funding under schemes including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Rural Regional Regeneration and Development Fund, Climate Action Fund, Disruptive Technologies Fund and other initiatives (see also Chapter 9, Section 9.3 Investment and Funding).



RPO 26

Towns and Villages

It is an objective:

- To strongly support strengthening the viability of our towns and rural settlements, as a key objective of the RSES, including the protection of essential rural services such as post offices, shops, and medical facilities;
- To seek investment and initiatives that deliver smart technologies, revitalisation of mixed-use town and village centre streets, and pilot initiatives for regional good practice in renewal and re-use of buildings;
- To seek investment, the timely delivery and the sustainable delivery of holistic infrastructures in towns and villages to support their service role along the Region's tourism corridors consistent with the settlement hierarchies as set out in relevant development plans;
- To ensure that development plans tailor the appropriate planning response by reference to the scale, nature and location of the settlement. Local authorities will identify settlements which can play an enhanced role at sub-regional level to drive the development of their area;
- To support the development of guidelines for cluster housing development within the existing footprint of our rural settlements;
- To support co-ordination between local authorities, Irish Water and other stakeholders to deliver investment in the sustainable development of water and wastewater and other infrastructure for towns and villages, prioritising retrofitting and improvement in the quality of existing services;
- To seek investment in the sustainable development of a “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative in the Region and the delivery of actions by local authorities, Irish Water, communities and other stakeholders in the provision of services and serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the existing footprint of rural settlements. Local authorities should identify and prioritise the provision and implementation of serviced sites within towns and villages as an objective of development plans. These programmes shall ensure a sustainable and appropriate spread of development between towns and villages within their areas.

3.7 | Rural Areas

Rural areas are settlements and surrounding rural areas with a population of less than 1,500. The RSES reflects the position of the NPF, that our countryside “is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities.”

RPO 27

Rural

To support rural economies and rural communities through implementing a sustainable rural housing policy in the Region which provides a distinction between areas under urban influence and other rural areas through the implementation of National Policy Objective 19 regarding Local Authority County Development Plan Core Strategies.

Local authorities shall:

- a. Include policies for the protection of the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements as key priority within Development plans;
- b. Have regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements. Core Strategies shall identify areas under urban influence and set the appropriate sustainable rural housing policy response which facilitates the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic, social or local exceptional need to live in a rural area and sitting, environmental and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans;
- c. Having regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements, in rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the sustainable provision of single housing in the countryside based on sitting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans;
- d. Provide for flexibility in zoning and density requirements to ensure that rural villages provide attractive easily developed options for housing.

The NPF and RSES make a distinction between areas under urban influence, i.e. those within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and rural areas outside these catchments where a more flexible approach to rural housing will apply.

Core Strategies in development plans should identify areas under strong urban influence in the hinterlands of settlements. They will set an appropriate rural housing policy response to avoid ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas, support revitalised towns and villages, achieve sustainable compact growth targets and protect the rural resource for rural communities, including people with an established local connection to the area.

RPO 27 addresses the issue of urban-generated housing to restrict the development of rural housing based on clearly defined eligibility criteria. This facilitates the needs of rural communities, whilst controlling pressures for urban-influenced housing demand.

The RSES recognises the critical role of rural transport services in providing social and economic connectivity between small villages/rural areas and larger towns. Chapter 6 Connectivity outlines the objectives of the RSES for the provision of rural public transport services to meet the needs of rural communities and support the role of towns and their rural catchments.



3.8 | Networks

Designation of individual settlements is not the sole determinant of achieving successful renewal and growth. Across the Region, there are examples of smaller-scale settlements that have a significant role in employment provision to their surrounding communities, often in highly skilled, world-leading innovative sectors.

Killorglin in County Kerry for example has twice the ratio of jobs to resident workers than the regional average. Other towns in the Region located near or along inter-

regional corridors and cross-boundary locations share similar economic strengths and specialisms, which when combined, provide strategic opportunities to drive the regional economy, contributing to and interacting with the larger centres of growth such as key towns and metropolitan areas. These networks present opportunities for collaborative projects and shared benefits from strategic infrastructure investments, particularly from improved inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital communications) perspective.

The RSES also recognises the importance of improved intra-regional connectivity between networked settlements - public transport, rail, inter-urban walking and cycling routes, greenways and e-mobility initiatives. Refer to Chapter 6 Connectivity for more information.

There are a number of well established networks of settlements in the Region that are strategically driving sub-regional growth and there are opportunities for further potential networks. Examples of existing and potential networks include:

- **Kerry Hub and Knowledge Triangle:** Innovation hub and centres of excellence in an established network between Killorglin, Tralee and Killarney interacting with the Atlantic Economic Corridor. The RSES recognises the important economic role of Killorglin in this network and its strong association with Tralee, Killarney and third level institutions. Reference to this network is also included as an example of regional innovation in Chapter 4;
- **Galway Ennis-Shannon-Limerick Economic Network:** A potential network of Key Towns and Metropolitan Areas sharing assets on the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Reference to this network is also included as an example of regional innovation in Chapter 4;
- **North Cork Agri-Food Network:** A potential network of Charleville, Fermoy, Mitchelstown with Mallow as the Key Town leveraging significant potential from food and beverage and agri-tech assets;
- **West Cork Marine Network:** A potential network based on the N71 West Cork to South Kerry Corridor across settlements of Clonakilty as the Key Town with Skibbereen, Bantry, Schull and Castletownbere, leveraging significant marine economy, tourism, food and beverage, digital and other assets with strategic transport connections to the Cork Metropolitan Area;
- **Cork Ring Network:** A potential network of Mallow Key Town, Bandon, Kinsale, Fermoy, Macroom and Youghal, all with a strong relationship with the Cork Metropolitan Area and with potential for sustainable employment led growth, consolidation and enhancement;
- **North Kerry/ West Limerick/Shannon Estuary/Clare:** The RSES recognises and supports the economic role and potential of settlements including Listowel, Abbeyfeale Newcastle West (Key Town), Kilrush as economic drivers in a potential North Kerry/West Limerick/Clare network connected with the Shannon Estuary (and Shannon Foynes Port. Their attributes extend to include the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) area and strategic locations identified under the SIFP as a Shannon Estuary Coastal Network. Reference to the SIFP network is also included as an example of our Region's strategic marine and costal assets in Chapter 4;
- **Limerick-Waterford Transport and Economic network/axis:** This potential network along a strategic east-west axis across the Region links the cities of Limerick and Waterford and the Atlantic Economic Corridor and Eastern Corridor. Cooperation and coordination are required across all Local Authorities to develop potential regional synergies through enhanced collaboration between the Waterford and Limerick-Shannon MASPs, the Key Town of Clonmel and the towns of Carrick-on-Suir, Cahir and Tipperary in South Tipperary. Early initiatives along this axis include the River Suir Blueway. The RSES process has identified the potential for future collaborative actions at local level to realise opportunities;
- **Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/Rail network:** A potential inter-regional network and opportunity for economic collaboration connecting the Waterford Metropolitan Area and Key Towns of Carlow and Kilkenny City on a strategic road and rail corridor linking the Region to the Dublin Metropolitan Area and Eastern and Midland Region. This potential network is further referenced as an example of regional innovation in Chapter 4.

As set out in the tailored approach (Table 3.2), development plans will progress these initiatives and identify further opportunities for settlement networks at the sub-regional level for sharing assets, specialisms and providing strategic opportunities to drive the regional economy. Sustainable infrastructure investment to support the economic role of settlements in these networks should also be identified through the relevant development plan and local area plan processes.

RPO 28

Collaboration/Partnership

To support initiatives between local authorities for cross-boundary collaborations and project partnerships that sustainably develop shared assets, revitalise settlements and strengthen rural communities in county boundary locations.

RPO 29

Rural Settlement Networks

- a. To support the concept of rural settlement networks and support the sustainable development of infrastructures to assist collaborative projects and sharing of assets and strengths to drive sustainable population and enterprise growth in sub-regional areas;
- b. To recognise the shared critical mass of population, strategic assets and economic potential of inter-urban networks working in collaborative partnerships as regionally significant drivers of growth and support investment in infrastructure and initiatives to sustainably deliver improved multi-modal transport connectivity and high-speed, high-quality digital connectivity between them.

The primary purpose of RPO30 is to foster partnerships and collaboration. Collaboration is supported between stakeholders, settlements across local authority boundaries for initiatives that harness the combined potential of strengths and assets in the Region and sub region. Development plans are best placed, with the support of this RPO, to provide further specific support and examples of networks.

RPO 30

Inter-Urban Networks as Regional Drivers of Collaboration and Growth

To recognise and support the role of existing and potential inter-urban networks as regional significant drivers of collaboration and growth. The RSES supports the further sustainable development of infrastructure investment and initiatives, through development plans of the following existing and potential networks:

- Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Area collaboration;
- Atlantic Economic Corridor;
- Eastern Corridor (Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor extending to Rosslare Europort including Gorey-Enniscorthy-Wexford & strong connectivity to New Ross, Waterford/Belview Port).

Examples of other regional and sub -regional drivers for collaboration and growth

- Limerick- Waterford Transport and Economic network/axis (strengthened multi-modal connectivity between the Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas with sustainable upgrades to the N24 corridor to connect the Atlantic Economic Corridor with the Eastern Corridor and connect port and airport assets);
- Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/ Rail network/axis;
- Cork to Limerick Transport and Economic Network/axis;
- Cork to Waterford Transport and Economic Network/axis (sustainable upgrades to the N25 corridor);
- Kerry Hub and Knowledge Triangle;
- North Kerry-West Limerick-Shannon Estuary-Clare;
- Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL);
- North Cork Agri Food Network;
- West Cork Marine Network;
- Cork Ring Network.

The RSES supports initiatives to better understand and harness the resources and potential of places and spaces in border communities in our Region. The Realising the Potential of Border Communities, Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Planning and Progress project, involving the International Centre for Local and Regional Development in association with local authorities and community-based development companies, is an example. This initiative aims to realise the potential of border communities and to promote sustainable and inclusive planning and progress.

3.9 | Placemaking

The growth of compact settlements must be in tandem with social, recreation and cultural development and it should seek to protect and enhance the identity and character of our unique places. Investment in sustainable mobility and enhancing the quality of the public realm will support successful urban living and the achievement of compact growth.

The RSES supports National Policy

Objectives in relation to the following:

- **Right Location:** prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location;
- **Building resilience in housing:** support the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time;
- **Sustainable residential densities:** increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights in appropriate locations.

The RSES recognises the importance of the following:

- A participatory approach to local planning - local governance and citizen participation;
- The creation of socially sustainable communities and an inclusive built environment;
- An integrated planning approach to ensure that employment, infrastructure, services and housing supply are considered together;
- Commitment to high design quality and performance-based design standards and criteria;
- The regeneration and retrofit of existing building stock, including housing, to tackle vacancy and improve energy efficiency;
- Improve and invest in the quality of the public realm for settlements of all scales;
- The role of both design and delivery of improved public realm and support for mechanisms that are effective in the operation, management, use and stewardship of public space;
- Functional relationships between places and the movement of people between places as key to placemaking, emphasising sustainable transport,

public realm and integration of multi modal travel chains;

- The application of sustainable higher densities, taking account of the need for variability and flexibility of local circumstances through an evidence-based approach;
- Consider the needs of retail to service growing population and compact growth in urban settlements and changes in the sector;
- Co-ordination across local authority boundaries for joint planning and infrastructure led forward planning initiatives, such as the Carlow and Graiguecullen Joint Spatial Plan.

Good International Practice:

minimum densities for 10-minute city and town neighbourhoods

Our urban communities need sufficient densities to sustain important local services, public transport networks and realise 5-10 minute city and town concepts. International experience shows that the critical density at which a large portion of people will change from accessing services at a distance by private car to accessing a large number of local services by foot or bicycle is approximately 10,000-12,500 people per square kilometre. Such minimum densities and target densities can be set for an urban area along public transport corridors and in central urban areas to achieve consolidation, compact growth and walkable communities. These densities vary across different walking distances to local services and public transport nodes. There is potential for development plans and local area plans to adapt such concepts following the principles outlined in Section 3.9 Placemaking and seek high quality permeability in new developments.

..... **RPO 31**

Sustainable Place Framework

Local authorities, through development plan and local area plan objectives, shall provide for and implement a Sustainable Place Framework to ensure the development of quality places through integrated planning and consistently excellent design. The role of education, learning and health in providing inclusive, dynamic and adaptable urban environments must be included in sustainable place frameworks. The importance of consultation with local communities is supported and recognised.

3.10 | Housing

The Government's plan, Rebuilding Ireland - Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, aims to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes and deliver 47,000 units of social housing in the period to 2021, while making the best use of the existing housing stock and laying the foundations for a more vibrant and responsive private-rented sector.

The five key pillars of the Action Plan are:

- **Pillar 1** - Address Homelessness;
- **Pillar 2** - Accelerate Social Housing;
- **Pillar 3** - Build More Homes;
- **Pillar 4** - Improve the Rental Sector;
- **Pillar 5** - Utilise Existing Housing.

Housing will be required to cater for existing and changing population requirements, such as social and affordable housing, student housing, renewal/ upgrade and replacement of existing stock, smaller families, an ageing population, and that adult children are living at home longer, with resultant requirements for additional housing responses.

A dysfunctional housing market affects the quality of life for large sections of society and increases the incidence of homelessness. The IBEC report "Better Housing: Improving Affordability and Supply" highlights the inadequate supply of affordable and quality housing as one of the main factors affecting attracting talent to our regions. The mix of housing demand is changing dramatically which will need targeted policy intervention to cater for 1-2 person households and the needs of an aging population. Coupled with this, Ireland has some of the lowest density cities in the developed world and this constrains housing delivery. This requires a better connect between housing policy to delivery and a radical rethink of the planning approach to height and density to bring our cities into line with international norms.

There is a need to diversify the housing mix and typologies within our Region using an evidence-based approach at local level. Under the NPF a 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' (HNDA) is to be undertaken for each local authority area to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements.

The HNDA is:

- To be undertaken by local authorities with coordination and assistance from the Regional Assembly, and at a metropolitan scale particularly where inter-county and inter-regional settlement interactions are to be planned for and managed;
- To primarily inform housing policies, housing strategies and associated land-use zoning policies as well as assisting in determining where new policy areas or investment programmes are to be developed;
- To be supported by the establishment of a coordination and monitoring unit to assist local authorities and the Southern Regional Assembly in the development of the HNDA (DHPLG, Regional Assemblies and the local authorities) to develop and coordinate a centralised spatial database for local authority housing data that supports each HNDA.

Statutory guidelines will be provided for development plans in relation to HNDA and the gathering of housing data.

The RSES supports smart living, integration of smart technologies to future proof our homes and universal design. Refer to Section 3.11 Retrofitting Initiative Priorities, Chapter 5 for Future Proofing and Chapter 7 Quality of Life that includes a specific objective for equal access and universal design.

RPO 32

Rebuilding Ireland

To support Government policy and targets of the Housing Agency under "Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness" and local authority actions that contribute to progress under the key pillars of addressing homelessness, accelerating social housing, building more homes, improving the rental sector and utilizing the existing building stock within our Region.

Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)

To support local authorities in the provision of a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) for the preparation of housing strategies, providing a robust evidence base to assist developing long-term strategic views of housing needs across all tenures and typologies in accordance with statutory guidelines and ensuring phased delivery of services including water, wastewater and transport.



3.11 | Regeneration

The RSES seeks a dynamic approach to land use within the footprint of existing settlements. Urban regeneration and infill development must be maximised to achieve the sustainable compact growth of settlements of all scale. This also aims to achieve the minimum targets for new homes within their existing built-up footprints, set by the NPF. Achieving these targets will require proactive land management to ensure land and building resources within existing settlements are used to their full potential.

The regeneration and development of urban brownfield and infill sites to achieve higher density populations will need to be a priority for local authority plans, with a focus given to mixed-use developments for vibrant living and working urban centres. These plans will need to seek targeted initiatives and actions that assist achieving compact growth targets at a local level for the refurbishment and upgrading of suitable vacant and underused building stock in our settlements (cities, towns and villages) for housing and other active uses.

Preparing sites for regeneration may require addressing legacy issues, such as removing or treating contaminated soil and remediating the ground on site. Development Plan Core Strategies should be accompanied by specific objectives setting out the achievement of urban infill/brownfield development and potential requirements for brownfield site remediation.

The RSES recognises that infill and brownfield development is complex. Lower tiered plans will need to meet compact growth targets in an evidence based approach on availability and deliverability of lands within the existing built up footprints. Lower tiered plans may consider active plan management initiatives which are supported through RSES RPOs including Compact

Growth in Metropolitan Areas, Urban Brownfield and Infill Development and the actions of the Land Development Agency.

Such examples include:

- Site assembly progressed by local authorities and the Land Development Agency (LDA);
- Site clearance being progressed by local authorities or LDA;
- Potential incentives such as reduced development contributions for complex infill/brownfield sites.

Section 3.2 Sustainable Place Framework acknowledges that it may require several RSES/development plan cycles to achieve compact growth targets and the required level of infrastructure. Proactive approaches by planning authorities to identify key infrastructure requirements for zoned lands in accordance with National Policy Objective 72 a, 72b and 72c are supported.



RPO 34

Regeneration, Brownfield and Infill Development

In pursuit of the NPF's NPO 3a, 3b & 3c, the Development Plan Core Strategy' should be accompanied by specific objectives setting out the achievement of urban infill/brownfield development. Requirements for brownfield site remediation shall consider:

- Seeking initiatives that enable site assembly for regeneration and initiatives that promote regeneration of brownfield lands over greenfield lands across all tiers of urban settlements including smaller towns and rural villages;
- Local Authorities through their respective County Development Plans and Local Area Plans will set out policies and objectives to support the reuse/refurbishment of existing disused and derelict rural dwellings for residential purposes, community or commercial (including social enterprise) and encourage new uses for disused/derelict farm buildings including residential where appropriate, subject to normal planning considerations and ensure that re-use is compatible with environmental and heritage protection;
- The establishment of database with site briefs specifically for brownfield sites zoned for development which will be continually renewed and updated as opportunities arise through active land management processes, so that brownfield re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders;
- Target measures to reduce the extent of vacancy within our Region's existing building stock and seek investment in refurbishment initiatives to bring underused property assets into use in the residential market;
- Target measures and support initiatives that promote retrofitting and improving the quality of the existing building stock, especially energy efficiency, green infrastructure, digital infrastructure, smart technologies to future proof our existing buildings and neighbourhoods;
- In brownfield developments, the preparation of a Construction & Development Waste Management Plan (C&D WMP) should be prepared in the early stages of project development to facilitate suitable arrangements for the proper and authorised management of wastes;
- In accordance with the "Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects", published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and any updated guidelines, Development plans shall seek that a C&D WMP shall accompany a planning application for projects which exceed specified threshold limits for both public and private sectors with the key objectives to (i) minimise the amount of waste generated as part of the project, (ii) maximise the amount of material for re-use on site, (iii) maximise the amount of material which is sent off site for reuse, recycling or reprocessing and (iv) assess by product options and (v) minimise the amount of material sent to landfill/export. Waste management plans should also consider potential impacts arising from spreading of invasive species;
- Proposals for brownfield regeneration in strategic locations including docklands, should be accompanied by a site risk assessment and a clear waste plan for any wastes arising, including consideration of hazardous or contaminated material.

RPO 35

Support for Compact Growth

- a. Local Authorities, through Development Plan and Local Area Plan policies, shall identify rejuvenation priorities within our Region's settlements which demonstrate achievement of National Strategic Outcome: Compact Growth;
- b. Development Plans shall set out a transitional minimum requirement to deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the Region's three Cities and suburbs of Cork, Limerick and Waterford, within their existing built up footprints in accordance with NPF National Policy Objective 3b. This will be evidence based on availability and deliverability of lands within the existing built up footprints;
- c. Development Plans shall set out a transitional minimum requirement to deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the cities and suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints in accordance with NPF National Policy Objective 3c. This will be evidence based on availability and deliverability of lands within the existing built up footprints.

The Land Development Agency has been established to coordinate and develop key state-owned lands for regeneration and development, and to drive strategic land assembly working with public and private sector land owners to promote the delivery of housing and other development. It is envisaged the agency will have Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and other legislative powers to allow a more proactive land management role.

RPO 36

Land Development Agency

To support the role, collaboration and delivery of actions in the Region through initiatives of the Land Development Agency which include co-ordinating appropriate State lands for regeneration and development, opening up key sites which are not being used effectively for housing delivery; and driving strategic land assembly, working with both public and private sector land owners. The co-ordination and selection of sites should be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental criteria and proposed mitigation measures (see also RPO 1).

RPO 37

Active Land Management

Local Authorities shall undertake Active Land Management (including use of CPO Powers) of housing land requirements, in order to manage the supply of land for residential development and ensure suitable zoning is in place to achieve compact, smart, sustainable growth targets within existing urban footprints.

RPO 38

Retrofitting Initiative Priorities

- a. Local Authorities, through County Development Plan and Local Area Plan objectives, will identify retrofitting initiative priorities within settlements that grew rapidly without corresponding investment in infrastructure and amenities which demonstrate achievement of National Strategic Outcome: Compact Growth;
- b. Support initiatives that seek retrofitting infrastructure to existing buildings including smart technologies, energy efficient and micro renewable systems and seek targeted initiatives and actions at a local level for the refurbishment and upgrading of suitable vacant and underused building stock;
- c. Support initiatives that retrofit environmental amenities to address adverse effects on biodiversity and the environment;
- d. Support initiatives that address fuel poverty.





A Strong Economy Innovative And Smart

4

4.1 | Introduction

The RSES economic strategy, as set out in this Chapter, relates to the following Regional Strategic Outcomes:



5. A Strong Economy



11. Inclusive International Region

This chapter develops the strategy to secure future economic prosperity and regional parity.

It builds on the settlement hierarchy in Chapter 3, our strong settlement structure (including three cities) the existing strong potential and performance of the Region, our capacity to adapt to change, and the EU, national and agency support framework on enterprise development, skills, innovation and placemaking.

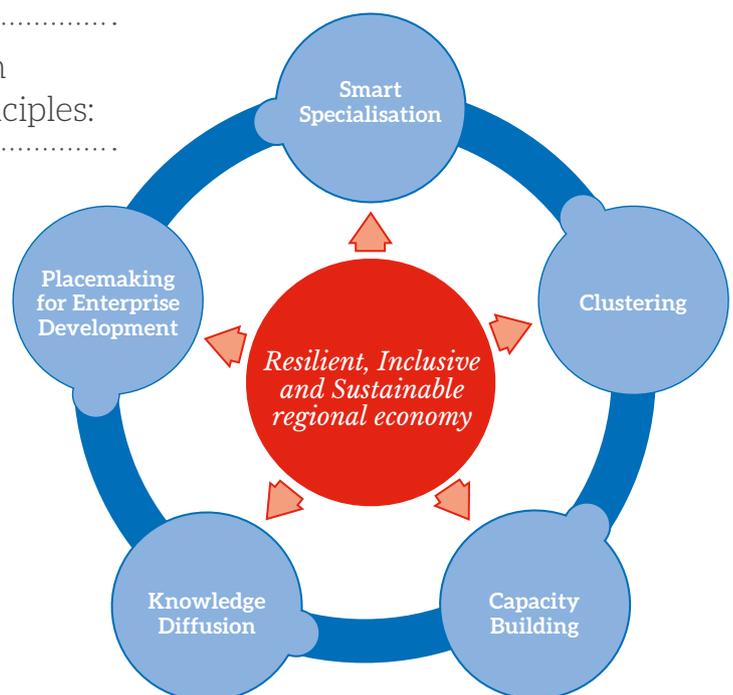


4.2 | The Economic Strategy

The economic vision for the Region is to enable sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient growth. This requires the development of a strong and diverse economic base. With immediate challenges such as Brexit, global issues and potential vulnerabilities within Ireland's enterprise base, it is important that the Region sustains what we have in the immediate term, transforms our enterprise base for longer term resilience while managing potential vulnerabilities.

The RSES seeks to achieve this vision through the following economic principles:

- Smart Specialisation
- Clustering
- Placemaking for enterprise development
- Knowledge Diffusion, and
- Capacity Building.



Smart Specialisation

Smart Specialisation brings together key stakeholders to identify the competitive advantages of an area with the view of developing economic opportunities. It is part of EU cohesion policy.

Smart Specialisation brings a broad range of stakeholders - local communities, national enterprise bodies, higher education institutions and private enterprises - into the Region's innovation policy process. These stakeholders undertake an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) to identify economic opportunities within their geographic area and evaluate how best to utilise these opportunities, particularly in sectors with the best potential. This process harnesses collective knowledge from local and national bodies to ensure the most effective distribution of research and innovation funds while moving away from a "one size fits all" development policy.

Smart Specialisation focuses on boosting productivity, regaining lost competitiveness, increasing export intensity and diversity of markets. It focuses on measures to improve our attractiveness as a location for national and foreign investment, and increasing entrepreneurial activity. Smart Specialisation requires strengthening enterprise engagement with academic research.

This approach can only work if choices are based on real knowledge of local potential and involves a bottom up approach through established structures such as the Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) and Local Enterprise Community Plans (LECPs). Our enterprise agencies constantly encourage companies to be innovative, transformative and to expand to other areas of global business. R&D plays a vital role in this process.

Whilst Smart Specialisation is primarily concerned with regional competitiveness, it is important to recognise that in order to achieve the ambition of an inclusive, resilient and sustainable region we must ensure citizen wellbeing is the core. Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is a European Commission crosscutting theme built around the concept that innovation should deliver measurable benefit for society. The EC advocates that the RRI principles are embedded in Smart Specialisation Strategies to facilitate the core RRI objective of ensuring research outcomes are progressively aligned with societal values. RRI promotes an anticipatory, reflective, inclusive and responsive approach to innovation, supported throughout the RSES by recognising the value of engaging citizens and decision-makers with science and innovation to address regional and societal challenges.

Good Practice Example: Extremadura, Spain

Extremadura, a rural community in Spain, embraced the policy of Smart Specialisation with a Local Action Group for rural development that created a new governance model based on the participation of government, third level institutes and the local community.

Their Smart Specialisation process identified two important aspects of the regional economy. Firstly, it identified a local competitive advantage - a cheese product called "La Torta del Casar" considered an economic catalyst for the local area. Secondly, it identified a weakness in this product's production system, a weak capacity of local farmers and shepherds to incorporate knowledge-based innovation in their work.

The process supported the Local Action Group to design solutions to this weakness, leading to the creation of the Farmers School and the Shepherding School to provide valuable partners and training sources for farmers and shepherds in the use of information and communications technology and other technological advances in the field. The results so far show promising advances in the areas of reinforced innovation at local level and support for a more rounded perspective on rural development.

Good Practice Example: Danish Food Cluster

On the back of an already world-leading food and agriculture sector, the Danish Food Cluster was established in 2014 to take advantage of the opportunity to embrace the global food challenge brought about by increasing populations worldwide and the rapid growth in the number of middle-class consumers. Through a managed programme of clustering activities, it is creating a pipeline for new products, technology, business models and talent and finding new solutions to provide value to industry to achieve its ambition of being the number one country for food innovation.

The Danish Food Cluster stands out for its culture of collaborative innovation. Primary producers work together to produce the very best raw materials for food production. An example is the Danish Transport Standard, established in 2010, to keep livestock free from disease. Research and innovation is a cornerstone of Denmark's position as a leading food nation and a vision for world-class innovation has been set for 2030.

Clustering

Clusters are a geographic or virtual concentration of interrelated companies, suppliers, and associated institutions. Fostering modern cluster policies is a strong feature of the Region's economic strategy.

This approach aims to put in place a favourable and connected regional business ecosystem in which new players emerge and support the development of new industrial value chains and emerging industries. For example, there is potential to strengthen collaboration and clustering activities between foreign and Irish owned enterprises, the Region's higher education institutions (HEIs), and communities.

A cluster does not require a specific geographic location and should be viewed in a global context when seeking FDI, as Ireland is a relatively small geographic area when compared to other jurisdictions.

Clustering Case Study: Cyber Ireland - Ireland's Cyber Security Cluster

Supported by IDA Ireland through the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Cyber Ireland is hosted by Cork Institute of Technology. Cyber Ireland provides a collective voice to represent the needs of the cyber security sector across the country and is addressing key challenges including: skills needs, research, internationalisation, and the development of a national community which connects industry, academia and government.

Cyber Ireland is based on cluster-style initiatives operating across Europe and internationally that have proven extremely successful in enhancing innovation, growth and competitiveness of regions, and the companies that are part of these clusters.

Placemaking for enterprise development

The RSES places significant emphasis on placemaking, which involves ensuring that geographical locations are attractive places to live, learn and work. Historically, the majority of firms located to a region for reasons such as the availability of raw materials, distance to specific markets and cost competitiveness of location, with employees following to work in the area. However, with the rise in the knowledge economy this trend has shifted and employers are competing for qualified workers globally. Instead of expecting their workforce to come to them, employers are moving closer to where their workforce live or facilitate remote working. Skilled workers want to live in locations with a high quality of life and companies also tend to follow suit.

Placemaking policy is instrumental to ensuring that the Region captures sufficient human capital and talent.

Examples of placemaking policies include:

- Continuous investment in public transport to ensure connectivity and accessibility;
- Provision of high quality public services and community amenities;

- Provision of social infrastructure in health, housing, and education;
- Provision of green spaces, creative spaces and cultural amenities;
- Provision of third level infrastructure, lifelong learning and skills development opportunities.

The **Smart City** concept (see Chapter 6) plays to our strengths in ICT. This concept, taken together with creating better places, will constitute an opportunity to develop a unique proposition, to attract mobile talent, entrepreneurship, FDI, and to stimulate innovation across all sectors.

Internationally and nationally, skilled people and firms are increasingly gravitating to urban areas of scale and concentrations of economic activity and the growth of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford will bring such economic opportunities to the Region. This needs sustainable infrastructure development, connectivity (including high speed broadband), and the enhancement of human capital and skills development.

Knowledge Diffusion

The policy of "knowledge diffusion" is the spreading of knowledge - the process of knowledge transfer to different segments of society to develop a region's human capital.

The OECD identifies "knowledge diffusion" as playing a critical role in growing regional economies, with growth rates highly sensitive to how easily knowledge is spread, across an area. Regions most exposed to the challenges of globalisation, automation and other technological changes are also the same areas with the lowest participation in knowledge intensive/ high-skilled sectors.

Encouraging collaboration between higher education institutes, the Regional Skills Fora and the Educational and Training Boards of the Region presents the potential to develop skills and knowledge in areas most exposed to technological disruption. By supporting community and education providers, our Region can ensure that knowledge and skills are spread to all citizens to help address skills shortages and lifelong learning challenges.

Multinational companies, export-oriented indigenous firms and the presence of a highly skilled local workforce can also spread knowledge and skills. By facilitating greater interaction between key economic participants and our higher education institutions, we can ensure greater enhancement of our Region's human capital and skills development - key components to regional economic growth.

Capacity Building

An inherent part of the economic strategy is the building of capacity to enable effective implementation and to respond to emerging challenges. There is a need to ensure we have sufficient capacity in our Region to bid for and win competitive bids for funding and to be ready to address potential risks to our economy.

Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable economic growth

With challenges such as Brexit, trade wars and unexpected shocks, it is important to be ready to act accordingly.

The ability to develop, nurture, retain and attract talent is critical and education and training institutions are needed to develop our people's skills and talent. The establishment of a Learning Region will build our citizen's skills base to succeed in life and business, which is critical to securing greater economic resilience (see Chapter 7).

RPO 39

Economic Opportunities and Choice for all our Citizens

It is an objective to further strengthen our higher education and further education and training sector, research, development and innovation capacity, the initiatives of the Regional Skills Forums and Life Long Learning to match the diverse skills of our people with a choice of employment opportunities for all and to attract and retain a skilled labour force within our Region.



4.3 | Profile

This section highlights the strengths and opportunities of the Region and outlines our employment and enterprise base.

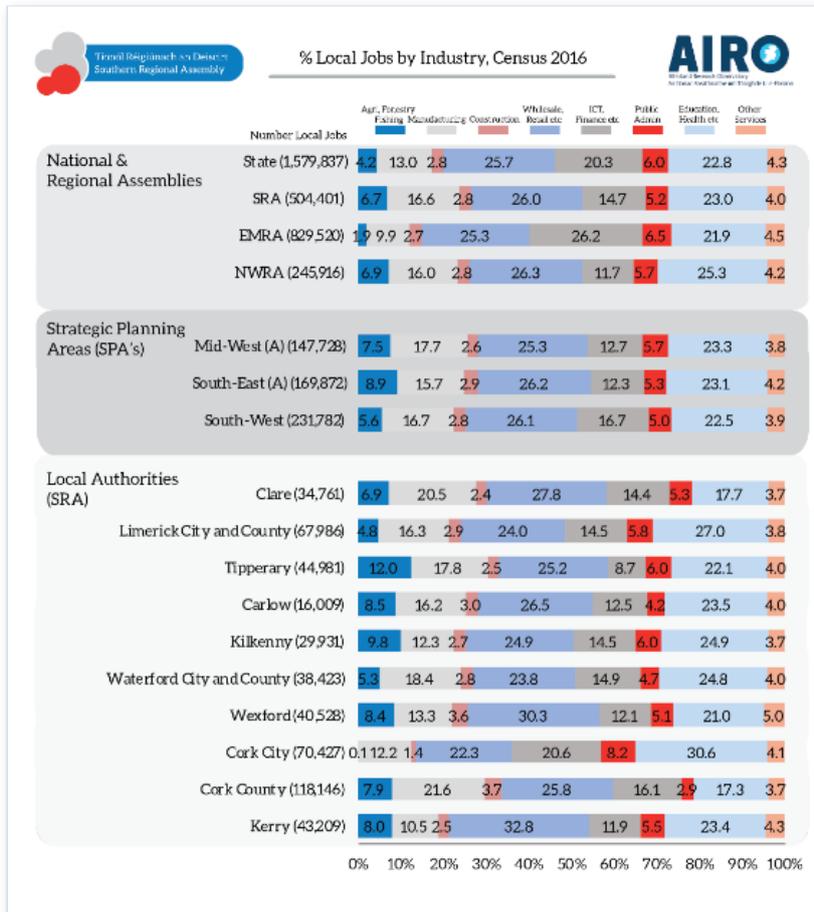
Strengths and Opportunities for the Region

The Region enjoys a balanced distribution of cities and key towns, which enables smaller settlements to access larger markets and the higher-level functions provided by larger urban centres. This balanced distribution offers an attractive enterprise location proposition given significant concentrations of businesses and varied enterprise base, access and connectivity to national and international markets, and available skills and talent. Nevertheless, our cities face capacity constraints such as housing shortages and significant infrastructure deficiencies. They display significant strength, hosting companies of significant scale in manufacturing and services, technology and pharmaceutical sectors. Strong concentrations of foreign and indigenous companies are also located across the Region in a variety of sectors.

Regional Context: Jobs and enterprise base profile

Manufacturing has specific requirements for the transportation of goods to markets. In the case of the services sector, quality of life and placemaking are particularly important in attracting and retaining the talent needed to operate and succeed. Graph 4.1 profiles the economic composition for each sub-region and local authority area.

Graph 4.1 | Economic composition



Our regional enterprise base and employment profile has gone through transformation in recent years. The ESRI (2018) projects an additional 55,000 people in employment in the traded, 125,000 the non-traded, and 45,000 in the government sectors for the Region. The National Competitiveness Council (2018) however warns that *“the sustainability of growth could be threatened by our heavy dependence on the performance of a narrow base of firms and economic sectors. At the same time our indigenous exporting base exports a narrow range of products and services and relies on a small number of export markets.”*

“To remain competitive, we need a relentless focus on innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and new markets. Broadening our enterprise and export base is key to ensuring our economy is resilient and adaptable. Supporting the internationalisation and market diversification of Irish enterprise would contribute to making the economy more resilient to external market shocks, such as Brexit.”

There is a need to build resilience in the face of global challenges.

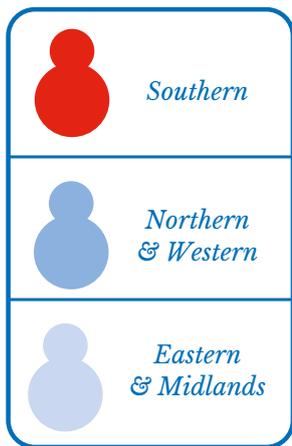
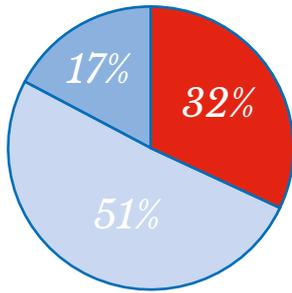
“
To remain competitive, we need a relentless focus on innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and new markets.

RPO 40

Regional Economic Resilience

It is an objective to sustainably develop, deepen and enhance our regional economic resilience by widening our economic sectors, boosting innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and access to new markets.

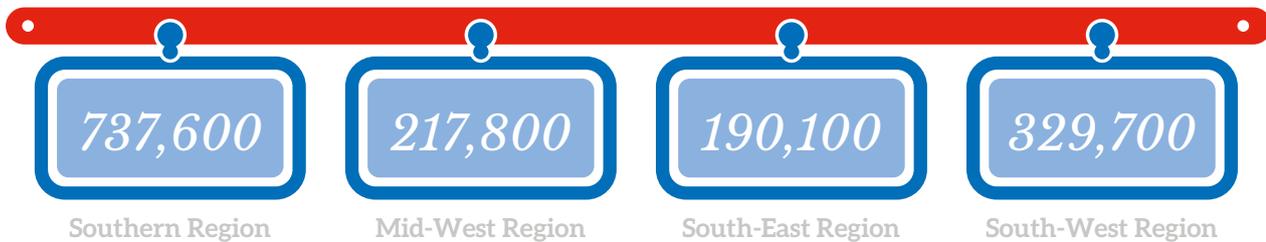
Employment as a share of Irish labour market



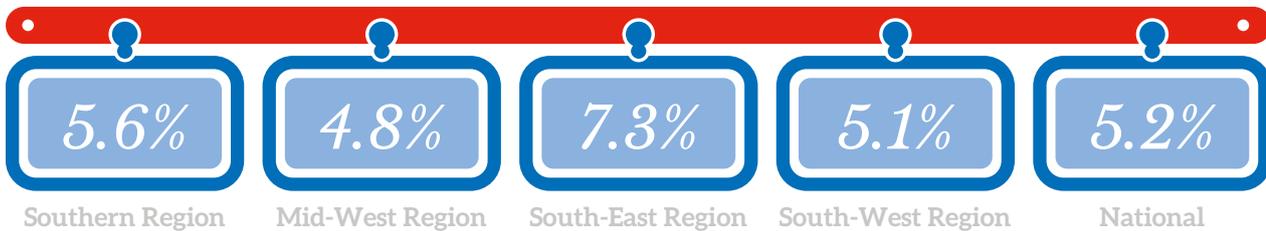
Sectoral Breakdown of Employment, by Sub Region - As of Q3 2019

	Southern Region	Mid-West	South-East	South-West	Ireland
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	6.4%	6.4%	7.4%	5.8%	4.3%
Industry	16.6%	16.1%	15.3%	17.8%	12.6%
Construction	6.6%	6.7%	6.8%	6.5%	6.4%
Services	70%	70.8%	70%	69.5%	76.4%
Not Stated	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%

Employment Levels - As of Q3 2019



Unemployment Rates - As of Q3 2019



Median Household Disposable Income - As of 2018



4.4 | Our Region's Economic Engines

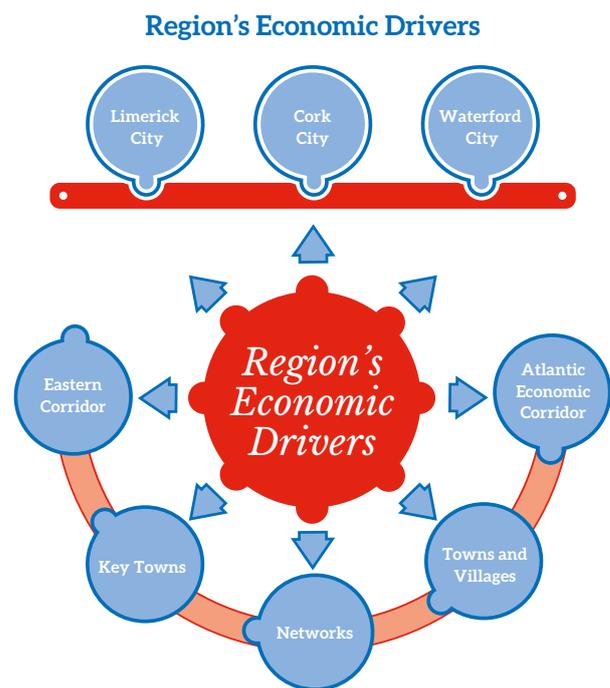
This section highlights our main economic engines - our cities and their metropolitan areas, the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC), the Eastern Corridor, Key Towns, towns and villages.

Core to our settlement strategy is convergence between improved quality of life and where people live and work.

Cities: Cork, Limerick, Waterford

The ESRI (2018) and Project Ireland 2040 highlight that our largest settlements are relatively small compared to other EU cities that directly compete for Foreign Direct Investment. This places our Region at a disadvantage against the attractiveness of Dublin or other large EU cities. Research (ESRI 2018) has identified that the development of scale in our cities will have regional and national benefits. The provision of infrastructure, services, housing, and amenities to attract and retain residents is critical to achieve these benefits.

The RSES promotes a co-ordinated, co-operative and collaborative intra-regional partnership approach between our cities and their metropolitan areas and a similar inter-regional approach with the Galway Metropolitan Area in the Northern and Western Region. This will provide a more effective counterbalance to Dublin.



Good Practice:

The UK Northern Powerhouse

In 2015, a partnership between central and local government and the road and rail agencies in the UK published a strategic vision to transform the economy of the North of England, based primarily on a world-class transport system linking the individual cities and towns in that region.

Alongside investment in skills, support for business and regeneration of the city centres, a transformation in connections between the great cities of the North and beyond would enable them to increase their productivity to meet levels currently only seen in London and the South East. The strategy's aim is for economic growth in the North to be at least as high as the rest of the country to complement and act as a balance to the economic weight of London.

The strategy is about using transport to aid change in future patterns of land use and economic growth. Rather than forecasting the future from current trends, it aims to change that future. A workforce able to move around its region, including between cities, is able to better access jobs and opportunities. A more mobile workforce means a bigger labour market which benefits businesses. Businesses which are well connected to each other can find much needed services and products, and the costs of transporting people and products are lower, and more business interactions generate new ideas and innovation. Specific funding is provided for joint projects between the Northern Powerhouse cities.

Atlantic Economic Corridor

The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) is a linear network along the western seaboard supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development. It is a connected spine of businesses and organisations seeking global market opportunities and investment to grow and prosper. The NPF identifies the AEC as an enabler for the regional growth and states that there is potential to extend its scope into other locations such as Cork City and County. Objectives under Chapter 6 to enhance regional connectivity will strengthen economic interactions between wider Region and the AEC.

The AEC fits with the European concept of polycentric development of building linkages and joining forces with neighbouring cities and towns in order to “borrow” size and quality, to ensure positive spill-over effects for the development of wider regions. An example is the existing

“Knowledge Triangle” of Killarney, Tralee and Killorglin in Kerry and potential networks identified in the RSES, such as the Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network. The aim is to achieve polycentric development across both the Southern and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly areas to build on the advantages and opportunities that exist across the entire AEC.

The AEC also offers significant future opportunities in terms of attaining an economy that is “green” and the RSES supports the early development and implementation of this high value and low carbon proposition. The RSES also supports the development of strategic regional infrastructure assets (sea and freight ports, airports, energy generating facilities, digital and rail) connecting to this corridor.

RPO 41

Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)

It is an objective to develop the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative as a driver for enterprise growth, investment and attracting entrepreneurial skills and talent to the rural catchments as an economic complement to the role of metropolitan areas and larger urban centres on the AEC. The RSES recognises the combined advantages and opportunities of the AEC including delivering a high-value and low-carbon economy.

RPO 42

Eastern Corridor

It is an objective to support the development of an Eastern Corridor through the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and strengthening economic links with the South-East, extending to Rosslare Europort (incl. public transport connectivity and optimising the potential for rail freight), which is an important economic and transport link, particularly in the post-Brexit scenario.

Eastern Corridor

The Dublin to Belfast Corridor connects Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry by high-capacity national road and rail links, major airports of Dublin Airport, Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport, and Belfast and Dublin ports. The Eastern Corridor extends south to Rosslare Europort, an important economic and transport link, particularly in the post Brexit scenario. It offers extended strategic connections throughout the island of Ireland through the TEN-T network and the Dublin-Rosslare route.

Cross-boundary coordination and maintaining an all-island economy will play a critical role in supporting economic growth and competitiveness. It is important that the Eastern Corridor harnesses strategic linkages such as the potential Waterford/Limerick Network and Belview Port. A Waterford/Limerick Network could provide collaborative potential that may assist in the development of both the AEC and Eastern Corridor.

Key Towns

The RSES settlement strategy (Chapter 3) identifies Key Towns as part of the settlement hierarchy. Key Towns have an economic function that provides employment for their surrounding areas and wider sub regional catchment.

Towns and Villages

Towns and villages are an important part of the Region's economic fabric and each plays differing roles depending on their scale and location. For example, the Roscrea Innovation and Business Park plays a significant role as a location for employment. The RSES emphasises the importance of networks between towns and villages, including cross-boundary connections. The local authorities' digital strategies are critical in promoting and guiding on the new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise. This complements the more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism) underpinned by the quality of life offering.

Networks

Chapter 3 identifies the importance of networks, with examples of settlements sharing assets and collaborating to drive economic growth. Established networks have shown that collaborative approaches can drive economic growth. Potential networks identified through the RSES process offer opportunities for collaboration on initiatives to deliver this growth. However, all networks require a commitment to be delivered at a local level if opportunities are to be realised.

In the South West, the Kerry Hub and Knowledge Triangle (Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin) is an established network with the aim to drive economic growth and capitalise on connectivity to the Cork and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas and the AEC. Shared assets include existing third level education, a technology park, ports, an airport and world leading indigenous companies in fin-tech and agri-tech. Investment in the Hub is key to development of a knowledge cluster and service design and innovation hub at Killorglin, focusing on research and development innovation and product prototyping.

In the Mid-West, the Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network is a potential network to promote greater collaboration between the metropolitan areas of Galway, Limerick-Shannon and the Key Town of Ennis. This potential network offers opportunities for partnership to drive economic growth and innovation on a sub-regional basis. This will be particularly important for the sub-regional development of the AEC. The proposed

network is underpinned by the presence of public transport and motorway infrastructure that connects the two cities on the west coast of Ireland. The proposed Network is much wider than just the transport link and captures parts of Counties Limerick, Clare and Galway. While the RSES process has identified the potential for collaboration actions, a commitment to deliver is required at a local level if opportunities are to be realised.

In the South-East, the potential Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-DublinM9/Rail Network, along a key north-south axis, links the Waterford Metropolitan Area, Kilkenny City and Carlow Key Town with Dublin and the Eastern and Midlands Region. The M9 Motorway and rail network provides direct access from a large inland area to the Port of Waterford and Waterford Airport with potential opportunities for more sustainable freight movements to the Port. This potential network has strong synergies through the higher education and research institutions at Carlow College, IT Carlow, WIT, St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny and at Teagasc. This potential network will be further strengthened by the development of TUSE - the Technological University of the South-East, which will help drive development of a Learning Region and support enterprise and innovation in key industrial sectors.

Networks also cross sub regional boundaries and Chapter 3 - Networks highlights the importance and potential of the Limerick - Waterford Network.

4.5 | Rural development

The Government's Charter for Rural Ireland (2016) states that frameworks will be put in place:

“To support enterprise creation and development, maintain and restore the rural cultural heritage, support and protect existing towns and settlements, facilitate safe and secure rural communities and foster an increased quality of life for all rural dwellers”.

Sustainable rural communities are dependent on viable and vibrant towns and villages. The RSES recognises the decline of the population and services in many villages and rural areas (see chapter 3) as a problem of strategic national and regional importance. In the absence of a targeted planning strategy and associated pro-active infrastructure and support actions, this decline will continue. Rural areas have different needs depending on their assets, remoteness and population density, requiring customised solutions. Rural areas need diversification and innovation to ensure economic resilience and job creation. This requires an integrated approach to rural economic development, including support for public services. Chapter 7 deals in more depth with issues in relation to the development of our Gaeltacht areas.



Europe and Our Rural Region

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) supports the opportunities of the countryside as a growth area, acknowledging that “the diversity of rural areas brings considerable added value and potential for creativity and innovation and this can be turned to even better use.”

The CoR has produced a rich array of research to demonstrate rural potential. In addition, EU Programmes offer a resource for potential projects as they encourage Member States to collaborate to share information, costs, results and best practices, and to generate ideas for further areas of cooperation across Europe’s land and maritime borders.

These Programmes see wide-ranging investment including, broadband, research and innovation, enterprise supports, sustainable energy, urban regeneration, marine and agricultural innovation. Projects under these Programmes cut across a range of sectors including the marine sector, energy sector, supports for innovative small firms emerging from Incubation Centres, climate action, inter alia. All projects involve partners from regions in other Member States dealing with similar issues. Engaging and participating in European projects will assist in bringing European solutions to meet various needs in our Region.

For the period 2021-2027, cohesion policy identifies five “policy objectives” of: **A Smarter Europe; A Greener, carbon-free Europe; A more Connected Europe; A more Social Europe; and A Europe closer to citizens.**

The Cork 2.0 Declaration 2016 A Better Life in Rural Areas states the determination “to strengthen the integration of local initiatives and rural capacity building in mainstream EU policy making, in particular through bottom-up approaches to local development such as LEADER and Community-Led Local Development”. A key regional issue is the inter-relationships between urban areas and rural hinterlands. This is of special relevance to our Region with three cities and strong network of towns closely associated with strong rural hinterlands.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of Our rural Region.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s €4bn Rural Development Programme 2014-20, funded under CAP, aims to:

- Enhance the competitiveness of agriculture through on-farm investment;
- To ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action;
- To achieve balanced regional development of rural economies and communities.

Pillar I of the Policy provides for a ‘greening’ payment for farmers following a specified set of farm practices that yield additional environmental benefits. Pillar II consists of measures to enhance the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, achieve more sustainable management of natural resources and ensure balanced development of rural areas, with a focus on delivering positive environmental outcomes including for water and climate change.

RPO 43

Rural Economy and EU Good Practices

It is an objective to harness the potential of shared learning and good practice from European Programmes and policy to assist rural development.

RPO 44

Common Agriculture Policy

It is an objective to ensure the delivery of sustainable actions under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-20 and beyond in priority areas of innovation, bio-diversity restoration, water and soil management, renewable energy and waste management, carbon conservation and sequestration, diversification, job creation and ICT development in our rural areas.

Action Plan for Rural Development

The Government's Action Plan for Rural Development, Realising Our Rural Potential, provides the framework for a co-ordinated approach across government for the economic and social development of rural communities. The Action Plan is delivered by a range of government departments, state agencies and other bodies, and includes over 270 specific actions to be delivered.

Innovative Rural Communities

In 2017, there were over 78,000 active enterprises employing less than 10 people representing 92% of the overall total of active enterprises in our Region. These enterprises employed over 86,000 people, around 24% of the total employed, which is greater than the State share of 19% in this category.

The growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) as a result of activity by world leading companies based in the Region (for example pharmaceutical, medical devices, technology, business services, financial services, and engineering, agriculture and food sectors) represents a significant opportunity. The Region has many examples of innovation and enterprise and Clare County Council's Rural Development Strategy is an exemplar. The development of partnership models across a network of settlement and communities is promoted to optimise the use of specialist roles and maximise further investment in infrastructure and services with the wider hinterland shared between towns and villages in our rural Region.

The way in which people work is changing. With advances in technology, changing employment trends, the arrival of millennials into the workplace, shortages in talent and a greater focus on work-life balance, there is a significant rise in the number of people seeking flexible remote working. While e-working still encompasses employees working remotely from their office, it now extends to capture emerging employment trends, including digital nomads (people who are location-independent and use technology to perform their job) and e-lancers (independent consultants who operate predominantly online). The RSES supports co-ordinated initiatives to create a regional co-working smart e-hub network bringing talent together and building on the Regions value proposition as a location of choice to live and work.

The Gaeltacht network of Digital Hubs is being implemented across the Region's Gaeltacht areas. The RSES supports the development of a comprehensive strategy to better link and manage the work of 'enterprise' hubs in the AEC. This hub network would be a valuable asset, contributing to the Region's offering to investors, facilitating, attracting and retaining high-value talent and providing resources and facilities to support vibrant local communities.

RPO 45

Action Plan for Rural Development and Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

It is an objective to support the Action Plan for Rural Development led by the Department of Rural and Community Development and to support the development of priority areas under the Rural Development Programme 2014-20, and its successor, led by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Good Practice Example: South-West Examples of Rural Innovation

The South-West has many good practice examples of centres of excellence, innovation and enterprise networks. Examples in Cork include Teagasc Moorepark Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre outside Fermoy, a world leader in agriculture research, and Ludgate Hub in Skibbereen, a hotspot for technology start-ups and multinationals. Other e-centre locations in Cork have a wide reach providing state of the art enterprise facilities and opportunities for remote working, including in Bandon, Bantry, Bere Island, Charleville, Dunmanway, Fermoy, Macroom, Goleen and Youghal.

In Kerry, centres have won national awards under the Enterprise Ireland Regional Enterprise Development Fund. Examples of innovation centres include the Tom Crean Business Centre, the Service, Design and Innovation Hub Killorglin, Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation, Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub, Sneem Digital Hub and Kenmare Innovation Centre. Examples of refurbishment projects for digital hubs and start up enterprise space includes projects in Valentia Cable Station in Knightstown and the Old Dingle Hospital.



RPO 46

Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas

It is an objective to expedite the completion of infrastructure servicing diverse settlements to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness. This includes high quality broadband and mobile communication services to all rural locations, water and wastewater facilities for the growth of settlements, sustainable energy supply, enhanced transport connectivity including rural public transport services and greenway walking and pedestrian corridors between settlements.

RPO 47

Rural Partnership Models

It is an objective to promote partnership models (e.g. the Partnership Parishes project in Co. Clare) which support sharing services across a network of settlements and communities.

Diversity in the Rural Economy

While our rural economy and society is changing rapidly, in many instances it remains dependent on traditional sectors of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and construction. Employment in the agricultural sector can be low paying necessitating off-farm employment, often in construction. Non-dairy farmers are particularly vulnerable as their income is largely dependent on EU and State transfers. There is also a wide variation in farm income. Rural areas need diversification to retain their population and supplement income. A 'one-size fits all approach' will not suffice. We must take account of diversity and tailor initiatives accordingly.

Our agriculture, forestry, fishing resource base offers many opportunities for diverse enterprise development, renewable energy production as well as tourism, leisure and recreation development. Specific products and services, fishing, mariculture, seafood harvesting, fresh and processed products, including artisanal foods, is established or developing as important enterprise opportunities. As a significant employer and driver of economic growth, the agriculture sector is supported by the RSES. The agri-food and forestry sectors are an integral part in Ireland's economy and are our largest indigenous industries. Forestry is central for Ireland's

Good Practice Example: Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026. Our Life, Our Home

This Strategy identifies as significant challenges, population decline in parts of the county, as well as loss of public services (health services including GPs, Post Offices, schools, Garda stations, transport services, enterprise development, welfare support services, etc.), and a protracted wait for physical and service infrastructure (e.g. schools, broadband, water, public transport). The Strategy also identifies that the flexibility of rural communities to respond to emerging needs is often constrained by ongoing commitments to maintaining costly community facilities and buildings that far exceed their current needs. It states that these dynamics will lead to terminal decline unless they are reversed.

The Strategy has a 10-year, 4,000 jobs creation target, with a particular focus on social enterprise. In parallel, the Clare Economic Development Strategy will provide the economic conditions and supports for the growth of enterprise and employment across the whole county. This Strategy will focus on the further growth of the high performing Ennis-Shannon economic corridor to the benefit of all of Clare.

The leadership of the different communities across Clare is supported by a special Rural and Community Support Unit in Clare County Council. Together, this coalition of interests will identify and support new opportunities for co-operative endeavour and individual achievement.

transition to a low carbon and sustainable future and can play an important role in increasing and diversifying farm income. By incorporating forestry into the farming mix, agricultural production can continue alongside timber production while delivering both economic and environmental benefits.

Food Wise 2025: A 10-year Vision for the Irish Agri-Food Industry sets out a strategic plan with growth projections for 23,000 additional direct jobs.

Other relevant policy supports and initiatives include:

- Delivery of hi-speed broadband (National Broadband Plan);
- Marine economy (Harnessing our Ocean Wealth and the National Marine Planning Framework) and future regional and local marine plans;
- Forestry (Growing for the Future and Business Area Unit Strategic Plans);
- Energy (White Paper-Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-30);

- Tourism (Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartland's initiatives);
- IDA Ireland's regional enterprise development (Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-19), Enterprise Ireland (Regional Enterprise Development Fund) and actions under the South-West, Mid-West and South-East Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs).

The RSES supports the REPs in the development of the Region's innovation hubs and industry clusters across sectors of agri-food, tourism, design and craft, specialised engineering, the knowledge economy, global business services, the green economy and marine which have significant potential to diversify and develop our rural Region. In addition, the RSES supports Údarás na Gaeltachta's work in providing assistance for enterprise, start-ups and innovation in Gaeltacht areas.

The drive for economic initiatives at a local level is critical. A healthy retail sector is key for rural services, regeneration of town and village centres, enterprise and employment creation.

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RPO 48

Innovation Hubs and Centres of Excellence

It is an objective to develop innovation hubs and centres of excellence (with particular opportunities for innovation in agri-food, agri-tech, marine research, creative industries, knowledge economy etc.) as local drivers for growth.

RPO 49

Innovation in Rural areas

It is an objective to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness of our rural Region.

RPO 50

Diversification

It is an objective to further develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms across our rural Region, including innovation and diversification in agriculture (agri-Tech, food and beverage), the marine (ports, fisheries and the wider blue economy potential), forestry, peatlands, renewable energy, tourism (leverage the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brands), social enterprise, circular economy, knowledge economy, global business services, fin-tech, specialised engineering, heritage, arts and culture, design and craft industries as dynamic divers for our rural economy.



4.6 | Portfolio approach - Sector development opportunities

This section identifies sectoral opportunities within the Region.

Enterprise 2025 Renewed sets out a portfolio approach to sector development – recognising that sectors contribute in different ways in the economy, delivering added value, export growth and quality employment throughout Ireland (Figure 4.2).

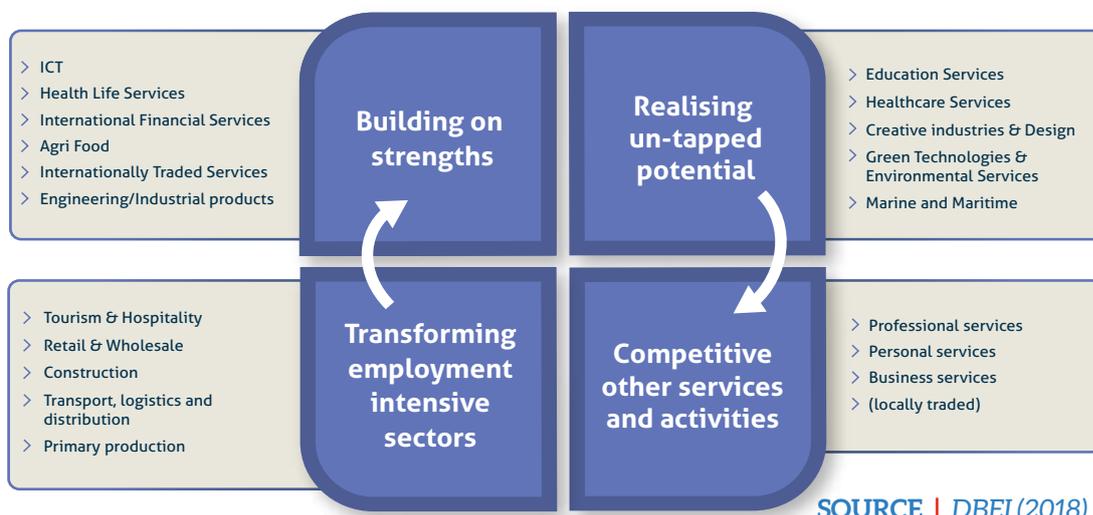
Particular industries have place-specific needs, such as proximity to high-energy services infrastructure, water capacity, availability of employees, proximity to public transport, access to international markets through airports and ports, and serviced lands. These issues should be considered by local authorities through the CDPs and objectives in LECPs. Opportunities also arise in the Region through Public Private Partnerships (PPP). This is demonstrated by cluster development led by industry, and property solutions, for instance the proposed works at North Quays in Waterford’s Strategic Development Zone, or Shannon Group.

It is important given the rapid evolution of the economy that our Region has the capacity to adapt to emerging trends. This includes emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, virtual reality. The REPs identify sectoral opportunities. New sectors are constantly emerging and therefore the Region should be flexible to allow adaption to emerging sectors.

The Mid-West REP identifies potential growth in industries such as future mobility (e.g. connected and autonomous vehicles), film, sportstech, and the logistics industry. The South West REP states that the maritime and the marine is a growth sector and selling point, reaching into a range of areas including enterprise and entrepreneurship, tourism, technology, and sustainability, among others. Over the first and second calls under the REDF, the South-East secured funding of over €10 million across six projects covering various emerging sectors such as 3D manufacturing, design innovation and the bio-economy. The RSES encourages future iterations of the REPs to identify sectoral opportunities as they emerge. There will be benefit in a holistic approach with the Regional Skills Fora in ensuring that employers and the education and training system work together to meet the emerging skills requirements.

As we live through the fourth industrial revolution (referred to as Industry 4.0), what the future of work will look like remains unknown. It is impossible to predict with certainty the cross-sectoral impact of technology on industry enterprise. Innovations in technology capabilities will affect all areas of work. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) have already started to fundamentally change the retail industry and 3D printing is now used by retailers to deliver customised products. As we seek to build an innovative and smart economy, our Region’s enterprise strengths should be examined with an assessment of the Industry 4.0 risk and opportunity. The RSES supports enterprise transitions to Industry 4.0 and equipping people with the necessary skills to adjust and adapt to technology changes and disruptions, while creating an enterprise ecosystem that promotes innovation and entrepreneurship in emerging opportunities.

Figure 4.2 | Enterprise 2025 Renewed Sectoral Cohorts



RPO 51

Economic Clusters and Ecosystems

It is an objective to identify and pursue opportunities for enterprise growth, innovation and diversity within our Regions' sectors of strength, including the potential of enterprise ecosystems in sectors identified in the Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) and their successors.

RPO 52

Multinational Corporation (MNC) and Indigenous Industry Connections

It is an objective to encourage multinational corporations and indigenous industry connections, e.g. the Global Sourcing Initiative, trade missions to Ireland and peer networks for lean initiatives.

Specific Sectors: Tourism, Retail, Low Carbon Economy, Social Enterprise, Marine.

TOURISM

The Region has a significant share of Ireland's premier tourism resources - both natural and man-made. We have the largest number and widest variety of tourism beds, from five-star castles to hostels. The Region hosts the three main tourism areas developed by Fáilte Ireland: The Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and Ireland's Ancient East as well as the Munster Vales brand, which is developed jointly by four local authorities. These provide a framework for local areas to develop corresponding tourism propositions.

A successful tourism sector creates significant benefits for many other sectors such as agriculture, food and drinks, transport and retail. The RSES supports the Department of Rural and Community Development's Action Plan for Rural Development (APRD) which seeks to increase tourist numbers to rural Ireland, support sustainable jobs through targeted rural tourism initiatives, develop activity tourism and leverage natural and built heritage assets.

The development of urban tourism is key to growing the tourism sector of the economy. Good quality international connectivity provides opportunities in the growing market of city breaks. The cities and towns of our Region host significant assets in the cathedrals, art galleries, museums, theatres and major annual festivals and sporting events.

Case Study:
Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) Sector

The emerging CAV sector provides a good example of how our Region is a global technology hub of choice when it comes to next generation of business and technology for connected mobility. For example, Jaguar Land Rover has an established major engineering research centre in Shannon, Co. Clare.

IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, ITS Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, LERO, and Insight established a CAV steering group to explore the business opportunities of this technology for Ireland.

The CAV forum serves as a central platform to bring together stakeholders from across industry, academia & research, transport authorities and support agencies to discuss the topic of connected and autonomous vehicles and help build a CAV value proposition for Ireland. A key objective is to identify Ireland's current CAV products and services and develop a shared vision of how best to position Ireland to capture potential opportunities, thereby leading to new investment, employment creation and growth of Irish exports.

SW Urban and Rural Tourism Assets

Examples of attractions in South West include, inter alia, the Wild Atlantic Way, Irelands Ancient East, Ireland's Maritime Paradise, Cork City (English Market, Cork City Goal, and Shandon),Blarney Castle, Kinsale, Fota Wildlife Park, Spike Island (2017 European No 1 Tourist Attraction), Middleton Distillery, Cobh Heritage Centre, Doneraile Park, Munster Vales, Blackwater Valley, Ring of Kerry, Dingle Peninsula, Killarney National Park, Muckross House, Killarney, Blennerville Museum, Kerry County Museum in Tralee, UNESCO site of Skellig Michael, proposed UNESCO site at Valentia Island Cable Station, festivals, mountain ranges, extensive coastline and blue and green flag beaches, peninsulas and islands.

MW Urban and Rural Tourism Assets

Example of attractions in the Mid-West include, inter alia, the promotion of Ireland's Lakelands, the Shannon Estuary and its islands as tourism and recreation destination, greenways, blueways, effective placemaking, Munster Vales, the Burren, Cliffs of Moher, West Clare NST tourism route, Loop Head, Bunratty, Holy Island, Lough Derg, Shannon Estuary Way, festivals (e.g. Willie Clancy Festival), Limerick City King Johns Castle. The utilisation and realisation of the Mid-West's existing and emerging tourism assets is supported.

SE Urban and Rural Tourism

Example of attractions in the South-East include, inter alia, the promotion of Ireland's Ancient East, the Munster Vales, the sustainable development of Blueways along the Rivers Barrow and Suir, existing Greenways such as the Waterford Greenway and planned greenway extensions and the many visitor attractions in the South-East, with Top 10 (by visitor numbers): Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny Castle, House of Waterford Crystal, Nicholas Mosse pottery, JF Kennedy Arboretum, Bishop's Palace, Waterford, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Cahir Castle, Wells House and Gardens, Altamount Gardens Carlow (Fáilte Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey 2014).

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's Policy Document *People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025* makes a number of policy proposals that are relevant:

- Targeting high growth potential areas;
- Incorporate Cultural and Sports-based Offerings;
- Respecting Brand Architecture and the Environment;
- Need to optimise Air and Sea Connections;
- Need to facilitate inter-modal transport transfers;
- Support for Cross-Border Tourism.

Fáilte Ireland's *Strategy, Tourism Development & Innovation: A Strategy for Investment 2016-22*, recognises that a flourishing tourism industry is vital for Ireland's economic well-being and continued recovery.

The promotion of enhanced transport networks including public transport services is essential to attract and enable ease of movement around the Region by tourists and visitors. Improvements are needed at key arrival points such as ferry ports with better public transport connections and to the existing road and rail networks/services to remove bottlenecks and improve connectedness to and between key tourism destinations.



RPO 53

Tourism

It is an objective to:

- a. Enhance provision of tourism and leisure amenity to cater for increased population in the Region including recreation, entertainment, cultural, catering, accommodation, transport and water infrastructure inter alia;
- b. Promote activity tourism subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes;
- c. Sustainably develop the road network and public transport services and facilities for improved visitor access, longer dwell times due to improved connectivity to ports and airports and tourism growth;
- d. Sustainably develop walking and cycling trails opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes and promote the sustainable designation and delivery of Greenway and Blueway Corridors.
- e. Facilitate appropriate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, prioritising sustainable projects that achieve maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level;
- f. Identify and map catchment areas concerning Culture, Heritage and Tourism of regional significance/scale. Such catchments should have the potential to deliver small-scale economic development and using wider local services such as Post Offices and local public transport.
- g. Support the relevant authorities in the development of specific monitoring protocols for visitor pressure to ensure that tourism activities are maintained within sustainable limits for the European sites in the Region.

RPO 54

Tourism and the Environment

Development of new or enhanced tourism infrastructure and facilities should include an assessment of the environmental sensitivities of the area including an *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)*; *Appropriate Assessment (AA)* and *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)* if required in order to avoid adverse impacts on the receiving environment. Where such tourism infrastructure or facilities are developed, the managing authority/agency should ensure that effective monitoring protocols are put in place to monitor and assess the ongoing effect of tourism on sensitive features with particular focus on natural, archaeological and built heritage assets.



RETAIL

Retail is a key part of our regional economy employing significant numbers and is central to the life and vitality of our cities, towns and village centres. Retail plays a central role in placemaking and creating attractive liveable environments, enabling strong mixed-use urban cores and facilitating regeneration.

The retail landscape is constantly changing and in recent years the trend to online shopping has had profound negative impact on our settlements. There is a need to adapt to the continuous development of shopping habits and retail, including a significantly improved customer experience of visiting settlement centres. This is a significant planning challenge to provide alternative and attractive uses within our cities, towns and villages.

The location of much of the retail activity in our settlement centres is supported by the Guidelines on Retail Planning 2012 and the principles of compact growth. Retail can be a catalyst for the renewal of city, town and village centres, supported by initiatives such as town centre health checks to identify potential improvements to the public realm and streetscapes. The RSES supports investment in placemaking and improving the public realm to provide more attractive and vibrant settlement centres which support retail activity and the wider commercial economy of our settlements. It also recognises the importance of the tourism sector, with retail services contributing to the attractiveness for tourists and tourist visitors increasing footfall and increased vibrancy.

As a Smart Region, the RSES champions innovation in the retail sector in response to changing patterns of activity, including online retail. The retail business model is evolving in a digital direction and retail should be a central part of any digital strategy. A Smart city or town centre should attract consumers by offering a unique retail experience and this experience should evolve in line with data collected around shopping preferences and behaviour. The RSES supports mechanisms to support traditional retailers in the transition to technology led, experiential retail models.

The RSES supports the full implementation of the Retail Planning Guidelines to ensure that retail development is focussed on settlement centres with the application of a sequential approach for retail development. In urban areas extending across local authority boundaries, development plans and local area plans must be informed by joint or multi-authority retail strategies.



RPO 55

Retail

It is an objective to:

- a. Improve the physical appearance, vitality and vibrancy of city centre, town centre and village locations through collaboration between Planning Authorities and Retail Traders Associations in regeneration / public realm projects and other measures;
- b. Ensure that retail development is focussed on urban and village centres with the application of a sequential approach to consideration of retail development which does not fall into this category;
- c. Prepare Retail Strategies in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines including Joint Retail Strategies where applicable. Proposed public realm or urban regeneration projects should be assessed for potential impacts on the receiving environment including capacity of existing services at project level. Where public realm or urban regeneration projects would significantly increase shopper/visitor numbers, planning authorities should ensure that projects include sustainable management of increased demand for access to city/town centre locations.

LOW CARBON (CIRCULAR) ECONOMY

The transition to a low carbon future (see also Chapter 5) will see entire sectors of the economy undergo radical changes and create new types of enterprises and jobs. Our Region has enormous potential for renewable energy as well as becoming a global leader in the bio-economy. This will require investment in new skills, as well as appropriate assistance and incentives to enable enterprise to make the transition.

BIO-ECONOMY

The NPF highlights the potential of the bio-economy in promoting a more efficient use of renewable resources and supporting economic development and employment in rural Ireland. The National Policy Statement on the Bio-economy (March 2018) mandated the establishment of an interdepartmental bio-economy implementation group to take forward a number of major actions, in close collaboration with bio-economy industries and other partners.

RPO 57

National Policy Statement on Bio-economy

It is an objective to support the National Policy Statement on Bio-economy (2018), subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA undertaken where necessary and the exploration of opportunities in the circular resource-efficient economy including undertaking a bio-economy feasibility study for the Region to identify areas of potential growth (including opportunities presented in the EU Bio-economy Strategy updated in 2018 for urban bio-economies and piloting circular bio economy cities) to inform investment in line with the national transition objective to a low carbon climate resilient and circular economy.

RPO 58

Bio-economy and Rural Areas

It is an objective to facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with the bioeconomy, subject to required environmental assessment processes where necessary and balanced with the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape.

RPO 56

Low Carbon Economy

- a. The RSES recognises the urgency to transition to a low carbon future and it is therefore an objective to accelerate the transition towards low carbon economy and circular economy through mechanisms such as the Climate Action Competitive Fund;
- b. It is an objective to develop enterprises that create and employ green technologies;
- c. Local authorities should ensure that the development of green industry and technologies incorporates careful consideration of potential environmental impacts at project level including the capacity of receiving environment and existing infrastructure to serve new industries;
- d. Local authorities shall include objectives in statutory land use plans to promote energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, energy efficiency in traditional buildings and initiatives to achieve Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standards in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).
- e. It is an objective to support investments in energy efficiency of existing commercial and public building stock with a target of all public buildings and at least one-third of total commercial premises upgraded to BER Rating 'B'. Local authorities shall report annually on energy usage in all public buildings and will achieve a target of 33% improvement in energy efficiency in all buildings in accordance with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).



RPO 59

National Bio-economy Hub in Lisheen

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of the Lisheen Bio-economy Hub site into a significant economic and employment driver with the potential to significantly contribute towards meeting Ireland's climate change targets as a strategic site of European significance. Such initiatives as the Lisheen site shall be subject to robust environmental assessment including Flood Risk Assessment (if required) and satisfy AA requirements so as to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Social Enterprise is enterprise that achieves social, societal or environmental impact, rather than solely maximising profit. It pursues its objectives by trading through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives⁸.

Social enterprises make a valuable contribution through job creation, the delivery of services such as homecare, childcare, employment activation, retail, hospitality and catering, environmental services, and social housing. They are innovative, entrepreneurial and are increasingly utilising new technologies and creative approaches to address social, societal or environmental challenges.

Through the *National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland*, the objective is for social enterprise in Ireland to grow. Implementation of the policy will open new opportunities to address social and environmental challenges, contribute to the revitalisation of local communities throughout the country, and support many of those most vulnerable in society.

RPO 60

Social Enterprise

It is an objective to develop social enterprises and the circular economy within local communities to benefit environmental protection, employment generation and community development.

Case Study:

Tipperary, the Low Carbon Energy Transition and the Bio-economy

Tipperary County Council has long recognised the importance of the low carbon energy transition, both to the quality of lives of citizens and the opportunities it brings in terms of rural economic growth and development.

The partnership approach of Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA), Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), business and communities was formalised in 2017 with the establishment of 'Sustainable Tipp'. This partnership has led to some key achievements and initiatives, including:

- The Council is the leading local authority and one of the leading public bodies in meeting energy efficiency targets, having exceeded the 33% 2020 target in 2017;
- The Council has met and exceeded national targets for energy efficiency in public buildings, is the owner of the largest solar installation in the country and has switched 90% of its heat use from fossil fuels to renewable combined heat and power;
- Tipperary is home to Cloughjordan eco-village and Templederry community owned wind farm;
- TEA is leading research and delivering exemplar community initiatives such as 'Superhomes', 'Better Energy Communities', 'Insulate Tipp' etc.

Gurteen College, through micro-generation of wind and solar PV and energy efficiency measures, has reduced its energy demand in heating and electricity by half. Tipperary is at the heart of the global bio-economy opportunity and is designated as a 'European Model Demonstrator Region'. The location of the National Bio-Economy Campus is at Lisheen, Co. Tipperary.

This National Campus was developed through the Irish Bio-economy Foundation bringing together relevant stakeholders, including universities, private enterprise and is supported through Enterprise Ireland. The campus will have a range of facilities which will enable industry, entrepreneurs and researchers to scale technologies that convert Ireland's natural resources (including residues) to products of high value for use in a wide variety of sectors including food ingredients, feed ingredients, pharmaceuticals, natural chemicals, biodegradable plastics and more.

8. *National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022*

4.7 | Placemaking for enterprise development

This section identifies the main components of placemaking for enterprise development and guiding principles for investment priorities.

Placemaking is our opportunity to create conditions necessary for sustaining jobs and regional competitive advantages, while increasing the attractiveness of the Region as a location to work, live and invest. Quality of life is an essential component of placemaking and this is discussed in further detail in Chapter 7.

It is important to consider the features that enterprises look for in a location. A Health Place Audit (HPA) consists of a 'check-list' of elements required to attract enterprise. A HPA to ensure better placemaking will be developed with input from the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and other relevant stakeholders to use for an audit of places. This will assist in determining whether a specific place has the features that make it attractive and enterprise development friendly, while identifying problems and informing where intervention is required. This will help establish a stronger evidence base to target future funding efforts.



RPO 61

Health Place Audit (HPA) for Placemaking

It is an objective to promote the use of Health Place Audits (HPA) for placemaking and develop projects that ensure the creation of attractive, enterprise development friendly, liveable, well-designed, high quality places that are home to a diverse enterprise base mix and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and wellbeing.

Good Practice Example: Limerick 2030 – An Economic and Spatial Plan

Limerick 2030 – An Economic and Spatial Plan has resulted in a significant transformation of Limerick City through economic, social and physical investment. This has been accelerated by the establishment of the Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC (Designated Activity Company) to deliver a city and countywide programme of investment. It is the biggest single Irish commercial property development programme undertaken outside of Dublin. Over €1 billion is being invested in enterprise and investment infrastructure.

Innovate Limerick acts as the delivery mechanism for strategic Limerick 2030 projects. One of its core objectives is to work with stakeholders to develop Limerick's business ecosystem and position Limerick City and County as one of the most attractive locations to start and grow a business. Innovate Limerick has attracted Troy International Film Studios to Limerick City and it has developed the Innovation Hub and ENGINE, which provides office solutions for start-up and accelerating businesses.

Limerick 2030 provides an excellent platform to promote even more active urban development and land management actions that focus on the development of under-utilised, brownfield, vacant and public lands.

Guiding principles to identify locations for strategic employment development

The following provide guiding principles for location of employment development and underpin the settlement strategy in Chapter 3. Local authorities, through their development plans and LECPs, should apply these principles. The MASPs have identified some strategic employment locations in Metropolitan areas.

Selection Criteria

Planning to accommodate strategic employment growth at regional, metropolitan and local level should consider:

- Location of technology and innovation poles (IoT's and universities) as key strategic sites for high-potential growth of economic activity;
- Current employment location, density of workers, land-take and resource/infrastructure dependency, including town centres, business parks, industrial estates and significant single enterprises;
- Locations for expansion of existing enterprises;
- Locations for new enterprises, based on availability of employees/customers, land, tied to resources, dependent on the availability of different types of infrastructure (e.g. telecoms, power, water, roads, airport, port etc.) or dependent on skills availability;
- Locations for potential relocation of enterprises that may be better suited to alternative locations and where such a move, if facilitated, would release urban land for more efficient purposes that would be of benefit to the regeneration and development of the urban area as a whole, particularly in metropolitan areas and large towns;
- Within large urban locations where significant job location can be catered for through infrastructure servicing and proximity to transport interchanges, particularly public transport;
- Environmental considerations including but not limited to designated European Sites, Flood Risk, Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage and landscape;
- An assessment of the phasing of development in association with the planned delivery of water and waste water services, extension or provision of public bus services to the location and provision of new or improved cycling and walking connectivity from existing residential areas.
- Areas which would address employment blackspots/legacies;
- Support existing sectoral and location-based strengths and synergies with existing employers
- Availability of 'ready to go' property solutions;
- Local ambition;
- Potential for rail borne freight.

Guiding principles for investment prioritisation in placemaking for enterprise development

- Local authorities, REPs, and LECPs, in their preparation of projects to bid for funds, should give due regard to factors already identified as enablers of enterprise development, such as the availability of human capital, proximity to a third level institution, transport infrastructure; broadband infrastructure, and a diverse local sectoral mix;
- Capacity of places - having regard to implications of commuting on quality of life;
- Consider our cities development with a focus on public transport networks and sites such as Strategic Development Zones to densify the existing footprint;
- Align to national strategy and approach for data centres – right location for use and energy demand;
- Opportunity for health and wellbeing sector with new hospitals;
- Support the emergence of international schools for incoming talent;
- Focus on densification of existing built urban footprint around existing public transport;
- Give due regard to enhanced functioning of global services centres and advanced manufacturing centres;
- Identify and prioritise locations considering capacity, analysis of assets, with a vision for the city and the Region, and not just population size;
- Explore a 'second site' strategy for MNCs in outlying locations;
- Location-specific sectors and assets to be developed clearly with tailored responses e.g. energy, marine, greenways, blueways and pet lands.



Locations for Employment Development

It is an objective to:

- a. Ensure employment locations follow the hierarchy identified in Chapter 3, and ensure they are built fit-for-purpose. This includes the provision of access to utilities, connectivity, and other enterprise development factors;
- b. Identify future locations for strategic employment development having regard to accessibility by sustainable transport modes and environmental constraints.
- c. Support a positive presumption in favour of locating appropriate employment where it would address unemployment blackspots, support sectoral and location-based strengths and synergies with existing employers, take advantage of 'ready to go' property solutions and local ambition.

Funding initiatives such as the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF), are in place to stimulate greater interaction and collaboration between local and regional stakeholders. The competitive REDF provides opportunities by harnessing existing strengths such as technologies and innovation poles, stimulating multi-disciplinary approaches to facilitate growth of emerging industries, enhancing collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship, and under-utilised assets. It stimulates the bottom-up approach of local and regional stakeholders to prepare projects and compete for funds. (Refer also to Chapter 9).

Enhancing our competitiveness and building resilience in our Region

Our competitiveness reflects our capacity to sustain economic growth. Resilience is our preparedness and capacity to weather unprecedented situations and external shocks. Both features, competitiveness and resilience, are underpinned by skills development, innovation capacity, trade and competition, and infrastructure investment.

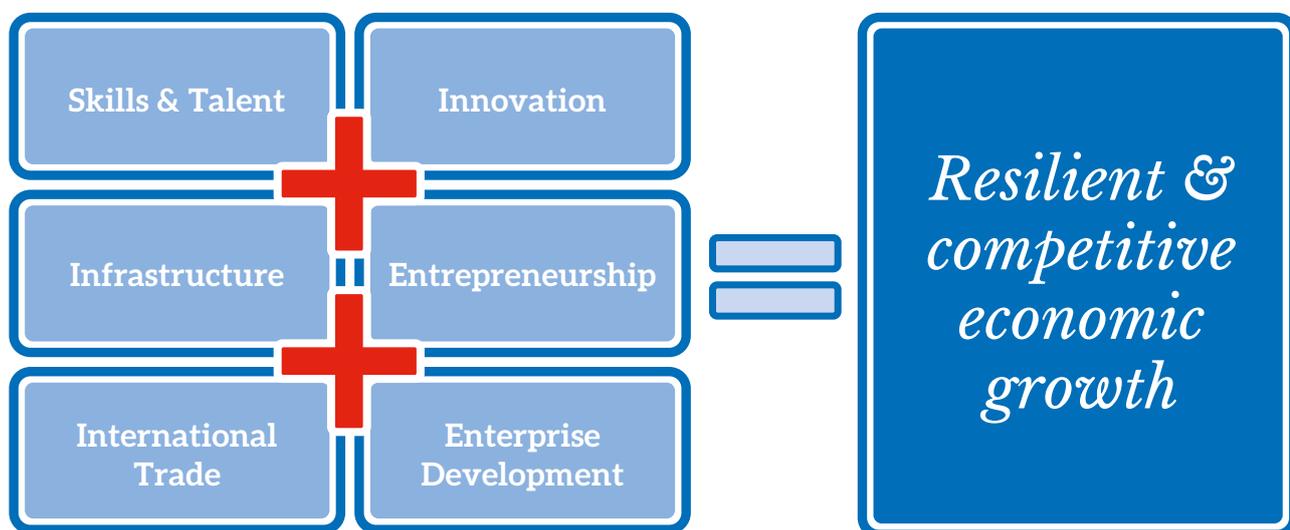
Future Jobs Ireland places a strong focus on increasing productivity and boosting participation rates to take advantage of technological changes. It also ensures that we enhance skills as we move to the low-carbon economy.

Future Jobs Ireland will focus on five pillars:

- embracing innovation and technological change
- improving SME productivity
- enhancing skills and developing and attracting talent
- increasing participation in the labour force
- transitioning to a low carbon economy

The RSES recognises that SMEs are the backbone of local communities. They play a key role in economic resilience through generating employment and contributing to innovation. However, **Future Jobs Ireland** states that productivity has declined and identifies deliverables and targets to tackle this issue.

Components required to develop resilient and competitive economic growth



Skills and Talent

Boom and bust economic cycles have strongly affected employment. While boom periods seem positive, challenges arise, such as skills shortages when enterprises struggle to find the talent and right skills necessary for their operations and growth. In addition, technological progress can make some skills obsolete and this can be exacerbated by a low lifelong learning rate.

National policy is to develop the skills that our enterprise base requires.

There is a need to futureproof employment, identifying those sectors that are vulnerable and those that provide opportunities for the future. We need to make sure that our people are as well-equipped as possible to take up the jobs of the future. We need to enable enterprises, and SMEs in particular, to invest in upskilling and re-skilling their workforce, including managerial capacity to enhance and maintain productivity, adapt to technological disruption, react effectively to shocks to the economy, and identify and exploit emergent opportunities from the digital and green economies. Lifelong learning is important in this regard. It provides the capacity for individuals to acquire new and relevant skills and to more readily fulfill their needs and aspirations. Creating a **Learning Region** will assist in providing high quality and timely education and training responses to evolving enterprise and skills needs. This issue is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 7.



RPO 63

Skills and Talent

- a. It is an objective to address the skills shortages challenges though improvements in lifelong learning rates across the Region;
- b. When local skills shortages arise and skills development at local level is not possible in the short run, it is an objective to explore the attraction and absorption of incoming talent, with emphasis on accommodation, education and integration.

Innovation

In line with our national policy Innovation 2020 and the EU's Horizon 2020, the RSES places emphasis on enhancing our regional innovation capacity.

The EU's Open Innovation, Open Science, Open to the World - a vision for Europe states that:

“Innovation can no longer be seen as the result of predefined and isolated innovation activities but rather as the outcome of a complex co-creation process involving knowledge flows across the entire economic and social environment.”

Consistency with this policy will increasingly involve the co-creation and co-production of new knowledge in a manner that values and systematically enables collaboration. This new knowledge is highly impactful and a driver of economic growth.

Our Region has seven major higher education institutions, four of which are currently in the process of redesignation as Technological Universities (Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee will form the Munster Technological University, while Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology will form the Technological University of the South East). HEIs will have a leading role in encouraging innovation and the application, including the commercial application, of all forms of intellectual property. The RSES strongly supports their role as a vital part of the overall regional economic proposition.

The **Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund** managed by DBEI is an important mechanism within Project Ireland 2040 to stimulate our regional innovation capacity. It encourages collaboration in research, development and innovation between two or more enterprises located in Ireland or one or more enterprises working with one or more research performing organisations located in Ireland. The fund identifies the Government research priorities areas that industrial research bidding for funds should focus on: ICT; Health and well-being; Food; Energy, Climate Action and Sustainability; Manufacturing and Materials; and Services and Business Processes. These priority areas are underpinned by overarching science and technology platforms: Basic Biomedical Science; Nanotechnology; Advanced Materials; Microelectronics; Photonics and, Software Engineering.

Entrepreneurship – A pipeline for growth

Entrepreneurship translates into new business formation, wealth, and jobs. Entrepreneurship and new and sustainable business start-ups thrive within a dynamic community of like-minded and supportive people. It is important that an enterprise-friendly ecosystem is facilitated, including skills-matching, collaborations between government, industry, higher education and communities.

In line with the national policy vision to be the best country in which to succeed in business, our ambition is to create a business environment that facilitates and supports business through all phases of its lifecycle. The focus is on establishing a dynamic environment where like-minded people can collaborate, network, co-work and have ready access to experienced mentors. We need to raise the Region's profile internationally - and Ireland as a whole - as a vibrant focus for entrepreneurship and talent.

Establishing an environment to stimulate entrepreneurship will require continuous assessment to take the necessary actions in a timely manner to redress barriers.

RPO 64

Facilitate new business formation, growth and industrial re-organisation

- a. It is an objective to remove business start-up obstacles as appropriate, to seek ways in which risks can be minimised, to redress any (mis-) perceptions of failure within the entrepreneurial community and to promote entrepreneurship as a valid career option within the Region;
- b. It is an objective to facilitate the transition of talent from declining industries to more competitive sectors through the use of Labour Activation Programmes and market re-activation emergency funds.

RPO 65

Attracting overseas Entrepreneurs and maintaining Irish Entrepreneurs

It is an objective to continue attracting overseas entrepreneurs to Ireland and supporting existing Irish entrepreneurship.

RPO 66

Monitoring and evaluating our economic eco-system performance

- a. It is an objective to map, monitor and evaluate our economic ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation;
- b. It is an objective to monitor and benchmark the Region against other relevant jurisdictions nationally and overseas.

Enterprise development and innovation assets – Enterprise supporting ecosystem

Led by DBEI and its enterprise development agencies, such as IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, the enterprise-supporting ecosystem comprises Business Innovation Centres, Incubators, Community Enterprise Centres, accelerator development scheme, Local Enterprise Offices (LEO), research and innovation infrastructure within higher education institutes, technology gateways, technology centres, research centres, and IDA Ireland Business and Technology Parks.

RPO 67

Enterprise and Innovation Support

It is an objective to maintain and leverage existing enterprise ecosystems to support enterprise development.





Infrastructure

Continuous investment in infrastructure is important to keep pace with growing demands. The NDP of Project Ireland 2040 represents a substantial commitment of resources and is expected to move Ireland close to the top of the international league table for public investment. In addition, competitive funds such as REDF, URDF, RRDF, DTIF and CAF are designed to incentivise creativity and collaboration across industry, government, higher education and communities to continuously identify projects to address bottlenecks that hinder progress. In addition, the Land Development Agency will coordinate land within State control for more optimal uses where appropriate.

Research by the ESRI⁹ points to specific factors such as connectivity - including transport infrastructure and broadband - availability of talent and human capital, proximity to a third level institute, and the presence of a diverse local enterprise base as factors required to foster new business formation. In this context, the lack of a competitive and internationally recognised university in the South-East puts it at a disadvantage and hinders the potential for new business formation. Therefore, the development of the Technological University of the South-East (TUSE) is critical to the future economic performance of the South-East.



9. McCoy et al (2018). Communique: <https://bit.ly/2PL1Ya9>; Scientific Article: <https://bit.ly/2DGfBbQ>

RPO 68

Regional Investment

It is an objective to develop and coordinate the regional investment plan, to enable:

- Sustainable development of infrastructure that creates a platform for enterprise creation and innovation in the Southern Region;
- Safeguarding of the Region's cost competitiveness by supporting an infrastructure led approach to planning for jobs growth;
- Enterprise infrastructure and initiatives of economic, education and skills development to improve our ranking under the EU Regional Competitiveness Index;
- Sustainable housing provision with accessibility to locations where jobs are concentrated, ensuring quality neighbourhoods with supporting infrastructure and services developed in tandem with jobs growth;
- Initiatives that protect and strengthen the qualities that distinguish the Southern Region as a high quality of life destination on the global stage;
- All proposals for investment in infrastructure shall be subject to robust site selection and environmental feasibility/assessment including Flood Risk Assessment. This should include explicit consideration of the likely significant effects on European sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in advance of any development.

4.8 | Capacity Building: Bidding Capacity, Shared Evidence Base, Future Proof and Anticipating Economic Structural Changes

International good practice, flexibility and adaptability

Continued research and sharing good practice will be essential in the implementation of the RSES. Our Region must be open to continual learning, innovation and adaptation.

Procurement is a crucial pillar of service delivery and a strategic tool for achieving key policy objectives across all sectors of the RSES. The development and promotion of best practice is highly desirable to achieving budget accountability, spending efficiency, buying green and promoting strategic use of public procurement in development of SMEs, and by facilitating SMEs access to a wider range of public contracts.¹⁰

Bidding capacity

With the introduction of competitive bids as part of Project Ireland 2040 and similar frameworks to access funds from sources such as EU programmes, there is a need to ensure that all local authorities and local stakeholders have sufficient capacity to identify funding sources and to prepare professional and robust applications.

Common & shared evidence base

A common and shared evidence base will inform the forthcoming reviews of development plans, LAPs and LECPs. There is a need at a local level for monitoring the governance patterns of Global Production Networks and/or Global Value Chains that may affect sectoral competitiveness and sustainable prospects in the locality. There also is the need to strengthen the monitoring and mapping of the regional eco-system of innovation and entrepreneurship. There is emerging research and technology that enables this development, V-LINC from the Cork Institute of Technology is an example.

10. Note that all public organisations (and private entities which are subsidised 50% or more by a public body) are subject to procurement procedures set out in the National Public Procurement Policy Framework

RPO 69

International Good Practice

- a. It is an objective to undertake on-going research and reports of international good practice and innovations in addressing themes outlined across the RSES Objectives.
- b. It is an objective to adopt a flexible and adaptable policy approach to allow for the integration on good practice, innovation and knowledge internationally from regions sharing similar challenges.

RPO 70

Bidding capacity

It is an objective to develop and strengthen the bidding capacity of local authorities, government agencies and regional stakeholders i.e. their capacity to identify infrastructure deficits and opportunities, to prepare strong business cases, to identify funding sources, to bid, and successfully attract competitive funding.

RPO 71

Shared Evidence Base

It is an objective to build a common, up-to-date, dynamic and shared evidence base and monitoring framework at regional and local level with information on assets, economic base, settlement functions, and economic performance.

Future Proof – Readiness to address emerging challenges

The aim of *Economic Risk Management System* is to evaluate the risk exposure to the Region, using an evidence-based analysis.

There is a need to prepare and be ready to address emerging issues and to react to potential shocks when planning and designing strategies. An assessment of whether or not assumptions or current conditions will maintain or change over the strategy timeframe is extremely important. In this regard, the *National Risk Assessment* continuously scans for potential risks.

There are a variety of current issues, such as Brexit, international tax developments, US trade and investment policies, technological advances, climate change and others will emerge. Based on this foresight exercise, developing a prevention or contingency plan provides preparedness and readiness.

RPO 72

Brexit

It is an objective to put in place measures to reduce the negative impact from the departure of the UK from the EU.

RPO 73

International branding of the Region and reputation

It is an objective to promote the Region through a comprehensive communication and promotion strategy, including the development of a regional brand with international focus building on heritage, culture and attractive qualities.

RPO 74

Economic Risk Management System

It is an objective to prepare and operate an economic risk management system, with preventive action plans, considering social and environment factors.

Anticipating economic structural changes

It is important to recognise that, given changes in the industrial and economic landscape, some sectors are under pressure, with the risk of jobs losses. Therefore, mechanisms are needed to support people engaged in declining industries by means of up-skilling, lifelong learning and communication strategies to redirect their talents and skills to alternative sectors.

RPO 75

Anticipating Economic Structural Changes

It is an objective to support diversification, economic resilience and to devise and introduce contingency plans and pilot projects based on the strengths of the Region to counteract the effects from industrial decline and potential external shocks to the Region. This may include lifelong learning programmes; appropriate business supports and upskilling to facilitate moving to alternative sectors in the locality or Region.



4.9 | Marine and Coastal Assets

Coastal and marine assets include the territorial waters of the Irish Continental Shelf in the Atlantic, the coastline and islands, the major commercial Ports of Cork, Rosslare-Europort, Shannon-Foynes and Waterford, the fishing ports and harbours, and our cultural and natural heritage.

The Region is ideally placed to improve economic growth through the sustainable use of its marine resource. Ireland's continental shelf or seabed territory is the largest in Europe covering more than ten times our landmass. This territory is the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) for Ireland, i.e. the sea zones within which a country has exclusive rights over the exploitation of marine resources.

4.9.1 | The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive

The EU's Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, adopted in 2014, provides a framework for Marine Spatial Planning and requires a coordinated, integrated and transboundary approach to promote the sustainable development and growth of the maritime and coastal economies.

Ireland is developing a National Marine Planning Framework as the marine counterpart to terrestrial spatial plans, such as the NPF, and will set out sectoral policies in areas such as offshore energy, port development and the marine environment as well as addressing the impact of climate change including implications from changes in sea levels and rising sea temperature. It will cover the entire maritime area.

Drawing from the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) baseline report published in September 2018, a number of strategic high-level objectives for marine planning are identified and supported by the RSES, including:

- Promote the sustainable development of a thriving ocean economy.
- Robust governance and meaningful public and stakeholder participation.

RPO 76

Marine Economy

It is an objective to ensure alignment, and consistency between land use and ocean-based planning, and to ensure co-ordination, which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the marine economy.

- Address land and sea interactions.
- Promote vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal and island communities.
- Adapt ecosystems-based approaches and ensure the pressure of human activities take into account the precautionary principle and moves towards achievement of good environmental status.
- Realise the potential of marine resources in an integrated fashion.
- Promote preservation and enjoyment of marine related cultural and heritage assets.
- Strengthen our marine identity.
- Develop a sound marine evidence base.
- Contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Consult and coordinate on transboundary issues.

The Region will play an active part in assisting the preparation of the Draft NMPF and will adopt measures necessary to secure the objectives of NMPF.



RPO 77

Maritime Spatial planning - Consistency and Alignment

It is an objective to support the integration of different uses in the marine environment and ensure consistency and alignment between high-level plans such as the National Marine Planning Framework, regional based approaches to maritime spatial planning and localised coastal management plans and local integrated coastal zone management plans. It is important to be cognisant of the need to promote cross-boundary management of coastal areas within the Region. Any development of plans in coastal zones should be informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

RPO 78

First Mover under the National Marine Planning Framework

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of the potential of the marine environment, to foster opportunities for innovation in the maritime economy and drive forward the Region as a first mover under marine spatial planning while preserving the environmental and ecological conservation status of our marine natural resource. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection, which includes flood risk assessments and explicit consideration of likely significant effects on European sites and potential for adverse effects on their integrity in advance of any development. The RSES encourages close interaction between higher education, state agencies, and enterprise to position the Region as a leader in this field.

RPO 79

Shannon Estuary and Other Harbour Plans

a. The RSES recognises the national and international importance of the Shannon Estuary, its potential to attract multinational development and the significant work that has been undertaken to progress its promotion and development. It is an objective to support and promote the delivery of the Strategic Development Locations as set out in the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA undertaken on SIFP and zoned in the Local Authority Development Plans.

Good Practice Example: Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary forms the largest estuarine complex in the country; it is Ireland's premier deepwater port and is a national economic and environmental asset. The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary is a land and marine based framework plan to guide the future development and management of the Shannon Estuary. It has identified an additional 1,200 hectares for marine related development (9 no. strategic development locations) by building on existing industry connectivity and synergy as well as the existing infrastructure to create a more sustainable and attractive network for further investment.

Significant tracts of land have been zoned for marine-related industry in Counties Clare, Limerick and Kerry because of the preparation of the SIFP and these sites present prime opportunities for employment-generating development in the Region. The Clare MEZ (Maritime Economic Zone) project for Cahiracon is a wave and offshore renewable energy test-site initiative by Clare County Council to provide specialist infrastructure, accommodation and development space for a range of different maritime-related niche businesses. The aim of the facility will be to provide mandatory maritime training courses and value-added training for non-seafaring personnel taking up positions at sea. There is significant opportunities to grow the Blue Economy through offshore wave and wind renewable energy in the Shannon Estuary and the west coast of County Clare, reflecting the key natural assets of wave and wind energy, together with the presence of gridconnections. The zoned lands at Tarbert/Ballylongford in North Kerry with extant planning for strategic energy and marine related industry including the Shannon Gas LNG project are a further example of the regional and national potential of the location. The SIFP requires marketing and promotion support both from a financial and expertise perspective.

- b. It is an objective to promote the SIFP initiative as a good practice model for the Southern Region and to seek the preparation of similar initiatives for Cork Harbour and Waterford Harbour between the relevant stakeholders.
- c. It is an objective to support the promotion, marketing and seeking of financial and expertise support for the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary and specific projects emerging there from.
- d. Such initiatives shall be subject to the relevant environmental assessment requirements including SEA, EIA SFRA and AA as appropriate.

4.9.2 | Growing the Blue Economy

As an island nation, we are highly dependent on our seas for trade, fishing, energy and tourism.

Future challenges will be to align marine resources with conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem health. There is potential for the offshore renewable energy sector (ORE) but there are also challenges, including sea level rise. Each of the Region's three main cities and ports are built around coasts, harbours and estuaries. The Region has an opportunity to harness excellent research available from some of our institutions in our Region.

The RSES acknowledges the special role of our coastal settlements by recognising that the tourism and leisure sectors can help support and promote traditional and new marine-based industries and activities.

Examples of potential in this sector in the South-West include Cork Harbour, a location with multiple functions and harbour communities within a sensitive ecological area. Refer to the Cork MASP for specific Cork Harbour objective. There is potential to strengthen a West Cork Marine Network, locations sharing port, marine leisure, fisheries, energy, harbour regeneration and tourism assets on the N71 corridor including Clonakilty, Skibbereen, Bantry, Schull and Castletownbere.

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Fishing and Aquaculture are significant to the economy of the coastal areas. The RSES supports Fishing Local Area Group (FLAG) Development Strategies, which provide a framework for community and economic development that support coastal and island communities. The FLAG Strategies identify National Fisheries Harbour Centres (NFHC) including Castletownbere, Daingean Ui Chúis and Dunmore East.

The industry faces challenges in relation to seasonal employment, fish stocks and coastal hazards. At a regional level there are however opportunities for growth through diversification and development of bio resources including food, aquaculture and off shore renewables. The RSES will support the sustainable growth and development of the seafood sector and Fishery Harbour Centres. In addition, the RSES will ensure planned activities on land do not adversely affect the marine economy.

Our sea vegetable industry, currently in its infancy has potential. This could become a growth sector if developed sustainably with small scale farming (such as kelp), a beneficial way of production rather than large-scale harvesting.

There is also potential for Marine Protected Areas to contribute to the economy.

Marine Biotechnology

Fish, shellfish, seaweeds and other marine species offer significant potential for food and ingredients companies to target the estimated €242m global market for functional foods and ingredients.

RPO 80

Marine Resource and Blue Economy

It is an objective to support the development of new coalitions amongst productive sector enterprises, coastal communities and public agencies to support the sustainable development of the marine resource and Blue Economy. Any supports arising, which result in further expansion of or new enterprise will be subject to the outcomes of the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment process.

RPO 81

Fishery Harbour Centres and Local Authority Harbours

It is an objective to seek investment in the sustainable development of infrastructure improvements to Fishery Harbour Centres and Local Authority Harbours in the Southern Region. Robust site selection and environmental feasibility and assessment is required in advance of seeking investment.

RPO 82

Seafood Sector

It is an objective to seek investment in the delivery of sustainable actions and development of the seafood sector under existing and future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programmes. Robust site selection and environmental feasibility and assessment is required in advance of seeking investment.

RPO 83

Island and Coastal Communities

It is an objective to seek investment in the sustainable development of infrastructure (physical and social), access (upgraded pier infrastructure, landing facilities and passenger and cargo ferry services), regional connectivity (transport networks and digital), enterprise growth and deliver initiatives by Local Authorities, Udaras na Gaeltachta, local communities and other stakeholders to strengthen and sustainably grow our Region's island and coastal communities. Robust site selection and environmental feasibility is required in advance of seeking investment including all necessary flood risk assessments.

RPO 84

Fishing Local Area Group (FLAG) Development Strategies

It is an objective to seek the implementation and investment in actions that support the Fishing Local Area Group (FLAG) Development Strategies to support coastal and island communities.

Robust site selection and environmental feasibility is required in advance of seeking investment, including all necessary flood risk assessments.

Offshore energy resources

The NPF supports the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity through the *Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP)*. Wind energy is currently the largest contributor of renewable energy and it has the potential to achieve between 11-16GW of onshore wind and 30GW of offshore wind by 2050 (SEAI, 2016). The sector can make a significant contribution to meeting national energy demands while attaining our energy and emissions targets for 2020 and beyond.

The OREDP has designated several areas in Ireland as suitable for development of tidal energy including the South-East Coast. Wave energy is more suitable for development on the west coast. Our Region will be a leader in the development of renewable energy resources through initiatives such as the ESB West Wave Project - which will be the first wave energy project connected to the grid.

RPO 85

Renewable offshore energy

To promote regional cooperation in terms of offshore renewable energy development, environmental monitoring and awareness of the benefits of realising the Region's offshore energy potential. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection, which includes explicit consideration of likely significant effects on European Sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in advance of any development.

RPO 86

Marine Cluster

It is an objective to develop a research driven marine cluster in the Southern Region to support development of Marine ICT and Biotechnology. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection, which includes flood risk assessment explicit consideration of likely significant effects on European Sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in advance of any development.



Environment

CREATING A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT FOR A HEALTHY SOCIETY



Introduction

Environmental protection and enhancement is a core component of the RSES. The relevant Regional Strategic Outcome is:

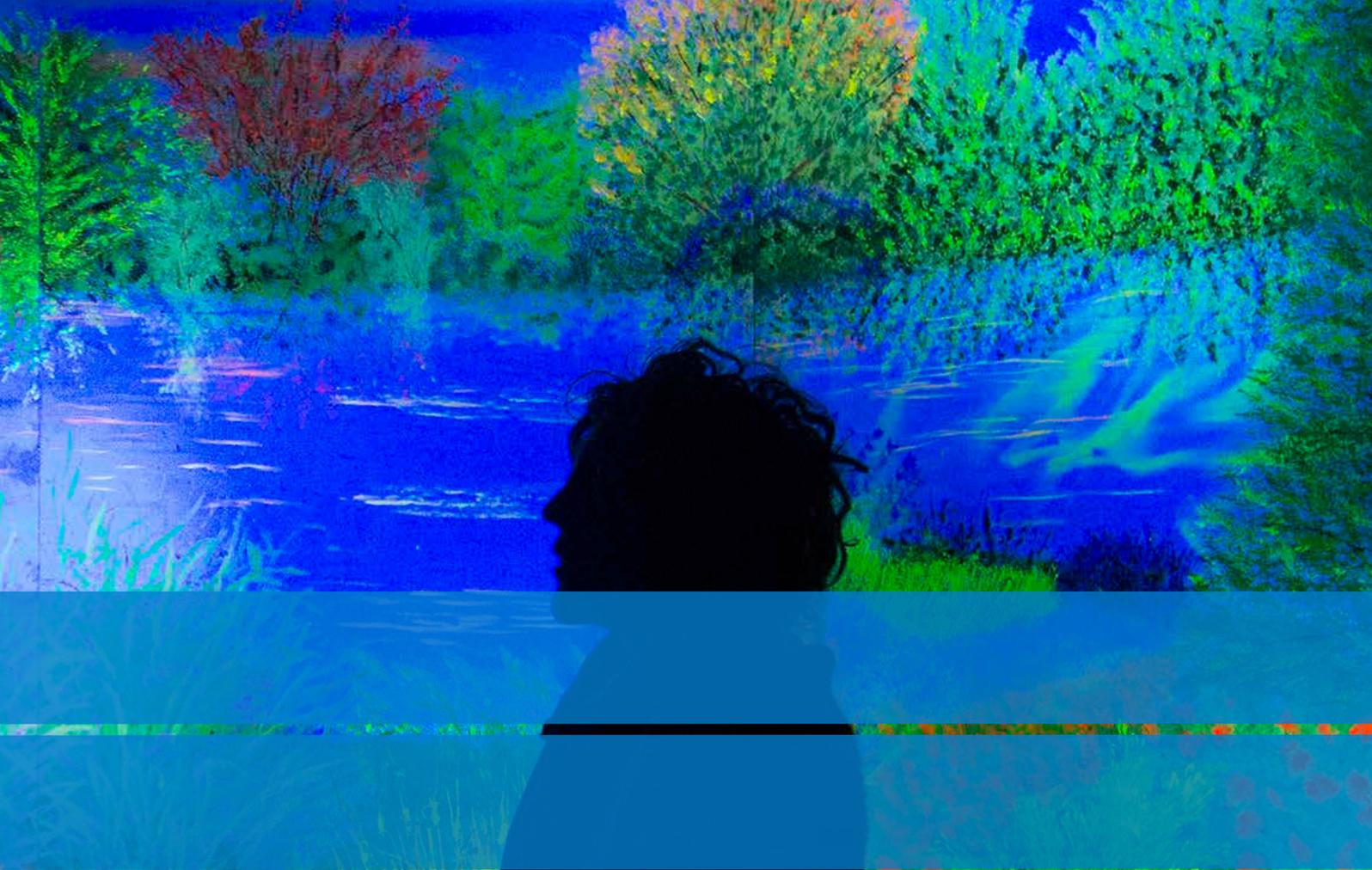


8. Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society

Ireland has a generally good overall natural environment compared to many other countries¹¹. However, many challenges remain in protecting this resource and globally we face a significant threat due to climate change. The RSES seeks to integrate sustainable economic and social development with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. It has a strategic vision of advancing social progress and prosperity through sustainable policies for allocating resources and developing a quality human environment consistent with respect for the natural environment.



11. *Ireland's Environment: An Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2016*



Section 1 - Climate action and transition to a low carbon economy

Climate change is a universal challenge that will affect our future environment, economy and how our communities function. Irish per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are among the highest in Europe. The Government has identified **'Climate Change as the most important long-term challenge facing Ireland'**. With the launch of the Climate Action Plan 2019 and as a signatory to the Paris Agreement, the Government has committed to 'the transformation required to achieve a low carbon resilient future'. The Climate Action Plan 2019 puts in place 'a decarbonisation pathway' to 2030 to reach the EU Target of Net Zero emissions by 2050.

The implications for the Region are stark. Observed and predicted climate changes for Ireland include:

- An increase in average temperatures of 0.8% between 1900 and 2011 with projected increases across all seasons of 0.9% -1.7% to 2050;

- Observed increases in rainfall with projected reductions in average levels for 3 seasons, but a substantial increase in frequency of heavy precipitation events;
- A projected increase in the number and intensity of storms in the North Atlantic;
- Sea levels rising at approximately 3.5cm per decade, continuing to rise up to 0.8m per decade;
- An increase in sea surface temperatures by 0.7C since 1850 with a projected warming of 1.9C by the end of the century.

The observed and potential impacts of these climate changes is widespread with adverse impacts to agriculture, the marine environment, biodiversity, coastal zones (including coastal erosion) sea level rise, flooding, critical infrastructure, water management, human health and wellbeing.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 provides the lead on actions to address these issues. It builds on the framework established by the National Mitigation Plan and sets out ambitious actions and targets to achieve decarbonisation. It also reflects Ireland's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and SDG 13 in particular, 'to take urgent action to combat climate change and impacts'.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 re-affirms the National Adaptation Framework as the main policy response to the challenges of climate change and the Regional Assembly will work in partnership with the Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO) to support the development of long-term solutions and extensive adaptation measures.

The Regional Assembly is committed to implement regional policy consistent with the Climate Action Plan 2019. Comprehensive policies are set out in this section across the three priority areas identified in the Strategy in Chapter 2 – decarbonisation, climate resilience and resource efficiency.

Transition to a low carbon economy and society

The transition to a low carbon future will require a wide range of responses across the public and private sectors and in communities to change how we use energy at home, in our work and how we travel. The NPF emphasises that the planning process is well placed to implement and integrate climate change objectives. Fundamental to the RSES is a change to more sustainable settlement patterns. The focus on compact growth, placemaking, sustainable transport, and focus on the sustainable location of development will bring fundamental benefits to climate change mitigation.

A number of locations have been identified as Key Change Locations in driving innovation and a low carbon economy, for example:

- Enniscorthy – UN Centre of Excellence on Carbon Emissions;
- National Bio-economy Hub in Lisheen, Thurles Co. Tipperary.

Key Change Locations for transition will provide a lead on climate action and further locations will be identified and developed as part of the Regional Decarbonisation Plan.

The RSES supports measures outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2019. Supporting actions will focus on **renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, agriculture and forestry and climate resilience through flood defences**. Our actions on decarbonisation will be linked to the implementation of the crosscutting measures in the Climate Action Plan 2019, the **National Mitigation Plan** and the **National Adaptation Framework** in conjunction the work of the Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO).



RPO 87

Low Carbon Energy Future

The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Government's policy under *Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-30 and Climate Action Plan 2019*. It is an objective to promote change across business, public and residential sectors to achieve reduced GHG emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture.

RPO 88

National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework

The RSES is committed to the implementation of the *National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework: Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland* to enable the Region transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. It is an objective to ensure effective co-ordination of climate action with the Climate Action Regional Offices and local authorities to implement the *National Mitigation Plan* and the *National Adaptation Framework* in the development and implementation of long-term solutions and extensive adaptation measures.

Climate Resilience

The *National Adaptation Framework*, sets out an overall approach for developing climate resilience. Climate adaptation aims to reduce the vulnerability of our environment, society and economy to the risks posed by climate change.

It focuses on short-term and long-term responses to climate change by taking a cross-cutting themed approach for all key sectors of Government, society and the economy:

- Natural and Cultural Capital;
- Critical infrastructure;
- Water resources and Flood Risk Management;
- Public Health.

The Regional Assembly has a key role to adopt a joint regional approach to adaptation planning in partnership with CARO and the local authorities (who have adopted Climate Adaptation Strategies), where there are opportunities to share knowledge, experience, resources and to benefit from working together in a co-ordinated way.

At regional and local level, we need to focus on the ability of the system in all its component parts to anticipate, accommodate and recover from the effects of hazardous events, including the integration of emergency planning into climate change adaptation.

Building Resilience to Climate Change will include measures to support flood risk management.

Project Ireland 2040 also includes fiscal measures in the area of carbon pricing to drive a reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels and taxation measures to support investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy and other measures to reduce GHG emissions.

RPO 89

Building Resilience to Climate Change

- a. It is an objective to support measures to build resilience to climate change throughout the Region to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning;
- b. Local Authorities and other public agencies shall continue to work with the Office of Public Works to implement the Flood Risk Management Plans and address existing and potential future flood risks arising from coastal, fluvial, pluvial, groundwater and potential sources of flood risk.

Decarbonisation across the Southern Region

The Regional Decarbonisation Plan will provide a regional focus for each of the sectors covered by the Climate Action Plan and *National Mitigation Plan*. The Plan should seek to develop sustainable economic pathways and a Just Transition so that the impacts of policies to achieve decarbonisation do not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in our communities.

RPO 90

Regional Decarbonisation

It is an objective to develop a Regional Decarbonisation Plan to provide a framework for action on decarbonisation across all sectors. The Regional Decarbonisation Plan shall include existing and future targets for each sector and shall be prepared with key stakeholders, including the Climate Action Regional Offices, and shall identify the scope and role of the Plan, the requirements for SEA, AA and the timescale for its preparation. Implementation mechanisms and monitoring structures for the Plan should also be established.

Electricity

To achieve national and EU targets will require investment in measures to develop alternative renewable energies with greater interconnection to energy resources, increased capacity in biomass/ biofuels and reconfiguration of power generation facilities from use of fossil fuels to low carbon solutions.

The built environment will require measures to support householders and business, changes to building regulations, smart metering in buildings, and new initiatives to support low carbon heating, including district heating. The transition to compact growth and more sustainable land use will underpin decarbonisation of the built environment.

The Transport Sector

All initiatives for meeting the national obligations to decarbonise the transport sector under the National Mitigation Plan will be included in the Regional Decarbonisation Plan. Sustainable transport and land use policies contained in the RSES also support a reduction of current level of car uses and dependence.

The Transport Sector will require significant modal shift from private carbon fuel using vehicles to sustainable transport. This will require a similar shift to more sustainable means of freight and logistics transport, including rail. The success of the Region in decarbonising transport will require the implementation of other core policy objectives of RSES, particularly the settlement strategy delivering compact growth and compact settlements, to make sustainable travel more viable. Decarbonising transport will also focus on alternative and low emission fuels for vehicles for freight, a modal shift of freight to rail transport and the increased electrification of freight transport.

Forestry & Decarbonisation

As part of the Government's Climate Action Plan, there is an annual afforestation target of 8,000ha. The Regional Assembly supports this target and the planned collaboration between Coillte and Bord na Mona to transform Bord na Mona bogs which are no longer used for peat production into native woodlands. The creation of new woodlands and the wider forestry sector have a critical role in contributing to carbon sequestration, decarbonisation and contributing to a post-carbon and climate resilient economy.

Carbon Sequestration

Recognising the value of our peatlands as carbon sinks is key to carbon sequestration in the Region.

In their natural state, peatlands act as long-term sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. A persistently high water table is necessary for this function. Peatlands are the most important long-term carbon store in the terrestrial biosphere and sequester and store atmospheric carbon for thousands of years.

The EPA highlights the importance of initiatives aiming at increasing soil carbon sequestration including grassland soils.

Carbon Capture and Storage

Carbon Capture and Storage is a method of storing carbon dioxide emissions in underground rocks and reservoirs. Carbon dioxide is captured from large emission sources and is condensed to a liquid CO₂ that is pumped into deep geological formations where it is stored. RPO 104 supports the development of opportunities for technological innovation in carbon capture and storage.

Decarbonisation in the Agricultural Sector

Agriculture is both highly exposed to and is a significant contributor of climate change. In 2018, agriculture accounted for 34% of national GHG emissions and is forecast to continue increasing by 4% over the period 2018 to 2030¹². Agriculture is intrinsically linked to our national identity and the agri-food and drink sector accounts for nearly 8% of Ireland's economy-wide GVA (DAFM, 2014), nearly 11% of exports and over 8% of total employment (DAFM 2015).

Current quantity and export driven Irish agriculture targets are set out in Food Harvest 2020 and Food Wise 2025. There is a need to align to our climate targets and to future proof the agricultural economy in the process.

12. *Ireland's Environment: An Assessment*, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2018

RPO 91

Decarbonisation in the Transport Sector

It is an objective to:

- a. Seek initiatives that will achieve the decarbonisation of the transport sector, moving to the use of clean generated electricity bio-gas, hydrogen and other non-fossil fuels for private and public transportation and provision of clean energy and lower carbon fuelling stations by 2030;
- b. Pursue policies to reduce reliance on private cars and achieve modal shift to sustainable transportation in conjunction with policies to achieve compact growth and reduce congestion;
- c. Seek the development of clean energy and lower carbon fuelling and electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure at the appropriate locations including consideration of electric, hydrogen, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)/biogas.

RPO 92

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

It is an objective to:

- a. Support investment in the sustainable development of Electric Vehicle charging facilities aligned with our Region's transportation networks;
- b. Through Local Authority County Development Plans and Local Area Plans, encourage and support policies and objectives to integrate Electric Vehicle charging point infrastructure within residential, commercial and mixed-use developments.

RPO 93

CNG & EV Infrastructure

It is an objective to:

- a. Support investment in the sustainable development of CNG refuelling stations aligned with the TEN-T corridors as a renewable technology for servicing public service vehicles and commercial fleets;
- b. Seek the provision of EV charging point infrastructure within residential, commercial and mixed use developments.



RPO 94

Decarbonisation in the Agricultural Sector

It is an objective to support initiatives that advance an approach to achieve carbon neutrality for agriculture and land-use that does not compromise sustainable food production through:

- i. Programmes including the Green Low-Carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) and the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) under Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-20 and future iterations;
- ii. Support for the Departments of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and Communications Climate Action and Environment to enhance the competitiveness of the agriculture sector with an urgent need for mitigation to reduce GHGs as well as adaptation measures. The All-of-Government Climate Action Plan and Ag-Climatise will guide action in this area.

Decarbonising Agriculture requires a focus on measures to develop low carbon farming and land management with the support of schemes such as GLAS (Green Low Carbon Agri Environmental Scheme).

Decarbonising Waste

The circular economy and waste minimisation is the focus of the Waste Management Strategy for The Southern Region, 2015 - 2021, which seeks to promote waste prevention and reduce dependency on landfill in line with EU and national policy. Decarbonising waste will also require a change in mind-set, including corporate social responsibility in the use of resources, design, and packaging.

Resource Efficiency

A determined focus on resource efficiency means using the Earth's limited resources in a sustainable manner while minimising impacts on the environment. In the following part of Section 1 the strategy for **renewable energy, energy efficiency** and **the circular economy** is outlined. Section 2 follows on to address resource efficiency in **ecosystem services** and **water resources**. The 2030 EU Climate and Energy Framework sets specific targets for the year 2030 of at least 40% reduction in GHG emissions with at least 32% of all energy generated from renewable energy sources (Climate Action Plan Target for Ireland 70% by 2030) and at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 and other Government policy including the *National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP)*, the *Offshore Renewable Energy Plan* and the *National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP)* have adopted the EU targets and set out a detailed approach within each area of energy generation and use. There is significant potential for action to ensure we meet these targets through development of wind, wave and tidal, solar, hydro, bio-energy, combined heat and power systems. Support for further initiatives will be advanced by the *Regional Renewable Energy Strategy* and the ongoing work of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment to address access to the Grid system.

Renewable Energy

Leadership

Leadership is key to transition to renewable energy and the RSES supports the initiative by many local authorities to sign the Covenant of Mayors – a European cooperation movement involving local and regional authorities aimed at increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

The development of research and innovation for renewable energy is evident across the Region in the initiatives outlined below:

- National Bio-economy Hub in Lisheen, Co. Tipperary: supported by the EU bio-economy strategy and Horizon 2020 for the sustainable use of our natural resources from traditional and non-traditional sectors. Developments in this area could enable the Region to become the **'European Model Demonstrator Region of the Bio-Economy'**;
- Promoting the conversion of **Moneypoint** electricity station by 2025 from burning fossil fuels. The RSES recognises the importance of Moneypoint as producer of 25% of national energy and its potential as a deep water port;
- Between fuel and energy production, **Whitegate Energy Park** could potentially deliver 25% of the country's energy needs. It is a national asset for bio-energy and is responsible for the production of a significant element of the national bio-fuel substitution target. Technology developments could provide potential to store carbon dioxide from electricity generation in depleted offshore reservoirs;
- The **Shannon Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP)** provides significant opportunities to grow the Blue Economy through offshore wave and wind renewable energy in the Shannon Estuary.

Wind Energy

The RSES recognises and supports the many opportunities for wind as a major source of renewable energy. Opportunities for both commercial and community wind energy projects should be harnessed, having regard to the requirements of DoHPLG Guidelines on Wind Energy. Wind Energy technology has an important role in delivering value and clean electricity for Ireland.

RPO 95

Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation

It is an objective to support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and leverage the Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation.

RPO 96

Integrating Renewable Energy Sources

It is an objective to support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.

RPO 97

Power Stations and Renewable Energy

It is an objective to support the sustainable technology upgrading and conversion of power stations in the Region to increase capacity for use of energy efficient and renewable energy sources.

RPO 98

Regional Renewable Energy Strategy

It is an objective to support the development of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy with relevant stakeholders.

RPO 99

Renewable Wind Energy

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and off shore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.

RPO 100

Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection

It is an objective to support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection.

RPO 101

International Hub for Energy Innovation

It is an objective to support continued innovation and research in the energy sector and to develop a role as an international hub for energy innovation.

RPO 102

Energy Research Funding

It is an objective to support initiatives for energy research funding within our Region to accelerate diversification away from fossil fuels to green energy, including the potential of wind, wave, solar, biomass, biofuels, biogas and hydrogen in the Region.



RPO 103

Interconnection Infrastructure

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of interconnection infrastructure, in particular the potential for the sustainable development of an international connection between Ireland and France in the Region.

RPO 104

Energy Storage and Carbon Capture

It is an objective to support investment in initiatives to develop innovation, advances in technology and pilot projects for the sustainable development of energy storage and carbon capture within the Region and to work with key stakeholders in developing sustainable forestry, including initiatives for native tree planting and better management of peatland and soil management to support carbon sequestration and enhancement of biodiversity.

Micro Generation

Building energy efficiency will require new measures such as the development of micro-generation, particularly where local communities and domestic customers produce their own electricity with the added option of exporting the surplus onto the electricity network.

Examples of micro-generation technology include, wind-power, photovoltaics, and combined heat-and-power.

District Heating

The RSES supports the potential for development of district heating as a significant opportunity to provide cost effective heating to benefit local communities and enterprise.

District heating consists of an insulated pipe network, which allows heat generated from a centralised source which is delivered to multiple buildings to provide heating and hot water. District heating networks benefit from economies of scale, the reduced coincidence of heat demand between different customers leading to lower capacity requirements and with multiple building level units, increased efficiency. A fewer number of larger heat

generation units compared to individual, building-level heating plants also allows for decarbonisation. District heating systems are well placed to use sustainable energy sources such as biomass and geothermal energy sources.

Hydro Energy

The development of hydro energy represents a significant opportunity for the development of renewable energy in the Region.

The planned Silvermines Hydro Electric Power Station would generate electricity during high demand periods as water from a higher elevation reservoir is released to a lower reservoir, flowing through giant turbines. It is pumped back up to the higher reservoir during low electricity demand periods. This energy storage project is the only electricity generating plant planned for Ireland included in the *European Network of Transmission Systems Operators for Electricity (ENTSOE) plan for 2018 to 2028*.

Community Energy

Measures to support the development of sustainable energy at community level will be enhanced by the LECO project funded by the EU INTERREG programme, the REACT project, funded by Horizon 2020, and Údarás na Gaeltachta and SEAI's joint programme – The Regional Energy Development Programme and the establishment of a Regional Energy Bureau.

Energy Efficiency

The SEAI and the Local Energy Agencies are key to promote action on energy efficiency at national, regional and local level. The focus on energy efficiency in the RSES reflects the actions outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Mitigation Plan and the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland No. 4 2017-20.

Energy efficiency policy for the Region will support the work of the SEAI and the Local Energy Agencies including goals for:

Economy: Measures which reduce reliance on the use of imported fossil fuels and enhance economic competitiveness and support the reduction of emissions.

Households: Measures to improve the energy efficiency of households and address energy poverty through domestic supports under the Better Energy Programme, including the Deep Retrofit Pilot Scheme.

Capacity Building

Capacity Building can boost the development of energy efficiency with the support of the local authority-led Local Energy Agencies and input from the Regional Skills Fora to develop upskilling programmes and expertise needed to facilitate a regional energy efficiency retrofit scheme.

RPO 105

Clean Electric Heat Technologies & District Heating

It is an objective to support development of district heating schemes by promoting innovation in the use of recoverable heat sources and related technologies. The development of new low carbon heat sources should include non-fossil fuel heat sources including clean electric and renewable gas heat technologies in the Region.

RPO 106

Future Proofing and Retrofitting

It is an objective to support implementation of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan, the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and investment in initiatives to improve energy efficiency and future proof our Region's residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and public building stock, including retrofitting in urban and rural areas and reduce fuel poverty. RSES supports the promotion of sustainable buildings that achieve certification under systems such as the Home Performance Index, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design at local authority level.

Circular Economy/Waste



The traditional linear model where we consume resources and generate high waste volumes to be sent to landfill is unsustainable. Policy is now focussed on **building a circular economy** which recognises that all resources are scarce and aims to maintain the value of all products, materials and resources through reuse, renewal and repair, so that products are reused continually, to minimise the generation of waste.

The Circular Economy and Ireland's Waste Management policy is part of the waste hierarchy established by the EU's Waste Framework Directive, which sets out to prioritise waste prevention, followed by re-use, recycling, and recovery (where combustible waste through incineration is a waste resource for energy extraction) and finally disposal into landfill. This policy is further developed in *A Resource Opportunity - Waste Management Policy in Ireland* which sets out national policy for Ireland to become a recycling society, with a clear focus on resource efficiency and the virtual elimination of landfilling of municipal waste. For example, the introduction of household food waste regulations and the rollout of "brown bins" to assist in the diversion of food waste towards more productive uses, such as the production of compost and the generation of electricity through anaerobic digestion. European and national policy is implemented at regional level through the Regional Waste Management Plan for the Southern Region 2015-2021. The Regional Assembly will seek the implementation of this plan, and its successor, along with local authority plans and programmes to develop the circular economy.

The Regional Assembly supports the use of smart technologies and innovative approaches to waste management, which promote waste prevention and increased reuse, recycling and recovery of waste, with additional environmental and economic benefits. Linking with research, such as the **Smart Waste Project** through **Interreg Europe**, will enable the Region to learn from and implement new measures and practices to develop the circular economy at regional level.

Biomass

The RSES will promote the efficient use of bio-based waste resources as part of a broader strategy to develop a Bioenergy Implementation Plan for the Region.

RPO 107

Regional Waste Management Plan for the Southern Region 2015-2021

It is an objective to support innovative initiatives that develop the circular economy through implementation of the Regional Waste Management Plan for the Southern Region 2015-2021 and its successor.

RPO 108

EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy

It is an objective to support the work of local authorities, the Regional Waste Management Office and all state bodies in the Region to implement the EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy-Closing the Loop to ensure sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the areas of:

- Product Design
- Production processes
- Consumption
- Waste management
- From waste to resources: boosting the market for secondary raw materials and water reuse in line with the EU Raw Material Initiative

RPO 109

Bio-Energy Implementation Plan

- a. It is an objective to support the preparation of a Bio-energy Implementation Plan for the Southern Region in conjunction with the Local Authorities and the Regional Waste Management office;
- b. Proposals for Bio-energy development and infrastructure will need to be subject to robust site and/or route selection that includes consideration of likely significant effects on European Sites and subject to the outcome of the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes

Section 2 - Protecting conserving and enhancing our natural capital

Ecosystem Services

Natural capital is the stock of living and non-living resources that combine to provide 'ecosystem services'- the services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. Some ecosystem services are well known including food, fibre and fuel provision, and the cultural services that benefit people through recreation and appreciation of nature. Others are not so well known. These include the regulation of the climate, purification of air and water, flood protection, soil formation and nutrient cycling.

An ecosystems approach focuses on the way that the natural environment works as a system. The valuation of the natural environment can help determine whether a policy intervention that alters an ecosystem condition delivers net benefits to society, providing evidence on which to base decisions on value for money. The draining of floodplains for urban development or intensive agriculture are examples, potentially leading to enhanced flood risk, as the natural buffering of the floodplain is lost. The incorporation and consideration of an ecosystem services approach can lead to significant enhancements to planning policy and decision-making and is recommended for use by local authorities in the preparation of Development Plans and other statutory land use plans.

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) brings economic thinking and a market mechanism into the provision of natural resources. These schemes are voluntary market-like transactions between buyers and sellers (beneficiaries and providers) of ecosystem services. For example, agri-environment programmes, such as the Burren Programme, pay farmers on the expected outcomes of their land management practices. In our Region, we can see this concept growing with initiatives such as the Mulkear River Catchment Project, BRIDE project and the River Allow Catchment Management Group which received funding under the European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP). It's evident therefore that environmental progress can be achieved through economic and social motivation.

RPO 110

Ecosystem Services

It is an objective that an Ecosystem Services approach will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans in the Region.

Good Practice Example: Upstream Thinking in the United Kingdom (UK)

The aim of Upstream Thinking is to prevent pesticides, nutrients and other pollutants from getting into rivers in the first place. Tackling the problem at source has reduced the need for expensive water treatment solutions and has supported the ecosystem services that peatlands provide such as carbon storage and biodiversity. It has improved water quality and helped wildlife to thrive.

In the UK, successful implementation of this approach has provided a 'win win' solution for farmers, water quality, drinking water supply, local economy and the environment. There are strong benefits to cost ratios with modelling showing that a £10 million investment into catchment management could save £650 million in costs of treating nutrient and topsoil-laden water over a 30-year period (i.e. a benefit-cost ratio of 65:1).

Water

Good water quality is vital to the well-being of our society, economy and environment. Our groundwater's, rivers and lakes are the sources of our drinking water. They also sustain water-intensive industries, including agri-food and tourism, particularly in rural Ireland. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets a goal of achieving at least "Good Ecological Status" in our rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters by 2027. The EPA's *Ireland's Environment: An Assessment 2016* report stated that there has been a substantial loss in the number of sites where highest quality river sites are found.

Anticipated increases in environmental pressures on waters due to human population growth and agricultural output will need to be carefully managed to ensure that deterioration is prevented but that water quality improvements take place. Untreated urban wastewater discharges are an ongoing concern. Continued investment in infrastructure and a reversal in the recent decline in capital expenditure are essential. Ocean acidification due to climate change is a cause of concern worldwide and the effects are now being seen in Irish waters. Coastal erosion because of extreme storm events has become a prominent issue in recent years.



• **RPO 111** •

Water Resources

It is an objective to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.

• **RPO 112** •

Water Quality

It is an objective to support commitments to achieve and maintain “At Least Good” status, except where more stringent obligations are required, and no deterioration of status for all water bodies under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and its programme of measures, the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan. Key challenges include, inter alia, the need to address significant deficits in urban waste-water treatment and water supply, addressing flooding and increased flood risks from extreme weather events and increased intense rainfall because of climate change.



Water Resource and Flooding

National Policy Objective (NPO) 57 seeks to enhance water quality and resource management by:

- Ensuring flood risk management informs placemaking by avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*;
- Ensuring that River Basin Management Plan objectives are fully considered throughout the planning process;
- Integrating sustainable water management solutions, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SuDs), non-porous surfacing and green roofs, to create nature-based solutions.

The OPW is responsible for coordinating and leading the implementation of the EU Floods Directive and for the preparation of predictive flood mapping and catchment-based flood risk management plans. These plans are a 10 year, €1 billion programme of investment in flood relief measures and the OPW publication *Implementing the National Flood Risk Policy* will assist the sustainable growth of our Region. The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme is central to the reduction and management of flood risk in Ireland. The RSES is informed by a Regional Flood Risk Appraisal (RFRA).

If not carefully managed, a concentration of development, including regeneration and infill in areas already prone to or at risk of becoming prone to flooding, could lead to flood risk. This is due to climate change (including sea level rise) and increasing potential damages within the flood prone areas. There is therefore a need for such risks to be minimised through the local authority level planning processes.

Land Use and Flood Risk Management

The planning system plays a major role in land use and flood management and is central to the strategic flood risk management pillar of prevention. *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* sets out a framework for the assessment of flood risk at all stages in the planning process. The Guidelines identify that regional flood risk appraisal and management policy recommendations are necessary to set a regional policy framework for local planning decisions and policy making. The Guidelines adopt a sequential approach based on avoidance, reduction and mitigation of risk.

The guiding principles are as follows:

- Avoid development in areas of risk, particularly on floodplains unless it can be justified on wider sustainability grounds and where risk can be reduced or managed;
- Substitute less vulnerable uses where avoidance is not possible;
- Mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

The Guidelines also highlight the need to consider the impacts of climate change and the potential for increased flood risk through sea level rise and increased river flows following intense rainfall events. The Guidelines recommend a precautionary approach in which climate change adaptation and future proofing is considered for new and existing infrastructure including flood defence structures and works. It is critical for the long-term sustainable management of flood risk that planning decisions take full account of existing and potential future flood risk to avoid or minimise the creation of new flood risks that could arise through inappropriate future development.

RPO 113

Floods Directive

It is an objective to support, at a regional level, the implementation of the Floods Directive to manage flood risks. It is an objective to encourage collaboration between local authorities, the OPW and other relevant Departments and agencies to implement the recommendations of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented.

Natural Flood Management

Natural flood management is the alteration, restoration or use of landscape features to manage surface water in order to reduce flood risk. It can reduce erosion and benefit water quality, carbon storage and biodiversity. Natural flood management methods for development and redevelopment can be utilised to reduce flood risk to communities. The incorporation of blue green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in projects is encouraged.

Natural flood risk management relies on one, or a combination, of the following underlying mechanisms:

- Storing water by using and maintaining the capacity of wetlands, ponds, ditches, channels and embanked reservoirs;
- Increasing soil infiltration, potentially reducing surface runoff. Transpiration from plants and evaporation from soil can also manage water at source to reduce runoff;
- Slowing water by increasing resistance to its flow, e.g. by planting floodplain or riverside woods.

RPO 114

Flood Risk Management Objectives

It is an objective to:

- Ensure that the flood risk management objectives of the Flood Risk Management Plans are fully considered in the development of planning policy and decision-making by local authorities so that flood risk is a key driver in the identification of suitable locations for new development, considering the CFRAM flood maps and other flood maps as available.
- Ensure that developments in upland areas, such as wind farm developments, roadway construction, peatland drainage and forestry proposals, provide sufficient storm water attenuation to avoid the occurrence of river erosion or flooding downstream subject to hydrological and ground/peat stability assessments.



RPO 115

Flood Risk Management Plans

Development and Local Area Plans in the Region should take account of and incorporate the recommendations of the Flood Risk Management Plans, including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk. Natural Water Retention Measures should be incorporated where appropriate in consultation with the OPW and other relevant stakeholders.

RPO 116

Planning System and Flood Risk Management

Consideration must be given to future appropriate land-use policies in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines, "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management 2009". Strategic and local flood risk assessments and plans should be prepared where appropriate, which should include consideration of potential impacts of flood risk arising from climate change. It is an objective to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SUDS, non-porous surfacing and green roofs) to create safe places in accordance with the Guidelines.

RPO 117

Flood Risk Management and Biodiversity

It is an objective to avail of opportunities to enhance biodiversity and amenity and to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats, including where flood risk management measures are planned. Plans and projects that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites are subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

RPO 118

Flood Risk Management and Capital Works

It is an objective to support investment in the sustainable development of capital works under the flood capital investment programme and Flood Risk Management Plans developed under the CFRAM process.

RPO 119

Flood Relief Schemes

It is an objective to:

- a. Support investment in the sustainable development of Strategic Investment Priorities under the National Development Plan 2018-27 and to ensure that flood risk assessment for all strategic infrastructure developments is future-proofed to consider potential impacts of climate change;
- b. Support investment in subsequent projects by capital spending agencies to deliver flood relief schemes under the National Strategic Outcome, Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society. Such projects should be future proofed for adaptation to consider potential impacts of climate change.
- c. Ensure that all infrastructure and energy providers/operators provide for adaptation measures to protect strategic infrastructure (including roads, railways, ports and energy infrastructure) from increased flood risk associated with climate change.

RPO 120

Flooding and Coastal Erosion

It is an objective to support measures (including Integrated Coastal Zone Management) for the management and protection of coastal resources and communities against coastal erosion, flooding and other threats. Statutory land use plans shall take account of the risk of coastal erosion.

River Basin Management Plan 2018-21

The second River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2018-21 is planned on the basis that Ireland is defined as a single River Basin District. With effective implementation of the Plan, Ireland can expect to see actions to improve water quality in over 700 water bodies. Changes in agricultural approaches and an increase in urban waste-water treatment should lead to reduced pollution pressures.

Key measures include:

- Planned investment by Irish Water of approximately €1.7bn in waste-water projects, programmes and asset maintenance;
- The deployment of 43 local authority investigative assessment personnel, who will work in prioritised areas for action;
- A new collaborative Sustainability and Advisory Support Programme between Government and the dairy industry;
- Improved controls for the management of water abstractions;
- The extension of the grant scheme for repairs, upgrade and replacement of domestic waste-water treatment systems, with priority given to high-status catchments;
- The creation of a Community Water Development Fund to support community water initiatives; and
- The development of a collaborative approach to protecting drinking-water sources.

RPO 121

Effective Collaboration to Implement River Basin Management Plans and Water Framework Directive

It is an objective to:

- a. Ensure a cross-agency collaborative approach to implementing the River Basin Management Plan. Planning authorities will be consistent with the Plan through their land use plans and strategies;
- b. Ensure effective co-ordination between the requirements of the Floods Directive and the Water Framework Directive;
- c. Promote a catchment-based approach to water management to facilitate cross boundary collaboration and shared responsibility at a regional level. The RSES supports bottom-up community initiatives through the integrated catchment management approach. The RSES recognises that there are opportunities for a collaborative regional approach to address issues such as invasive species.
- d. The RSES supports the work of the Local Authority Waters Programme in promoting an integrated approach to catchment management as part of the implementation of the RSES.



Good Practice Example: **Duhallow LIFE**

In 2009 the Kanturk Angling Club, IRD Duhallow Ltd, and the Southern Regional Fisheries Board (now Inland Fisheries Ireland), recognised the need for a broader holistic approach in order to protect the most sensitive species, the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, and other vulnerable species such as the Atlantic Salmon and Brown Trout.

The Duhallow LIFE project took a people centred view by including the community at its core. Conservation actions were carried out on a large scale, sometimes spanning the farms of hundreds of landowners. For example, the invasive species Himalayan balsam was removed from almost 40km of river bank, fencing to protect against debris left by flooding and silt traps to prevent pollution were provided to protect the spawning beds of fish and Freshwater Pearl Mussel habitat. Education was a major element of the project with 41 schools visited in the area.



Before works 2012



Same Site 2013

Good Practice Example: **Local Authority Waters Programme**

The Programme is a shared service working with local authorities and state agencies to develop and implement Ireland's River Basin Management Plan. The focus of this work is to protect and improve water quality in rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters.

The Programme provides a necessary link between active communities and various funding streams, such

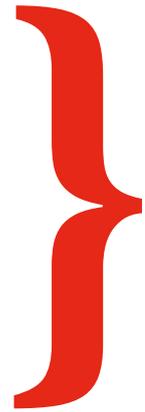
as LEADER and Local Agenda 21. The Community Water Development Fund, managed by the Programme, also supports community-led projects.

By looking at the experiences of the Rivers Trusts across Ireland and the UK, and the Rural Development Companies, the benefits of community stewardship in relation to water management are apparent. It will continue to require all stakeholders including local authorities, public authorities, Non-Government organisations and communities to cooperate and work together for common goals.

Planning policy and development management has a significant role in achieving WFD objectives which notes:

“Planning is critically important to the management of water resources.

The planning system both directly and indirectly influences effective water management. This includes water service provision, river basin management, landscape, flood risk planning, coastal and marine management and climate change adaptation. Accordingly, statutory development plans must ensure the integration of sustainable water management considerations.”



Spatial planning can play a significant role in ensuring that the design of developments prevent and reduce diffuse pollution, including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), blue green infrastructure and nature-based solutions. The development management process can also assist in reducing water use by encouraging rainwater harvesting (RWH) in new developments.

Urban Blue Corridors can provide many benefits including: more effective management of urban flood risk; improved access, additional and more useable public open space, and improved biodiversity. The guidance document, *Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment* published by Inland Fisheries Ireland provides an integrated watercourse protection strategy. These guidelines provide planning authorities with a template for the protection and enhancement of rivers in urban areas which can bring the positive benefits of the “Wild River” to settlements.



RPO 122

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

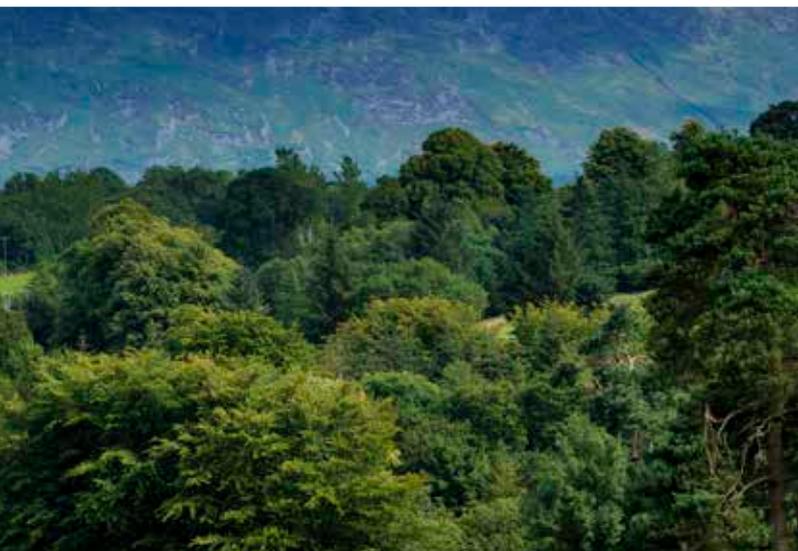
It is an objective to:

- a. Promote the integration of sustainable water management solutions such as the use of SuDs. Future development and Local Area Plans in the Region should include objectives and actions to encourage the integration of sustainable water management solutions such as the use of SuDS;
- b. Promote the diversion of surface water from combined sewers where possible.

RPO 123

River Basin Management Plan and Spatial Planning

- a. The RSES recognises that planning is critically important to the management of water resources. It is an objective to encourage the better integration of water issues into planning authority land-use plans and strategies;
- b. It is an objective to encourage the integration of river corridors with blue green infrastructure in settlements. The guidance document “*Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment*” published by Inland Fisheries Ireland provides an integrated watercourse protection strategy.



Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure surrounds and threads through our cities, towns villages and rural areas. By strategically planning where to create, maintain and expand our green infrastructure multiple benefits can be delivered to our communities. The EPAs State of the Environment Report (2016) highlights that high-quality green and blue spaces are important not just for nature but for peoples' health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of an increasingly urban society and increasing settlement densities. Common examples are habitat provision, amenity space, walking and cycling infrastructure, recreation areas, tourism attractions and flood control through the development of greenways, blueways and peatways. Management of these spaces can also provide wider benefits to the Region, including acting as wildlife corridors, pollinator-friendly areas, air, water and noise pollution barriers, and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In 2013, the EU Commission adopted an EU-wide strategy promoting investments in green infrastructure. The strategy promotes the development of a Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure in Europe (TEN-G) on the same level as existing transport, energy and ICT networks as an efficient and cost-effective way for countries to achieve the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets, to fulfil commitments under the Birds, Habitats, Water Framework and Marine Strategy Framework Directives, and contribute to the goals of the Floods and Nitrate Directives.

Green infrastructure should be a key concept of a local authority's Development Plan. Additionally, local authorities should work with their neighbouring authorities to coordinate green infrastructure strategies across their boundaries. Local authorities should collaborate with appropriate stakeholders (e.g. NTA, TII, Gas Networks Ireland, Irish Water) to seek out opportunities to appropriately design, deliver and manage green infrastructure on lands containing strategic infrastructure.

RPO 124

Green Infrastructure

- a. It is an objective to promote the concept of connecting corridors for the movement of wildlife and encourage the retention and creation of features of biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas of high conservation value such as woodlands, hedgerows, earth banks, watercourses and wetlands. The RSES recognises the necessity of protecting such corridors and the necessity to encourage the management of features of the landscape that support the Natura 2000 network;
- b. Green infrastructure will be integrated into the preparation of statutory land-use plans in the Region, which will include identifying Green infrastructure and strengthening this network;
- c. All Development Plans and Local Area Plans shall protect, enhance, provide and manage Green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner addressing the themes of biodiversity protection, water management and climate action; and should also have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species;
- d. Any future development of greenways, blueways, peatways, cycleways or walkways will include an assessment by the relevant authorities of any impacts that may arise from increased visitor pressures, in particular, on sensitive European sites and the design of the network will consider the provision of protective measures on sites sensitive to disturbance/visitor pressure.

RPO 125

Green Infrastructure Corridors

Transport infrastructure provides potential opportunities to act as Green infrastructure corridors. It is an objective to support local authorities acting together with relevant national infrastructure providers to co-develop infrastructural management plans to enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity

Ireland's biodiversity is unique and precious - it has intrinsic value and is part of what makes our country special. It also contributes at least €2.6 billion each year to the Irish economy through ecosystem services¹³.

Biodiversity is a primary indicator of the health of our surroundings and provides for:

- The food we eat - the provision of crop plants and their insect pollinators and other food items such as meat and fish;
- Purifies our air, decomposes our wastes and forms part of important nutrient cycles;
- Is a source of raw materials such as fuel and building materials;
- Holds our water supplies in rivers, lakes and other waterways;
- Provides important moderation of droughts, floods, temperature extremes and the forces of wind;
- Provides a wealth of resources to the Irish tourism industry;
- Provides the raw materials for traditional and modern medicines.

The Region's more sensitive habitats and species are protected by European or national legislation – including Special Area of Conservation (SAC's), Special Protection Area (SPA's) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's). However, biodiversity is not restricted to rare or threatened species; it includes all the natural world. Natural features such as waterways, trees and hedgerows play important roles in supporting biodiversity at a local level.

The Region has various marine and coastal habitats, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Celtic Sea and the Irish Sea. Inland, the rivers and their valleys support a diversity of habitats and species, many rare and important. Habitats of the valleys and floodplains include woodlands, marshes, fens and grasslands while other lowland habitats form the agricultural and urban landscapes that have been shaped by human settlement. The Region also has many mountain ranges, which add to its biodiversity by supporting habitats such as blanket bog, heath and upland grasslands.

Rural uses together with varying geological influences has created a diversity of agricultural landscapes. Initiatives such as Ireland's European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) administered by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine in the Rural Development Programme 2014-20 have significant potential to bring innovative solutions and practical implementation of new ways to achieve viability in the agriculture and food sector and to improve biodiversity.

Delivered by Operational Groups comprising farmers, researchers, advisors and businesses, EIP projects can provide innovative solutions to the challenges facing the rural economy. Projects such as the Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme in Co. Wexford harnesses the creativity and resourcefulness of Ireland's rural sector by addressing challenges such as biodiversity, profitability and sustainability.

Participating in "citizen science" can increase understanding and engagement by the public with important biodiversity issues. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is one of the leaders in this area through initiatives such as the Citizen Science Portal, a facility for recorders to submit and store their biodiversity sightings online. A mobile phone application called 'Report Invasive Plants' was developed to inform people of problems regarding invasive species and to facilitate easy reporting.



13. National Biodiversity Data Centre. <https://bit.ly/2EKUo71>

Good Practice Example: The Burren Programme

The Burren Programme is a locally-led measure under Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-20 and builds on the success and experience of the Burren Life Project (2005-10) and the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (2010-15). It is an agri-environmental measure focussed specifically at the conservation of the unique farming landscape of the Burren in counties Clare and Galway. It aims to promote a particular farming model that couples traditional farming practices with scientific assessment of environmental health.

The Burren Programme places farmers at the very centre of the conservation agenda and rewards them for their environmental performance. There are two main support mechanisms in the Burren Programme, one for the management of species-rich grasslands, and the other for any related capital works on the farm. The actions supported vary from farm to farm and from year to year, allowing the farmer the flexibility to tailor these actions to the needs of his/her farm at that point in time.

This funding has contributed to a number of spin-offs such as increased work for local contractors, more custom for local shops and manufacturers (e.g. Burren gates), and new farm-based tourism enterprises.



Burren Life
PROGRAMME

RPO 126

Biodiversity

- a. Promote biodiversity protection and habitat connectivity both within protected areas and in the landscape through promoting the integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species in the preparation of statutory and non-statutory land-use plans. The RSES recognises the role of the National Biodiversity Data Centre through its Citizen Science initiatives;
- b. Support local authorities acting together with relevant stakeholders in implementing measures designed to identify, conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the Region; seek and support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, National Biodiversity Action Plan and National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan;
- c. Local Authorities are required to carry out required screening of proposed projects and any draft land-use plan or amendment/variation to any such plan for any potential ecological impact on areas designated or proposed for inclusion as Natura 2000/European Sites and shall decide if an Appropriate Assessment is necessary, of the potential impacts of the project or plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000/European Site;
- d. Support local authorities to carry out, monitor and review biodiversity plans throughout the Region. Planning authorities should set objectives in their land use plans to implement and monitor the actions as set out in the National and County Biodiversity Plans, as the conservation of biodiversity is an essential component of sustainable development. Local authorities should address the issue of fisheries protection and invasive introduced species and encourage the use of native species for landscape planting in rural areas, in the review of their biodiversity plans;
- e. Support local authorities to work with all stakeholders to conserve, manage and where possible enhance the Regions natural heritage including all habitats, species, landscapes and geological heritage of conservation interest and to promote increased understanding and awareness of the natural heritage of the Region.

Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are cited as the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide after habitat destruction. They can negatively affect native species, transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems, causing serious problems to the environment, agriculture and the economy.

RPO 127

Invasive Species

It is an objective to:

- a. Support coordination between the Region's local authorities in terms of their measures to survey invasive species in their counties and coordinate regional responses;
- b. Encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they are spread;
- c. Carefully consider and implement the management of invasive species where there is a corridor, such as hydrological connections to European Sites in order to prevent the spread of invasive to sensitive sites.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020

Pollinators are a hugely important group facing widespread decline. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan states:

“If we don't protect our pollinators it will affect the food industry.”

Without the pollination service freely provided by our bees and hoverflies, it would be increasingly difficult and expensive for farmers to produce some crops at current scales and could result in a loss of consumer choice for Irish grown products. The beauty of the Irish landscape would also be affected without pollinators to maintain the diversity of our wild plants and support healthy ecosystems.”

Pollinators face the twin threats of habitat loss and decline in wildflowers leading to pollinator starvation. Of particular concern are Ireland's bee species, one third of which are facing extinction.

RPO 128

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020

It is an objective to support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-20 and future iterations. Local authorities should incorporate the actions of this Plan when managing their parks, open spaces, roadside verges and all vegetation in a way that provides more opportunities for biodiversity, while being cognisant of the threat of the spread of invasive species.

Landscape

The Southern Region includes the Ireland's highest mountain ranges, extensive coastal areas and islands, urban landscapes, river valleys, estuaries and the unique limestone area of the Burren. Landscape character areas and protected sites, such as NHAs, SACs and SPAs, frequently overlap administrative boundaries and it is important that there is a consistent approach to their management and protection. This particularly is true of more extensive landscapes and habitats such as uplands, estuaries and our coastal zone, where ground water resources and river basins are managed by several adjoining local authorities. It is also important that public access initiatives and plans consider historical setting and landscape character and potential for the negative effects related to pressure of visitor numbers.

The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-25 sets out a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape and ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention, which came into force in 2004.

The Strategy's vision is reflected in the NPF and National Policy Objective (NPO) 61. Seascape assessment should be addressed in both the proposed Regional Landscape Strategy and in the proposed Marine Spatial Plan for the Region, which should contain a robust policy framework for Seascapes and Coastal Areas so that future maritime developments address issues including visual impact, built heritage and cultural significance.



RPO 129

Landscape

It is an objective to develop a Regional Landscape Strategy to facilitate landscape protection, management and change through undertaking a Regional Landscape Assessment and Landscape Character Map and development of guidance on local landscape character assessments, (including urban and historic landscape characterisation) to ensure a consistent approach to landscape character assessment, particularly across planning and administrative boundaries. The Regional Landscape Character Assessment should also address the characterisation of our seascapes and coastal areas. The implementation mechanisms and monitoring structures to be established following the adoption of the RSES will identify the scope and role of the Regional Landscape Strategy for the Region and the timescale for its preparation.



Air Quality

Air Quality in Ireland reports identify that particulate matter from the burning of solid fuels, including wood, coal and peat, poses the greatest threat to human health with the problem most acute in small towns and rural areas. The second biggest cause of pollutants is nitrogen dioxide from cars, particularly in heavily trafficked urban areas. The protection of air quality requires cross-sectoral policy responses to address air pollution emissions from transport (diesel) energy (peat, biomass) and home heating (solid fuel).

A National Clean Air Strategy will provide the strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote integrated measures that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air while delivering on wider national objectives. Arising from the EPA's Ireland's Environment: An Assessment 2016 report, the response required is for policymakers, legislators and regulators to ensure that the safest fuel and transport options are favoured and promoted to assist people in making healthier decisions. In parallel, individuals need to consider how their behaviours impact on our environment and contribute to health problems such as respiratory and heart disease in our own communities.

Transformative change is required to prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution by supporting public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car and the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes and innovative design solutions. The careful planning of nature-based solutions, blue green infrastructure and vegetation are important for air quality in urban areas, as trees naturally remove pollutants from the air and help better manage urban micro-climates.

Noise

Exposure to excessive noise can have significant impacts on human health as well as pressures to wildlife and ecosystems. According to WHO, excessive noise is the second greatest environmental cause of health problems after air quality. Environmental noise from major infrastructure including roads, railways and airports is governed by the EU's Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC). The preparation of strategic noise maps is a major task associated with this directive and this is currently under way in Ireland. Following completion of the noise maps, the relevant Action planning authorities will prepare Noise Action Plans. The action plans are designed to manage environmental noise through land-use planning, traffic management and control of noise sources.

RPO 130

Air Quality

It is an objective to:

- a. Improve and maintain good air quality and help prevent harmful effects on human health and the environment in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions and promotion of measures that improve air quality including provision and management of green areas and vegetation;
- b. Support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring and to investigate the merits of creating a regional air quality and greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

RPO 131

Noise

It is an objective to promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and the environment. It is also an objective to support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans for major urban centres as considered appropriate.

In addition to controlling excess noise, it is also important to identify and protect those areas which are substantially unaffected by man-made noise. Accessibility to quietness is highly important to the health of both wildlife and humans. This is particularly so in urban environments leading to the concept of Relatively Quiet Areas, such as local parks, green and blue areas and are valued by the public as areas of tranquillity. The RSES supports 'Quiet Areas' in proactively managing noise as part of noise levels action plans

Light Pollution

Light pollution refers to excessive and inappropriate artificial light.

There are four components of light pollution:

- Glare: excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort;
- Skyglow: brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas;
- Light trespass: light falling where it is not intended or needed;
- Clutter: bright, confusing and excessive groupings of light sources.

The International Dark-Sky Association works to protect the night skies for present and future generations. 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves are focused on areas "possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment". The Kerry International Dark-Sky Reserve is the only internationally recognised Dark Sky area in the Region. The NPF and RSES recognise the potential of this concept as a significant tourism attraction. This is particularly true of mountainous and peatland areas where there is little or no light pollution, serviced by adjoining rural communities. This RSES encourages measures to support the establishment of other 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves.

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RPO 132

'Dark Sky' Parks and Reserves

It is an objective to encourage measures to support the Kerry International Dark-Sky Reserve and the establishment of other 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves in the Region, where appropriate.



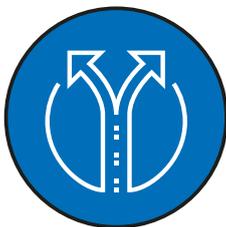


Connectivity

6

6.1 | Introduction

This chapter seeks to sustainably advance the vision of the RSES to realise the full potential of places, achieving economic prosperity, improving quality of life and accommodating development in suitable locations. These connectivity objectives are central to achieving the Strategy set out in Chapter 2, including:



2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility



4. Sustainable Mobility



6. High-Quality International Connectivity



Section 1 sets out the objectives for Digital Connectivity, Infrastructure and Smart Cities and Region, while Section 2 sets out the objectives for a Regional Transport Strategy and for High Quality International Connectivity: Our Ports and Airports.

Section 1 - Digital Connectivity, Infrastructure and Smart Cities and Region

6.2 | Digital Connectivity

Enhanced quality and provision of digital and mobile telecommunications infrastructure is critical for the revitalisation of cities, towns, villages and rural areas. Developments in information and communications technology (ICT) continues to fundamentally change how our society and economy functions.

The relational proximity of all locations will improve with advances in technology. Regions need to embrace

innovative solutions in the pursuit of prosperity, environmental protection and reduce locational disadvantage. To optimise the opportunities from smart technology, access to high-speed, high capacity digital and communications infrastructure is required across the Region. This is fundamental to ensure parity for all locations in our Region.

6.2.1 | Developing Smart Cities and a Smart Region

This Region is well positioned to drive sustainable growth and to lead on smart investment choices, supported by the EU Digital Single Market.

The **Smart City** concept envisages that digital technology is embedded across all city functions as a platform to solve complex challenges and achieve efficient use and deployment of infrastructure and local services, increasing public safety, increasing entrepreneurial activity and improve our environment. It involves a systematic integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in planning, design, operations and management for the benefit of the citizen. Smart cities boost a location's attractiveness, especially for those who want to innovate¹⁵.

Harnessing the best of the Smart City concept makes our cities and towns more efficient and liveable. The yields for citizens, the environment and the regional economy are far reaching. The **'All Ireland Smart Cities Forum'** focuses on advancing cities through a common purpose and agreement to work together to solve problems, share knowledge, cultivate best practice and foster innovation. The concept provides a platform for sharing knowledge between the cities of Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Galway, Waterford, Belfast and Derry and includes the two regional initiatives of Smart Dublin and Cork Smart Gateway.

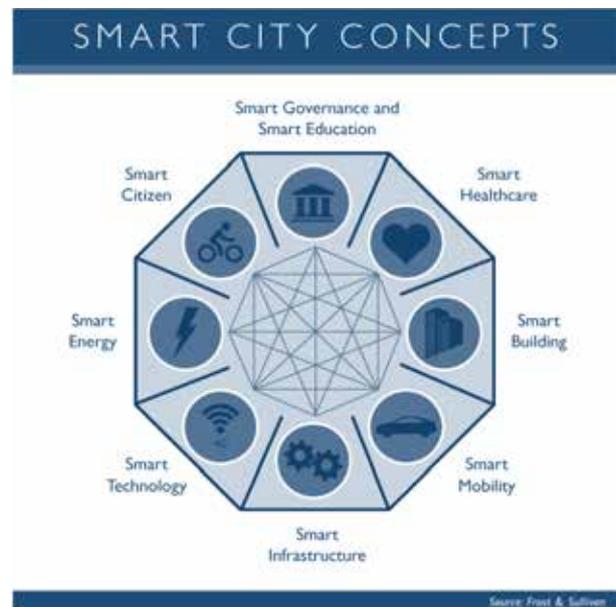
The benefits of Smart Cities apply not only to the urban but are also to rural areas. Capitalising on Smart City concepts across towns and villages will require ongoing investment in broadband, fibre technologies, wireless networks and integrated infrastructure. For example, the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs), managed by ENet on behalf of the state and local authorities, requires continual investment and upgrading, especially where urban focused population and employment growth is targeted.

A Smart City goes beyond the use of ICT it means smarter urban transport networks, upgraded water supply and waste disposal facilities and more efficient ways to light and heat buildings. It also means a more interactive and responsive city administration, safer public spaces and meeting the needs of an ageing population. These concepts can also be applied to towns, villages and rural areas for a Smart Region.

14. *Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy for Research and Innovation.* <https://bit.ly/2OVCFNP>

15. *Examples of smart city initiatives include: Amsterdam Smart City (ASC); Barcelona (e.g. Open Data BCN); Copenhagen (first carbon neutral city ambition); and Esbjerg, Denmark (Next Step City)*

Figure 6.1 | Smart City Concepts¹⁴



For example, Enniscorthy town has taken the initial steps towards the achievement of Smart Town Status with the establishment of the FAB LAB in 2017, the development of a Technology Park for smart business and the establishment of the National Zero Energy Building training centre. The town has commenced a Healthy Town Programme under Healthy Ireland. Subject to appropriate environmental appraisals it is also proposed to develop a Blueway from Enniscorthy to Wexford town and Bunclody

Chapter 4 also includes RPOs aimed at supporting digital infrastructure, innovation hubs and diversification. Chapter 7 Quality of Life supports digital technology as an enabler for Lifelong Learning.

RPO 133

Smart Cities

It is an objective to:

- Develop Smart Cities as engines for a Smart Region (urban and rural);
- Support the initiatives of the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum;
- Seek good practices yielded through living labs, test-beds;
- Seek the deployment of disruptive technologies and smart infrastructures in cities, towns, villages and rural areas;
- Seek investment in the initiatives of stakeholders to achieve the pillars of the EU Digital Single Market.

6.2.2 | International Digital Transmission Infrastructure

Our place in the global digital arena is supported by high capacity international connections with the US, the UK and Europe through projects, such as the Hibernia Express subsea cable line at the Cork Internet Exchange and the Ireland-France subsea cable. This will provide the potential for direct high-speed Transatlantic internet connectivity.

6.2.3 | National Broadband Plan

Aligned with the Digital Agenda for Europe, the National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to deliver high-speed broadband services to all businesses and households in Ireland.

The NBP is funded by the Government and part co-funded through the European Regional Development Fund under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-20 which is managed by the Southern Regional Assembly.

The targets of the NBP include:

- 70Mbps - 100Mbps available to at least 50% of the population with a majority having access to 100Mbps;
- At least 40Mbps, and in many cases much faster speeds, to at least a further 20% of the population and potentially as much as 35% around smaller towns and villages;
- A minimum of 30Mbps available to all, no matter how rural and remote.

The NBP involves a combination of commercial investment by the telecommunications sector and State intervention to provide high-speed broadband to the unserved parts of the country where the market has failed due to factors such as low population density. The High-Speed Broadband Map 2020 shows the gaps in high-speed broadband services requiring NBP intervention and where it will be provided commercially over the life of the Plan.

RPO 134

Smart Cities and Smart Region

It is an objective to:

- a. Build on Smart Cities and Smart Region initiatives in Cork, Limerick and Waterford, such as the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum, and seek to extend such initiatives to towns, villages and rural areas to support a Smart Region;
- b. Seek investment in broadband, fibre technologies, wireless networks (including an Internet of Things Network across the Region) and integrated digital infrastructures to enable actions that sustainably deliver on smart technologies to increase the innovative, sustainable and competitive placemaking dividend for the Southern Region;
- c. Support a leadership role for the Southern Region as an innovator in smart technologies and smart mobility;
- d. Seek and support investment for initiatives in smart technology as an enabler for education and life-long learning in all locations.

RPO 135

High Quality High Capacity International Digital Transmission

It is an objective to:

- a. Optimise the economic opportunities for all locations in the Southern Region from achieving high quality high capacity international digital transmission connections between the Region, the US, the UK and Europe through support for improved regional digital and internet exchange facilities (subject to required feasibility, planning and environmental assessment processes) in each of the Region's cities and metropolitan areas and optimise the infrastructure asset of the projects such as projects such as the Hibernia Express subsea cable line located at Cork Internet Exchange and the Ireland-France subsea cable;
- b. Seek investment and continual strengthening of Metropolitan Area Networks;
- c. Support and seek investment in the sustainable delivery of digital infrastructure ducting and dark fibre infrastructure.

6.2.4 | Mobile and Broadband Taskforce

The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce aims to:

- Identify solutions to broadband and mobile phone coverage deficits;
- Investigate how better services could be provided to consumers prior to full build and rollout of the network planned under the NBP.

RPO 136

National Broadband Plan (NBP)

It is an objective to seek to expedite the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA for the NBP to all locations in the Region and seek reporting procedures to the Southern Regional Assembly on progress and targets being achieved from the relevant State Departments and agencies through effective implementation mechanisms for the RSES.

RPO 137

Mobile Infrastructure

It is an objective to strengthen the continued delivery of high-speed, high-capacity digital and mobile infrastructure investment in our Region and strengthen cross regional integration of digital infrastructures and sharing of networks.

RPO 138

Digital Strategies

It is an objective to promote the preparation and support the implementation of digital strategies by each local authority, seek investment for actions identified, and support the role and initiatives of the Mobile and Broadband Taskforce in addressing digital and mobile coverage blackspots and rural communications connectivity.

Case Study: Cork Smart Gateway

The Cork Smart Gateway is an initiative of Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Nimbus Research Centre and Tyndall National Institute where the vision is to enhance the reputation of Cork as an attractive Region for people to live, work, visit and invest. The initiative aims to engage with citizens, to identify the evolving challenges and opportunities that impact on their quality of life, identify suitable and achievable smart projects through a collaborative multi-stakeholder approach, encourage an open and innovate business ecosystem that

pilot new technologies and to promote Cork as a smart destination internationally. Strategic goals centre on citizen engagement, assisted living, mobility, open data, energy & resource efficiency, e-governance, food and agriculture, economic development, and communication.

The Cork Smart Gateway is part of an All-Ireland Smart Cities Forum which includes Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Belfast and Derry.



Case Study: Limerick Digital Strategy

Limerick's digital strategy will enable the development of a smart, sustainable, city and region where digital technologies improve quality of life, empower communities and enable economic growth. Limerick is the first city in Ireland to appoint a Chief Digital Officer to lead the development of a digital strategy that will lay the foundation for the Smart Limerick Region.

This initiative will invest in technology and research so that, by 2020, citizens and businesses will be better engaged in city life using digital channels, while locals and visitors will be able to access information on some 2,000 attractions, new online services provided by the Council and over 1,000 events each year in a single digital experience platform - www.limerick.ie.



Case Study: Waterford Telecommunications Software & Systems Group (TSSG)

Based on the WIT Campus, TSSG is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for ICT research and innovation. Key research areas are in mobile platforms and services, data analytics and social computing, adaptive networks and services, augmented and virtual reality. TSSG creates an

economic impact by translating their knowledge base and innovation into leading edge products and services by continuing engagement with industry in collaborative R&D, knowledge generation and transfer in the South-East, nationally and on the global stage.



Section 2 - REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

This section addresses the role of transport networks to improve the sustainable movement of people and goods. Objectives in this section address the NPF's National Strategic Outcomes of Enhanced Regional Accessibility, Sustainable Mobility and High-Quality International Connectivity.

6.3.1 | Introduction

Transport has a major impact on quality of life, community interaction, economic prosperity and environmental quality. It also has a major impact on the distribution of population, employment, education, socio-economic and cultural uses. There is evidence of an overreliance on the private car for travel to work and education. Approximately 14% of the Region's population traveled to work/education used green modes in 2016 - lower than the State average (17%)¹⁶. Our Region faces the challenge of shifting to alternatives to the private car and promoting greater efficiency in the use of our transport networks.

6.3.2 | Policy Context

Project Ireland 2040 supports the provision of a well-functioning integrated public transport system, enhancing competitiveness, sustaining economic progress and enabling sustainable mobility choices for citizens.

In broader terms, the RSES addresses the effective integration of transport and land use planning in the metropolitan areas, large towns and settlements, smaller towns, villages and rural areas. The RSES recognises the diversity of the Region, its variety of settlement patterns, economic and social conditions in the formulation of transport policies, objectives and measures.



16. Census 2016, CSO.

6.3.3 | A Transport Vision for the Southern Region

6.3.3.1 | The Role of Transport

Transport investment in the Region aims to meet the following objectives:

- To reduce the environmental impact of travel on the Region;
- To provide for the integrated development of sustainable transport infrastructure, including walking, cycling (including emerging e-modes) and public transport to accommodate the necessary switch from the private car, for the travel needs of all individuals in the Region, in line with the stated government transport policy;
- To manage sustainably the existing and future demand for travel, in particular by private car and other passive travel modes, primarily through appropriate integrated land use planning to reduce the distance between origin and destination of the greatest proportion of trips generated;
- To support improved strategic and local connectivity;
- To expand attractive public transport and other alternatives to car transport;
- To reduce congestion;
- To cater for the demands of longer-term population and employment growth, in a sustainable manner;
- To provide reliable and resilient connectivity to international and domestic markets;
- To provide for the safe and most efficient movement of people and goods;
- To ensure value for money.

The following principles will inform the integration of land use and transport planning in the Region over the period of the RSES:

- Supporting compact and smart growth through the achievement of mutual consistency between land use and transport planning, investment, and service provision;
- Strengthening intra-regional connectivity between the metropolitan areas and large towns, and between large towns to improve public transport services and reliable journey times;
- Strengthening inter-regional connectivity through the improvement of inter-urban road and rail connectivity, particularly between the largest urban

centres and access to ports and airports for the movement of both people and goods;

- Protecting the capacity of inter-urban road connectivity in and around the largest cities, ports and airports, through effective traffic management and transport demand management;
- Strengthening intra-regional connectivity by providing for an effective network of regional roads, particularly improved connectivity between large towns, smaller towns, villages and rural areas;
- Providing public transport infrastructure and services to meet the needs of smaller towns, villages and rural areas;
- Developing a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in the three cities and their metropolitan areas and to provide similar facilities in other towns and villages where appropriate;
- Ensuring that future developments are planned and designed to maximise their accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Protecting the strategic capacity and safety of the Region's transport network;
- Meeting the safe travel requirements of all people, irrespective of age or mobility and transport mode;
- Facilitating the role of the private car insofar as this role complements the other modes;
- Facilitating the overall cost of travel in terms of journey time and financial outlay.

The Southern Regional Assembly, together with local authorities, the NTA and other agencies, will seek to apply these principles in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner, taking into consideration the requirements of both urban and rural areas of the Region.



6.3.3.2 | Framework for the Integration of Transport Planning with Spatial Planning Policies

Transport policies and objectives for the Region have a strong focus on:

- Managing and enhancing the national and strategic road networks to address the Region’s intra-regional, inter-regional and international connectivity;
- Managing and enhancing the existing rail infrastructure in the Region to maximise future level of rail services to be sustainably accommodated in tandem with integrated spatial planning;
- Safeguarding disused railway line alignments for possible future use, for example conversion to greenways;
- Providing for enhanced regional and local bus services;
- Improving walking and cycling provision in towns and villages, including the re-distribution of street space and upgrade of public realm and urban design;
- Providing multi- modal hubs, park-and-cycle and park-and-walk for those large segments of the population not living on a public transport route;
- Improving public transport provision in rural areas.



The following table sets out the hierarchy of policies and plans against which transport policy in the Region is formulated and implemented.

Table 6.1 | Hierarchy of Transport Policy

International	Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Trans-Boundary Interaction with Northern Ireland
National	National Planning Framework, Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future National Cycle Policy Framework and National Physical Activity Plan
RSES	Regional
Metropolitan Areas	Metropolitan Transport Strategies for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford
County & City	Development Plans, County Walking and Cycling Strategies
Settlement	Settlement Walking and Cycling Strategies Local Area Plans Local Transport Plans Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018-22

6.3.4 | High Quality International Connectivity: the Region's Ports and Airports

As an island nation with an open economy, our airports and ports play a vital role in our competitiveness and international connectivity. With the uncertainties of BREXIT on our economy, our gateways to the world are key to safeguarding our resilience and ability to adapt to change.

Consolidating our port and airport gateways will be contingent on the development and improvement of road and rail infrastructure and public transport services for the movement of people and goods in line with priorities defined through National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy.

The RSES supports actions and innovation that transition our port, aviation and freight sectors to a low carbon future.

RPO 139

Low Carbon International Connectivity

In pursuit of the NPF National Strategic Outcome of High-Quality International Connectivity, the RSES supports actions to transition the movement of freight, ports and airports to a low carbon future.

6.3.4.1 | Movement of Freight & Services

The EU TEN-T network comprises roads, railway lines, inland waterways, inland and maritime ports, airports and rail-road terminals throughout the Member States.

The Network aims to achieve efficient, safe and seamless transport chains for passengers and freight. The Network will enhance internal markets, strengthen territorial, economic and social cohesion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Ireland's Core Corridor under the Network is the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor. There are opportunities for regional connections to the Network.

Under the EU Connecting Europe Facility, funding is allocated to develop the EU TEN-T Core Network and Comprehensive Network in Ireland. The NPF recognises the need to improve land transport connections to the major ports and airports and protect the strategic function of the key transport corridors.

The National Ports policy identifies hinterland connections as critically important to a port's ability to facilitate large volumes of traffic. It is important that reliable and sustainable hinterland connections are part of an integrated transport chain. The policy highlights the potential of the port network to offer multi-modal distribution networks. There is an increased potential for the role of rail freight to and from ports in addition to road transport¹⁷. Optimising the EU TEN-T corridor, integrating efficient movement to and from ports and achieving smooth transition between ports and Metropolitan Areas is a key priority.

The opportunities to strengthen rail freight through the Region is recognised and supported by the RSES. Limerick Junction for example, is an important regional asset interconnecting Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford rail corridors with potential phase 2 & 3 extensions to the western rail corridor. There is potential to re-instate the Limerick - Foynes Freight Line and potential to strengthen freight and logistics facilities and network at both Rosslare and Waterford/Belview ports. A Regional Freight Strategy can address such rail network assets, future potential and address the issue of potential regional and national hubs for the transport of freight by rail.

17. 2030 Rail Network Strategy Review Final Report October 2011 11.7 The Case for Public Funding of Rail Freight

International Connectivity

It is an objective to:

- a. Sustainably maintain, support and enhance the Region's International Connectivity Transport Network including the Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T) which seeks the development of a Europe-wide network of railway lines, roads, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airports and railroad terminals.
- b. Sustainably maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads and rail network including planning for future capacity enhancements to ensure effective land transport connections to the major ports, airports and markets.
- c. Support the role of our strategic road and sustainable transport networks including connectivity to the TEN-T Core and Comprehensive Network, connecting the Region's metropolitan areas, key towns, ports and airports with the Atlantic Economic Corridor, extended Dublin-Belfast Eastern Corridor and other urban networks as identified through Section 3.8 of the RSES and City and County Development Plans.
- d. Sustainably support infrastructure for electric and low carbon fuel infrastructure along TEN-T Core and Comprehensive Network.

Regional Freight Strategy

It is an objective 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 potential for electrification, lower carbon fuels and technology to be prepared by the relevant stakeholders in 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 delivering a national rail freight and passenger hub in the Region and reinstatement of freight lines on our Region's rail network. 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 shall be considered, as appropriate, in relation to a Regional Freight Strategy.

6.3.4.2 | Our Region's Strategic Port and Harbour Assets

Over 90% of our international trade moves by sea. The State's ports are categorised into Ports of National Significance (Tier 1), Ports of National Significance (Tier 2) and Ports of regional significance.

Tier 1 ports are expected to lead the response to future national port capacity requirements. There is also a role for Tier 2 ports to develop additional capacity - servicing cruise tourism and the ocean energy sector is a core and growing part of their functions. Of the five ports of national significance in the State; four are in the Southern Region - Ports of Cork, Shannon-Foynes (Tier 1) and Port of Waterford and Rosslare-Europort (Tier 2 Ports).

They represent an international gateway to and from Britain, continental Europe and global locations for trade directly from the Region. Cork and Shannon-Foynes are located on the North-Sea Mediterranean TEN-T Core Network Corridor with the Port of Waterford having an active freight rail connection and notable rail opportunities for connection to Limerick-Foynes.

Other ports designated for regional significance and function are important facilitators of trade for their regional and local hinterland. Fishing harbours are also important economic centres within the Region. Table 6.2 lists examples of the port and harbour assets within the Region.



Table 6.2 | Ports and Harbour Assets in the Southern Region

County	Port/ Harbour
Cork	Cork, Ringaskiddy, Tivoli, Cobh, Rushbroke Dry Dock facilities, Kinsale, Bantry, Castletownberehaven, Youghal, Baltimore, Ballycotton, Union Hall, Schull
Clare	Kilrush, Moneypoint, Cahercon
Limerick	Limerick, Shannon-Foynes
Kilkenny	Belview Port
Waterford	Waterford, Dungarvan, Dunmore East
Wexford	Wexford, Kilmore Quay, Rosslare Europort, New Ross
Kerry	Tralee-Fenit, Daingean Úi Chúis

The strategic development of Tier 1 and 2 Ports, ports of regional significance and smaller harbours are addressed as part of the RSES, MASPs, and local authority development plans.

The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford, presented in Volume 2, include further policies and objectives relating to ports and harbours.

RPO 142

Ports

It is an objective 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) and support the strategic role of our Region's port and harbour assets under the National Marine Planning Framework;
- 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 no. strategic development locations adjoining sheltered deep-water in line with the recommendations of the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary and subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA undertaken on the SIFP.
- 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

RPO 143

Ports and Airports

The critical role of the Region's port and airport assets will be protected by ensuring that local land-use policies subject to required planning and environmental processes facilitate and do not undermine their functions and their landside access capacity, subject to consideration of environmental concerns including water quality, flood risks, human health, natural and built heritage.



RPO 144

Port Infrastructure

It is an objective to complement investment in port infrastructure by seeking the sustainable development of improved access infrastructure to ports from their regional catchments, including the promotion of rail access where practicable.

RPO 145

Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region

It is an objective to support the development of a Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region to be prepared by the relevant stakeholders through consultation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports, Local Authorities, port authorities, TII, NTA and other relevant stakeholders. The implementation mechanisms and monitoring structures to be established following the adoption of the RSES will identify the scope and role of the Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region and the appropriate timescale for its preparation. The requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment shall be considered, as appropriate, in relation to a Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region.



RPO 146

High Quality International Connectivity – Ports

It is an objective to achieve NSO: High Quality International Connectivity. The following port development actions are identified, subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and implementation of mitigation measures outlined in applicable SEAs and AAs, while ensuring the protection of sensitive natural environments and the protection of natura sites, the protection of other harbour interests including recreation, tourism and residential amenity:

- Continued development and improvement of ports by the relevant responsible commercial State-Owned Enterprises consistent with sectoral priorities defined through National Ports Policy;
- Continued support for capital infrastructure projects in the Port of Cork's Strategic Development Plan including redevelopment of existing port facilities in Ringaskiddy and preparing City Docks and Tivoli for future regeneration;
- Continued support for the capital infrastructure projects in the Shannon-Foynes Port Company Infrastructure Development Programme including capacity extension works and infrastructure investment towards deep water berthage on Foynes Island and offshore resources;
- Continued support for Rosslare Europort and Port of Waterford (including the port's strategic plan and Port of Waterford Corporate Plans subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in applicable SEAs and AAs) to maintain and strengthen linkages with EU markets;
- Strategic Review of Rosslare Europort;
- Strengthening and maintaining access to ports through enhanced transport networks and improved journey times including support for M11 and N80 improved connectivity to Rosslare, N28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Road and N21/N69 (Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme including Adare bypass);
- Investment in maritime services programmes to support aids to navigation, Coast Guards and pollution prevention activities.



RPO 147

Economic Opportunities of Ports

It is an objective for all ports in the Region to:

- Protect the marine related functions of ports in the Region including landside accessibility to ensure the future role of ports as strategic marine related assets is protected from inappropriate uses. Harness sustainable economic opportunities from the ocean economy and the role of Ports in the region in realising the full potential of the ocean economy. Particular regard should be had to the Government's integrated plan for the marine industry - Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth (2012), the National Marine Research and Innovation Strategy 2017-2021 (Marine Institute Ireland, 2017), and Ireland's Ocean Economy (NUIG, 2017), as well as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Ireland's Programme of Measures; and Ireland's forthcoming National Marine Planning Framework subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA undertaken where necessary;
- Support the role of ports, where appropriate, in facilitating the sustainable development and operation of off-shore renewable energy development;
- Support sustainable and appropriate enabling infrastructure development to harness our ocean wealth at regional and local levels including grid, pier and port facilities to support renewable energy and export potential;
- Undertake feasibility studies to determine the carrying capacity of ports in relation to potential for likely significant effects on associated European sites including SPA and SAC;
- Port development in the Region must adhere to the European Commission guidelines on the Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in Estuaries and Coastal Zones in order to protect the European Sites around them;
- Any economic activity which utilises the marine resource shall also have regard to Ireland's obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) which requires achieving and maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) of coastal and marine waters (comprising both the water column and the seabed beneath it).

6.3.4.3 | Our Region's Airports

The Southern Region has two of the three State airports (Cork and Shannon) and two of the four regional airports (Kerry and Waterford). National policy recognises the importance of aviation to Ireland and is committed to maximising its potential for the wider economy¹⁸.

All airports have a mandate to promote the development of their region. National aviation policy supports the role of regional airports to assist and distribute tourism and FDI business throughout the regions and recognises the challenges they face when located close to larger State airports. The future of these airports are impacted by the EU Guidelines on State Aid to Airports and Airlines. It is important that our regional airports identify opportunities for attracting new business within their niche markets and that long-term viability is identified and supported, in partnership with relevant regional, tourism and industry bodies.

The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASP) for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford, presented in Volume 2, provides further policies and objectives relating to national and regional airports.

RPO 148

National Aviation Policy

It is an objective to:

- a. In line with EU Guidelines on State Aid, seek investment to sustainably deliver actions under National Aviation Policy for Ireland that strengthen and develop the economic role of the national airports of Cork and Shannon and the regional airports of Kerry and Waterford;
- b. Protect the functions of airports in the Region including landside accessibility to ensure the future role of airports through land-use management of land-side areas to focus on the current and future needs of the airports;
- c. To engage with DTTAS to ensure timely delivery of the legislation implementing Regulation (EU) 598/2014 relating to noise.

18. A National Aviation Policy for Ireland, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport 2015

RPO 149

Airport Strategy for the Southern Region

It is an objective to support the development of an Airport Strategy for the Southern Region to be prepared by the relevant stakeholders through consultation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports, Local Authorities, Airport Authorities, TII, NTA and other relevant stakeholders in the Southern Region. The implementation mechanisms and monitoring structures to be established following the adoption of the RSES will identify the scope and role of the Airport Strategy for the Southern Region and the timescale for its preparation. The requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment shall be considered, as appropriate, in relation to an Airport Strategy for the Southern Region.



RPO 150

High Quality International Connectivity - Airports

It is an objective 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 sustainable development and improvement of enterprise assets, access infrastructure, airport infrastructure and services at Cork Airport and Shannon International Airport 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 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.
- c. Support for continued exchequer assistance for regional airports under the Regional Airports Programme, support the role of Waterford Airport and Kerry Airport 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 Airport and Shannon International Airport.
- d. Support strategic route development for airports outside of Dublin and support extension of Regional Airports Programme to all airports under 3 million passengers as permissible under EU guidelines.
- e. Seek strengthened sustainable multi-modal inter-regional and intra-regional transport access to/from airports.
- f. Support sustainable innovative policies to boost the economic role of regional airports including through marketing partnerships with airlines, hotels, attractions and other hospitality and tourism sector stakeholders





6.3.5 | Regional Policy Objectives for the Integration of Transport Planning with Spatial Planning Policies

RPO 151

Integration of Land Use and Transport

The following principles of land use and transport integration will guide development:

- a. For urban-generated development, the development of lands, within or contiguous with the existing urban areas will be prioritised over development in less accessible locations;
- b. Residential development will be carried out sequentially, whereby lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport – including infill and brownfield sites – are prioritised;
- c. Larger scale, trip intensive developments, such as offices and retail, will be focused into central locations highly accessible by sustainable transport modes;
- d. New employment and residential development will be consolidated and intensified in a manner which renders it serviceable by public transport and ensures that it is highly accessible, by walking, cycling and public transport. Within the Metropolitan Areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford, except in limited planned circumstances, trip intensive developments or significant levels of development will not occur in locations which are not well served by existing or proposed high capacity public transport;
- e. Land use development in smaller rural towns will optimise public transport and sustainable travel integration within settlements. Public transport interchange will be facilitated to encourage modal shift to public transport and sustainable travel between settlements and on approach to settlements. The strategic transport function of national roads will be maintained and protected in accordance with national policy;
- f. All non-residential development proposals will be subject to maximum parking standards as a limitation to restrict parking provision to achieve greater modal shift;
- g. In locations where the highest intensity of development occurs, an approach that caps car parking on an area-wide basis will be applied;
- h. Infrastructure for Electric Vehicles will be integrated into developments;
- i. The design of all roads and streets within the urban areas, including suburbs, towns and villages within the 60 kph zone shall be as per the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, being the designated appropriate road design standards for such locations.
- j. The protection of the Natura 2000 networks and the ecological linkages connected to the Natura 2000 network.

Local Planning Objectives

It is an objective to:

- Deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking, cycling and public transport modes, increasing with place context value as per the provisions of the Design Manual for Roads and Streets, to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe, places to work, live, shop and engage in community life;
- Measures to facilitate the complementary use of private car, through appropriate local traffic management including the siting of destination car-parking, is central to achieving the correct balance of modal use;
- Planning at the local level will prioritise walking, cycling and public transport by maximising the number of people living within walking and cycling distance of their neighbourhood or district centres, public transport services, and other services at the local level such as schools;
- New development areas will be permeable for walking and cycling and the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling facilities shall be undertaken where practicable in existing neighbourhoods, to a give competitive advantage to these modes;
- Where possible, developments will provide for filtered permeability. This will provide for walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle access but at the same time will restrict or discourage private car through trips;
- To the extent practicable, proposals for right of way extinguishments will only be considered where these do not result in more circuitous trips for residents accessing public transport, or local destinations;
- Cycle parking will be appropriately designed into the urban realm and new developments at an early stage to ensure that adequate cycle parking facilities are provided and designed in accordance with cycle parking design guidelines;
- For all major employment developments and all schools, travel plans with a strong emphasis on sustainable travel modes will be conditioned as part of planning permissions and be carried out in a manner consistent with published NTA guidance;
- Where space or other constraints prevent the full implementation of the provisions of the Design Manual for Roads and Streets, local authorities should be allowed to make their best reasonable efforts in the interests of providing accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists where inability to fulfil the requirements of the manual might otherwise mean that no accessibility improvement at all could be achieved;
- Support engagement with representatives of disability rights associations by local authorities when planning accessibility works to ensure that the perspective of vulnerable road users is taken into account.

An example of an approach to achieving the above objectives is the '10 minute' settlement concept, whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or are accessible by high quality public transport to services in larger settlements.

RPO 176 in Chapter 7 Quality of Life supports the 10 Minute City and Town concepts.



RPO 153

Capacity of Inter-Urban Road Connections

It is an objective to protect, improve and maintain the operation of the National and Strategic Regional inter-urban road connections within and between the cities, settlements, ports and airports by providing effective policies in Local Authority County Development Plans (CDP), Local Area Plans (LAP) and Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) promoting effective traffic management and transport demand management. It is a requirement for CDP's, LAP's and SDZ's to consider all alternative modes and public transport options in tandem with traffic demand options.

RPO 154

Land Use Plans

Land-use plans shall ensure integration of transport and land use planning informed by the guiding principles expressed in the RPO for Integration of Land Use and Transport Planning.

Managing and Enhancing Transport Assets

The management, maintenance and improvement of the Region's transport infrastructure is a key consideration, to ensure that the safety, capacity and the efficiency of the networks are maintained and factored into the capital funding process.

RPO 155

Managing the Region's Transport Assets

It is an objective that the capacity and safety of the Region's strategic land transport networks will be managed and enhanced including through the management of travel demand to ensure their optimal use. Enhancement to existing land transport networks shall be subject to robust feasibility, route selection, environmental assessment and planning processes that reduce impacts on the environment;

- Promote engagement between local authorities, stakeholder agencies and government departments for effective management of the Region's strategic land transport networks.



RPO 156

Steady State Investment

It is an objective to strengthen Steady State Investment in our existing regional transport networks to ensure that existing networks are maintained to a high level to ensure quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity to transport users of all transport modes.

Local Transport Plans

To give local expression to the regional-level transport strategy and to provide for local implementation of national and regional-level land-use and transport policies across the Region, Local Transport Plans (LTP) will be prepared by local authorities for the key towns, based on the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance produced by NTA and TII¹⁹. LTPs will be based on a clear set of objectives and the most recent demographic and travel information. LTPs will include priorities for each settlement in terms of public transport infrastructure and services, cycle investment, improvements to the pedestrian environment and road enhancements.

The policies, objectives and measures which emerge from the LTPs will be incorporated into the relevant statutory land use plans pertaining to each settlement.

19. <http://www.tiipublications.ie/library/PE-PDV-02046-01.pdf>

RPO 157

Local Transport Plans (LTP)

LTPs will be prepared for the key settlements by Local Authorities, based on the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance produced by NTA and TII and will be focused on, but not limited to, Key Towns as designated in the RSES and other towns as identified by Local Authorities, including towns in metropolitan areas as a complement to Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies and certain other development areas identified within the metropolitan areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford;

LTP's will:

- Maximise the opportunities for the integration of land use and transport planning;
- Assess the existing traffic, transport and movement conditions within the plan area and in its wider context;
- Plan for the efficient and sustainable movement of people, goods and services within, to and from the Plan area;
- Identify the extent to which estimated transport demand associated with local development objectives can be supported and managed on the basis of existing transport assets;
- Identify the transport interventions required within the plan area and in the wider context, to effectively accommodate the anticipated increase in demand;
- Prioritise the delivery of sustainable and active travel infrastructure;
- Plan and target actions for modal shift to sustainable transport modes to facilitate a modal shift away from car dependence;
- Plan and target actions to retrofit permeability for green modes (walking and cycling);
- LTPs shall include the perspectives of vulnerable road users (e.g. wheelchair users) to be taken into account in respect of LTP's;
- LTPs shall be subject to further environmental assessment at local level as part of the Local area plan process;
- LTPs shall take into consideration the DTTAS National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport 2017-2030;
- LTPs shall include provision for infrastructure for electric vehicles;
- Local Link Offices, (Transport Co-Ordination Units) will be consulted in the development of Local Transport Plans.

Rural Development

The importance of development which supports the rural economy and the rural social fabric is of fundamental importance. The rural economy and its social fabric will be supported through the provision of better local connectivity to transport, services and commercial activities located in cities and towns.

RPO 158

Intra-regional Rural Connectivity

It is an objective to seek investment in the sustainable development of fully accessible infrastructure that strengthens intra-regional rural connectivity including rural public transport services as "life lines" which are important routes on the road network connecting communities in remote locations and smaller scaled settlements with larger scaled settlements to access important services.

The Role of Transport in Enabling Access for All

Transport is one of the key policy areas through which social inclusion can be effectively addressed.

The Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport's high-level goal for accessible public transport is embodied in the concept of 'transport access for all'. It is premised on the principle that through accessibility improvements to the public transport system for people with disabilities, access for all people should be improved. Access to public transport services is wider than merely access to buses and stations as it includes getting to and from transport nodes. It includes, for example, pedestrian routes to bus stops, and the bus stops themselves. The role of local authorities and other key stakeholders is critical in this regard.

RPO 159

Role of Transport in Enabling Access for All

It is an objective to seek investment in transport networks and services in the Region that are socially inclusive and provide a quality of service, connectivity and facilities to meet all societal needs disabilities (including mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments) and meet the needs of aging cohorts.

6.3.6 | Transport Investment Priorities

Major transport infrastructure investments identified in the NDP have an important role in enabling the sustainable and balanced development over the period of the RSES.

Proposals for infrastructure investment should clearly demonstrate consistency with spatial planning objectives, at regional and national level.

The management, maintenance and improvement of existing transport infrastructure is a key consideration, to ensure that the safety, capacity and efficiency of networks is maintained and factored into the capital funding process.

The RSES' Transport Investment priorities are presented below, under the following headings:

- Over-arching Objectives to Promote Sustainable Mobility;
- Regional Cities – Cork, Limerick, Waterford;
- Road Network;
- Rail;
- Bus;
- Rural Transport;
- Walking and Cycling;
- International Connectivity (see Section 6.3.4 above).



6.3.6.1 | Sustainable Mobility

RPO 160

Smart and Sustainable Mobility

It is an objective to deliver on NSO: Sustainable Mobility subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes. This includes the following sustainable mobility investment actions:

- Seek investment in initiatives that leverage intelligent transport systems and smart transport services, which would include real time information for all transport systems;
- Recognise the importance of public transport networks and multi-modal interchange;
- Support Steady State Investment to maintain and upgrade the existing road, rail and bus networks to provide a quality service to transport users;
- Support initiatives under the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to reduce congestion in our Region's cities primarily by enhancing sustainable travel options through Smarter Travel projects that include traffic management, bus priority, urban cycling and urban walking routes;
- Continued investment in bus and rail fleets;
- Reduction in the use of fossil fuels for public transport and increasing use of technology and green energy sources to pursue low emission public transport fleets;
- Delivery of the strategic bus network programmes for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford metropolitan areas (initiatives identified as Bus Connects in the NDP) including associated customer services and facilities;
- Investments to facilitate park-and-ride and multi-modal travel;
- Delivery of sustainable comprehensive cycling and walking networks with an emphasis on Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford metropolitan areas;
- Support and investigate the feasibility of sustainable water transportation services for Cork Harbour, Shannon Estuary and Waterford Harbour.

RPO 161

Smart Mobility

It is an objective to support the transformative potential of E- Mobility, autonomous vehicles, Mobility as a Service transport solutions and other emerging innovations in the transport and mobility sector through transport planning at regional, metropolitan and local level. Seek investment in actions and initiatives that position the Region as a leader in the digital transformation of transportation, E-Mobility and sustainable mobility.

RPO 162

Multi-Modal Travel Integration

It is an objective to deliver on sustainable mobility. Investment is sought in infrastructure to provide for integration between all modes of transport to support the use of sustainable travel choices. Further details will be developed and progressed through Metropolitan Area Transport Plans, Local Transport Plans, in City/ County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and SDZ's. Options to consider include:

- Bike and Ride facilities;
- Park and Cycle facilities;
- Park and Car Pool facilities;
- Public bicycle sharing facilities;
- Car sharing (GoCar type);
- Integration of cycling and public transport;
- Carriage of bicycles on trains and (selected) buses;
- Integrated ticketing to include bike and car sharing;
- Integrated ticketing/cards across bike sharing, bus use, train use and car sharing;
- Investigate the feasibility of Mobility Hubs for major developments or multi-developments sharing the facility;
- The feasibility of e-scooter schemes.

RPO 163

Sustainable Mobility Targets

It is an objective that:

- a. Through effective integration of land-use and transport planning, implementation of RPOs in the RSES and MASPs and actions driven through Development Plan, Local Area Plan, Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies and Local Transport Plans, significant progress is sought for the Southern Region to reduce the modal share of private car travel and increase the modal share of travel by walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing;
- b. Support the function of Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies and Local Transport Plans to achieve higher rates of modal shift to sustainable transport;
- c. National Smarter Travel Targets are supported which seek to achieve a reduction of work-related commuting by private car to 45% of modal share by 2020 and commuting by walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing to 55% of modal share by 2020. Such targets are nationwide average targets and higher achievement under lower tiered plans such as for metropolitan areas are supported;
- d. Targets identified across Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies and Local Transport Plans shall be informed by an evidence base of existing performance and will include the identification of actions to help achieve higher performance in modal shift to sustainable mobility. Targets will be reviewed and strengthened for a higher performance continually through effective implementation and monitoring;
- e. Local Authorities to set complementary sustainable mobility targets in development plan reviews;
- f. Greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging mixed use developments on regeneration sites within the city and suburbs through supportive development plan policies to encourage sustainable mobility trip patterns.



6.3.6.2 |

Preparation of Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies

Metropolitan area transport strategies are being prepared for the Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford metropolitan areas.

They aim to inform the integration of land use and transport planning and investment in transport infrastructure and services over the short (5yrs), medium (10yrs) and longer terms (20yrs). These strategies will complement and support the achievement of MASP objectives and will be subject a five-yearly review.

High-level transport investment priorities for the Region's three metropolitan areas are set out below, to be taken into consideration in the preparation of the metropolitan area transport strategies.

RPO 164

Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies

It is an objective to develop Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford by the NTA, TII, Local Authorities and relevant stakeholders integrating priorities for the metropolitan areas identified in the RSES Regional Transport Strategy and support investment in actions under these strategies subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes for the sustainable development of transport infrastructure and services in the metropolitan areas over a 20-year period. Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies shall undergo SEA and AA as per NPF objective NPO75.



RPO 165

Higher Densities

Local Authorities, through appropriate Development Plan policies shall ensure the consolidation of development at higher densities within existing urban centres and provision of permeability (improved for existing areas and included in any new development), with a focus on locations where it can be demonstrated that such development supports the use of walking, cycling and public transport.



6.3.6.3 | Transport Priorities for the Cork Metropolitan Area

Transport investment will be identified and prioritised through the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS).

The following transport investment objectives have been identified for consideration, in the preparation of the transport strategy subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

(A) The development of an enhanced metropolitan area-wide public transport system, including:

- A high capacity public transport corridor (potential for a light rail corridor subject to appraisal, planning and design stages) providing for long-term growth of the metropolitan area on an east-west axis. Immediate priority must be given to advance route selection and preliminary design;
- Infrastructure for Cork Docklands and Tivoli;
- Prioritise buses over car traffic - the delivery of several high-quality bus corridors through the strategic bus network investment programme, connecting the city centre with the city suburbs/environs and surrounding metropolitan area (see the CMATS for details);
- Investment in the existing rail network for intercity and commuter rail movement with consideration to additional stations, higher service frequencies and greater opportunities for interchange with other modes, including bus, car and bicycle;
- Targeted improvement of arterial routes within the City and its environs to enable the delivery of higher bus service frequencies and improved journey time reliability;
- Development of park-and-ride facilities to enable interchange between car and bus or rail services and bike-and-ride facilities with bicycle stations for overnight storage for public transport commuters;
- Orbital public transport services to connect the city hinterlands strategic employment locations.

(B) The improvement of accessibility to the City Centre through a range of traffic management and infrastructure improvements, with an emphasis on improving:

- The operation of public transport services into and through the City Centre;
- Infrastructure servicing the Cork Docklands and Tivoli;
- Local traffic management and the location/management of destination car parking;
- The improvement of walking and cycling accessibility into and within the City Centre;
- Implementation of the Cork City movement strategy.

(C) The maintenance and enhancement of the strategic road network (including national roads), catering for transport demand within the Metropolitan Area, for improved inter-urban/inter-regional connectivity/ reduced journey times, and for the improved access to international gateways (including the Port of Cork and Cork Airport), supported by the RSES for improved connectivity within the Metropolitan Area through the following projects subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

- Delivery of the Government's current and proposed national road network improvement schemes relating to the Cork Metropolitan Area and associated inter-urban connecting roads;
- Advancing orbital traffic management solutions through the implementation of appropriate demand management measures on the N40 and provision of alternative local roads, as necessary. Specific measures should not be introduced in isolation, but only after due consideration of the impacts on access and movement across the city and suburbs and in parallel with the introduction of appropriate alternatives to service affected traffic movements;
- Enhanced regional connectivity through improved average journey times by road to Limerick and Waterford via the proposed M20 Limerick to Cork and the targeted enhancement of the N25 between Cork and Waterford;
- Cork Northern Ring Road connecting the N22 to the M8, identified by the NDP as a complementary scheme to the M20;
- Improved connectivity from Cork City to Cork Airport including N27 dedicated public transport corridor;

- Dunkettle Interchange;
- Improved connectivity to Ringaskiddy via N28/M28 scheme;
- Cork Northern Distributor Road;
- Cork Docklands and Tivoli Bridge and street infrastructure, including Eastern Gateway Bridge, a key enabler for Cork under the NPF;
- N27 Cork to Cork Airport dedicated public transport corridor;
- Improved N22, N25, N27, N71 inter-regional and intra-regional corridors;
- Upgrade of the R624 Regional Road linking N25 to Marino Point and Cobh;
- Upgrade of the R630 Regional Road linking Midleton to Whitegate Road (Energy Hub);
- Cork Science and Innovation Park Access, a key enabler for Cork under the NPF;
- Transport packages, including road upgrades, relief roads, enhanced public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure for metropolitan towns and urban expansion areas;
- Advancing transport study measures for Little Island as a holistic approach comprising all modes, including cycling and effective management of car access and parking facilities.

All measures shall have due consideration of the impacts on access and movements across the City and suburbs and, in parallel any planned works to the strategic road network will also consider the potential for improvement to sustainable transport.

(D) The optimal use of the intercity and commuter rail network, connecting Cork at a metropolitan, regional and national level, in catering for the movement of people and goods through interventions including:

- The development of new commuter rail stations in Metropolitan Cork (see the CMATS for details), including upgrading existing and new stations on a network serving Blarney/Stoneview (park-and-ride station), Monard, Blackpool/Kilbarry, Kent Station, Tivoli Docks, Dunkettle (park-and-ride station), Little Island, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill West, Carrigtwohill, Water Rock, Midleton, Fota, Carrogaloe, Ballynoe, Rushbrooke and Cobh;
- Kent Station as a key node with through running of suburban services, interchange with the Light Rail Transit network, improved signalling, bridge access to the South Docks, improved rail journey times to Dublin and consideration of direct network connections;
- The Dublin to Limerick Junction/Cork rail lines are subject to an examination to move to higher

speeds and/or electrification, leading to improved connectivity and journey times to regional cities. An evaluation of the economic benefits of high-speed rail for the Dublin-Belfast, Dublin-Limerick Junction and Dublin-Cork lines against improvements to existing line speeds will be carried out against relevant appraisal processes and value-for-money tests;

- Through the NDP, the ongoing development of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and enhancements to the commuter rail service, including additional stations and rail fleet;
- Support the feasibility of converting the heavy rail commuter services to light rail services which can be flexible for extension of services and future integration with city light rail.

(E) The development of a metropolitan-wide cycle network focused on the City, its environs and metropolitan area towns, and connectivity between the City and its metropolitan area towns, catering for a range of journey purposes:

- Support the provision of segregated walkways and cycleways;
- Support the delivery of east-west greenway through the city centre, connecting major employment/education hubs to large commuter towns like Ballincollig and Carrigaline (Lee to See Greenway);
- Support walking and cycle connectivity and infrastructure to amenities such as Ballincollig Regional Park from the city centre;
- Support walking and cycling connectivity and infrastructure connecting the Cork Docklands and Tivoli regeneration areas to the city centre and other strategic employment locations.



6.3.6.4 | Priorities for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

Transport investment by the Government Departments, NTA and other agencies, will be identified and prioritised through the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS).

The following transport investment objectives have been identified for consideration in the preparation of the transport strategy subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

(A) The preparation of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy and associated implementation plan

(B) The development of an enhanced citywide public transport system with enhanced accessibility from the City Centre to the National Technological Park, Raheen Industrial Park, UL and Shannon International Airport

(C) The improvement of accessibility to the City Centre through effective traffic management, reduced congestion and the improvement of modal choice. Development of a strategic metropolitan-wide cycle network with several high capacity flagship routes catering for a range of journey purposes

(D) The maintenance and enhancement of the national roads network, catering for transport demand within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, for improved inter-urban/ inter-regional connectivity/ reduced journey times and for improved

access to international gateways, including Shannon International Airport and Shannon-Foynes Port, through:

- Delivery of the Government's current and proposed national road network improvement schemes relating to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and associated inter-urban connecting roads;
- The maintenance and optimisation of the strategic road network's capacity and utility, through the implementation of appropriate demand management measures;
- Support for intra-regional connectivity with the metropolitan area, enhanced regional connectivity through improved average journey times by road to Cork and Waterford via the proposed M20 Limerick to Cork and the possible enhancement of the N24 between Limerick and Waterford;
- To support inter-regional connectivity with the metropolitan area, enhanced road connectivity to Shannon- Foynes Port, including local by-passes via Foynes to Limerick (including Adare bypass) National Road Scheme. Maintenance of transport connectivity to Shannon International Airport;
- Any planned works to the strategic road network will also consider the potential for improvement to sustainable transport.

(E) The Metropolitan Area local authorities have identified the requirement for the enhancement of regional and local roads network for improved connectivity within the Metropolitan Area through the following projects subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

- Limerick Northern Distributor Route (LNDR) regional road project;
- Improved accessibility to Limerick Southside including the possible provision of a motorway interchange connection from the M20/M7 to Limerick Southside, subject to robust appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes;

- Upgrade of arterial roads from the motorway network to increase capacity including the provision of public transport infrastructure and park-and-ride, including R527 Dock Road, R445 Dublin Road, including Junction 28 and R527 Tipperary Road.

(F) The optimal use of the rail network including:

- Connecting Limerick at a regional and national level to cater for the movement of people and goods;
- Development and promotion of existing intercity rail and commuter links between Limerick and Dublin, Cork, Galway, together with Ennis, Nenagh, Thurles and Clonmel;
- The commuter rail line between Limerick and Nenagh and onward intercity line to Ballybrophy is recognised as an important public transportation link to the wider area and the RSES supports its upgrade and enhancement;
- The ambition to create a rail link between Limerick City and Shannon International Airport;

- Investigation of the possible re-instatement of the Limerick to Foynes rail line, linking Ireland's deepest port to the national rail network;
- Improved rail journey times to Dublin and consideration of onward direct network connections. The Dublin to Limerick Junction/Cork rail lines are subject to an examination to move to higher speeds and/or electrification, leading to improved connectivity and journey times to regional cities. An evaluation of the economic benefits of high-speed rail for the Dublin-Belfast, Dublin-Limerick Junction and Dublin-Cork lines against improvements to existing line speeds will be carried out against relevant appraisal processes and value-for-money tests.

(G) The development of a metropolitan-wide cycle network focused on the City/environs, with several high capacity routes, catering for a range of journey purposes



6.3.6.5 | Priorities for the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

Transport investment by the Government Departments, NTA and other agencies, will be identified and prioritised through the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (WMATS).

The following transport investment objectives has been identified for consideration in the preparation of the transport strategy subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

(A) The preparation of a Waterford Metropolitan Transport Strategy and associated implementation plan

(B) The improvement of accessibility to the City Centre through effective traffic management, reduced congestion and the improvement of modal choice

(C) Support the delivery of the North Quays SDZ regeneration project for integrated sustainable development through the provision of supporting transport infrastructure and services

(D) The provision of a citywide public transport system, with:

- Enhanced accessibility to the City Centre and key destinations such as WIT & Waterford University Hospital, from within the City/Environs area, and nearby towns, including Tramore;
- Improved cross-city connectivity between the City/environs (south of the River Suir) and the North Quays SDZ/ Ferrybank area;



(E) The maintenance and enhancement of the national roads network, catering for transport demand within the Waterford Metropolitan Area, for improved inter-urban / inter-regional connectivity/ reduced journey times and for improved access to international gateways, including Port of Waterford, Rosslare-Europort and Waterford Airport, through:

- Delivery of the Government's current and proposed national road network improvement schemes relating to the Waterford Metropolitan Area and associated inter-urban connecting roads;
- The maintenance and optimisation of the strategic road network's capacity and utility, through the implementation of appropriate demand management measures;
- Support for inter-regional connectivity with the Metropolitan Area, enhanced regional connectivity through improved average journey times by road to Cork and Limerick via targeted improvements of the N25 between Cork, Waterford and Wexford and the possible enhancement of the N24 between Limerick and Waterford;
- Any planned works to the strategic road network will also consider the potential for improvement to sustainable transport.

(F) The optimal use of the rail network, connecting Waterford at a regional and national level, to cater for the movement of people and goods

(G) The development of a metropolitan-wide cycle network, focused on the City/environs, catering for a range of journey purposes, including the development of strategic cycle routes and the extension of the Waterford Greenway to link WIT to the City Centre.





6.3.6.6 | Road Network

The quality of the strategic road network and connectivity to it has been substantially improved over the last two decades.

The NPF sets out the importance of maintaining, improving and protecting the strategic function of the key transport corridors.

The steady-state maintenance and safety of the National Roads network is critical to ensure that the existing extensive transport networks are maintained to a high level and to ensure high-quality levels of service, accessibility and connectivity for transport users.

Additionally, investment in maintaining regional and local roads and strategic road improvement projects in urban areas to unlock development opportunities in rural areas to ensure access to critical services and to support road based public transport is a key RSES priority. These schemes should be developed in accordance with the Guidelines on a Common Appraisal Framework for Transport Projects and Programmes for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and appropriate sanctioning authorities. Confirmation of consistency with the RSES should be a requirement in advance of a road authority seeking development consent for a road scheme.

RPO 166

Investment in Strategic Inter Regional Multi-Modal Connectivity to Metropolitan Areas and Economic Corridors

It is an objective to:

- a. Achieve and maintain the sustainable development of infrastructure that strengthens the quality of inter-regional connectivity between the metropolitan areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford to each other and to other regions on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, extended Dublin-Belfast Eastern Corridor and to ports and airports
- b. Strengthen the quality of Cork to Limerick connectivity (proposed M20 and Rail), Cork to Waterford connectivity (N25) and rail and Limerick to Waterford connectivity (N24 Cahir to Limerick Junction and N24 Waterford to Cahir and rail) as identified in the NDP.
- c. Maintain the efficiency and safety of the existing national primary and secondary roads network by targeted transport demand management and infrastructure improvements.
- d. Facilities for sustainable transport are supported in strengthening the quality of inter-regional connectivity

National Road Projects

It is an objective for the provision of National Road Projects to be delivered during the period up to 2027 to achieve NSO: Enhanced Regional Accessibility subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes are supported.

Under this RPO, where works to any part of the strategic road network are supported, the potential for improved sustainable transport shall be considered. The potential for nature-based design solutions for mitigation design shall be considered.

Part (A) Projects Identified Under the NDP Including Pre-Appraisal Stages

The following National Road Related Schemes and Projects under Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan for National Roads are supported:

- M20 Limerick to Cork Scheme
- N8/N25 Dunkettle Road Interchange
- N69 Listowel bypass
- N28 Cork to Ringaskiddy
- N21/N69 Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme (including Adare bypass)
- N22 Ballyvourney to Macroom
- N20 Mallow Relief Road
- N25 New Ross Bypass
- N11 Gorey to Enniscorthy including N30 link
- N86 (Tralee to An Daingean)

The progression of the following National Road Projects at pre-appraisal stages to achieve NSO: Enhanced Regional Accessibility, subject to robust feasibility studies and site/ route selection to reduce impacts on the environment and required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

- N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare
- N21 Newcastle West bypass
- N21 Abbeyfeale bypass
- N22 Farranfore to Killarney
- N24 Waterford to Cahir/Cahir to Limerick Junction
- N25 Waterford to Glenmore
- N25 Carrigtwohill to Middleton

Part (B) Other Projects

Under this RPO, for identified strategic road network improvements not included in the current NDP for the period 2018-2027, RSES seeks that:

- Government's current priorities remain in accordance with National Development Plan 2018-2027 priorities only;
- Improvements to national roads identified at a regional and local level will be done in consultation with and subject to agreement with TII in accordance with current project appraisal, environment and planning procedures;

DTTS/TII may not be responsible for the funding of any such schemes or improvements.

The provision of the following projects are also supported as strategic regional priorities to achieve NSO Enhanced Regional Accessibility subject to the recommendations of the three MASPs, the preparation of associated Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies and the preparation of Local Transport Plans for key settlements and other urban centres where applicable. These measures are also subject to robust feasibility studies and site/route selection to reduce impacts on the environment and required appraisal, planning and environmental processes:

- Cork Northern Ring Road (CNRR) is a complementary scheme to the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme, identified in the NDP. It has been assessed as part of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS). It is expected that the CNRR project will be planned for implementation during the latter period of the CMATS. The finalisation of a route corridor and its protection from development intrusion is an objective of CMATS to allow for changing circumstances including potentially an earlier project delivery requirement;
- N27 Cork-Cork International Airport
- N40 Junction improvements at Curraheen for CSIP
- Limerick Southside Accessibility Project M20/M7 Interchange
- Limerick Northern Distributor Route (LNDR) connect N18 to M7
- Upgrade and improve the N24 Limerick to Waterford Corridor
- New interchange M18 Quin Road Ennis
- Improvements N71, N72, N73, N77, N78 Corridors
- Improvements to N30 (including Clonroche By Pass)
- Upgrade N80 Enniscorthy to Carlow and Midlands
- Upgrade and improve N29-access to Port of Waterford Belview
- Upgrade N62 Horse and Jockey to Thurles, to connect with M7 and M8
- N67/N85 Blakes Corner Ennistimon
- N85 Kilnamona Road Improvement Scheme

Investment in Regional and Local Roads

The following regional and local road and transport measures will be progressed to achieve NSO: Enhanced Regional Accessibility subject to the recommendations of the three MASPs, the preparation of associated Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies and the preparation of Local Transport Plans for key settlements and other urban centres where applicable. These measures are also subject to robust feasibility studies and site/ route selection to reduce impacts on the environment and required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes.

Under this RPO, where works to any part of the strategic road network are supported, the potential for improved sustainable transport shall be considered. The potential for nature-based design solutions for mitigation design shall be considered.

Part (A) Projects Identified Under the NDP Including Pre-Appraisal Stages

- Shannon Crossing
- Dingle Relief Road
- Coonagh to Knockalisheen Main Contract
- Realignment of R498 Nenagh/Thurles road at Latteragh
- Killaloe Bypass/R494 upgrade
- Carrigaline Western Distributor Road

Examples of projects currently subject to appraisal are set out below:

- Thurles Relief road
- Tralee Northern Relief Road
- Carlow Southern Relief Road (N80-R448)
- Abbey Road to Belmont Link Road – Ferrybank

Part (B) Other Projects

Under this RPO, for identified strategic road network improvements not included in the current NDP for the period 2018-2027, RSES seeks that:

- Government's current priorities remain in accordance with National Development Plan 2018-2027 priorities only

- Improvements to roads identified at a regional and local level will be in accordance with current project appraisal, environment and planning procedures

DTTS/TII may not be responsible for the funding of any such schemes or improvements;

- New or improved orbital routes on the Northern and Southern sides of Cork City
- The Cork Northern Distributor Road
- Upgrade of the R624 Regional Road linking N25 to Marino Point and Cobh and designation to National Road Status
- Upgrade of the R630 Regional Road linking Midleton to Whitegate Road (Energy Hub) and designation to National Road Status
- Upgrading the R586 Regional Road from Bandon to Bantry via Dunmanway and support for designation to National Road Status
- Upgrading of the R572 linking Castletownbere Port to the N71
- Upgrade of the R558 Regional Road linking Tralee to Fenit Port
- Limerick R527 Dock Road, R445 Dublin Road, R527 Tipperary Road
- R471 access to Shannon Free Zone
- L3126 to Bunratty Castle
- Upgrade R498 Thurles to Nenagh
- Improve access from New Ross to the M9
- Upgrade and improve the R418 Tullow to Castledermot and Junction 4, M9
- Upgrade of the R 672 linking Clonmel & Dungarvan

Refer to RSES Chapter 3 Key Towns for specific strategic relief road projects to enable the potential for sustainable growth, regeneration and enhanced active travel and public transport services to town centres in these settlements.



Local Authorities have identified infrastructure to strengthen regional accessibility and sustainable mobility for Key Towns. Examples include:

- **Tralee:** North and West Tralee Relief Roads, R558 Tralee to Feint Port;
- **Killarney:** N22 Farranfore-Killarney Realignment by pass, Southern and Eastern Relief Road Schemes;
- **Mallow:** Relieve traffic congestion through relief road (Northern Relief Road);
- **Clonakilty:** Northern Relief Road and Western Relief Road;
- **Ennis:** Northern Inner Relief Road linking the Gort Road (R458) to the Tulla Road (R351), link from the Drumcliff Road (L4182) to the Lahinch Road (N85), link from the Drumcliff Road (L4182) to the Gort Road (R458), link from Clon Road (R871) to the Quin Road (R469) and possible provision of a new access to the motorway from the Quin Road;
- **Nenagh:** Upgrade of R498 Nenagh to Thurles Road, provision of a new link road between the N52 and R445 and provision of a new inner relief road from R498 to R445;
- **Thurles:** Upgrade of R498 Nenagh to Thurles Road, provision of the Thurles Relief Road;
- **Newcastle West:** Distributor Road;
- **Carlow:** Kilkenny Road to Wexford N80-R448 (Southern Relief Road); N80 upgrade as a key inter-regional route and link to Rosslare Europort;
- **Clonmel:** Benefits from upgrade of N24 linking Limerick and Waterford;
- **Dungarvan:** Benefits from upgrade of N72 between Dungarvan and Mallow;
- **Kilkenny:** Improved accessibility to the Port of Waterford and Rosslare Europort;
- **Wexford:** Improved accessibility from Rosslare and Wexford to Waterford, improvements to M11/M25 from Oilgate to Rosslare, N30 and N80;
- **Gorey:** Delivery of Orbital Route (avenues) and bridges over rail line identified in the Gorey Local Area Plan 2017-23 - Neighbourhood Framework Plans.

Local authorities plan to progress a range of other regional and local roads projects across the Region. These projects will be selected and prioritised in accordance with the RSES objectives and the hierarchy of transport plans at regional, metropolitan area and settlement levels. These will be developed in accordance with Guidelines on a Common Appraisal Framework for Transport Projects and Programmes from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and in accordance with the general objectives of the RSES.



RPO 169

Strategic Road Network Improvement Priorities

It is an objective to achieve and maintain investment in the sustainable development of strategic priorities in regional and local roads subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and in accordance with Guidelines on a Common Appraisal Framework for Transport Projects and Programmes for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and in accordance with the general objectives of the RSES.

6.3.6.7 | Rail

Rail is a valuable national asset which contributes directly to:

- Enhanced mobility and reduced traffic congestion;
- Regional / national economic & tourism development;
- Reducing carbon emissions and achieving national climate change targets.

The Region is relatively well-served in terms of rail connectivity with radial rail connections to the key urban areas. A National Rail Review identified the achievement of steady state maintenance of existing transport assets prior to investing in new assets as a funding priority. Intercity rail services play a key role in offering sustainable travel alternatives for longer distance trips and improved inter-regional connectivity.

The network is at a competitive disadvantage due to inadequate infrastructure investment compared to the major inter-urban motorway network. An investment programme for the delivery of more competitive rail journey times and increased service frequencies, as a counterbalance to road developments, is crucial.

Fleet and infrastructure enhancements (including longer-term electrification), along with improved frequency and journey times on all rail routes serving the Region will be required to compete with current road-based journey times on the inter-urban road network.

There is scope for further improvements to existing rail services and this will be assisted by the delivery of the National Train Control Centre. A feasibility study of high-speed rail between Dublin-Belfast, Dublin-Limerick Junction/Cork will also be undertaken.

Commuter rail services

Commuter rail services will be enhanced by the concentration of development within railway catchments to support existing and new stations. There is potential for further expansion of commuter rail services based on planned developments along the rail corridor and feasibility.

Freight

The current absence of State funding, capital or subvention, dictates a commercial focus for rail freight which limits its role to niche markets. Experience in other European jurisdictions clearly shows the contribution of rail freight to improved carbon footprint and reduced road congestion. There is potential to develop rail freight, such as the Limerick-Foynes rail link and the development of Limerick Junction for rail freight logistics, and to utilise the existing rail infrastructure at Waterford Port and Rosslare Europort.

6.3.6.8 | Bus

Within all three Metropolitan Areas, continued investment in bus infrastructure and services is a priority for sustainable mobility. Programmes proposed for delivery during the period to 2027 under the NDP includes the BusConnects programme for all of Ireland's cities inclusive of bus corridors, additional capacity and passenger facilities. Metropolitan Transport Strategies for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford will further address strengthening bus networks and services.

Beyond the Region's three cities, bus services are the backbone of the regional public transport system and investment will be focused on improving connectivity between regional settlements and enhancing the reliability and the level of service within key settlements.



RPO 170

Rail

It is an objective to seek to strengthen investment in the maintenance, improvement and strengthening of the rail network in the Region subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process. This will provide for:

- Future proofed infrastructures for rail in our transition to smart transport networks and low carbon society.
- Improved journey times, services and passenger facilities to encourage greater use of rail travel between cities, towns and villages on the rail network across the Region.
- Take immediate actions to transition transport fleets to non-fossil fuel and renewable / low emission energy sources.
- Invest in integrated, real-time, passenger information systems and passenger facilities including weather proofed facilities.
- Optimisation of the existing rail network assets and the protection of these assets for our region's transition to greater levels of sustainable mobility, use of rail and achievement of lower carbon emissions.
- Investment in upgrading and modernisation of fleet, rail infrastructure and passenger facilities.
- Investment in commuter rail stations and services, especially in cities, suburbs and metropolitan areas.
- Investment in bike- and-ride and park-and-ride and multi-modal transport interconnection facilities with rail networks.
- Achieve improved and consistent journey times and frequencies.
- As identified in the National Development Plan, the Dublin - Limerick Junction/Cork rail lines are subject to an examination to move to higher speeds leading to improved connectivity to regional cities through improved rail journey times. An evaluation of the economic benefits of high-speed rail between Dublin-Belfast, Dublin-Limerick Junction and Dublin-Cork against improvements to existing line speeds will be carried out against relevant appraisal processes and value-for-money tests required by the Public Spending Code by 2020.
- Support feasibility assessments and investment in infrastructure to achieve high-speed intercity rail services.
- Optimise rail freight to ports in the Southern Region.

RPO 171

Bus

It is an objective through the functions of the NTA, to seek the development of bus networks in the Region focused on the following subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process, during the period of the RSES:

- Support the development of a bus service network development strategy for the Region through the relevant stakeholders.
- Investment in bus network and service improvements.
- Network reviews for the larger settlements across the Region, with a view to providing improved local bus services.
- Review of bus services between settlements.
- Review of local bus services throughout the Region, including services to small towns and villages and the rural transport programme.
- New interchange facilities.
- New fare structure that fully integrates all public transport modes including bicycle share, car share etc. Such systems need to be easy to use and attractive for commuters to incentivise uptake, including carrying of bicycles on trains and inter-urban buses.
- Enhanced passenger information.
- Improvements to bus waiting facilities and bike-and-ride.
- Support strategic bus networks (initiatives identified as Bus Connects in the NDP) through identification, safeguarding and phasing of strategic bus network Bus Connects routes throughout Southern Region's Cities and metropolitan areas.
- Enhanced rural bus services including Local Link and community bus services.
- Upgrade of bus fleet to low carbon/low emission.
- Buses to be accessible for all.
- Support direct inter-regional bus services between the cities and key access points such as airports.

6.3.6.9 | Rural Transport

The NTA provides rural transport through the Local Link Rural Transport Programme which aims to address rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services.

RPO 172

Rural Transport

It is an objective to expand the development and expansion of the Local Link Rural Transport Programme by the NTA in the following manner:

- Seek further integration with other public transport services, including HSE and school;
- Better linkage of services between towns, villages and rural areas;
- Ensure fully accessible vehicles operate on all services;
- Enhance the customer experience;
- Increase patronage among children and young people;
- Encourage innovation in the service.

Investment in the quality of the road network along tourism corridors is important to ensure that visitors, both domestic and international, are assured a safe and good standard of connectivity, helping to generate economic activity across our urban and rural tourism locations.

RPO 173

Tourism Corridors

It is an objective to invest in the sustainable development of infrastructure and service improvements on the transport networks along our Region's key tourism corridors, subject to robust feasibility studies to reduce impacts on the environment and required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes, including the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartland Corridors.





6.3.6.10 | Walking and Cycling

Active walking and cycle infrastructure will support active health initiatives and healthy communities, encourage transition to sustainable modes of travel, promote sustainable mobility and significantly assist our transition to a lower carbon society.

RPO 174

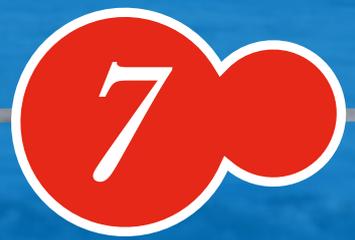
Walking and Cycling

The following walking and cycling objectives are supported and will guide investment subject to the required appraisal:

- Delivery of the cycle network set out in the three regional cities' metropolitan area Cycle Network Plans, inclusive of key commuter routes and greenways subject to SEA and AA where required;
- Delivery of cycle routes, Greenway and Blueway corridor projects (subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes), having regard to the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways July 2018;
- Delivery of high-quality safe cycle route network across the Region and cycling environments (applicable to cities, towns and villages) with provision for segregated cycle tracks;
- Development of a safe cycling infrastructure to cater for the needs of all groups of cyclists, especially new cyclists, school children, elderly etc;
- Safe walking and cycle routes especially in the approach to schools;
- Greenways in the Region shall be linked up to a network to improve connectivity within the Region for walking routes and commuter cyclists in addition to recreational amenity functions;
- Creating a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists off the arterial roads shall be supported by large scale 30 km/h limits (except for main arterial roads) and adequate junction re-design;
- A cycle network that is coherent, continuous and safe, particularly when going through busy junctions;
- Alternative "quiet" routes must be established and signposted for cycling and walking to improve the experience and uptake of active travel;
- All significant development proposals shall be required to provide a Quality Audit, as referred to in the Design Manual for Roads and Streets;
- Place walkability and accessibility by walking mode as a central objective in the planning and design of all new developments/new development areas, transport infrastructure and public transport services;
- Enhance pedestrian facilities in all urban areas in the region;
- Support sustainable pedestrian and cyclist greenway initiatives and the potential for inter connections between greenways subject to robust site selection processes and environmental assessment processes;
- Support accessibility to walking routes for people with disabilities;
- A buffer distance shall be maintained between walking, cycling, Greenway and Blueway corridors and from coastal areas, particularly those subject to current and future erosion, as well as rivers and canals to ensure protection of riparian zones; and
- Such initiatives shall commit to feasibility and route selection studies with a view to identifying and subsequently avoiding high sensitivity feeding or nesting points for birds and other sensitive fauna.



Quality of Life



7 | Introduction

Well-being and improving quality of life are core themes in the RSES reflected in the overarching statement covering the following key elements:



7. Diversity, Language, Culture and Heritage Enhancement



8. Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society



10. A Healthy and Learning Region



11. Inclusive International Region





7.1 | Regional Quality of Life

Improving quality of life to build and safeguard inclusive communities and places is central to the ambition of the RSES. This will require significant investment in people and in buildings and facilities as well as improvements in the performance and responsiveness of our institutions and processes.



7.1.1 | Inclusive Communities and Places

Sustainable communities are safeguarded and built up through the development of social principles based on social capital, needs-based access to services and amenities, equity, transparency, democracy and the development of a collective approach to sustainable living. Affordable housing with availability of mixed unit size and tenure types alongside sustainable modes for the movement of people and goods with parity of access by able and disabled people are among the key principles in strengthening and consolidating functioning communities. The RSES fosters successful neighbourhoods based on the best practice model of “10-minute city” concept and smart growth principles for rural places.

The “10 minute city/town” concept is about creating connected communities – understanding how our neighbourhoods work so that we can map out how a more compact and permeable urban form can provide high quality and safe links to public transport, shops, services, green spaces and to other neighbourhoods, reducing the need to travel.

Inclusive communities and places are not conjured up through public policy intervention, nor are they

realised by one-off investment programmes. They occur where public policy listens to the needs of the people and responds accordingly. Inclusive communities are realised by recognising their value, safeguarding their assets and building on the strong foundation - the people - the ultimate custodians and architects of strong vibrant, inclusive communities. The role of public intervention is to provide supportive policies that strengthens the fabric of communities, fosters pride of place and facilitates parity of opportunities, towards achieving sustainable and societally enriching goals.

Local authorities are core agents in placemaking. Greater recognition and investment in arts and culture in our communities, community policing initiatives, age and stage appropriate communities' resources are required to deliver on an improved quality of life and well-being. Imaginative solutions are called for at all settlement levels, for example in rural areas a re-purposed role for post offices.

We are no longer an isolated and homogenous society located off the coast of continental Europe, but globally connected and enriched with a diverse, young and educated population. The requirements for growth set out by the NPF and RSES are substantially based on new people coming to Ireland to live and work. We live in exciting and fast-moving times and our unique proposition as a nation, as a region, is firmly vested in our people and in our collective vision and values.

The RSES supports the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) in their bid to create an Ireland where:

- Development is integrated and determined at a local level;
- Vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities flourish;
- Communities that are vulnerable, disadvantaged or under threat are empowered to overcome these problems;
- Society as a whole is active, democratic and pluralist.

This remit to sustain local and community development in Ireland is based on a set of core values covering social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity, local and community development. The RSES supports the role of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), the Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and other community partnerships in their roles to ensure regional policy responses are meaningful and flexible to cater for the needs of local communities.



Tackling legacies of social deprivation

The persistent nature of social deprivation is evident in locations across the Region, where low educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, poor health and housing, addiction and elevated crime rates result in high levels of people living in consistent poverty, often in a poor physical environment.

The RSES is committed to improving quality of life for all and places a high priority on tackling these legacies through policies aimed at the targeted investment in infrastructure and support for access to public services. Local authorities and other public bodies should work to deliver multi-agency programmes and regeneration projects to address the housing, health, education and welfare needs along with a focus on job creation measures centred on these communities.

RPO 175

Improving Regional Quality of Life through Infrastructure-led Planning

It is an objective to support sustainable infrastructure-led planning for future population and jobs growth in our Region, ensuring the development of social infrastructure in tandem with population and jobs growth, reflecting the RSES settlement strategy and key principles to tackle regional disparities and the legacies of deprivation in the Region. Local authorities should ensure that decision making in relation to new development/infrastructure is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

RPO 176

10-minute" city and town concepts

It is an objective to attain sustainable compact settlements with the "10-minute" city and town concepts, whereby, a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes or are accessible by high quality public transport services by connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services. Local authorities should ensure that decision making in relation to new infrastructure for improved connectivity is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

7.1.2 | Healthy Communities

Physical design of settlements has profound effects on the way we live, affecting our mobility and levels of physical activity.

The true costs of poor design, in terms of negative health outcomes, cannot be underestimated, necessitating a deep appraisal of how we plan for our built environment.

Placemaking and integrating safe and convenient alternatives to the private car into the design of our settlements is pivotal to progressing to more walking and cycling friendly communities. This requires future proofing, to ensure citizens in existing settlements are equally considered, by instituting programmes of retrofit to achieve the same level of access in existing residential areas.

In the face of lifestyle induced illnesses and an ageing population there is an increased urgency in the provision of primary healthcare centres and homecare. Educative and primary healthcare intervention focused approaches, allow gains, both in terms of lifestyle adjustments and tertiary care avoidance, leading to a more cost-efficient and an ultimately less burdened healthcare system.

The RSES supports the implementation of Healthy Ireland in its primary goal to improve health and well-being for people across all stages of life. It also supports the focus on reducing health inequalities through co-ordinated action on Key Risk Factors²⁰ and how different socio-economic groups are impacted, particularly in areas with high levels of deprivation. Local authorities should seek to ensure LECs are aligned with Healthy Ireland and in relevant action areas to address legacies of deprivation across the Region.

Our three cities are WHO Healthy Cities and form part of the Healthy Cities and Counties Network.

Sláintecare(2017)calls for the provision of equitable access to a universal single-tier system. Gaps in the national healthcare infrastructure, in particular the demand and capacity for 24 hour Accident and Emergency service provision, primary care, acute care, maternity care, mental healthcare and social care services and outreach services to rural areas, need to be addressed to meet this objective. The NDP details a range of healthcare service redesign and infrastructure investment. The RSES supports this investment programme, the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan.

Infrastructure and facilities that support the transition of patients to the most appropriate care settings ranging from acute care to primary and community services, are not solely financially prudent but more citizen-centred. The health dividend from a strong and effective primary healthcare system, complemented by education programmes, speaks to the wellbeing of the Region.

In line with the NPF National Policy Objectives 26 and 27 the RSES will support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, through integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.

It seeks to ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

RPO 177

Childcare, Education, and Health Services

It is an objective to improve access to quality childcare, education, and health services through initiatives and projects under the National Development Plan, alignment with Healthy Ireland and support development of outreach and community services for an expanding and ageing population.

RPO 178

Universal Health Services

It is an objective to seek the delivery of better universal health services including mental health, at all levels of service delivery, including provision of 24 Hour Accident and Emergency Services and implementation of Sláintecare for an expanding and ageing population across the Region.

20. As identified in the Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2018 – 2022 – Section 2.

7.1.3 | Diverse and Inclusive Region

For the Region to achieve its growth potential, retaining the existing population base and attracting new population is necessary.

The quality of services and amenities for a **diverse and multi-cultural society** will be a key determinant to achieve this growth ambition. Experience has shown that diverse cities and communities are also successful. Demographic change has helped make Irish cities and towns more diverse and vibrant, with immigration from many different countries contributing to cultural, economic and social diversity. The RSES recognises the positive contribution of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and supports the Government's Migrant Integration Strategy.

The Region's trend towards an **ageing population** will require future planning to ensure positive social integration and to safeguard the vibrant contribution of all age cohorts within our economy and communities. The changing character of **household formation** (trend to smaller household unit sizes) needs to be met with appropriate housing types and associated social and community services. Quality place-making embodying **inclusive and universal access design** principles for our building stock, public realm, amenities and transport services are key for citizens, while adding to the ease and quality of visitor's experience to the Region. The RSES supports the National Disability Strategy and implementation of its guiding principles on equality, maximising participation and enabling independence and choice.

Programmes addressing social deprivation, such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), are required for the most vulnerable and will continue to play a critical role. The role of people involved in volunteering and active citizenship in community building, education and support for individuals and families is a significant and valuable contribution to community cohesion and the common good. This should be supported and enabled by local authorities through for example the provision of community and meeting facilities or equipment.

Social Enterprise

The RSES recognises and supports the diverse range of social enterprises within the Region and their contribution to the regional economy. Key supports required for social enterprise are to (a) identify the supports required for the retention of existing social enterprises, and (b) implement the structures required to support the development of new social enterprises.

RPO 179

Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society

It is an objective to plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society which:

- Recognises the positive contribution of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to multicultural communities and the economic life of an area and supports government policy *The Migrant Integration Strategy*;
- Prioritises parity of opportunity and improved well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the Region including, for example, the LBGTI+ community, travellers and minority groups through enhanced integration programmes, measures to support sustainable accessible communities and the provision of associated services.

RPO 180

Volunteering and Active Citizenship

It is an objective to support the empowerment of individuals and groups in communities through volunteering and active citizenship, recognising the collective contribution of time and effort to the common good. Local authorities and other public bodies and agencies should support active citizen engagement, such as participation in a resident's association or lobby group, or volunteering to help out in a local sports club, caring for a family member or neighbour or simply being active and caring about the local neighbourhood, the environment as well as larger global and national issues.

RPO 181

Equal Access

It is an objective to promote disability awareness and improve equal access for all through universal design for public transport access, housing, social, cultural and recreational facilities and the public realm to improve quality of life equally for abled and disabled citizens in our Region. Local authorities should ensure that decision-making in relation to investment in infrastructure and facilities is informed by engagement with representatives of disability support organisations to ensure that perspectives of those they represent (e.g. wheelchair users) are understood and an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

7.1.4 | Age-Friendly Communities

In December 2019 Ireland became the first Country in the world to become fully affiliated with the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age Friendly Cities & Communities.

At the heart of age friendly communities is an understanding and a commitment to make great places in which to grow old. In response to regional, national, global population ageing, this commitment allows a focus on actions at the local level that foster the full participation of older people in community life and promotes healthy and active ageing. It requires investment in initiatives and infrastructures that care for and value our ageing population cohorts, including the choice of affordable care in the home. The RSES recognises and supports the National Positive Ageing Strategy and the An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy, which will empower people in their own communities.

The National Positive Ageing Strategy has a vision that Ireland will be a society for all ages that celebrates and prepares properly for individual and population ageing. It will enable and support all ages and older people to enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. It will promote and respect older people's engagement in economic, social, cultural, community and family life, and foster better solidarity between generations. It will be a society in which the equality, independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people is pursued at all times.

The RSES supports the development of Age-Friendly communities including support for Independent Living and Community Facilities as part of Smart Ageing Policy and implementation through Local Community Development Committees and in Local Economic and Community Plans.



RPO 182

Ageing Population

It is an objective to support Smart Ageing and National Positive Ageing policies and An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy and ensure that local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing population. Local authorities should ensure that the development of housing, transport, accessibility and leisure facilities/infrastructure is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment of potential impacts from such development.

RPO 183

Digital Strategies

Local Authority Digital Strategies should take account of the ageing population and varying levels of technological know-how and access and should prepare detailed strategies in collaboration with education providers to address training needs and support digital literacy. These strategies should focus on and promote the development of new technologies, interfaces, and methods to address the challenges faced by the ageing population and should prioritise technological solutions that address these challenges. Local authorities and other agencies should prioritise the adoption of technologies that allow for greater access to facilities and services for all citizens regardless of age and technological competency.

7.1.5 | Childcare, Education and Life Long Learning

Valuing all our children calls for parity of access to services, amenities and opportunities. The NPF forecasts that the number of people aged 15 or under, will continue to increase until the early 2020s and decline only slowly thereafter.

The RSES prioritises the provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, parks and sports grounds. Provision of quality affordable childcare places is critical, both developmentally for children and as an effective labour market intervention. Affordability of childcare is a factor, particularly for low income families, and a barrier to employment.²¹ The RSES supports investment, as outlined in the NDP, for the sustainable development of childcare services.

Optimally, schools need to be located within or close to residential areas and along sustainable transport corridors (walking, cycling, and public transport) to avoid car dependency. This is a key factor in the improvement of independent mobility for Ireland's children and teenagers, in line with European counterparts²². While sustainable access is required for new schools and educational infrastructure, a programme of settlement retrofit is needed to facilitate safe walking, cycling or access to public transport alternatives to existing schools. The NDP has committed to investment for primary and post-primary education services. This will support population growth targets under the RSES. The multi-use of school facilities for wider use by communities and co-location of childcare and school facilities is supported under the RSES, alongside initiatives that achieve appropriate and active re-use of old school buildings and lands.

The RSES recognises that long-term unemployment remains the principal cause of the most concentrated forms of multiple disadvantage found in urban areas²³. Initiatives that address urban and rural unemployment black spots and barriers for unemployed young people in accessing skills, education and training development show a region that works to an inclusive agenda. The role of education in tackling legacies due to deprivation, is a key intervention supported by the RSES. The secondary, further education and third level sectors together with Irish language learning infrastructure are part of the wider education and social resources required to be delivered in the Region. These alongside programmes such as Children and Young People's Services Committee Plans, assist in the realisation of ambitions and opportunities for our Region's children and youth.

Further Education

Further Education is organised through the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) which oversees the delivery of continuing education and training for young school leavers and adults. It is also considered a lead contact point for citizens to re-engage with learning, and therefore a key sector for supporting lifelong learning. The RSES supports investment in ETB facilities and initiatives.

Higher Education

The regional proposition is considerably strengthened by the provision of enhanced higher education institutions of UCC, UL, CIT, LIT, MI, IT Tralee, WIT and IT Carlow, all recognised nationally and internationally. Access to high quality higher education locally and regionally enhances the quality of life of all the Region's citizens and facilitates greater levels of third level enrolment and attainment. By improving access to higher education, this can arrest outward migration and encourage significantly greater numbers of people to study and subsequently work and live in the Region.

The RSES explicitly supports the establishment of the Technological University for the South-East (TUSE) and the Munster Technological University (MTU) and other future collaborations between third level institutions to greatly enhance the quality of regional education and enhance the ability of higher education provision to drive regional development.

Regional Skills Fora work in tandem with the education and training providers and business to meet the emerging skills needs. The higher education sector plays a critical role in educating an emerging workforce and servicing the market's need for skills in addition to the sector's core role in Education and Training.

RPO 184

TUSE and MTU

It is an objective to support the further enhancement of higher education provision in the Region through the establishment of two new high-quality universities of international standing, the Technological University for the South-East (TUSE), including development of the Wexford Campus, and the Munster Technological University (MTU) and other future collaborations between third level institutions.

21. *Indecon International Economic Consultants Indecon Report on Support for Childcare for Working Families and Implications for Employment, Prepared for Donegal County Childcare Committee, November 2013*
22. *O'Keefe B. and O'Beirne A. (2014) Children's Independent Mobility on the island of Ireland, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.*
23. *Haase, T. Pratschke, J. September 2017, the 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index for Small Areas (SA)*

New School Facilities

It is an objective to support a planned approach to location of school facilities in accordance with the DoHPLG Guidance document *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System*, such that both proposed locations and existing schools are accessible by cycling/walking from the main catchment areas and accessible by public transport with appropriate safe facilities within reasonable access of public transport and active travel modes. Local authorities should also consider measures that could improve sustainable accessibility to existing school facilities by cycling/walking accessibility or public transport. Local authorities should ensure that a robust site selection process is followed in the selection of new school locations taking into account proximity to community developments such as community centres, playing fields, libraries etc. so that the possibility of sharing facilities can be maximised. New educational development/infrastructure should be informed by anticipation of demand for student capacity and Local authorities should ensure that decision-making is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.



7.1.6 | A Learning Region

Learning plays a significant role in promoting social inclusion, a healthy, sustainable society, economic growth, public safety and environmental protection. The Region is competing globally to build on Ireland's growing reputation for innovation. Ensuring a citizen's skills base, to succeed in life and business, is critical to securing greater economic resilience. The National Skills Strategy 2025 states:

“A well-skilled, adaptable and innovative workforce can underpin improved living standards for all over the longer term. The availability of skilled talented people is one of Ireland's key international differentiators in the attraction of foreign direct investment. It also drives the success of our indigenous enterprise base, from innovative start-ups through small employers critically located throughout the country to scaling firms with high growth potential.”

The World Economic Forum's report *The Future of Jobs*, points to disruptive changes to business models as having a profound impact on the employment landscape over the coming years. Changes will range from significant job creation to job displacement and from heightened labour productivity to widening skills gaps. In many sectors, the most in demand occupations or specialties did not exist ten or even five years ago, and the pace of change is set to accelerate.

It is estimated that 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately work in jobs that do not yet exist²⁴. Given this, the Region's ability to develop, nurture, retain and attract talent has never been more critical than it is in today's dramatically changing world.

The RSES recognises that the establishment of a Learning Region can build pillars of inclusive and sustainable development that will benefit all. Promoting this culture of learning will assist in the continued success of all education and learning provisions and enhance the skills and employment opportunities for our Region's population, through initiatives such as the Regional Skills Fora. While the RSES can provide the strategic support for building a Learning Region, lasting change requires commitment and partnership at the local level. A learning society must be built county-by-county, city-by-city, and community-by-community involving partners in education and beyond, in formal, non-formal and informal learning.

7.1.7 | UNESCO and the Southern Region

The RSES responds to UNESCO's work on Learning Cities and Regions, recognising that responsive solutions are required for a complex, fast-changing world, where social, economic and political norms are constantly redefined. UNESCO defines a Learning City as one which mobilizes its resources across all sectors to maximise the opportunities for lifelong learning for all its citizens.

In 2017, Limerick joined Cork to be among only 28 cities worldwide to be awarded the UNESCO Learning City Award. Limerick and Cork also form part of the Irish Learning City Network and it is an objective of the RSES for Waterford to join this network.

The UNESCO approach to lifelong learning is intentionally city focused. By establishing Learning City structures, these centres of population can act as hubs of development supporting replication of this approach in the surrounding region. By firstly establishing and integrating Learning City principles in all our three cities, this approach can be adopted across the Region.

7.1.8 | Eolas Comhroinnte Obair le cheile / Shared Knowledge Working Together (ECOLC/SKWT)

ECOLC/SKWT is the collective regional approach to development of a competitive knowledge-based society where a framework of the four pillars of higher education, industry, government and civic society work together to harness their collective resources, knowledge and skills. Drawing from experience across the EU²⁵, ECOLC/SKWT can accelerate the transfer of research and innovation into effective actions supporting regional growth and overall regional innovation performance.



24. McLeod, Scott and Karl Fisch, "Shift Happens", <https://shifthappens.wikispaces.com>.

25. In the EU, the collective regional approach ECOLC/SKWT is known as the Quadruple Helix.

7.1.9 | Skills and Talent

As indicated in Chapter 4, the regional economy requires a consistent supply of highly skilled and resilient personnel with an extensive and adaptable talent pool to drive future enterprise development.

There are immediate challenges to address short-term skills needs in support of current economic development. The three Regional Skill Fora align with the SPA areas of the Mid-West, South-East and South-West. The Regional Skills Fora have established strong relationships with employers, education providers, and Údarás na Gaeltachta in Gaeltacht areas to become an effective means of facilitating co-ordinated responses ensuring alignment between education, training and local skills needs. The EXPLORE Programme helps improve participation in lifelong learning.

They are central in improving and enhancing the talent proposition and it is essential they become a permanent part of the education and training infrastructure. Our innovation-based economy requires ongoing upskilling and talent development. The creation of two new

Technological Universities will address gaps in current regional higher education provision; help arrest the outward migration of regional talent by offering greater access to high quality university education locally, as well as strengthening the Region's innovation capacity and capability. The RSES supports the creation of these two new universities.

They will form a critical part of a network of education providers, greatly enhancing access to education across the Region, particularly in lifelong learning.

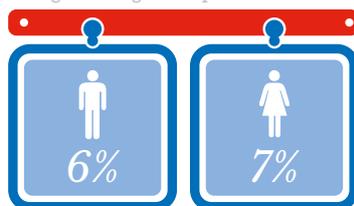
The National Skills Strategy identifies that enhancing lifelong learning, especially for those in employment, is key to addressing a national performance gap. Lifelong learning participation rates in Ireland have grown strongly from the 2015 rate of 6.5% compared to 12.5% in 2018. This compares to an EU average of 11.1% in 2018.

The RSES recognises that lifelong learning and access to a variety of opportunities beyond school, is increasingly important. It is also important to involve employers in the development and provision of learning to ensure its relevance to the needs of the workplace.

Explore Programme

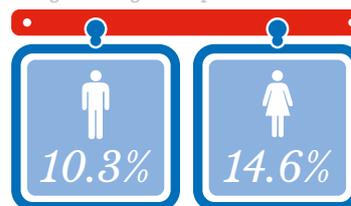
Ireland (2015 Annual Average)

Lifelong Learning Participation Rate - 6.5%



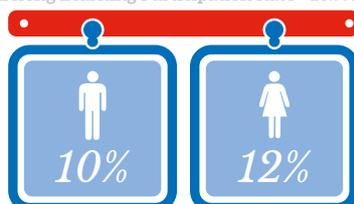
Ireland (2018 Annual Average)

Lifelong Learning Participation Rate - 12.5%



EU 28 (2015 Annual Average)

Lifelong Learning Participation Rate - 10.7%



EU 28 (2018 Annual Average)

Lifelong Learning Participation Rate - 11.1%





RPO 186

Lifelong Learning

The RSES recognises the value and necessity for lifelong learning. It is an objective to support the further development of the Region as a Learning Region, support the expansion of the Learning City initiative to other urban and rural centres of population and support the initiatives of the Irish Network of Learning Cities and preparation and implementation of a Learning Region Strategy.

RPO 187

Education and Training

It is an objective to promote co-ordinated investment in infrastructure comprised of regional education and training providers, local government agencies and industry to facilitate a collaborative approach to regional skills development, aligned to the needs and opportunities of regional economies and to promoting lifelong learning to all citizens. Local authorities should ensure that the development of education and training facilities is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

RPO 188

Regional Skills Fora

It is an objective to retain and enhance the Regional Skills Fora as a permanent part of the education and training infrastructure.

RPO 189

Further Education and Training

It is an objective to increase the investment in addressing our Region's educational and skills needs through investment in the higher education and further education and training sector, recognising:

- a. That the further education sector is a lead contact point for citizens to re-engage with learning and skills development;
- b. The strong partnerships already evident between the training and education institutions and agencies such as the Regional Skills Fora in addressing development and innovation capacity;
- c. The important role of the Education and Training Boards in the further education sector, creating a diversity of skills, education, lifelong learning and enabling access to job opportunities for citizens;
- d. The critical role of higher education in the continued evolution of the Regional effort to identify and address skills gaps, retraining needs, continuing professional development needs, and the future needs for a sustainable, knowledge driven economy.

RPO 190

Lifelong Learning and Healthy City initiatives

It is an objective to:

- a. Foster an interagency approach to integrating Lifelong Learning and Healthy City initiatives across the Region as essential components as exemplified in Cork and Limerick's attainment of UNESCO Learning City status and extend the UNESCO Learning City status to Waterford city, to create a regional knowledge triangle as an explicit aim of the RSES;
- b. Support the Irish Network of Learning Cities and preparation and implementation of a Learning Region strategy.

7.2 | Cultural Heritage and the Arts

7.2.1 | Introduction

Our Region possesses a distinctive and rich heritage and culture. In addition to its intrinsic value, culture provides important social and economic benefits. The management of our built and natural heritage plays an important role in protecting the environment, creating vibrant communities and sustaining local economies.

The Region is endowed with vibrant and diverse cultural attributes across its cities, towns, rural areas and islands. The cultural diversity can be seen in the people and communities of the Region, the art galleries, museums, theatres, our Gaeltacht areas as well as the festivals that bring great life and colour to many locations. The Region boasts a rich tapestry of national monuments, national parks and nature reserves, cultural institutions, historic cities, towns and villages.

In Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) sets out the national framework for arts and cultural policy. The presence of vibrant arts and culture contributes to the attractiveness of the Region for visitors, workers and investors and enhances its reputation internationally.

The RSES will promote and support cultural diversity in our communities throughout the Region, recognising the importance of our cultural heritage, the Irish language and Gaeltacht areas, our music, arts, folklore and games, and cultural diversity to foster a more sustainable future; and harnessing our collective attributes to showcase our Region to the world.

The RSES supports the Creative Ireland Programme/ Clár Éire Ildánach and in its enabling work focussed on the Five Pillars of Creative Ireland/ Cúig Cholún a bhaineann le Éire Ildánach. The RSES also supports the important work at county level, recognising the culture and creativity plans in place for each local authority in the Region. A successful example of a strategic approach to promoting sustainable cultural development, opportunities and innovation is the Three Sisters Regional Cultural Strategy 2016-25 developed for the counties of Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford.



7.2.2 | Enabling Infrastructure for development of the Cultural and Creative Sector in our Region

The implementation of key regional initiatives (including Fáilte Ireland's strategic projects) and programmes supports the strong presence of cultural heritage and the arts in our communities and connection to our built, natural and linguistic heritage.

The RSES supports the development of a network of community arts and cultural hubs providing space for arts and culture in local communities. A good practice example is the Wexford Creative Hub developed by Wexford County Council in association with Wexford Arts Centre that includes working studios, exhibition, retail and workshop space for the creative sector, as well as being a focus point for artists, painters, sculptors, craft makers, photographers, writers, musicians, film makers, and more.

RPO 191

Cultural and Creative Sectors

It is an objective to develop a vibrant cultural and creative sector in the Region as a key enabler for enterprise growth, innovation, regeneration, place-making and community development, health and well-being and support measures under Culture 2025, Creative Ireland Strategy 2017-22 and the Action Plan for Rural Development. Local authorities and public agencies should support development of a network of community arts and cultural hubs.

RPO 192

Cultural Policies and Objectives

Local Authority Development Plans, Local Enterprise Community Plans and Local Area Plans should include cultural policies and objectives supporting the sustainable development of enabling infrastructure including:

- Workspaces for cultural uses;
- Delivery and optimisation of high-speed broadband to support the digital media and remote working;
- Support investment in training and education initiatives for cultural employment opportunities;
- Provision and upgrade of cultural facilities;
- Support the adaptation and bringing back into use of heritage buildings;
- Where large scale housing is planned, to ensure adequate provision is made for a range of community facilities including cultural facilities. Local authorities should ensure that decisions relating to upgrades/re-use of buildings for developments incorporating cultural and creative sector space and facilities are informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment including undertaking studies where regeneration / building projects may have the potential to affect protected species.

RPO 193

Collaborative Regional Partnerships

It is an objective to develop collaborative regional partnerships to:

- a. Enhance opportunities for the development of cultural and creative strategy across county sub-regional boundaries, in conjunction with the Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other public bodies, agencies and government departments;
- b. Seek support and investment towards a vibrant network of local/community hubs, based around the Region as locations for collaboration and creativity.

RPO 194

Arts, Heritage and Culture

It is an objective to advocate for investment in infrastructure and initiatives that develop the role of arts, heritage, culture within our Region and communities and assist delivery of actions under arts, heritage and cultural strategies in our Local authorities, including funding streams outlined in *Project Ireland 2040 Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027* and *Heritage 2030*. Local authorities should ensure that decisions relating to investment in arts, cultural and heritage infrastructure and facilities should be informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.



7.2.3 | Gaeltacht na hÉireann - The Gaeltacht and our Linguistic Heritage

There are five Gaeltacht Areas in Cork, Kerry and Waterford, each with a unique economic and cultural character.

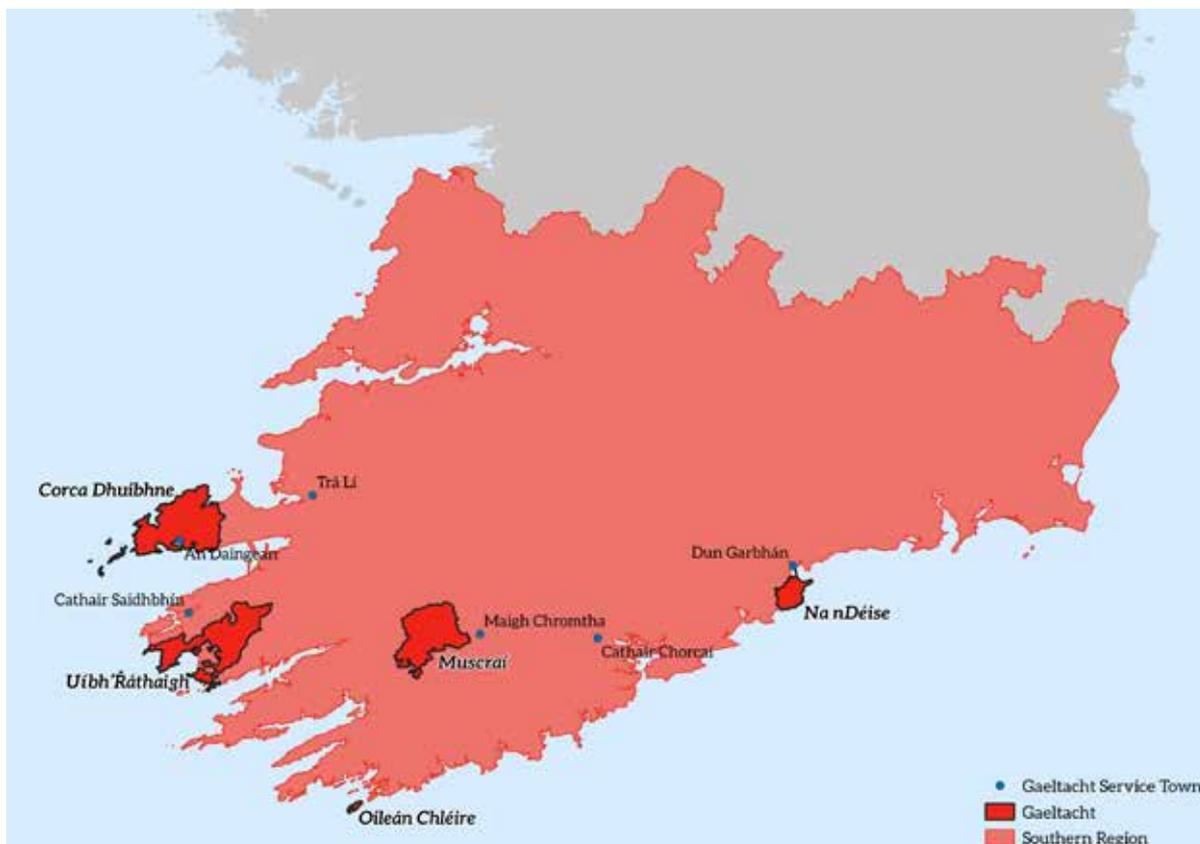
The 2016 Census indicates that the Irish language is strong in the Region. All Gaeltacht areas are served by Údarás na Gaeltachta, the statutory regional development authority with the aim of preserving and promoting the Irish language as the community language of the Gaeltacht. These areas have an important role in promoting the use of the Irish language to the wider community, for example through residential Irish Summer colleges that also bring economic benefits. The RSES supports opportunities to normalise the use of Irish and greater visibility of the language in the naming of buildings, streets, signage and in references to public bodies and agencies.

New initiatives to plan and develop the Gaeltacht areas and use of the Irish language were introduced by the Gaeltacht Act 2012. The key measures include the development of Language Planning Areas (LPAs) and the development of Gaeltacht Service Towns (GST). The designation of GSTs is a recognition of the provision of services required to support Gaeltacht areas including digital and educational resources.

The RSES supports the unique linguistic and cultural heritage of our Region's Gaeltacht areas and supports the statutory functions of Údarás na Gaeltachta under the Gaeltacht Act 2012. The RSES recognises the designation of GST and the location of LPAs in the Region as spatial designations which support the growth and sustainability of Gaeltacht areas. There are five LPAs in the Region - Na Déise in Co. Waterford, Muscraí and Cleire in Co. Cork and West Kerry and South Kerry. The designated GSTs are Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Cork City and Macroom and Co. Cork and Daingean Uí Chúis, Cahirsiveen and Tralee in Co. Kerry. The Gaeltacht Act 2012 places a new emphasis on language planning and each of the LPAs and GSTs are required to prepare a language plan, to be prepared by a lead organisation.

Outside of the Gaeltacht areas, the development of Carlow as a bi-lingual town is significant in a part of the Region located at a remove from the Gaeltacht areas, as is the spread of the 'pop-up Gaeltacht' phenomenon across the country and overseas. There is an Irish Summer College at Colaiste Uí Chomhraidhe in Carrigholt Co. Clare. For places removed from traditional Gaeltacht areas, the Gaeltacht Act 2012 provides for a new statutory designation of Irish Language Networks to which such locations can aspire, providing an innovative new option to build critical mass for the language.

Map 7.1 | Gaeltacht Areas in the Southern Region





7.2.4 | Economic Development in the Gaeltacht

A fundamental role of An tÚdarás is consolidating the economic foundation in Gaeltacht areas. Mindful of the socio-linguistic distinction of the Gaeltacht, an tÚdarás provide measures to promote the Gaeltacht’s competitive advantages for enterprise.

The provision of high quality broadband and mobile communications services is essential to this role. An tÚdarás represents the Gaeltacht areas in the Atlantic Economic Corridor and also performs the role of Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Office in the Gaeltacht. An tÚdarás also supports and co-funds renewable energy initiatives such as the Regional Renewable Energy Programme and the LECO Interreg Project.

RPO 195

Language Plans

It is an objective to support designated lead organisations and other public bodies in the preparation of language plans as the key language planning framework for Gaeltacht development in each of the designated Language Planning Areas and Gaeltacht Service Towns. Lead organisations and other public bodies shall support communities in centralising the position of Irish in society and normalising use of Irish through the development of language plans.

RPO 196

Gaeltacht

It is an objective to support the development of a network of economic and social infrastructure to address the remote locations of the Gaeltacht, including:

- The identification of Gaeltacht areas as economic loci and support for the role of Údaras na Gaeltachta in developing economic strengths and opportunities in the Gaeltacht and mechanisms to support access to employment and social enterprise;
- The development of the Gaeltacht network of digital hubs;
- Support for the development and upgrading of regional enterprise infrastructure and accommodation for the Gaeltacht and provision of appropriately located zoned and serviced lands to support enterprise space;
- Local authorities should ensure that decision-making relating to the development of social and economic infrastructure including the development of communications and renewable energy are informed by an appropriate level of community consultation and environmental assessment.

RPO 197

Irish language Networks

It is an objective to support the designation of suitable locations as Irish language Networks in recognition of community development work in the use of Irish in communities outside of the Gaeltacht.

7.2.5 | Regional Recreational and Sporting Facilities

Our parks, sporting arenas and facilities are essential to the quality of life of all our communities. The quality of recreational and sporting facilities contributes to good physical and mental health, sporting achievement and excellence and to wider social, cultural and economic benefits for our communities.

The RSES supports the development of **new regional-scale recreational and sporting facilities** including new stadiums and provision of public parks and green areas. In addition, the RSES supports the development of new and upgraded **local sporting and recreational facilities**.

Local authorities and partner organisations should seek to provide for a range of open space and sporting and recreational facilities to include:

- Formal open space (passive) as a relaxed setting for visual amenity purposes, for walking, sitting and generally enjoying landscapes and nature;
- Informal (active) open space or recreational areas designed for greater physical movement and sporting activities;
- Access and co-operative arrangements for use of open spaces belonging to privately managed or community/voluntary clubs and organisations and often not readily open for public use;
- Provision for full accessibility to sporting and recreational areas and facilities;
- Sustainable linkages to nearby communities and neighbourhoods including provision of new or enhanced cycling and walking routes.

In conjunction with local sporting organisations, local authorities and other public bodies should work to facilitate the following objectives.



RPO 198

Sport and Community Organisations

It is an objective to support investment in sport and community organisations in the Region through the Sports Capital Programme including development of shared local and regional sports and community facilities by local authorities. Local authorities shall support the vision and objectives of the National Sports Policy, including working with local sports partnerships, clubs, communities and partnerships within and beyond sport, to increase sport and physical activity participation levels locally.

RPO 199

Larger Sports Projects

It is an objective to support investment in the sustainable development of larger sports projects in the Region under the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund. Local authorities should ensure that decision-making in relation to the development of recreational and sporting infrastructure is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

7.2.6 | Development of Trails, Walkways & Linear Parks

The National Trails Office provides development of strategy at national level to stimulate and facilitate the promotion of recreational amenities and the development of new walking and cycling routes²⁶.

The RSES supports this strategy and the development of opportunities for improved access for walking to coastal areas, uplands and urban and rural waterways. It is recommended that competent authorities and community groups follow the principles set out in the Irish Trails Strategy and that the planning and development of walking and cycling routes are informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

²⁶ Irish Trails Strategy, <https://bit.ly/2JqAFQr>

7.2.7 |

Development of Greenways, Blueways & Peatways

The RSES supports the development of Greenways, Blueways and Peatways including initiatives to extend existing routes and links to regional and national networks, ports and other transport hubs. Opportunities to develop new greenways along abandoned or disused railways should still allow for future rail use if feasible at a later stage.

In addition to existing regional good practice such as the Waterford Greenway, examples of strategic inter-regional greenway initiatives are emerging across the Region including the South Kerry Greenway and the North Kerry Greenway with opportunities to connect with the Great Southern Trail in Limerick.

RPO 201

National Trails, Walking Routes, Greenway and Blueway Corridors

It is an objective to support investment in the development of walking and cycling facilities, greenway and blueway corridors within the Region between our Region's settlements and the potential for sustainable linkages to create interregional greenways. Proposals for investment in walking and cycling facilities, greenway and blueway corridors should be based on rigorous site/route selection studies and Local authorities should ensure that decision-making in relation to such developments is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment, including all necessary reports to assess the potential impact on designated European sites and on biodiversity outside of formal protections such that proposed development does not contribute to loss of biodiversity. Local authorities and other public agencies shall seek to promote and support access to rural areas including upland areas, forestry, coastal areas and the development of existing walking routes, pilgrim paths, mountain trails and nature trails in conjunction with other public bodies, representative agencies and community groups and shall identify and protect existing paths, walkways and rights of way.

RPO 200

Green Infrastructure and Recreation

It is an objective to support investment in the on-going maintenance and enhanced facilities in existing green infrastructure and support the provision of new public parks, green space in tandem with projected population growth to create green, healthy settlements throughout our Region. Local authorities shall identify the potential locations of new public parks and open spaces jointly (with neighbouring local authorities) and individually to develop both regional scale recreational open space and local parks and open space. Local authorities should ensure that decision-making in relation to the development of new or enhanced Green Infrastructure and new public parks and facilities is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

RPO 202

Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Built Heritage assets

It is an objective to support initiatives that enhance and protect our Region's unique natural heritage, biodiversity and built heritage assets, recognising the contribution which education and outreach can play in developing understanding of biodiversity and heritage in our communities. Such initiatives should secure funding to support projects in the Region in line with the *National Biodiversity Action Plan*.

7.3 | Environmental & Built Heritage

7.3.1 | Natural Amenities

The Regions' diverse landscapes and seascapes, rich farmland, river valleys, lakes, upland areas, peatlands and our coastline and marine environment, are key assets that demand careful protection.

Other areas, such as national parks and nature reserves, including Coillte forests and uplands, are important natural amenities which provide areas with key natural & recreational assets for local communities as well as being attractive for visitors and tourists. The RSES supports the NPF objectives underlining the importance of biodiversity and the protection of our natural heritage and landscape and these policy objectives are reflected in regional policy objectives.

7.3.2 | National Parks

Two of the six National Parks in the State are located in the Region – the Burren National Park and Killarney National Park.

They are established in accordance with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and are protected under law. The RSES acknowledges their importance to the Region and the need to continually maintain and enhance this amenity in terms of their nature conservation, biodiversity and amenity importance.



7.3.3 | Built Heritage and Archaeology

The Region's attractive streetscapes, built fabric, archaeological structures and monuments contribute to the historic character and appeal of our settlements and rural areas.

The protection of our built heritage and the restoration and re-use of derelict or under-used buildings and streetscapes can provide for a variety of innovative uses such as education, arts and cultural spaces or can be converted into essential uses such as residential accommodation. The restoration of extant built fabric coupled with sensitive new build developments can also add to the vitality of urban centres and attractiveness of places to visitors/tourists and to residents. The protection and conservation of buildings and structures and their settings as protected structures and archaeological (recorded) monuments will continue to be a key element in built heritage policy, with all buildings/structures identified as protected structures or recorded monuments entitled to protection under national legislation.

A key area for the long-term protection of our built heritage is community involvement through programmes, such as 'Adopt a Monument'. Such projects are supported as important links for communities to the built heritage of their area and can also be a focus for tourism projects, which can support community-led employment schemes, local economic development as well as the social and cultural development of communities.

The RSES recognises the value of marine heritage, particularly in our harbours and estuaries and the customs and folklore developed around them. Local authority heritage plans should include appropriate policies and actions relating to marine heritage.

RPO 203

Revitalisation of Historic Cores

It is an objective to promote the initiatives of local authorities, the Heritage Council, local communities, heritage property owners and other stakeholders pursuing the revitalisation of historic cores in our cities, towns and villages. Local authorities should ensure that visitor pressures do not impact negatively on the capacity of local services (including water, waste water) or facilities such as car parking. In this regard, heritage-led initiatives shall consider historical setting /landscape character and potential for negative effects related to visitor pressures. Local authorities should ensure that decision-making on heritage-related projects and developments are informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment including assessment of impacts on other environmental receptors such as protected species.

RPO 204

Better Public Access

It is an objective to promote initiatives that provide better public access for abled and disabled visitors to our historic, built and natural environment. Local authorities should ensure that decision making on projects/ development to improve public access and facilities are informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

RPO 205

Built Heritage

It is an objective to support targeted investment in the built heritage of our Region including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund to assist owners maintain our built heritage assets.



RPO 206

Architectural Heritage

It is an objective to protect architectural heritage in statutory plans including a record of protected structures (RPS) and identification of groups of buildings/localities suitable to designation as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Local authorities should provide for monitoring and review of the RPS and ACAs including measures to prevent dereliction and to support re-use of built heritage.

RPO 207

Archaeological Investigation

Where proposed development may have implications for recorded archaeological monuments /sites, zones of archaeological potential, or undiscovered archaeology, local authorities should ensure that decisions relating to development (including infrastructure associated with broadband, telecommunications and renewable energy installation of services installation and major road/rail infrastructure) are informed by an appropriate level of archaeological investigation undertaken by qualified persons.





Water & Energy Utilities



8 | Introduction

The sustainable growth of the Region requires the planned provision of services and infrastructure which is central to the strategy of the RSES and which includes the requirement for:



9. Sustainable, Planned and Infrastructure-led Development

This chapter sets out requirements for water and energy utility infrastructure to serve the targeted growth of the Region in a sustainable manner and specifically, to service and underpin infrastructure-led delivery of the settlement strategy, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. It is also related to Chapter 5 Environment with relevant objectives for water and energy.



8.1 | Sustainable Management of Water Supply and Waste Water Needs

The Water Services Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018, sets out how the planning system will relate to and inform the planning and delivery of water services by Irish Water (the national provider of public water services) at a national, regional and local level.

Irish Water have a key role in supporting appropriately located development and the delivery of NPF and RSES policies and objectives. The Guidelines require that the quantum, location and distribution of planned development must have regard to the capacity of public water services and seek to make efficient use of existing and planned water services infrastructure.

Key priorities are to ensure targeted investment to enable growth at appropriate locations, and that development is phased such that water services infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner to enable infrastructure led sustainable growth patterns.

In addition to current projects it is anticipated that, subject to availability of funding, a number of significant

water services infrastructure projects will be required within the lifetime of the RSES (and some beyond its lifetime) to support planned development and maintain and improve existing services.

These include but are not limited to:

- Water Supply Project for the Midlands and Eastern Region including key enabling infrastructure to benefit communities adjacent to the pipeline route in accordance with the sustainable approach set out by the NPF (NSO 9).
- Water Supply in Cork City including City Centre, Docklands, Ballyvolane and North City Area, new network to improve interconnectivity between the Lee Road WTP and the city. Provision of treated water storage for the Ballincollig area.
- Western Environs Trunk Main in Kilkenny City to cater for the large future development of the Western Environs of the City.
- Limerick City & Environs PWS to Shannon/Sixmilebridge RWSS Interconnector.
- Wastewater pumping station and rising main from Middleton to Carrigtohill and from Killumney to Ballincollig.
- Cork Lower Harbour Main Drainage Project.

- Drainage Area Plans for Limerick city & suburbs, Waterford city & suburbs, Cork city & suburbs, Midleton, Ballincollig, Dungarvan, Wexford, Kilkenny, Tralee, Killarney, and some smaller settlements.
- Upgrade of Ballina/Killaloe effluent treatment plant
- Upgrade of Nenagh effluent treatment plant.
- Upgrade of Clonmel water treatment plant.

Based on national population growth targets (Volume 3 Appendix 1) and input from the RSES, Irish Water has identified the need to review the projects on the draft investment plan to take account of increased growth rates. Necessary upgrades will be identified in Irish Water’s 2020-24 Investment Plan and subsequent plans (subject to available funding and Irish Water’s additional obligations in addressing environmental drivers and constraints).

Refer to Chapter 5 for RPOs supporting water resources and water quality. The RSES supports the work of the Local Authority Waters Programme to achieve the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plans.



8.1.1 | Water Supply

Irish Water is preparing for the future by developing the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP).

This plan will outline how we move towards a sustainable, secure and reliable public drinking water supply over the next 25 years. The NWRP will outline how Irish Water intends to maintain the balance between our supply from water sources around the country and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long-term. A statutory consultation process will be undertaken in preparation of the Plan.

General initiatives and priorities to enhance water supply will include:

1. Water supply projects in the Region as part of Irish Water’s current Capital Investment Plan, and current Networks and Capital Programme portfolio;
2. Investment in projects under leakage reduction programmes in all counties through Service Level Agreements between Irish Water and local authorities;
3. Water conservation campaign;
4. Protect the source of public and group scheme water supplies by the inclusion of Groundwater Source Protection Plans in local authority development plans and the provisions of future plans to be developed for Drinking Water Protection Areas identified under the WFD;
5. Strategic water services through Irish Water’s NWRP to move towards a sustainable, secure and reliable drinking public water supply over the next 25 years, whilst safeguarding our environment;
6. The Core Strategy approach to development should be phased according to the population and growth projects set out in the RSES and the National Planning Framework and linked to the ability to provide the necessary critical service infrastructure.





..... RPO 208

Irish Water and Water Supply

It is an objective to:

- a. Support the implementation of Irish Water Investment Plans (prepared in five-year cycles) and subsequent investment plans and seek such plans to align the supply of water services with the settlement strategy and objectives of the RSES and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford;
- b. Support the role of Irish Water Investment Plans in taking into account seasonal pressures on critical service infrastructure, climate change implications and leakage reduction in the design of all relevant projects;
- c. Deliver and phase services, subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network;
- d. Local Authority Core Strategies shall demonstrate compliance with DHPLG Water Services Guidelines for Planning Authorities and demonstrate phased infrastructure led growth to meet demands on the water supply, suitability of new and/or existing drinking water sources (for example hydro morphological pressures) and prevent adverse impacts on the integrity of water dependent habitats and species within the Natura 2000 network.

..... RPO 209

Strategic Water Supply Projects

It is an objective to support investment and the sustainable development of strategic water supply projects by Irish Water and relevant local authorities, arising from initiatives including Investment Plans, 25 Year Water Supply Plans for our Region’s cities and metropolitan areas, leakage reduction programmes and initiatives through the National Water Resources Plan subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.

..... RPO 210

Drinking Water Protection Plans

It is an objective to support the development of Drinking Water Protection Plans in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the current and future cycles of the River Basin Management Plans. In this regard, the RSES supports the inclusion of objectives in County Development Plans relating to the provision of mitigation and protection measures for all protected areas, including Drinking Water Protected areas and associated Source Protection Plans.

8.1.2 | Waste Water Collection and Treatment

There is an urgent need to eliminate point sources of pollution caused by untreated effluent across the Region.

The Irish Water Services Strategic Plan (2015), identified 44 settlements discharging untreated effluent, 24 of which were in the Region. A number of these settlements are now provided with wastewater treatment and Irish Water is aiming to upgrade the remaining settlements by the end of 2021. Achieving compliance with the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment (UWWT) Directive is currently the focus of Irish Water’s investment in wastewater infrastructure and is likely to continue to be so in the medium-term. All such interventions incorporate an appropriate provision for future growth.

Irish Water is investing in some 113 wastewater projects in the Region in its current Capital Investment Plan as well as additional projects, included under its Capital Programmes portfolio. Future investment in the next investment plan will ensure Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas and Key Towns should have the capacity to accommodate future growth for the next 12 years. Upgrades of collection networks may be required to accommodate new development in specific localised areas.

The upgrading of 64% of relevant treatment plants in the Region to meet UWWT Directive requirements are included in the current Capital Investment Plan 2017-21, although a number will run into the next investment cycle 2020-24.

RPO 211

Irish Water and Wastewater

It is an objective to support the implementation of Irish Water Investment Plans (prepared in five-year cycles) and subsequent investment plans, to align the supply of wastewater treatment facilities with the settlement strategy and objectives of the RSES and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford. Support the role of Irish Water Investment Plans in taking into account seasonal pressures on critical service infrastructure, climate change implications, and leakage reduction in the design of all relevant projects.

RPO 212

Strategic Wastewater Treatment Facilities

- a. It is an objective to support investment and the sustainable development of strategic wastewater treatment facilities by Irish Water in the Region arising from initiatives including Investment Plans, Strategic Drainage Area Plans subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.
- b. For the management of wastewater, increasing population growth should be planned on a phased basis in collaboration with Irish Water and the local authorities to ensure that the assimilative capacity of the receiving environment is not exceeded and that increased wastewater discharges from population growth does not contribute to degradation of water quality and to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

RPO 213

Rural Wastewater Treatment Programmes

It is an objective to support investment in the sustainable development of rural wastewater treatment programmes and support the initiatives of Irish Water, local authorities, communities and developers in small rural settlements to identify sustainable solutions subject to available funding for such services including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund of the NDP. Investment in Rural Wastewater and Treatment Programmes will be subject to settlement hierarchies and core strategies set out in development plans.

RPO 214

Eliminating Untreated Discharges and Long-term Planning

It is an objective to support Irish Water and the relevant local authorities in the Region to eliminate untreated discharges from settlements in the short-term, while planning strategically for the long-term in tandem with Project Ireland 2040 and the RSES and in increasing compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.

RPO 215

Separation of Foul and Surface Water Networks

Development Plans shall support strategic wastewater treatment infrastructure investment and facilitate the separation of foul and surface water networks to accommodate the future growth of the Region.

RPO 216

Servicing of Rural Villages

It is an objective to support the servicing of rural villages (serviced sites) to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside.

Refer to Chapter 5 Green Infrastructure, Water Quality, River Basin Management Plans for further emphasis and objectives on water, drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems.



8.1.3 | Surface Water

Approaches to manage surface water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution), biodiversity (wildlife and plants) and amenity are collectively referred to as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Storm water flows can have a significant detrimental impact on the available capacity of combined sewer networks and at treatment plants. SuDs and the diversion of surface water from combined sewers should be sought in infill/brownfield sites as appropriate. Early identification of potential brownfield and infill sites in each city by Local Authorities will allow assessment of existing capacity.

RPO 217

Storm Water Infrastructure

It is an objective to support the relevant local authorities (and Irish Water where appropriate) to improve storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in the urban environment.

RPO 218

Sustainable Urban Drainage and Rainwater Harvesting

It is an objective to support the incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) in all public and private development in urban areas. The local authorities shall include objectives requiring the incorporation of SUDs in local authority development plans and Local Area Plans, promote greater rainwater harvesting by households and businesses for the diversion of storm water from combined sewers (where possible), so that within developments and in the wider public realm, opportunities for SUDs and rainwater harvesting maximise capacity to cater for infill, brownfield and new development in sewer networks and treatment plants.

Refer to Chapter 5 for further emphasis and objectives on water, drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems.





8.2 | Strategic Energy Grid

The Region is particularly rich in renewable energy resources and contains significant energy generation infrastructure of national and regional importance, including hydro-generation, thermal generation at Moneypoint, Tarbert, Marina, Aghada, Whitegate and Great Island.

Even with significant energy demand centres, the Region is currently generating more than demand at present. Eirgrid's Grid Development Strategy, Your Grid, Your Tomorrow addresses the overall needs of the system and will increase transfer capacity from the south and southwest to the Eastern and Midland Region. This signifies the strategic role of the Region's energy assets in national energy generation and transmission.

The existing infrastructure, developed over many years, represents major and on-going capital and infrastructural investment in strategic national assets and is essential for the continued provision of a secure and reliable electricity supply.

This is particularly the case within electricity generation stations including Ardnacrusha hydro-station (86MW) on the River Shannon, Inniscarra & Carrigadrohid hydrostations (27MW) on the river Lee and three thermal plants, one at Moneypoint (915MW) and two thermal stations at Aghada (270MW & 435MW). Investment in new renewable energy technologies at these locations will make it more feasible to transition to a low carbon future.

Eirgrid and the French transmission system operator (RTÉ) are jointly developing an energy interconnector between France and Ireland at a location in our Region (the Celtic Interconnector project). There are significant benefits, including an increased competition and increased security in supply. It will help facilitate Ireland's transition to a low carbon energy future and host fibre optics, providing a direct telecommunications link between Ireland and continental Europe.

A safe, secure and reliable supply of energy is critical to a well-functioning Region. With projected increases in population and economic growth, the demand for energy is set to increase in the coming years. In moving towards a more energy efficient society and an increase in renewable sources, there is a need to set a policy approach which will meet national targets for renewable electricity generation, climate change and security of energy supplies.

The RSES supports a safe, secure and reliable system of transmission and distribution of electricity and the successful implementation of the Ireland's Grid Development Strategy, Your Grid, Your Tomorrow, prepared by EirGrid. The transmission grid is currently robust enough to service the growth strategy for the Region and demand locations.

There is significant potential to use renewable energy across the Region to achieve climate change emission reduction targets. With costs actively driven down by innovation in solar, onshore and offshore wind in particular, the renewable industry is increasingly cost competitive. The RSES supports renewable industries and requirements for transmission and distribution infrastructure.

Refer also to Chapter 5 for RPOs supporting renewable energy.

Data Centres

The Government statement on the role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy published June 2018, advises that a plan-led and strategic approach should ensure suitable locations throughout Ireland are promoted for investment in data centres to minimise the need for deep reinforcements on the energy grid. This policy is reflected for the Region in the objectives set out on the next page.

RPO 219

New Energy Infrastructure

It is an objective to support the sustainable reinforcement and provision of new energy infrastructure by infrastructure providers (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs.

RPO 222

Electricity Infrastructure

It is an objective to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid's (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity.

RPO 220

Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM)

It is an objective to support the Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM) as a key priority for the Region and seek the sustainable development and reinforcement of the energy grid including grid connections, transboundary networks into and through the Region and between all adjacent Regions subject to appropriate environmental assessment and planning processes.

RPO 223

International Energy Interconnection Infrastructure

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of international energy interconnection infrastructure and support the sustainable development (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) of the Celtic Interconnector project between Ireland and France from a location in the Region.

RPO 221

Renewable Energy Generation and Transmission Network

- a. Local Authority City and County Development Plans shall support the sustainable development of renewable energy generation and demand centres such as data centres which can be serviced with a renewable energy source (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to spatially suitable locations to ensure efficient use of the existing transmission network;
- b. The RSES supports strengthened and sustainable local/community renewable energy networks, micro renewable generation, climate smart countryside projects and connections from such initiatives to the grid. The potential for sustainable local/community energy projects and micro generation to both mitigate climate change and to reduce fuel poverty is also supported;
- c. The RSES supports the Southern Region as a Carbon Neutral Energy Region.

RPO 224

Delivery of Energy Networks

Local Authorities shall work in partnership with existing service providers to facilitate required enhancement and upgrading of existing infrastructure and networks (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) and support the safeguarding of strategic energy corridors from encroachment by other developments that could compromise the delivery of energy networks.

Refer to Chapter 5 for further references and objectives that support renewable energy and energy efficiency.



8.3 | Gas Networks

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) operates, builds and maintains the state-owned gas network (representing 30% of Ireland’s primary energy). They aim to move to a “carbon neutral” gas network by 2050. Renewable gas is an extremely flexible and efficient fuel that can be fully accommodated into the existing gas network.

In urban areas, natural and renewable gas are economically beneficial routes to a decarbonised energy sector. The network currently includes Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Kilkenny, the towns of Metropolitan Cork, Carlow, Tramore, Wexford, Clonmel, Carrick On Suir, Nenagh, Ennis, Shannon, Mallow, Bandon, Fermoy, Kinsale and Listowel. There are opportunities to extend the gas network to other settlements and to draw further upon the use of renewable gas supplies and support decarbonisation in the energy sector.

The gas network also has the capacity to accommodate new loads as part of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Increased use of the gas network can provide enhanced energy security at a relatively low cost. There is significant demand for renewable gas from industry as a heating and transport fuel. In addition, the circular economy benefits will also deliver a major decarbonisation benefit for agriculture and industry. GNI is committed to integrating indigenous renewable gas production (including biogas derived from waste) and grid injection, and is progressing a renewable gas injection facility project with Green Generation Ltd and the GRAZE Gas project in Mitchelstown.

There is significant potential for the Region to lead in the integration of the biogas sector and biogas production as a core element of sustainable agriculture, developing a significant indigenous renewable energy industry. There are further proposals in assessing a potential Carbon Capture Storage Project, which has the potential to decarbonise gas-fired power plants in the Region, and thereby make a significant contribution to achieving a low carbon economy in Ireland.

Chapter 5 contains related objectives on renewable biogas/biomethane sector, renewable energy and decarbonisation.



Energy Hub Case Study: The Tarbert-Ballylongford lands in Co Kerry

The Tarbert-Ballylongford lands in Co Kerry comprise of 390 hectares of lands zoned for marine-related industry and compatible industries. Planning permission exists at the location to build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) importation and storage terminal on a portion of the site. The proposal included a 500 MW Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant, a 26km pipeline and permitted connection to the natural gas grid. It is anticipated that the project would position the area as a major National Centre for CHP and facilities requiring access to deep water with substantial requirements for electricity and natural gas.

RPO 225

Gas Network

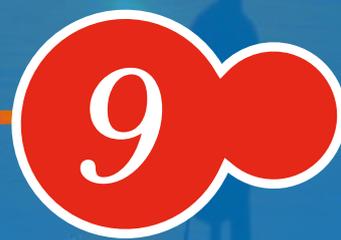
Subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process where required, it is an objective to:

- Promote renewable gas leading to carbon emission reduction in agriculture, industry, heating and transport as well as sustainable local employment opportunities.
- Support the transition of the gas network to a “carbon neutral” gas network by 2050, which will drive Ireland and the Region to becoming a low carbon society.
- Support investment in the sustainable development of agricultural biogas sector and regional gas supply projects which strengthen gas networks in the Region and assist integration of renewable gas to the grid network.
- Support investment in developing renewable gas and provision of CNG refuelling infrastructure which will help reduce the Green House Gas emissions in both the agriculture and transport sectors and support Carbon Capture and Storage initiatives, which has the potential to decarbonise power generation at scale.
- Strengthen the gas network sustainably to service settlements and employment areas in the Region, support progress in developing the infrastructures to enable strategic energy projects in the Region. An example is the Tarbert/Ballylongford landbank in Co Kerry which is a strategic development site under the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary and support for the extension of the Gas Network from Listowel into the Kerry Hub and Knowledge Tri-Angle settlements of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin.





Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation



9.1 | Introduction

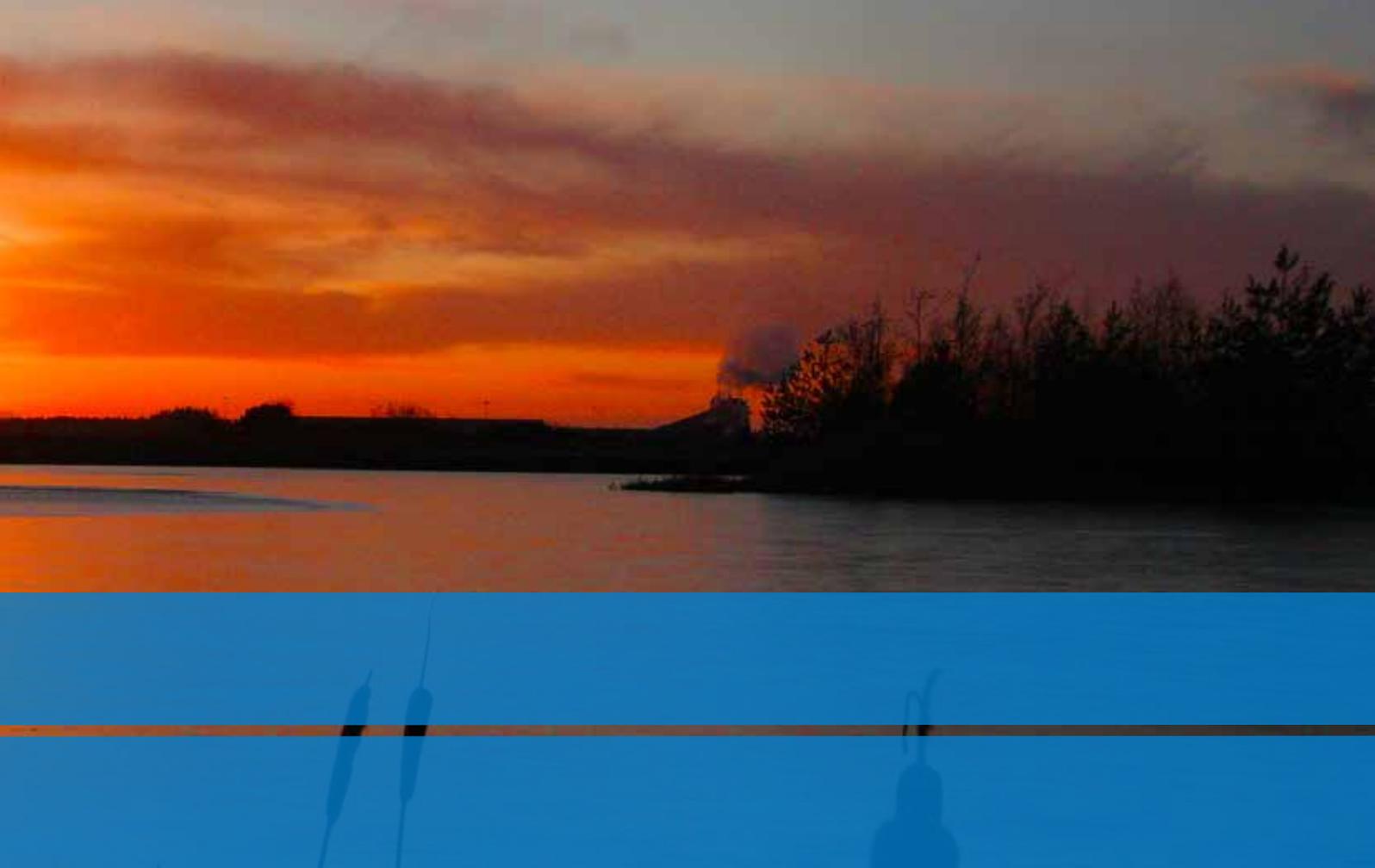
The primary objective of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Southern Region.

The objectives of the RSES are set out in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and national economic, social, environment policies. The success of the RSES rests on policy coherence at national, regional and local level and the consequential programme of investments. The RSES is a co-production. Consequently, responsibility of RSES implementation extends beyond the Southern Regional Assembly. For example, an important measure of successful implementation will be that all local authority land use plans are consistent with the RSES.

The RSES includes a development framework that sets out the context for the preparation of core strategies in local authority development plans to ensure consistency with the RSES. It will also directly influence the content of Local Area Plans (LAPs) and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) which must be formulated in accordance with the RSES framework.

The implementation of the MASP will facilitate improved coordination and delivery of growth in the Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford's metropolitan areas. This will provide significant benefits for all of our Region.





9.2 | Legislative Background

The preparation, review and monitoring of the RSES is underpinned by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Local Government Acts (as amended).

Section 27 of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) provides that, local authorities ensure consistency between any development plans or LAPs and the RSES in force for its area. Regional Assemblies are obliged to prepare submissions or observations in relation to the making of, and variations to, local authority

development plans, stating its opinion whether the plan and its core strategy is consistent with the RSES in force for the area. If a Regional Assembly is of the opinion that a development plan and its core strategy is not consistent with the RSES, its submission or observations and report will include recommendations on the required amendments to ensure consistency.

Section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act (2014) requires that an LECP is consistent with the RSES as well as the core strategy and the objectives of the relevant development plan. Local authorities are also required under this Act to submit a draft LECP to the relevant Regional Assembly for consideration which is then required to adopt a statement on the draft LECP.



The implementation phase of delivering the RSES will focus on policies, actions and investment programmes to deliver the strategy. The Southern Regional Assembly will construct a full implementation plan for the RSES with clear timebound progress indicators and transparent reporting milestones with the involvement of key stakeholders from the Region.

Review and Alignment of Local Authority Plans with the RSES

There are ten local authority development plans in effect in the Region with varying review timeframes. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2016 provides for recently adopted plans, ordinarily lasting 6 years, to be brought forward for review or variation to align with the RSES. This means that most development plans will be subject to review during 2020-22, broadly aligned to address a 6-year period to 2026-27.

All LAPs, including those to replace previously extended town plans, will be similarly brought into alignment during or immediately after the development plan review period. In the interim, any amendments or reviews of these plans, particularly in urban areas, will need to reflect the approach and direction of the NPF and RSES.

Implementation of the RSES and MASP

The Southern Regional Assembly will take a leadership role in developing a comprehensive and transparent monitoring and reporting process. Robust structures will be put in place for the implementation of the RSES and the MASP to ensure delivery is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound.

The MASP were prepared with the constituent local authorities and key stakeholders, who will be critical agents in the delivery of the RPO's and MASP Policy Objectives. In consultation with the local authorities and key stakeholders, implementation groups will be formed consisting of representatives of these organisations. These implementation groups will drive implementation, and have oversight, of their respective MASP for the Region. Ensuring cooperation between all three metropolitan areas for the benefit of our Region is imperative.

Implementation Mechanism for the Strategy and MASP

Within a year of the making of the RSES the SRA will establish robust implementation mechanisms, plan and structures, including cross sectoral stakeholder and cross boundary local authority steering group committees, to ensure the delivery of the RSES and the MASP is specific measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. The implementation phase will include action plans that include time bound targets, progress indicators and a project tracking plan to ensure effective and efficient delivery.

Investment and Funding

Investment is key to delivering the objectives of the RSES and this will be achieved through a variety of funding sources. Alignment of projects to the RSES is an important part of the criteria for funding applications. In turn, this funding is necessary to implement the RSES.

Enhancing bidding capacity, as highlighted in Chapter 4, will be essential.

The following are some funding resources which will assist in the delivery of the RSES.

Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040, includes (for the first time) an investment programme linked to a spatial plan.

Project Ireland 2040 includes four new funds totalling €4bn to stimulate renewal and investment in rural and urban areas, climate action and innovation, a €22bn climate change programme, as well as major public transport investment. The RSES has aligned its Regional Policy Objectives with the National Strategic Objectives to improve the competitive advantage of the Region and maximise the investment opportunities.

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund supports compact growth and sustainable development in the five cities and other large urban centres. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has responsibility for the fund which has €2bn under the NDP to 2027. In line with the objectives of the NPF, the fund is designed to leverage a greater proportion of residential and commercial development, supported by infrastructure, services and amenities, within the existing built 'footprint' of our larger settlements.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

The Government has committed an additional €1bn for a new Rural Regeneration and Development Fund from 2019-27. Administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the fund supports rural renewal for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000 and outlying areas. The fund is an opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address de-population in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the NPF, in particular the National Strategic Outcome to achieve Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities.

Climate Action Fund

The Climate Action Fund, under the auspices of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, has at least €500m to 2027 to support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets that leverage investment by public and private bodies. The fund will facilitate projects that contribute to other Government policy priorities, including support for innovation and capacity building to develop scalable and sustainable climate change solutions, and generating wider socio-economic benefits such as job creation, air quality improvements, reduction in fuel poverty, bio-diversity and community resilience and development. It also aims to leverage non-exchequer sourced investment.

Disruptive Technologies Fund

The Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund aims to support Ireland's innovation ecosystem and to drive collaboration between public bodies, our research base and industry to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes. It is a competitive, challenge-based fund for the development, deployment and commercialisation of innovative technology solutions to global challenges across a broad range of areas, including healthcare, services, energy, and food production. Implemented through the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation, the fund has €500m over 10 years. The fund will invest in collaborative partnerships involving enterprises and research partners with SME participation.

Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 27

Investing in our culture, language and heritage, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's sectoral plan under Project Ireland 2040, sets out the overarching vision for a vibrant heritage and culture sector, as well as concrete investments to preserve and promote the national language and to protect natural heritage and biodiversity. The Government has allocated almost €1.2bn to supporting Ireland's culture, language and heritage through this 10-year strategy that recognises the essential role of the RSES in directing and informing future investment across the Region.

Other Investment Mechanisms

Outside of the funding mechanisms under Project Ireland 2040, the following organisations provide potential funding opportunities for delivery of the RSES:

Ireland Strategic Investment Fund

The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund, managed and controlled by the National Treasury Management Agency, is an €8.9bn sovereign development fund with a statutory mandate to invest on a commercial basis in a manner designed to support economic activity and employment in Ireland. The fund has a long investment time horizon and seeks investment where it can make a difference - where it can enable commercial investment with positive economic impact and make it an attractive "investor of choice" for the company, project sponsors and advisors. The fund is uniquely positioned to connect and drive innovation across multiple industry players developing and delivering innovative opportunities that might otherwise go unrealised.

European Funding Programmes

The European Green Deal is a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. The aims of the Green Deal are: for Europe to become climate-neutral by 2050; to protect human life, animals and plants by cutting pollution; to help companies become world leaders in clean products and technologies; and to help ensure a just and inclusive transition. By ensuring good policy alignment, the RSES can drive investment that targets identified priorities at European, national, regional and local scale and assist local authorities in identifying European partnership opportunities and leveraging funding from EU Regional Programmes.

The RSES is also aligned to the five policy high level investment priorities of the EU's Regional Development and Cohesion Policy which will drive EU investment for the 2020-27 period, namely:

1. A smarter Europe: innovative and smart economic transformation;
2. A greener, low-carbon Europe;
3. A more connected Europe: mobility and regional ICT connectivity;
4. A more social Europe: implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
5. A Europe closer to citizens: sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas through local initiatives.

European Investment Bank and Council of Europe Development Bank

The European Investment Bank, the EU's bank representing the interests of Member States, works closely with other EU institutions to implement policy. It provides finance and expertise for sustainable investment projects that contribute to EU policy objectives supporting projects that make a significant contribution to growth and employment in Europe.

The Council of Europe Development Bank is a multilateral development bank with an exclusively social mandate. By financing and providing technical expertise for projects with a high social impact it actively promotes social cohesion and strengthens social integration in Europe. It finances social projects, responds to emergencies and contributes to improving the living conditions of the most disadvantaged. It also contributes to the implementation of socially-oriented investment projects in areas, including sustainable and inclusive growth and developing climate action adaptation and mitigation measures.

Enterprise Funding Schemes

Enterprise Ireland provides a range of funding and supports for enterprise including the €60m 2017-20 Regional Enterprise Development Fund to support the implementation of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs. The fund aims to drive enterprise development and job creation by co-financing projects that can sustain and add to employment at a national, regional and county level. It supports collaborative and innovative projects involving a range of enterprises and public bodies, including local and community enterprise initiatives, innovation and technology partnerships and enterprise-led industry clusters comprising of at least five companies.

Small Business Innovation Research

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) is the national innovation pre-commercial procurement initiative, administered by Enterprise Ireland. It aims to drive innovation across all sections of the public sector through the co-funding of competitive challenges that support engagement between technology companies and public bodies. It also supports small and emerging businesses by providing early-stage funding and a route to market, reducing risk through a phased technology development programme. A number of local authorities have run SBIR challenges to identify and develop smart solutions to challenges such as digital engagement, sustainable mobility, water quality and flooding.

Other Supports

Enterprise funding and business supports are also available from other development agencies such as the Local Enterprise Offices, with a number of schemes co-funded under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme, managed by the Southern Regional Assembly.



RPO 227

Investment and Funding

It is an objective of the RSES to support local authorities and state bodies and other stakeholders and communities in achieving the drawdown of investment funds, including national rural, urban, technology and climate funds, the EU Regional Operational Programmes and other EU funds available to the Region.

RPO 228

Smart Growth Initiatives

It is an objective to support smart growth initiatives that develop new solutions to existing and future urban challenges, including climate risks in the Region and will support local authorities and other appropriate organisations in the drawdown of climate and smart technology funds.

9.4 | Monitoring and Reporting

A comprehensive and transparent monitoring and reporting process will be incorporated as part of the implementation plan for the RSES, based on legislative requirements and involving key stakeholders in the Region.

Legislative Requirements

The following arrangements for monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the RSES are required by legislation to measure progress:

- The Local Government Reform Act 2014 requires that public bodies and local authorities to which Section 22A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) relates must prepare and submit a report to their relevant regional assembly every two years indicating progress made in supporting objectives, relevant to that body, of the RSES;
- Every two years, the Southern Regional Assembly will prepare a monitoring report on the progress made in implementing the overall objectives of the

RSES; This will include monitoring of specific actions and outcomes, including actions specific to public bodies identified in legislation;

- The Southern Regional Assembly will submit its monitoring report to the National Oversight and Audit Commission for consideration and recommendations to the Minister in relation to relevant measures to further support the implementation of the RSES;
- Public bodies are required to assist and co-operate as far as practicable in implementing the RSES.

Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

The OPR was established in 2019. The OPR has an independent monitoring role of advising the Minister, the Government and the Oireachtas on implementation of the NPF under the planning process, through the RSES and local authority statutory planning processes. The OPR will develop indicators to assist effective monitoring.

Tracking and Reporting Progress

The delivery of the implementation phase for the RSES will include action plans with an agreed set of quantified and qualified progress indicators. These will be subject to a time-bound, project tracking plan. Progress reports will be published in line with the meetings of the Monitoring committee. The Southern Regional Assembly will regularly engage with key stakeholders from across the Region to ensure a transparent delivery of its objectives in a number of ways throughout the life of the RSES. This activity will be included in the implementation plan.

RSES Monitoring Committee

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for consultation with named public bodies in the preparation and review of the RSES. This includes the establishment of a monitoring committee.

Membership of the monitoring committee will comprise of a cross-sectoral representation from across the Region, including:

- Southern Regional Assembly;
- The Region's local authorities;
- Named public bodies under the Act and other competent public authorities;
- Economic and social partners in the Region;
- Bodies representing civil society, environmental partners and non-governmental organisations;
- Bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

The monitoring committee will meet at least once every two years to review implementation of the RSES and the progress made towards achieving its objectives. In doing so, it shall have regard to the key regional indicators and any milestones defined for the RSES.

RSES Monitoring Committee

The monitoring committee will examine all issues that affect the performance of the RSES and, if appropriate, give an opinion on any required amendments. The monitoring committee may make observations regarding implementation and evaluation of the RSES and will monitor actions taken as a result of its observations.

The monitoring committee will examine:

- Progress made in implementation of the RSES's evaluation plan and the follow-up on findings of evaluations;
- Any issues that affect the performance of the RSES;
- Actions to promote gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- Actions to promote sustainable development across the Region.

RPO 229

Monitoring the Strategy

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

- 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 a local authority's Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans;
- b. Carrying out regular updates of baseline data for monitoring purposes, including integration of baseline data (including environmental data), if available, from other relevant reports, strategies and data repositories;
- c. 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. Establishing a monitoring committee 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.



Evaluation and Evidence Based Policy Making

This is the first RSES and it provides an ideal opportunity to reflect on knowledge acquired from the process of preparation and implementation for future strategies. The impact of the RSES will be subject to evaluation which will include experts independent of the Southern Regional Assembly. The results will be publicly available.

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Evaluation Mechanisms for the RSES

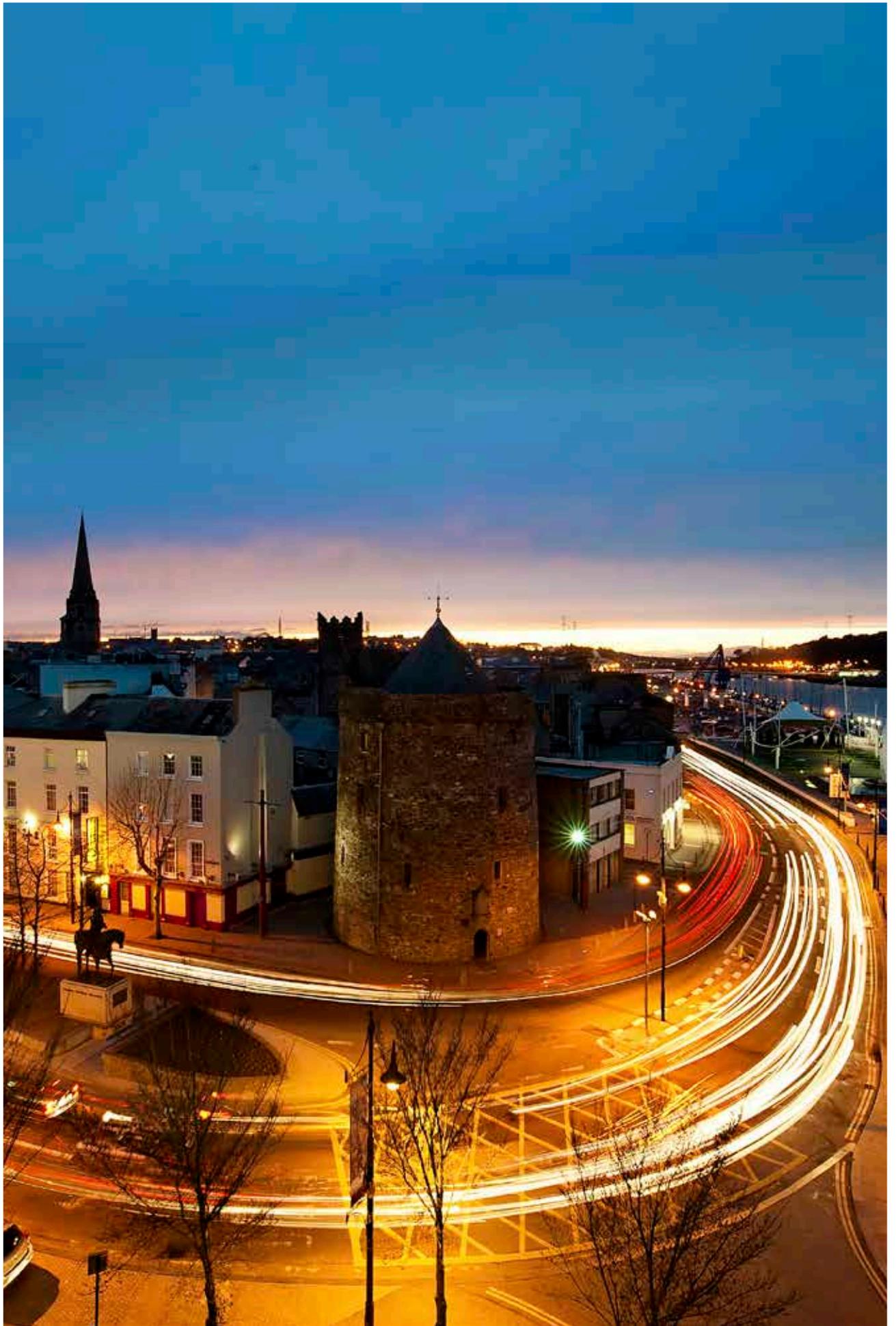
- 1.** The RSES will be subject to formal review not less than once every six years to allow for the revoking or amending objectives of the RSES;
- 2.** The Local Government Reform Act 2014, 26(2) requires that before revoking a RSES (other than to make a new RSES), the regional assembly will consult with planning authorities in its Region;
- 3.** Where the regional assembly makes a new RSES, it will follow the procedures laid down in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Sections 22, 24 and 25);
- 4.** Where a new RSES is made, it shall supersede any previous RSES.

The Southern Regional Assembly is strongly committed to the preparation of evidence-based strategies, as demonstrated in the baseline data gathered to inform the development of the RSES. As part of this commitment, this baseline data will be available to other public bodies and local authorities as a shared evidence-base for the Region, particularly to inform the preparation and implementation of a local authority's Development Plans, Local Area Plans, and Local Economic and Community Plans.

The RSES baseline data will be updated as new information becomes available and the Southern Regional Assembly will support the development and publication of a set of robust, relevant and timely key regional indicators for policymaking and evaluation.

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Volume 2

Metropolitan Area Plans

Cork

Limerick-Shannon

Waterford

Introduction to Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASP) in the Southern Region

The NPF targets significant growth and development in all five of Ireland's cities. To achieve this, Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) have been designated in the NPF as the appropriate vehicle to address both the city and suburbs and adjoining area that supports the core of the city.

A MASP has been prepared for:

- The Cork Metropolitan Area;
- The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area;
- The Waterford Metropolitan Area.

Targets alone will not be achieved unless important qualitative principles and new approaches to sustainable development are undertaken in how we plan for and manage growth in each metropolitan area.

The strategic role and Regional Policy Objectives for MASPs are set out in Section 3.4 of the RSES which apply to each MASP. These objectives are supported by the strategic goals summarised below and in **Appendix 3**:



Goal 1: Sustainable Place Framework

Goal 2: Excellent Connectivity and Sustainable Mobility

Goal 3: Economic Engines Driving Regional Enterprise Growth

Goal 4: High Quality Environment and Quality of Life

Goal 5: A Learning, Welcoming and Socially Inclusive Metropolitan Area

Goal 6: Pioneering Locations Networked Internationally and Regionally

Goal 7: Evolve Innovative Approaches and Strategic Priorities



Cork

Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

1.0 | Introduction

1.1 | Overview

At over 304,000 in 2016, the Cork Metropolitan Area accounts for almost one fifth of the Region's total population. It is the second largest metropolitan area in the State, and is larger in scale than the Limerick-Shannon, Galway and Waterford Metropolitan Areas combined. The NPF recognises that, "Cork is emerging as an international centre of scale and is well placed to complement Dublin but requires significantly accelerated and urban focused growth to more fully achieve this role".

With a planned growth rate (50-60%) to 2040 in the Cork City and suburban area of between two to three times the national average and up to 50 % for the rest of the metropolitan area, this is a strong platform of scale, critical mass and capacity and uniquely positions the Cork Metropolitan Area as:

- A principle complimentary location to Dublin with strong international role;

- A primary driver of economic and population growth in the Region;
- A compact City and Metropolitan Area with increased regional connectivity;
- A City and Metropolitan Area focusing growth on the delivery of sustainable transport patterns.

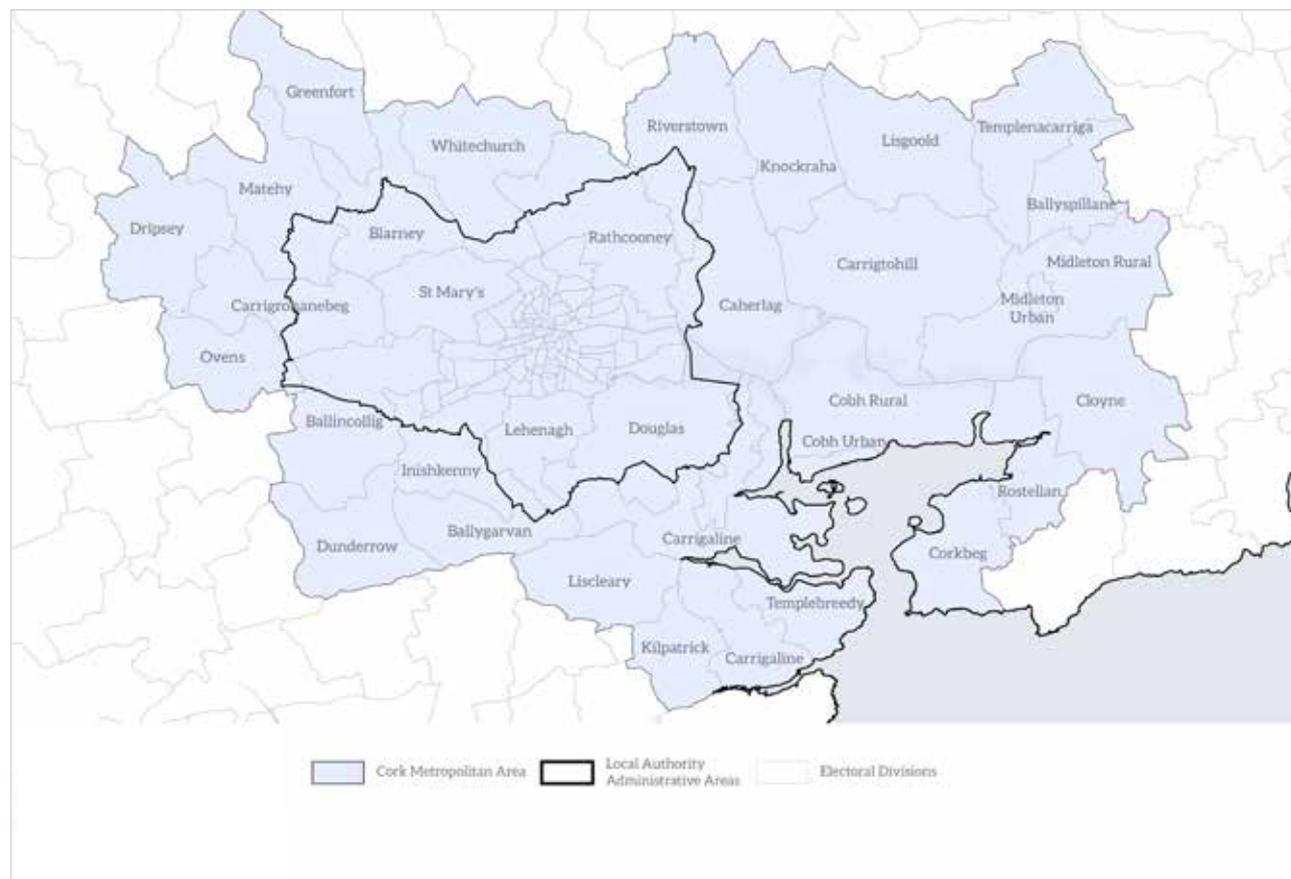
The NPF explicitly states that significant **accelerated and urban focused growth** is needed to fulfil this potential, along with accelerated investment, physical and social infrastructure, and protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Distribution of population and employment growth in the metropolitan area must align with public transport investment and focus on regeneration, consolidation and infrastructure led growth of the city and suburbs, existing hierarchy of metropolitan towns and the strategic employment locations. Key transport infrastructure to accommodate growth, retrofit quality services and enhanced sustainable mobility are needed. The MASP recognises the delivery of an integrated multi modal transport network, informed by the **Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS)**, is a key requirement. A new Light Rail Corridor, connecting Ballincollig, City Centre, (interchanging with suburban and inter-city rail at Kent Station), Docklands and Mahon is a game changer.



1.2 | Spatial Definition

Map 1 | Cork Metropolitan Area



The Cork Metropolitan Area includes:

- The recently expanded Cork City Boundary (c. 210,853 population)²⁷ including Cork City Centre, Cork City Docklands and Tivoli, City Suburbs; and the recently added areas of Douglas, Rochestown, Ballincollig, Tower, Blarney, Glanmire and Cork Airport;
- Metropolitan towns including Carrigaline (15,770), Cobh (12,800), Midleton (12,496), Passage West (5,843), Carrigtwohill (5,080) and Monard Strategic Development Zone, a new planned metropolitan town on the suburban rail line;
- Cork Harbour, a strategic location of natural amenities, port activities, industry, marine sector research and development, tourism, heritage, and harbour settlements.



27. Population from Census 2016 of each listed settlement is contained in brackets.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 1

Cork Metropolitan Area

- a. To strengthen the role of the Cork Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale, a complement to Dublin and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region.
- b. To promote the Cork Metropolitan Area as a cohesive metropolitan employment and property market where population and employment growth is integrated with: (i) the city centre as the primary location at the heart of the metropolitan area and region reinforced by (ii) the continued regeneration, consolidation and infrastructure led growth of the city centre, Cork City Docklands, Tivoli and suburban areas (iii) active land management initiatives to enable future infrastructure led expansion of the city and suburbs (to be assessed by Core Strategy initiatives) and (iv) the regeneration, consolidation and infrastructure led growth of metropolitan towns and other strategic employment locations in a sustainable manner.
- c. Seek co-ordinated investment and delivery of holistic infrastructure packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Cork Metropolitan Area and seek further investments to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals (see Volume III).
- d. The Cork MASP allows flexibility to respond to changes in planning policy, infrastructure requirements and priorities that will arise in the area which will be added to Cork City as a result of the boundary extension, framed by the principles set out in RPO 10 Compact Growth in Metropolitan Areas, other objectives of the Cork MASP and MASP Goal 7 in Volume III.
- e. Support communities in Metropolitan Towns through regeneration initiatives, investment to support retrofitting holistic infrastructures (physical, social, recreational, public transport, active travel networks including enhanced filtered mobility for pedestrians and cyclists *inter alia*), seek vibrant metropolitan communities with a high quality of life, mixed uses and services and seek the infrastructure led sustainable compact growth of metropolitan settlements.
- f. Any reference to support for plans, projects, activities and development in the MASP should be considered as referring to 'sustainable development' that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints), environmental assessment including EclA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate.
- g. The MASP seeks to protect, manage and through enhanced ecological connectivity, to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Region.

1.3 | Context of Other Strategic Planning Initiatives

There is a long track record of planning for the metropolitan area of Cork and wider city area, involving partnerships between both Cork City Council and Cork County Council and other key stakeholders particularly through the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) - a long-established framework and process for integrated planning in Cork.



2.0 | Key Components & Attributes

2.1 | Cork City: The Heart of the Cork Metropolitan Area

EU research by ESPON identified Cork as Ireland's second tier city²⁸.

The study highlights the contribution of well organised city strategic land use planning, good working relationships and collaboration between stakeholders, success in attracting FDI, balanced economic profile between sectors, young educated and highly skilled workforce, strong third level sector and research community and conscious local policies to promote place quality assets as key contributors to its success.

Cork City is notable for initiatives including:

- Strengthening a vibrant retail core;
- Enhanced public transport and sustainable travel;
- Public realm and transformational projects including the Grand Parade/Beamish and Crawford/Sullivan's Quay Cluster, the Cork City Harbour Interchange Cluster;
- City medieval spine and cultural precincts of South Parish and Shandon;
- Regional scaled city parks and waterfront amenities connecting the city centre to the harbour;
- Regeneration initiatives delivering housing, commercial and community development.

Collaboration and confidence to meet the challenges of delivering future growth are evident through examples such as:

- *Cork: A City Rising is a Beautiful Thing* initiative which highlights progress on over 30 prime regeneration and development sites in the city;
- *We Are Cork* initiative between Cork City and Cork County Councils, marketing the city and county internationally.

The Cork City Centre Strategy (2014) works to deliver a "Healthy Heart" by revitalising the City Centre through increased investment, improvement and development, better management based on partnership and increased marketing of the City Centre experience.

²⁹The following trends are an **indicator of dynamics** of the city centre:

- A whole city in renaissance with 5.5% growth in the last Census period;
- Higher percentage of young age and working age cohorts in the City Centre Central Business District (CBD) than the Metropolitan Area overall, Region and State average (for example 51% aged 25 to 44 in the City Centre CBD compared to 31%, 28% and 29.5% for those other areas respectively);
- A truly international city, recording 42% of the population as Non-Irish in the City Centre CBD;
- A higher labour force participation rate in the City Centre CBD (68.6%) than the Metropolitan Area overall, Region and State (60%, 59.5% and 61.5% respectively);
- High recorded rates of travel to work/education by green modes (46.5%) compared to the Metropolitan Area overall (18.5%), Region (13.5%) and State (17 %);

Other **unique attributes** of the city include:

- A university and learning city with a student population of more than 35,000;
- Ranked no. 1 for business friendliness among small European cities by FDI Intelligence under the 2014-15 European Cities and Regions Future report;
- Higher education institutes, UCC and CIT, establishment of the Munster Technology University and elite research centres including Tyndall, and Rubicon Centre;
- Dynamic clusters of specialisms such as it@cork technology cluster and Energy Cork;
- Leading FDI and indigenous enterprise location within the City Centre, Mahon, north, west and south suburbs with many companies have multiple sites across the metropolitan area (Apple, Lilly, J&J, Dell, Stryker, etc.);
- World class digital and telecommunications infrastructure assets including Tier 1 connectivity and the fastest latency to New York than anywhere in Europe;
- Cork City twinned with six other international cities including Cologne, Coventry, Rennes, San Francisco, Swansea and Shanghai;
- Designated by the World Health Organisation as a Healthy City;
- Cork City Centre awarded the prestigious Purple Flag

28. *ESPON Second Tier Cities and Territorial Development in Europe: Performance, Policies and Prospects, Section 3 How Do National and Local Policies Affect Second Tier Cities: 2012.*

29. *AIRO Key Regional Indicators Socio-Economic Baseline Report.*

accreditation an international award for excellence in the evening and night time economy of the city;

- One of 12 cities globally, and three in Europe, presented with the inaugural UNESCO Learning City Award in 2015;
- Under the EU's Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor, in 2017 Cork was ranked first in European medium-sized cities for cultural vibrancy and cultural venues and facilities and is ranked within the Top 5 for human capital and education and openness, tolerance and trust;
- Voted the third Friendliest City in the World by Condé Nast Travellers 2018.

Other **signals of confidence, including projects supported under the NDP, include:**

- Continued initiatives to improve the public realm, public transport and more sustainable accessibility to the city centre;
- Cork Lower Harbour Main Drainage Project;
- New acute hospital for Cork and Cork University Hospital Phase 2;
- Investment in the Crawford Art Gallery, a significant cultural asset of the State;
- Recent completion of Páirc Uí Chaoimh;
- Advancement of developing Ballincollig Regional Park, Marina Park and Tramore Valley Park, regional scaled recreational assets;
- Increased pace of development in private sector development in the City Centre including One Albert Quay, Navigation Square, and Nano Nagle

Place. Commercial investment in the city centre is promoting the city as a competitive location for international financial services;

- Progress in developing a 6,000 seat Cork Events Centre, with potential to deliver 200,000 visitors into Cork on an annual basis;
- Progress on the Cork Science and Innovation Park;
- Progress on the delivery of the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy, which will facilitate re-location of port activities from the docklands, allowing regeneration processes to advance.

A maritime city steeped in heritage, Cork has significant urban and cultural tourism assets and lively festivals, placing it as a prime city break destination and quality of life destination to live and work. Sports, recreation and amenity is supported as a city-wide attribute.

Economic and social regeneration in disadvantaged areas is important so growth and prosperity in a rising city is socially inclusive, providing opportunities and enhanced quality of life for all. Active regeneration initiatives are ongoing, especially driven through the LECP, Local Community Development Committee and RAPID initiatives. The MASP supports a healthy, living and working city centre that is the economic, social and cultural heart of the Cork Metropolitan Area. Regeneration and consolidation of the city centre, new urban quarters in the Docklands and consolidation of the suburbs and will drive this role.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 2

Cork City

Seek delivery of the following subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes.

- a.** To strengthen the consolidation and regeneration of Cork City Centre to drive its role as a vibrant living, retailing and working city, the economic, social and cultural heart of the Cork Metropolitan Area and Region.
- b.** Seek investment to achieve the infrastructure led brownfield regeneration of the Cork City Docklands and Tivoli as high quality, mixed use sustainable waterfront urban quarters, transformative projects which set national and international good practice standards in innovation, green and quality design, exemplary urbanism and place making.
- c.** Seek investment to achieve regeneration and consolidation in the city suburbs. Seek high quality architectural and urban design responses to enhance the uses of the waterfront and all urban quarters.
- d.** To strengthen the attributes and opportunities for the city centre, including transformative initiatives such as the City Centre Strategy and other initiatives as identified by the City Development Plan (existing and future).

- e.** Seek investment for the enhancement and refurbishment of existing public buildings as a driver for private sector development e.g. English Market.
- f.** Seek to achieve High Quality Design to reflect a high-quality architectural building stock in all urban quarters.
- g.** Seek delivery of a network of large city parks and smaller green areas throughout the metropolitan area and inner-city areas.
- h.** Strengthen Social and Community Development.
- i.** Support active regeneration initiatives that are ongoing, especially driven through the Local Economic Community Plan, Local Community Development Committee and RAPID initiatives.
- j.** Seek investment towards initiatives that tackle high housing vacancy rates and seek conversion of vacant stock to active housing uses.
- k.** 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.

2.2 | Assets of the wider Cork Metropolitan Area

The wider metropolitan area has strategic national and regional assets which complement the role of the City.

Collectively, these drive the role the Cork Metropolitan Area. In addition to the City, the strategic assets of the metropolitan area include:

- A strong network of vibrant metropolitan towns connected on existing and planned strengthened public transport networks. Metropolitan towns in Cork are among the largest, fastest growing and youngest (age cohort wise) towns in the Region.
- Monard Strategic Development Zone, a new planned metropolitan town and strategic residential location on the suburban rail line between Blarney and Cork City.
- Strategic national asset of Cork Harbour (see section and specific objective below) including Tier 1 Port of Cork.
- Considerable marine resources in Cork Harbour with internationally renowned leaders in marine research and technology, including the MaREI Research Centre;
- Cork International Airport.
- Significant clusters and global leaders in ICT and life sciences.
- Strategic employment locations with strong foreign direct investment and indigenous enterprises. Locations include Carrigtwohill (IDA Carrigtwohill East/Ballyadam), Little Island and Ringaskiddy.
- Significant agriculture, agri-tech excellence and food and beverage production.

- Significant energy resources and renewable energy production (Whitegate, Ireland's Energy Park) and potential energy interconnector to Europe (Eirgrid's Celtic Interconnector project).
- Digital assets including direct international fibre optic connection to the USA (Hibernia Express Link), E Centre networks.
- Significant tourism, culture and heritage offer with unique towns, villages and attractions on and close to both the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East corridors.
- Exceptional natural amenities and recreational activities offering high quality of life opportunities accessible to and integrated with a thriving international scaled city.

Objectives of the Cork MASP support and seek to strengthen these assets and opportunities.

The Cork MASP supports physical and social infrastructure, regeneration and improving quality of life for existing metropolitan towns and communities, especially the retrofitting of such infrastructure for communities that experienced past high levels of growth without matching infrastructure and services. It is important that compact residential and employment growth is matched with mixed use services, physical, social and recreational infrastructure and that such services are identified and addressed in lower tier plans for the sustainable regeneration and growth of metropolitan towns. Cork MASP Objective 1 (e) supports investment in infrastructure and services for metropolitan towns and communities.



2.3 | Cork Harbour

As Europe's largest natural harbour, Cork Harbour is a special character area and strategic asset. It is a location sharing port activities, strategic employment uses, marine research, energy generation, tourism, heritage and residential communities in an environment with sensitive ecosystems and natural amenities (Cork Harbour SPA).

Strategic marine sector facilities in the harbour area include Tier 1 Port of Cork, dry dock facilities at Cobh, Marino Point, Irish Naval Service Haulbowline, National Maritime College of Ireland, MaREI Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy and Whitegate - Ireland's Energy Park. Significant tourism and cultural attractions include

Cobh, Spike Island (a No 1 in Europe award winning attraction) and Fort Camden Meagher. The remediation of Haulbowline will provide an additional harbour recreational amenity. Fishing harbours, marinas, harbour greenways, characterful towns in outstanding natural settings all set the location apart as unique for the Region. Balanced with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, heritage and communities of the harbour area, it is evident that the multi-sectoral assets have potential for Maritime Cork to be a key catalyst and driver for economic growth.

There is an opportunity, to put in place a framework to guide the sustainable future management of different uses in the Cork Harbour area, including driving the role of strategic economic assets, while protecting the sensitive ecosystems and designated natural habitats.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 3

Cork Harbour

- a. To promote Cork Harbour as a unique and strategic asset in the Cork Metropolitan Area and the Region and seek investment in the sustainable development of projects that will strengthen the potential for Cork Harbour to be a first mover in Marine Spatial Planning, a significant driver for economic growth, balanced with the protection of the harbour's ecology and natural habitats (Cork Harbour SPA).
- b. To seek a specific planning framework initiative through the Core Strategies of Local Authority Development Plans as appropriate to guide the sustainable future management of different uses in the Cork Harbour area, including strategic economic uses, while protecting the sensitive ecosystems and designated natural habitats.
- c. The initiative under Part (b) shall address opportunities of a waterfront city and the harbour area, the opportunities for harbour communities, enhanced transport and public transport connections, Tier 1 Port activity, industries, clusters of economic specialism, research and innovation in the marine economy, renewable energy, ecology and habitat protection, ecosystems services, tourism, greenways and blueways inter alia.
- d. The delivery of plans and projects in the Cork Harbour area as a result of this objective shall be subject to quality site selection processes that consider environmental constraints and undertake environmental assessments including EclA, SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate.

2.4 | Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and the Wider Region

As a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Region, the Cork Metropolitan Area can drive and support economic growth in other locations.

There is a close network and functional relationship between the city, metropolitan area and settlements such as the ring towns of Mallow (a Key Town) Bandon, Kinsale, Fermoy, Macroom and Youghal and other

towns in North and West Cork including Mitchelstown, Charleville, Kanturk and Clonakilty. The RSES supports the sustainable, employment-led growth, consolidation and enhancement of services for such settlements (see Chapter 3). Chapter 4 Strong Economy - Innovative and Smart, Chapter 6 Connectivity and the objectives of the Cork MASP seek progress in these areas, especially for enhanced connectivity between each Metropolitan Area, to the Atlantic Economic Corridor and Ten-T Corridor, to enable the efficient economic movement of freight to and from our ports and airports.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 4

Cork Metropolitan Area Regional Interactions

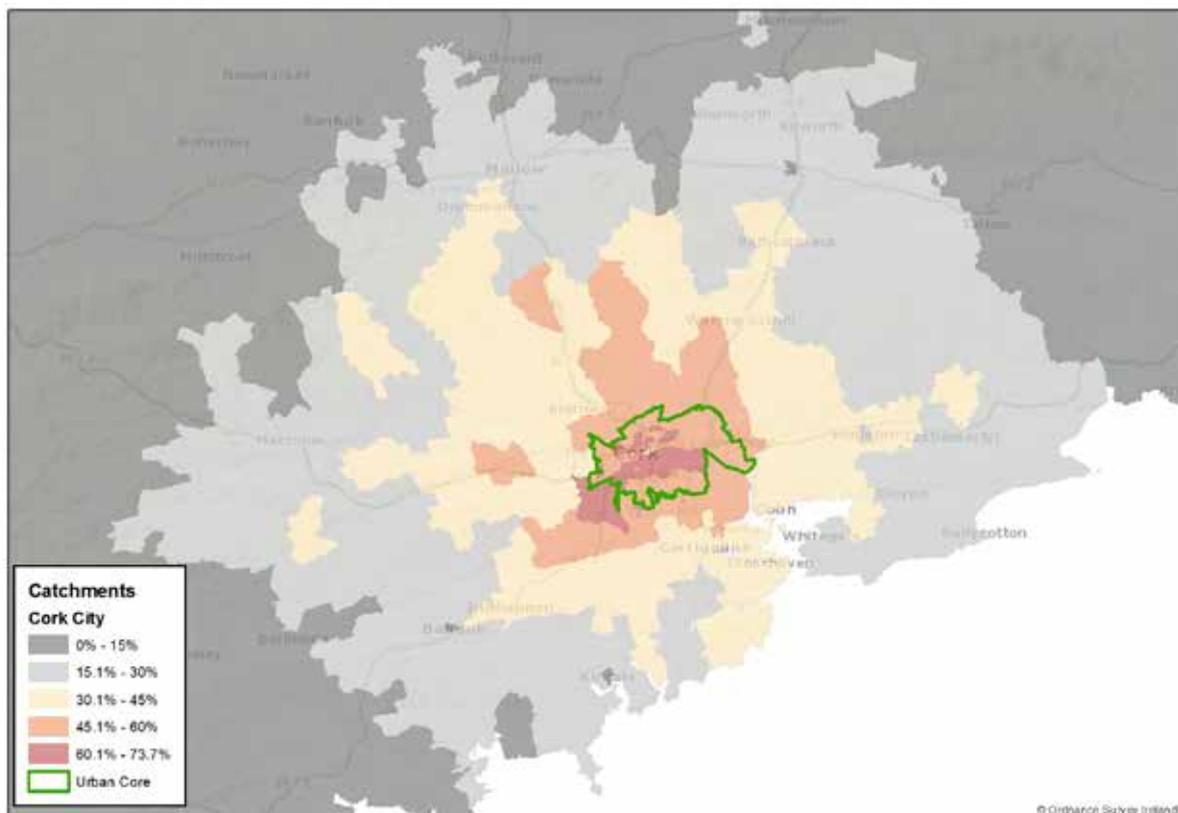
In support of the role of the Cork Metropolitan Area as a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Region, seek to strengthen inter-regional and intra-regional connectivity (public transport, strategic road network and digital) subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process:

- a. Between the Cork Metropolitan Area and the other metropolitan areas of Galway, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford, strengthen connectivity to the Atlantic Economic Corridor, to the Kerry Hub and Knowledge Triangle and strengthen connectivity to the TEN-T Network.
- b. Between the Cork Metropolitan Area and Key Towns in the Southern Region, especially Key Towns in the South West which include Mallow, Clonakilty, Tralee and Killarney and Dungarvan in the South East.
- c. Between the Cork Metropolitan Area and settlements in a strategic North Cork Agri-Tech Network with Mallow Key Town, in a strategic West Cork Marine Network with Clonakilty Key Town and a central North and West Network connecting the two, initiatives which will be progressed through the County Development Plan process.
- d. Between the Cork Metropolitan Area and the ring towns of Bandon, Fermoy, Macroom, Kinsale and Youghal through the sustainable development of enhanced critical mass to attract new investment in employment, services and public transport and support Kinsale's role as a Principal Tourist Attraction.
- e. Recognise the role of Cork City as a Gaeltacht Service City under the Gaeltacht Act 2012.
- f. Support multi modal enhanced transport and digital connectivity between Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford cities and metropolitan areas and the delivery of infrastructures as supported in objectives under Chapter 6 Connectivity.

The scale of development, roles and cumulative impact in other settlements in the wider metropolitan area and rural areas, identified in the County Development Plan Core Strategy, will be at a level so as not to undermine the MASP Goals, Objectives for the Cork MASP and the role of the City as a driver for the Region.

NTA Map Showing the Catchment of the Urban Core of the Cork Metropolitan Area

Map 1 | Catchment of Cork City Urban Core

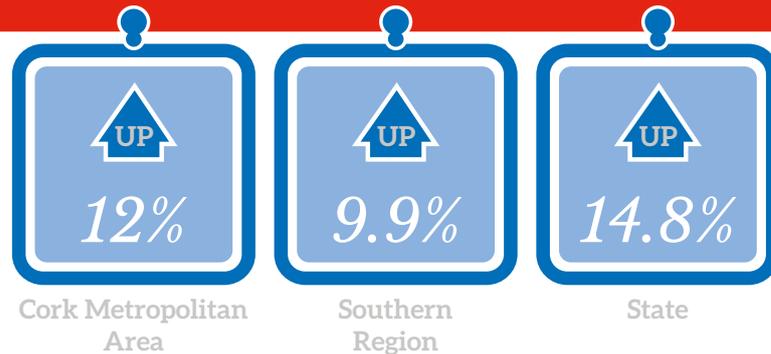


SOURCE | NTA Hinterland analysis

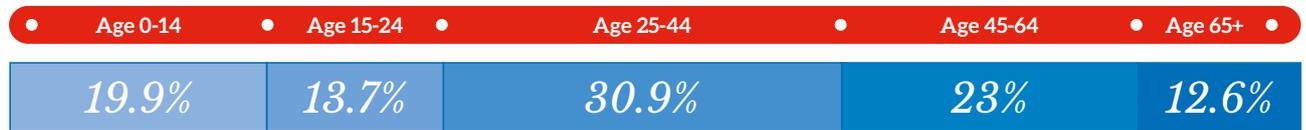
2.5 | Example Trends for the Cork Metropolitan Area

The following infographics provide details of the key components and attributes of the Cork Metropolitan Area.

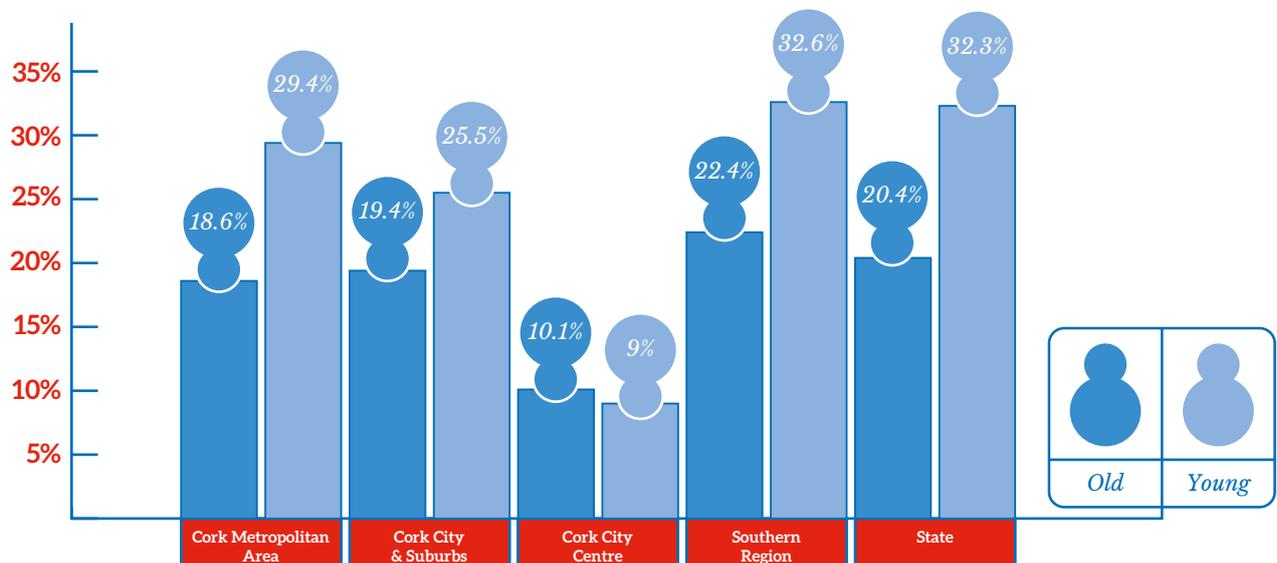
Population Change 2006 - 2016



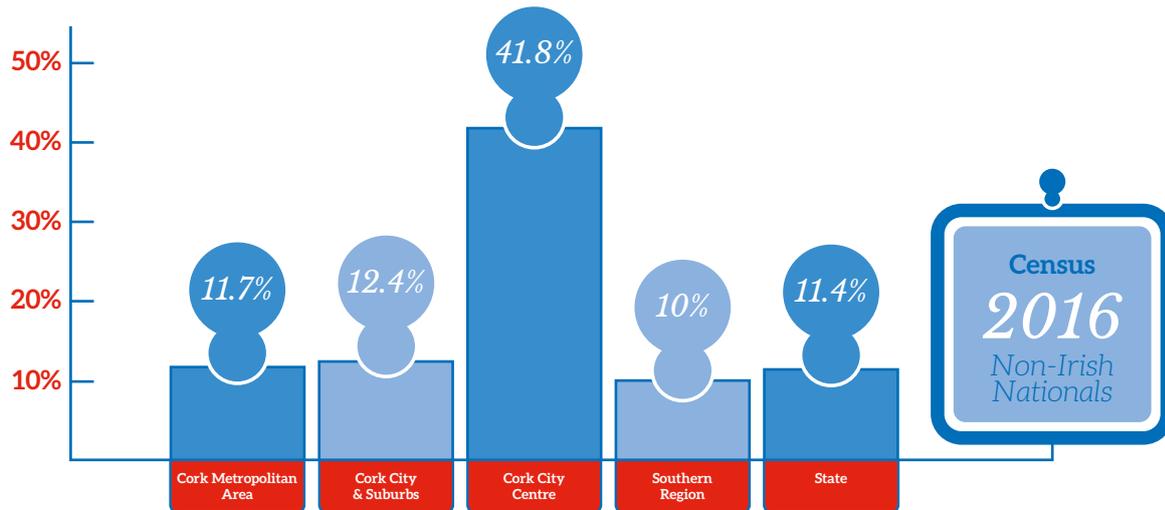
Population by Age



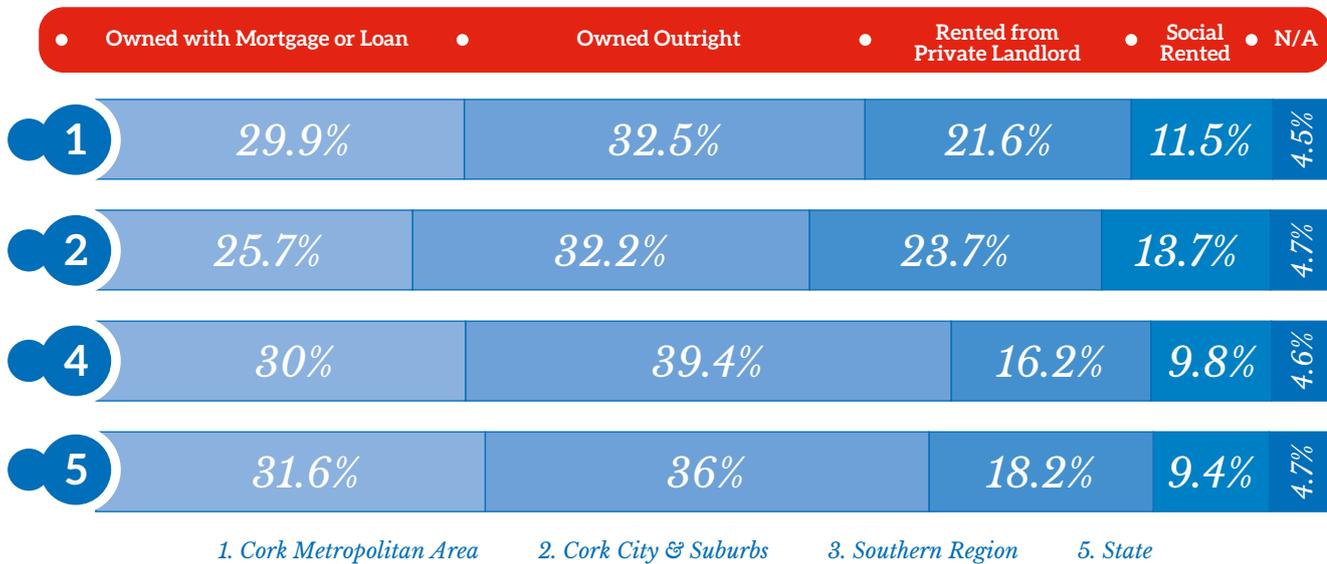
Old & Young Age Dependency Rate



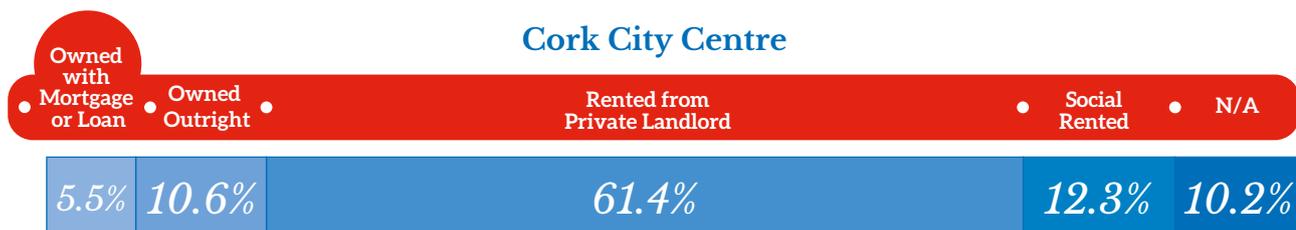
Diversity and our Migrant Communities



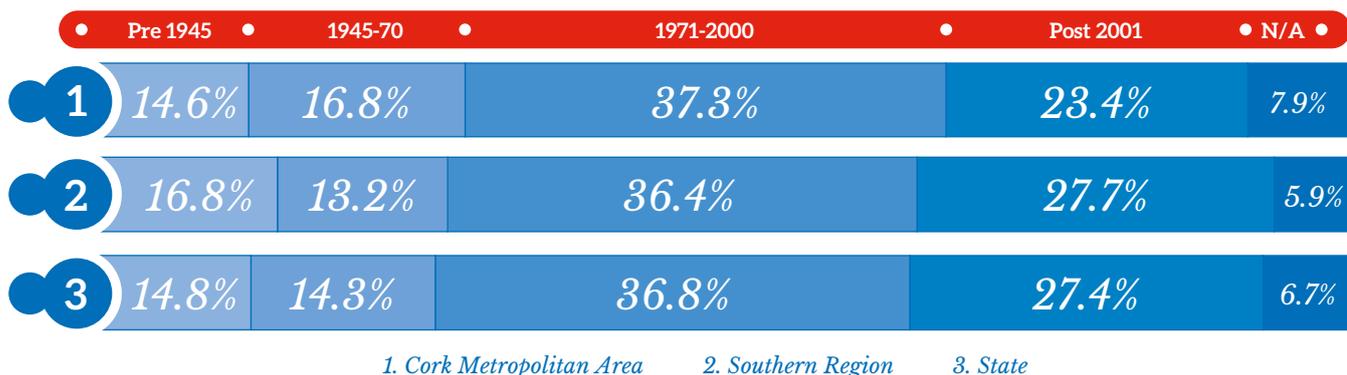
Housing Tenure



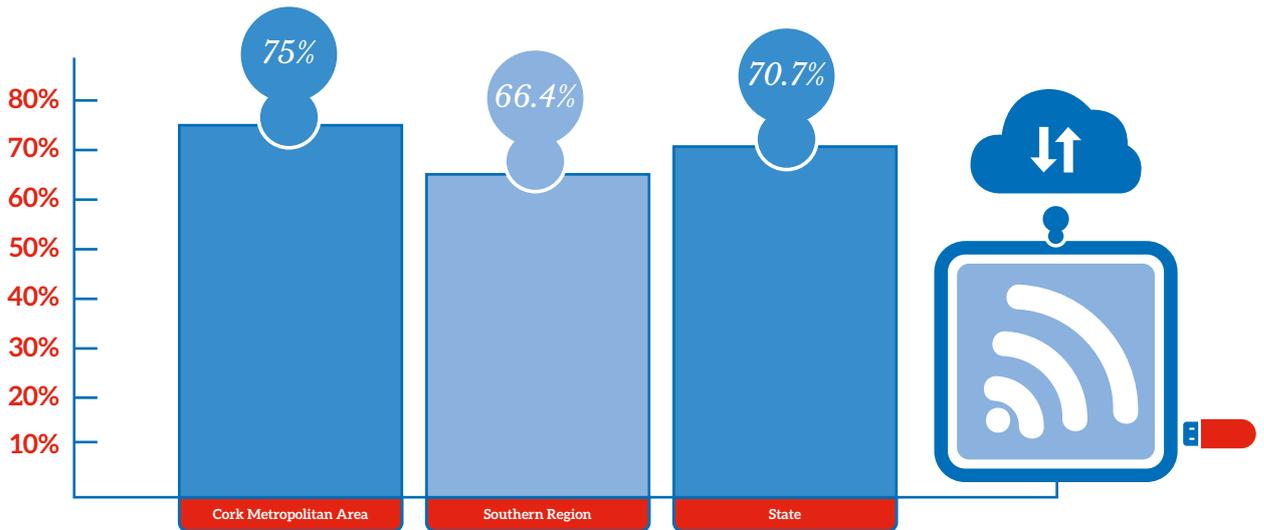
Cork City Centre



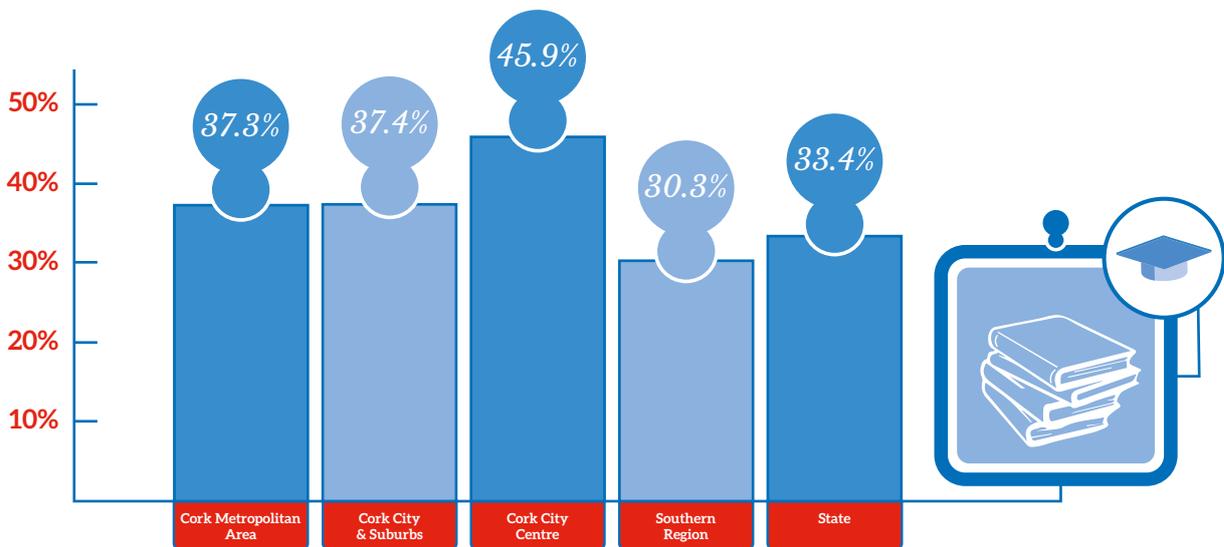
Housing Year Built



Households with Broadband



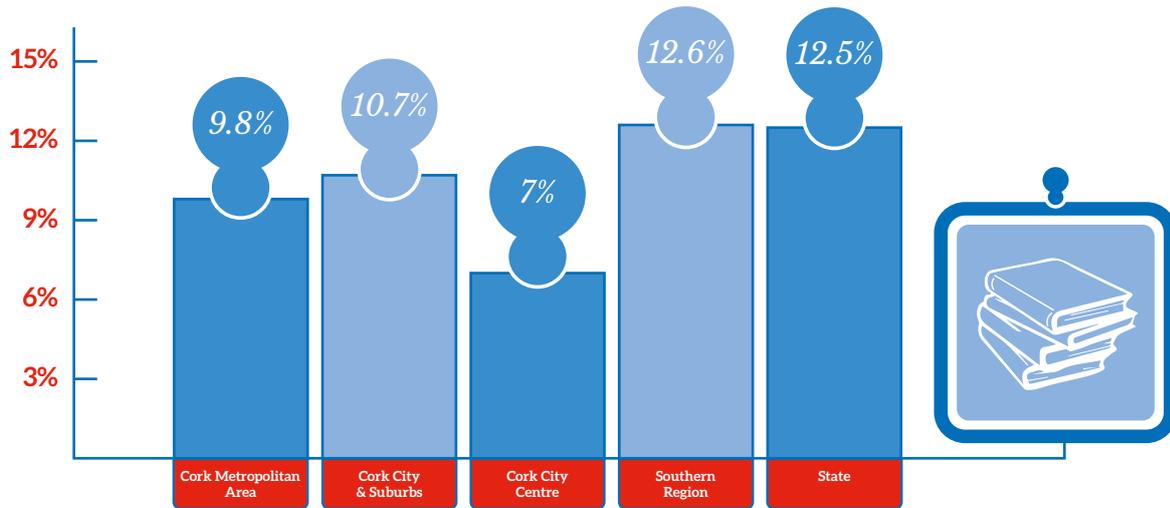
Education Attainment: All Third Level



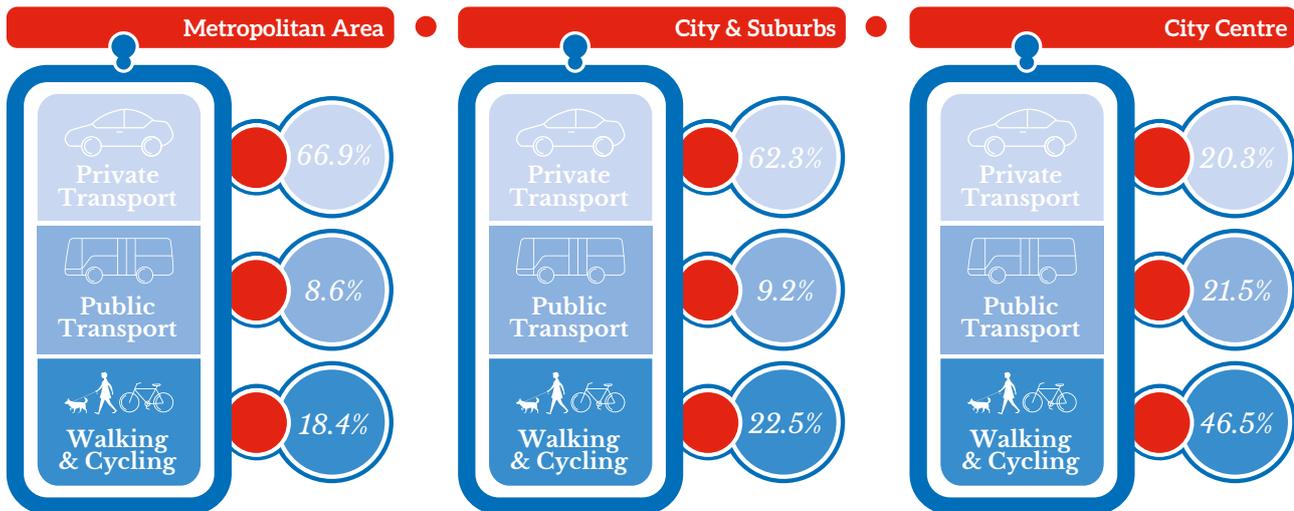
Education Attainment: Tech/Apprentice/Cert



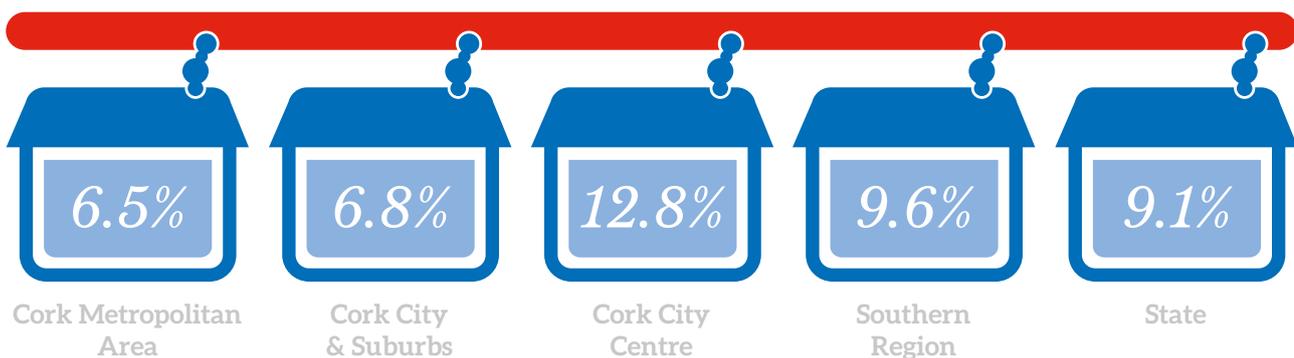
Education Attainment: No Formal/Primary



Mode of Travel to Work/Education



Housing Vacancy*



*Excluding Holiday Homes

3.0 | Vision & Guiding Principles

3.1 | Vision

Building on the consultation process in preparation of the RSES and Cork MASP, the Vision Statement for the Cork Metropolitan Area is:

Sustainably develop the potential and capacity of Metropolitan Cork, which has the State's Second City of international scale, as a healthy, people centred, affordable, socially and economically inclusive, innovative and technologically smart international gateway offering a high-quality environment, a vibrant city at its heart, supported by a network of compact metropolitan towns, connected by sustainable transport networks, serviced by a high standard of physical and community infrastructure offering a high quality of life for all. A metropolitan area that inspires pride, encourages creativity and achievement with high standards of environmental sustainability.

3.2 | Guiding Principles

The ambition of the Cork MASP is based on the principles of a **Sustainable Place Framework**, as identified in the RSES Settlement Strategy (Chapter 3).

To achieve this ambition the following guiding principles for investment and sustainable development are identified:

A Living City and suburbs: A city and suburbs offering a mosaic of quarters, comprising of residential suburbs, strategic employment locations, commercial areas, waterfront living and the vibrant social and cultural life of a European City with a unique landscape setting. The primary retail location of the Cork Metropolitan Area. Investment must be supported in revitalising and reinvigorating Cork City for higher density living, high density high value jobs, retailing, regeneration and social inclusion.

Metropolitan Engine: Combined with the city and suburbs, a well-functioning, socially inclusive and energising place providing residential, employment, health, business, political, educational, and commercial and transport functions driving the Region. Targeted growth will occur in Metropolitan Cork which has significant capacity within its hierarchy of settlements and strategic employment locations along public transport corridors. The area has a unique and sensitive environment to be protected and enhanced, a significant natural asset in Cork Harbour and offers a rich sporting, recreational and cultural offer, as well as tourist destinations of regional and national importance.

Compact sustainable growth: Promote consolidation of Cork City and suburbs, refocus on the development of brownfield and infill lands to achieve a target of a minimum 50% of all new homes within the existing

built up footprint in Cork and 30% in other metropolitan settlements. Development at sustainable locations with inherent climate resilience.

Integrated transport and land use: Target growth along high quality public transport corridors and nodes linked to the delivery of key public transport projects under the development of a Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy including an enhanced public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure, light rail corridor, suburban rail corridor and strategic bus network corridors, all interconnecting with the city centre and connecting with strategic employment locations in the metropolitan area.

Accelerate housing delivery: Activate strategic residential development areas and support the steady supply of sites to accelerate housing supply and the adoption of performance-based design standards as supported by NPF National Policy Objective 13 to achieve higher densities in the urban built up areas, supported by better services and public transport.

Employment density in the right places: Re-intensify employment within the city and suburbs, activate strategic employment opportunities to complement existing employment hubs in the city and metropolitan area. Recognise the variety of established manufacturing operations/hubs and FDI investments around the city in the metropolitan area and seek to improve sustainable transport connectivity to these locations.

Better alignment of growth: Target 'catch up' investment to support employment, infrastructure and amenity provision and/or sustainable transport links in metropolitan towns and suburban areas that have experienced high levels of population growth but are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services.

Social regeneration: Realise opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration, particularly in areas with pockets of deprivation such as RAPID areas.

Future development areas: Having regard to the NPF targets to 2040, the role of the Cork Metropolitan Area in the State and Region and the long lead in time for planning and development, identify future strategic growth areas that may be delivered beyond the lifetime of the RSES. Such areas will be identified by the Local authorities through City and County Development Plan Core Strategies and adhere to the achievement of compact growth principles, integration of land use and transport planning, the distribution of growth guided through the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and fulfilling criteria set out under Goal 7 for all MASP.

Metropolitan scale amenities: Provision and enhancement of regional parks, recreation and sports amenities, natural amenity and habitat protection, strategic green infrastructure including walking, cycling, greenways and blueways in an integrated network across the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Enabling infrastructure: Identify Infrastructure capacity issues and ensure water / waste water needs, municipal and C&D waste capacity issues are met by national projects. Improve sustainability in terms of energy, waste management and resource efficiency and water, to include district heating and water conservation.

Co-ordination and active land management: Enhanced co-ordination across local authorities and agencies to promote more active urban development and land management policies that focus on the development of under-utilised, brownfield, vacant and public lands.

Re-intensify employment within the City and suburbs at strategic locations well-connected to public transport. Activate strategic employment opportunities to complement existing employment hubs in the city and metropolitan area.

Any future **strategic growth areas** should not compromise the delivery of more sustainable regeneration and consolidation of existing strategic sites more suitable for delivery under the Cork MASP Objectives.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 5

Investment to Deliver Vision

- a. It is an objective to seek the identification of investment packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Cork Metropolitan Area and seek further investments into the Cork MASP area to deliver targets boosting population and jobs and to deliver on the seven Metropolitan Area Goals (see Volume III).
- b. It is an objective to ensure quality infrastructure and quality of place is prioritised as an incentive to attract people to live and work in sustainable settlement patterns in the metropolitan area.



4.0 | National Enablers

The following NPF enablers and other enablers for the Cork MASP:

- Delivering ambitious large-scale, mixed-use regeneration projects in Cork Docklands (City Docks and Tivoli) identified including the provision of supporting infrastructure (rapid transit, transport infrastructure in particular Eastern Gateway Bridge, and public realm) and the relocation of 'Seveso' site from the City Docks and two from Tivoli Docks;
- The development of an enhanced City and Metropolitan area public transport system, focused on the concept of an east-west rapid transit corridor (Light Rail Transit) from Mahon, through the City Centre to Ballincollig, and a north-south corridor with a link to the Airport, supported by a strong core bus network;
- Upgrading the Cork commuter rail service serving the areas to the East and North of the city and providing additional stations in areas targeted for growth, such as Monard and Tivoli;
- Progressing the sustainable development of new areas for housing, especially those on public transport corridors such as Monard and urban expansion areas on the rail corridor such as at Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Cobh and Blarney;
- Identifying infill and regeneration opportunities to intensify housing development in inner city and suburban areas, supported by strengthened public transport connectivity, public realm and urban amenity projects;
- Enterprise property solutions and employment enabling infrastructure;
- Enabling enhanced opportunities for existing communities as development and diversification occurs, particularly through employment, learning and education support;
- Development of a new science and innovation park to the west of the City, accessible by public transport;
- The continued expansion of and integration with the City's third level institutions, centres of research and innovation and strengthened supports for the role of learning, training, skills development and apprenticeships;
- M8/N25/N40 Dunkettle Junction upgrade (approved) and improved Ringaskiddy Port access (M28), upgrade of the Cobh Road (Fota Road) R624 and R630 Midleton to Whitegate Road to National Road status, to facilitate Port relocation and regeneration of docklands;
- Enhanced regional connectivity and *improved journey times including the M20 Cork to Limerick and the Cork Northern Ring Road* to ensure connectivity across the Cork Metropolitan area and to routes serving Limerick, Kerry, West Cork, Waterford and Dublin) and upgrade of the N22 Cork to Tralee (approved) and the N25 Cork to Waterford. Improved transport offer around the City through a package of measures including rail and light rail, improvements to the radial and orbital distributor road network, including a northern distributor road, improvements to and more effective management of the strategic road network, including the existing N40 and a future Northern orbital route, delivery of strategic bus network, delivery of the Metropolitan Area Cycle Network, provision for cycling/walkability/permeability/accessibility in the planning, design and delivery of new development;
- Improved rail journey times to Dublin and consideration of improved onward direct network connections;
- Ensuring that water supply and wastewater needs are met by new national projects to enhance Cork's water supply and increase waste water treatment capacity;
- Improving sustainability in terms of energy, waste and water, to include district heating and water conservation;
- Improve quality and accessibility to a network of parks, recreational areas, sports facilities, playgrounds, natural amenity areas, greenways and blueways extending from a green heart in Cork City throughout the metropolitan area;
- Interconnected and integrated walking and cycling infrastructure;
- Protecting built and natural assets;
- Managing flood and climate change risks;
- Invest in digital/ICT infrastructure - Seek delivery of the National Broadband Plan;
- Ensure security of electricity supply, enhanced connection to grid from renewable technologies, roll out of EV infrastructure.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 6

National Enablers

- a. It is an objective to seek sustainable delivery of enablers as identified in the NPF/NDP for the Cork Metropolitan Area and to progress these through coordination between the principal stakeholders, subject to the recommendations of CMATS (see Section 4.0) and required feasibility, planning and environmental assessment processes. Identification of suitable sites for regeneration and development should be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental concerns high-quality design and evidence-based housing demand to drive increased density enabling the roll out of sustainable public transport solutions;
- b. It is an objective to implement innovative and collaborative projects through funding mechanisms such as the Urban Regeneration and Development, Rural Regeneration and Development, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies funds.

5.0 | Population Projections

The Cork MASP population growth targets to 2031 provided by the DHPLG are set out below:

Table 1 | Population Projections for the Cork Metropolitan Area

Location	2016 Base Year	Growth to 2026	Growth to 2031	Population Target 2031
Cork City and Suburbs	208,669	50,000	75,000	283,669
Rest of Cork Met. Area	95,500	20,281	29,657	125,157
Total Metropolitan Area	304,169	70,281	104,657	408,826
Balance of Cork County	238,699	25,739	36,695	275,394

Core Strategies will address the alignment of the table in the Cork MASP with the new Cork City Council and Cork County Council administrative boundaries that came into effect May 2019.

The NPF and Implementation Roadmap sets out projections to achieve accelerated urban growth. They also refer to further qualified allowances. This includes scope for an additional 25% headroom (to 2026) which may be applied locally at Development Plan stages in Cork (City and County). The additional 25% headroom refers to population and not zoned lands.

The NPF, (NPO 68) states a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan may enable up to 20% of the phased population growth targeted in the principal city and suburban area, to be accommodated in the wider metropolitan area, i.e. outside the city and suburbs or contiguous zoned area, in addition to growth identified for the Metropolitan Area.

This is subject to the following:

- Any relocated growth being in the form of compact development, such as infill or sustainable urban extension;
- Any relocated growth being served by high capacity

public transport and /or related to significant employment provision; and

- NPO 9 of the NPF.

Given the ambitious targets applied to the MASP, it is unlikely that this will be required during the lifetime of this RSES. However, this will be subject to review.

Also refer to Chapter 3, RPO 35 Support for Compact Growth in the application of these targets.

Consultation with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) and the Local authorities will be part of the implementation mechanisms to be established for the MASP following adoption of the RSES. Review processes on how targets are being achieved will be part of the implementation mechanism for each MASP. These review processes, in consultation and agreement with the Local authorities and the DHPLG, will inform the application of NPO 68.



6.0 | Integrated Landuse and Transport

CMATS prepared by the NTA, TII and local authorities provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services over the period up to 2040. The alignment of the CMATS with the Cork MASP Objectives is required for the coordination of policymaking and investment.

The distribution of growth must be infrastructure led, phased and provided at an appropriate higher density at strategic nodal points on the transport network to underpin the viability and successful implementation of transport networks under the CMATS. The distribution of growth must be based in integrated land use and transport. The successful implementation of CMATS will be a game changer to support the role of the Cork Metropolitan Area and achieve the National Strategic Outcomes of Compact Growth, Enhanced Regional Accessibility, Sustainable Mobility, High Quality International Connectivity, A Strong Economy, and Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society.

A major challenge for Cork City is providing alternatives to the car, a shift that can only be achieved by a better balance in the distribution of activity and

ensuring people can live close to where they work. Promotion of compact growth will go some way to alleviating this over-dependence and encourage more sustainable and active modes of travel.

Where practicable, development within the metropolitan area should be carried out sequentially, and lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport - including infill and brownfield sites - are prioritised. The transport capacity of the strategic national road network should also be maintained and protected and larger scale, trip intensive developments, such as high employment density offices and retail, should primarily be focused in locations which are well served by existing or proposed high capacity public transport corridors.

The growth strategy for the Cork Metropolitan Area will require key transport investment, framed by sustainable land use and transport planning integration. Prioritisation, as identified in the following objectives, is to be developed further through the CMATS and the Core Strategies of City and County Development Plans in the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 7

Integrated Landuse and Transport Planning

To seek delivery of the following subject to the outcomes of required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes including SEA and AA as appropriate.

- a. It is an objective to prepare a Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.
- b. Seek investment and delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure as identified through the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and delivery of e-mobility infrastructures.
- c. The Core Strategies of City and County Development Plans in the Cork Metropolitan Area shall allocate the distribution of future population and employment growth with the integration of land use and transportation planning principles, public transport nodal points and targets identified through the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.
- d. Achieve the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF, through sustainable and infrastructure led:
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of the City Centre, Docklands and city suburban areas;
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along a potential new Light Rail Corridor;
- e. Identify and deliver strategic locations for increased residential and employment use at public transport interchange locations relating to the proposed Light Rail Transit Route, Suburban Rail and the strategic bus network, where high levels of accessibility by public transport can be achieved. Seek sustainable higher densities where practicable at public transport nodal points.
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along a Suburban Rail Corridor;
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along strategic bus network corridors.

Key Transport Objectives (to be informed by and subject to the recommendations of Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy)

Subject to the finalisation of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transportation Strategy (CMATS) and the outcomes of required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes including SEA/AA as appropriate:

- a.** The SRA will seek investment in the sustainable development and implementation of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and transport initiatives that improve connectivity between the metropolitan area, wider Cork context and wider region.
- b.** The SRA will seek the Core Strategies of Local Authority Development Plans to identify the public transport corridors and public transport nodes on those corridors in Cork Metropolitan Area arising from the CMATS which have potential for high density development/regeneration. Core Strategies shall identify the appropriate land use zonings for these public transport nodal points and demonstrate the effective alignment between land use and transport infrastructure planning and delivery of the NPF Compact Growth targets as they apply to the Cork Metropolitan Area.
- c.** Integration of All Sustainable Travel Modes: Infrastructure to provide for integration between all modes of transport to support the use of sustainable travel choices.
- d.** East-West Light Rail Public Transport Corridor: A east-west public transport corridor from Mahon to Ballincollig via the City Centre, serving CIT, CUH, UCC, Kent Station, Docklands, Mahon Point. The corridor requires development consolidation along it at appropriate nodal points for a high capacity service.
- e.** Rail Network: Strategic public transport services along the existing rail lines. Strategic priorities will include investment in the Cork Rail Network (serving locations such as Monard, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Cobh) and enhancing the commuter rail service with additional stations and fleet, improve intercity journey times and electrification of fleet. On the suburban rail network, the following key components are proposed:
 - P & R and new station at Blarney/Stone View;
 - New station to serve Monard SDZ;
 - New station to regenerate and intensify Blackpool/Kilbarry;
 - Kent Station as a key interchange node between city centre walking/cycling, LRT and bus network;
 - New station Tivoli Docks;
 - P & R and new station at Dunkettle;
 - To Cobh, improved signal operations and new station at Ballynoe interchanging with bus services;
 - To Midleton, new station Carrigtwohill West and IDA Carrigtwohill East/ Ballyadam when developed, dual track and new station at Water Rock;
 - The development of a greenway from Midleton to Youghal and still allow for future rail use if feasible at a later stage subject to SEA/AA and protection of the Ballyvergan Marsh proposed Natural Heritage Area;
- Support the feasibility of designating Mallow as a Commuter Rail Station (which will assist a revised fare structure) and the opportunity this presents to encouraging a modal shift for commuters in North Cork.
- f.** Core Bus Network: A comprehensive network of high frequency bus services operating on a core radial and orbital bus network as provided for in CMATS.
- g.** City Centre Movement Strategy: Delivery of the Cork City Centre Movement Strategy 2018-2024.
- h.** Walking: Make Cork the most walkable city in Ireland, implement and further develop upon the Cork City Walking Strategy 2013-2018 and strengthen the role of walking through improved walkability, with a particular focus on new development areas, access to services at the local level and improved pedestrian accessibility to and within the City Centre area, Town/District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres. Seek and support greenways for walking in addition to cycling.
- i.** Cycling: Implement and further develop upon the Cork Metropolitan Area Cycle Network Plan 2017, invest in infrastructure to support the integration of the cycle networks throughout the Cork Metropolitan Area and region, improve and develop primary, secondary, greenway (including the Lee to Sea Greenway) and feeder cycle networks and support cycling through provision of a high proportion of segregated cycleways to provide a safe infrastructure for all.
- j.** Public Transport Integration: provision for interchange opportunities across all modes of transport together with information provision and revised fare structures.
- k.** Road Network Improvements: Improvements to the road network to support the sustainable growth of the metropolitan area, while also providing appropriate strategic provision for the movement of goods. Investment in the road network supports sustainable travel modes (walking, cycling, and bus networks), supports strategic inter urban and inter regional freight traffic, especially between ports and airports. Improvements discourage secondary local trip and urban expansion based on road corridors. Strategic road corridors are identified by separate objective.
- l.** Other Strategic Road Priorities will include implementation of City Centre Movement Strategy, Cork Docklands and Tivoli Docks bridge (South Docks Eastern Gateway Bridge, Mill Road) and road infrastructure (South Docks and North Docks Roads, Tivoli Access).
- m.** Management of freight around metropolitan Cork, enabled through Port of Cork relocation to Ringaskiddy construction, logistics and delivery centres.
- n.** Supporting Measures: Further measures to support the delivery of CMATS key transport objectives including parking management, Park and Ride, demand management, mobility management and behavioural change programmes.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 9

Strategic Road Network Improvements

To seek delivery of the following subject to the outcomes of required appropriate project appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes including SEA/AA as appropriate. The upgrade of public transport networks must be the priority for strategic road network improvements under this objective. Sustainable proposals that facilitate the implementation of public transport networks on the strategic road network will be supported.

- a.** The SRA will seek investment in the management, implementation and sustainable development of strategic road network improvements for the Cork Metropolitan Area and its improved connectivity to the wider region. This will include the delivery of all of the following (b to s).
- b.** Delivery of current Government programmed and proposed national road network improvement schemes relating to the Cork Metropolitan Area and associated inter-urban connecting roads.
- c.** Advancing investment in orbital transport corridors through the implementation of appropriate demand management measures, on the N40 and provision of alternative local roads, as deemed necessary. Specific measures should not be introduced in isolation, but only after due consideration of the impacts on access and movement across the city and suburbs and progressed in parallel with the introduction of the necessary appropriate alternatives to service affected traffic movements.
- d.** Enhanced regional connectivity through improved average journey times by road to Limerick and Waterford via proposed M20 Limerick to Cork and the targeted enhancement of the N25 between Cork and Waterford.
- e.** Improved connectivity Cork City to Cork Airport including the provision of bus priority lanes on the N27 and an improvement in the alignment of the R600 south of the Airport (refer to Cork MASP Policy Objective 14).
- f.** Improved connectivity to the Port of Cork and strategic employment areas on the N28 Cork to Ringaskiddy route.
- g.** Dunkettle Interchange.
- h.** A Cork Northern Ring Road (CNRR) is a complementary scheme to the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme, identified in the NDP. It has been assessed as part of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS). It is expected that the CNRR project will be planned for implementation during the latter period of the CMATS. The finalisation of a route corridor and its protection from development intrusion is an objective of CMATS to allow for changing circumstances including potentially an earlier project delivery requirement.
- i.** Cork Northern Distributor Road delivering a multi-modal orbital public transport route, accessing planned development lands, connecting to radial distributor roads and providing connectivity at its western end to join the existing N22.
- j.** Access for Monard SDZ (a key enabler for Cork under the NPF).
- k.** Cork City Docks and Tivoli Bridge and Street Infrastructure (including Eastern Gateway Bridge) Cork Docklands infrastructure is a key enabler for Cork under the NPF.
- l.** Improved N22, N25, N27, N71 Inter Regional and Intra Regional corridors.
- m.** Upgrade of the R624 Regional Road Linking N25 to Marino Point and Cobh subject to required feasibility, planning and environmental assessment processes and support the designation of this route to National Road Status.
- n.** Upgrade of the R630 Regional Road linking Midleton to Whitegate Road (Energy Hub) and support the designation of this route to National Road Status.
- o.** Cork Science and Innovation Park Access (a key enabler for Cork under the NPF).
- p.** Transport packages including road upgrades, relief roads, enhanced public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure for metropolitan towns and urban expansion areas.
- q.** North East Orbital Road (access for residential lands and public transport infrastructure Ballyvolane).
- r.** Advancing transport study measures for Little Island.
- s.** Provide improved access infrastructure to IDA Carrigtwohill East / Ballyadam strategic site (N25).

Refer to Chapter 6 Connectivity of the RSES for further transport objectives for the Region and role of the Cork Metropolitan Area.





7.0 | Housing and Regeneration

The Cork MASP identifies strategic housing and regeneration locations within the metropolitan area (see tables below). These give an indication of existing initiatives and, as identified in Chapter 3 of the RSES and MASP Goal 7, new initiatives must meet NPF growth targets. Achieving these target will require in-depth consideration for new locations and initiatives by each local authority.

It is accepted that additional sites may become available, and the Cork MASP recognises the need to be flexible to accommodate opportunities. It is required that any such opportunities be integrated with sustainable land use and transport planning as per the objectives in the Cork MASP.

The Core Strategies of City and County Development Plans in the Cork Metropolitan Area will need to assess and identify these locations.

The Cork MASP recognises the existing active land management initiatives of Cork City Council and Cork County Council, through Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Funds (LIHAF) initiatives, regeneration area masterplans (such as the North West Regeneration Area), and the Strategic Land Reserve and Housing Infrastructure Implementation Team of Cork County Council.

The Cork MASP will pursue an evidence-based and tailored approach to the delivery of the right housing types, mix of tenure and typologies, in the right locations through the preparation of a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA).

Any future strategic residential growth areas should not compromise the delivery of more sustainable regeneration and consolidation of existing strategic sites more suitable for delivery in accordance with the Cork MASP Objectives.

7.1 | City Centre Consolidation and Regeneration

The following summary tables refer to strategic housing and regeneration areas identified to date for the Cork MASP as an indication of existing strategic initiatives and locations, noting that many function as dynamic mixed-use locations. A comment on key infrastructure requirements is also provided.

Strategic Residential (including mixed uses) and Regeneration Areas

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Residential Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
City Centre	<p>The city centre is a vibrant mixed-use area made up of the commercial core area largely centred on the island and the adjacent historic areas such as Shandon and the South Parish. The City Centre is a growing vibrant location, with a 20% increase in population and a 10% increase in new businesses, and is supported as a vibrant living location</p> <p>It has a Level 1 Retail Role.</p> <p>Globally, city centres are increasingly sought-after as the locations of choice for investors for combined living, working and high quality of life opportunities. Cork City is the key economic driver at the heart of the metropolitan area.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 1014 Plus, significant employment potential from e.g. offices (capacity of permitted developments tbc) and hotel development (900 additional hotel beds due for delivery</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <p>Of particular note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and development of inner-city parks including Bishop Lucey Park, develop urban amenity areas, green spaces including linear amenity areas that optimise the waterfront setting, public realm upgrades to city centre streets and pedestrian access to create an attractive environment for increased numbers of residents and workers. • Acquisition of strategic inner-city sites to facilitate regeneration of vacant and underutilised areas. • Mechanisms to promote redevelopment of strategic city blocks and the upgrading and reuse of existing buildings. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.





Location	Brief Description and Indicative Residential Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Cork City Docks	<p>The redevelopment of the North and South Docklands and Tivoli is one of the most significant urban regeneration schemes in Ireland. It will require significant investment in supporting infrastructure to proceed. The City Docks, over 160 ha, comprises the North and South Docks. Through Local Area Plan process, Cork City Council are seeking to regenerate the brownfield site as a sustainable, vibrant, mixed use socially inclusive quarter, an extension of the city centre, capitalising on its waterside setting, access to city centre and public transport networks. Strong urban design and place making principles are at the core of the regeneration initiative.</p> <p>The regeneration of the Cork City Docks provides significant opportunities for new enterprise and employment uses.</p> <p>Potential Yield: 9,500 residential units. 9,500 jobs based on 920,000 sq.m office space and additional jobs from services, retail, restaurants etc.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <p>Of particular note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The redevelopment of the docklands is strongly linked to the relocation of Port activities from the city and development of new Port of Cork facilities in Ringaskiddy, the construction of the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy and facilities at Marino Point. • Cork Docklands are key to unlocking the travel demand for the proposed Light Rail system and will greatly enhance the potential for high-density mixed-use development in Docklands. • For mobility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River crossings including Eastern Gateway Bridge and Mill Road Bridge, upgrades to Monahan Road, Centre Park Road and bridge approach roads, PT provision, transition area junction upgrades/ • Flood relief measures. • Marina Park, Kennedy park, quayside amenities. • Horgan's Road relocation. • Cultural and tourism infra. • Education and health infra. • Potential Brownfield Site remediation. • Cross-river watermain to serve South Docks.

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Residential Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Tivoli	<p>Lands at Tivoli docks are c.61.5 ha, strategically located at a gateway location to the city, bounded by the Cork-Cobh rail line. Through Local Area Plan process, Cork City Council are seeking to regenerate the brownfield site as a sustainable, vibrant residential and mixed-use waterside quarter, optimising rail connectivity, pedestrian and cycle links to the Cork City Docklands and City Centre, unique waterside and gateway location and complement uses with quality recreational amenities.</p> <p>The regeneration of Tivoli Docklands provides significant opportunities for new enterprise and employment uses.</p> <p>Potential Yield: At least 3,000 residential units. 4,000 jobs based on 50,000 sq.m office space.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <p>Of particular note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tivoli Docks will require a commuter rail station to allow it to be developed sustainably at an appropriate density. • Upgrade to access roads including second access, park and quayside amenities. • Relocation of SEVESO uses. • Site remediation.



7.2 | Potential Light Rail Corridor

Strategic Residential and Regeneration Area

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
City Suburban Areas	<p>The 20th century suburbs of the city consist of residential areas interspersed with employment uses, institutions and social and community uses. There are many opportunities for redevelopment, particularly where non-residential uses rationalise or relocate freeing up infill and brownfield sites for residential and other redevelopment</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 3986 (this figure will grow as further “windfall” sites emerge).</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in placemaking including upgrading the public realm and provision of parks and community facilities. Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.
North West Regeneration	<p>A major housing regeneration initiative is underway in the north-west of the city focused on the Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill areas under the guidance of the North-West Regeneration Masterplan.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 200 net additional.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.
Mahon	<p>Mahon has developed with significant mixed-use residential, enterprise and retail uses, has potential for further development of greenfield sites and intensification of former industrial lands and improved public transport connectivity.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 1021 units.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New public transport bridge and route linking via Bessboro to Mahon. Expansion and upgrading of amenity areas and walking/cycling routes. Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.





Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Ballincollig	<p>Ballincollig is the largest and fastest growing town in Cork, building on its IT specialism and potential for improved public transport links to the City via the Cork Science and Innovation Park.</p> <p>Urban Expansion Area of Maglin.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 4582 (includes Maglin UEA 3,570).</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maglin Urban Expansion Area Phased Infrastructure Packages. • CMATS recommendations re road network / public transport (LRT in particular). • Waste Water Infrastructure upgrades. • Water Supply Upgrades. • Local Road improvements (Killumney Road Upgrade, Maglin Road realignment). • Delivery of Cork Northern Ring Road. • Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.

7.3 | Monard Strategic Development Zone and Strategic Residential Growth Nodes on the Metropolitan Rail Line

Strategic Residential and Regeneration Areas

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Monard Strategic Development Zone	<p>Monard is a planned new rail based Metropolitan Town between Blarney and Cork City.</p> <p>Monard SDZ is identified as an enabler for Cork in the NPF. The inclusion of the SDZ as a strategic initiative in Metropolitan Cork is important to align with the NPF and support investment packages. MASP sets higher-level strategic infrastructure priorities for the location.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 5,000 units.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDZ Phased Infrastructure packages. • New Rail Station. • Orbital road access North Ring Road/ Northern Distributor Road. • Waste Water Infrastructure (new trunk foul sewers required with interim solution at Killeens WWTP and ultimate solution at Carrigrennan WWTP). • Water supply infrastructure (pump station and trunk main from Churchfield reservoir plus 2 new reservoirs at Monard). • Upgrade of access routes serving Monard.
North Environs- Kilbarry-Blackpool	<p>The Blackpool Valley, Kilbarry and the Old Whitechurch Road area have opportunities for significant mixed-use regeneration and residential and enterprise development providing a northern gateway to the city from the Limerick Road.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 950 units.</p> <p>The north environs will be reinvigorated through sustainable development of mixed-use development in Ballyvolane, complementing the North Blackpool Local Area Pan.</p> <p>Urban Expansion Area of Ballyvolane: 3,600 units.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballyvolane Urban Expansion Area Phased Infrastructure Packages. • Kilbarry Rail Station a key enabler. • Waste Water connections to Carrigrennan. • Drinking Water supply infrastructure (new trunk mains, off-site reservoir and pump station required). • Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy. • Various Local Road improvements. • Connectivity to the Northern Distributor Road. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Midleton	<p>Midleton is the largest town in East Cork, building on the success of the town's rail connections to Cork City, building on its industrial base and specialist roles in the food and beverage sector and building on its tourism assets. Urban Expansion Area of Water Rock.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 5,255 units (includes Water Rock UEA 2,460 units).</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Rock Urban Expansion Area Phased Infrastructure Packages. • New rail station. • Pump station and rising main solution to Carrigtwohill WWTP (medium term solution). • Midleton Water Supply upgrade. • Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy. • Implementation of CMATS sustainable transport measures (walking, cycling and public transport), connecting with and within Midleton. • N25 Upgrade including interchange and slip road improvements. • Improvements to Lakeview Roundabout and Banshane junction with N25. • New Bridge over rail line connecting to N25 upgrade. • Midleton Northern Relief Road. • Waste Water Management Strategy for Cork Harbour. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.
Cobh	<p>Cobh is the third largest of the Metropolitan Towns, building its potential for greater employment self-sufficiency, optimising its accessibility on the rail line to Cork City and wider Metropolitan Cork and building on its unique heritage and tourism assets.</p> <p>Urban Expansion Area of Ballynoe Valley</p> <p>Residential Yield: 1570 (includes Ballynoe Valley UEA 700 units).</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballynoe Valley Urban Expansion Area Phased Infrastructure Packages. • Improved road access between N25 and Cobh Town (R624 upgrade to national road). • Local Road improvements (approach road between Belvelly Bridge and Cobh Cross, the L-2989-30 and Tay Road). • Public transport improvements (CMATS) connecting Cobh to Cork City/Little Island. • Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity from UEA to the town centre and rail station. • Cork Lower Harbour Sewerage Scheme (upgrade due to be completed 2019). • Water Supply Upgrades. • Upgrade of Cobh North WWTP. • Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy. • Belvelly Bridge upgrade and/or new bridge.

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Carrigtwohill	<p>Carrigtwohill is one of County Cork's fastest growing settlements, maximising rail connectivity and the economic potential of the town as a Strategic Employment Area through the IDA Business Park.</p> <p>Urban Expansion Area Carrigtwohill North.</p> <p>IDA Strategic Landbank at Carrigtwohill East/Ballyadam</p> <p>Residential Yield: 3285 (includes Carrigtwohill North UEA)</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrigtwohill North Urban Expansion Area Phased Infrastructure Packages. • Public transport improvements (CMATS) including new rail station and interurban greenway connecting town to Cork and Midleton. • Rail platforms at Carrigtwohill West and Carrigtwohill East when developed. • Utilities and services for residential and strategic employment sites -Carrigtwohill Water Supply upgrade. • Various Local Road improvement works required including bridge/ access solution for pedestrians and cyclists. • N25 upgrade including interchange improvements. • Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy. • Town Regeneration Project. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.



Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
<p>Blarney</p>	<p>Blarney is a Metropolitan town and significant regional tourist centre optimizing its accessibility on the rail line. Urban Expansion Area of Stone View.</p> <p>Residential Yield: 3,555 (includes Stoneview UEA 2,600 units).</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone View Urban Expansion. Area Phased Infrastructure Packages. • Public transport improvements (CMATS) including re-development of rail station. • New road over rail bridge and improvements to existing bridge; • New link road to Blarney via Lower Sheen Road. • Local Road improvements required including R617 and Station Road upgrades. • Upgrade Waste Water infrastructure – new trunk sewer required to north of City linking to Carrigrennan (there may be an interim solution at Blarney WWTP). • Upgrade required to Water Supply infrastructure (network extension pump station and off site main from Blarney). • Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.
<p>Glanmire</p>	<p>Glanmire is a main town and key growth centre in Metropolitan Cork set in an attractive, historic, woodland environment in close proximity to City Centre, the railway-line and Little Island Strategic Employment Area.</p> <p>Urban Expansion Area of Ballinglanna/Dunkettle.</p> <p>Residential Yield: 1,567 (includes Ballinglanna/Dunkettle UEA 1,200 units).</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: Not on Light Rail but close access to Suburban Rail. • Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.

7.4 | Other Metropolitan Towns

Location	Brief Description and Indicative Yield: Yields are indicative only, will be revised in the context of compact growth targets, departmental guidelines and development plans.	Infrastructure Priorities subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes
Carrigaline	<p>Carrigaline is a thriving Metropolitan Town with a strong village character, set in a high-quality harbour environment and in close proximity to Ringaskiddy employment area.</p> <p>Urban Expansion Area of Shannon Park.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 2380 (includes Shannon Park UEA 1,000 units)</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced public transport connectivity- CMATS. Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.
Passage West	<p>Passage West is an important residential area based around excellent recreational facilities, harbour setting and greenway.</p> <p>Potential Residential Yield: 890</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced public transport connectivity- CMATS. Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities.
Other Existing Metropolitan Settlements	<p>Other existing settlements in the metropolitan area as determined in Core Strategies. Distribution of growth to adhere to integrated land use and transport planning and CMATS.</p>	<p>As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in retrofitting infrastructure and services (physical, social and recreational) to improve quality of life for communities. Enhanced public transport connectivity- CMATS.



8.0 | Employment and Enterprise

8.1 | Introduction

Investment in the creation of 'place', access to talent and the presence of an innovative and smart economy are key factors to realising the potential of the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Internationally and nationally, the trend is increasingly toward urban areas of scale and concentrations of economic activity.

The following key elements inform business location choices:

- Critical mass in population.
- Connectivity and access are paramount – nationally and internationally – enabled by physical and technology infrastructures with capacity resilience and quality. This has become even more critical in a post-Brexit environment.
- World class economic infrastructures and competitive services with capacity, resilience and quality.
- Third level infrastructures, access to skills and to research, development and innovation.
- Availability of property solutions – including 'ready-to-go' commercial properties, 'landing spaces', co-working spaces and flexible property solutions³⁰ and affordable housing.
- Effective and integrated public transport networks within and between cities and urban areas.
- Co-location or dynamic clustering plays a role, for example, in the agri-food sector, enterprises will seek to locate close to local suppliers of produce. Enabling connectivity and linkages within and between suppliers and purchasers, between enterprises and higher education institutions is an important consideration for the NPF, including quality of life factors and sense of place.
- Strong track record with established clusters of enterprise.

The delivery of the elements that attract business and enterprise depends on identifying and understanding the main economic drivers and removing obstacles to realising their full potential. The Cork Metropolitan Area meets these key elements for business location choice. However, there is a need to continually improve and enhance these requirements in order to compete internationally.

30. Including lease terms, ability to scale/re-size, parking facilities, shared services, etc

8.2 | Cork Metropolitan Area Strengths in attracting FDI, Economic Resilience and Clusters

The diversification of industry and the development of clusters will increase economic resilience and reduce risk. By developing industrial clusters, benefits such as lower production costs, increased innovation among related businesses and increased co-location of similar and supporting businesses can be realised.

Working together, companies can be more innovative, create more jobs and register more international trademarks and patents than they would alone. The EU Cluster Portal³¹ provides tools and information on key European initiatives, actions and events for clusters with the aim of creating more world-class clusters across the EU.

Cork (City and County) has a strong record in fostering collaboration between stakeholders, economic growth performance, the development of clusters and attracting international investment. As of 2018, with 169 overseas companies employing c38, 870, there are strong clusters in technology and ICT, life science (pharma, bio-pharma and med-tech), financial and business services, engineering and an international track record in attracting global leaders such as Apple, Dell EMC, Pfizer, J & J, PepsiCo, BNY, and Stryker. There are opportunities to enhance and strengthen several different sectors including a European Tech Cluster in the Cork City.

Large scale and high value manufacturing operations and associated employment are important enterprise strengths and assets across the Cork Metropolitan Area with many global companies in technology, engineering, life sciences and food and beverages.

31. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/cluster_en

The sectoral strengths of the Cork Metropolitan Area also extend to energy and maritime, agriculture food and beverage, agri-tech, culture and arts, leisure and tourism, research and education. Established business networks and clustering, higher education, skills pool and innovation, international airport (over 50 international destinations), Tier 1 Port, vibrant city centre, quality of life potential with access to metropolitan and wider Cork amenities are some of the key attributes leading to this success. Further investment to improve efficient access, develop enterprise property assets, achieve strong placemaking and establish a platform for international and indigenous growth is essential to build upon this strong position for national economic growth. Example locations of recent take ups include One Albert Quay, Lavitts Quay, City Gate Park Mahon, Barrack Square Ballincollig, Cork Airport Business Park, Eastgate and Apple located in Hollyhill. The Cork Metropolitan Area is a location for high-tech industry, securing its place in the global digital arena through high-speed digital connections such as the Hibernia Express subsea cable line located at Cork Internet Exchange and the Ireland-France Subsea Cable.

Collaboration is driving innovation and success in the Cork Metropolitan Area's digital and green future transition, such as Tyndall, Nimbus, MaREI, IT@Cork, Energy Cork, Cork Innovates, Cork Smart Gateway, and CEIA.

Global trends point to the need for hybrid/blended skills sets where technology innovates across all industries. Future growth will be through innovations in the existing sectoral strengths in the metropolitan area, the emergence of the marine economy, global trends in the internet of things, artificial intelligence, convergence, 3D printing, autonomous things, cyber security, space science, for example. Manufacturing sectors will need to embrace disruptive technologies.

The role of vibrant indigenous enterprise and local enterprise growth (through Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Offices), in addition to IDA Ireland are critical to the future successful economic uplift of all communities and locations in the metropolitan area, assisting enterprise growth where the platform and environment is prepared and supportive of local entrepreneurship.

The following objectives for learning and innovation, enterprise infrastructure and digital infrastructure support strong enterprise growth in the Cork Metropolitan Area (see also objectives in Ch 4 - A Strong Economy - Innovative and Smart which apply to the metropolitan area).

Cork MASP Policy Objective 10

Enterprise Support, Education and Access to Talent

a. To seek investment into infrastructure and facilities that sustainably drives the role of Higher Education Institutes (such as UCC, CIT transitioning to the Munster Technological University with IT Tralee), other institutions, research and innovation centres and enterprise agency research and incubator facilities as catalysts for economic growth in the Cork Metropolitan Area and wider region.

b. To seek investment to support the sustainable delivery of strategic plans and initiatives of IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, the Local Enterprise Offices, South West Regional Skills Forums and the South West Regional Enterprise Plan in strengthening enterprise assets fostering competitive locations and conditions for enterprise growth in the Cork Metropolitan Area.





Cork MASP Policy Objective 11

Transition to Digital Future

The SRA will seek investment in the delivery of accessible and improved high speed, high capacity digital infrastructure in the Cork Metropolitan Area subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process including:

- a. Support and seek investment in Cork City and Cork County Council's Digital Strategies, harnessing the roll out and delivery of various forms of high capacity ICT infrastructure that will support the Digital transformation of Cork and which recognises that ICT or digital connectivity infrastructure requirements will vary depending on the desired outcome, location, activity etc.
- b. Support the collection of better real time city data to enable city users and management to make better data driven decisions.
- c. Support Cork City Councils participation in the European Commission's Digital Cities Challenge programme to develop a digital transformation vision and action plan for Cork to enable a better quality of life in a greener, more innovative and smarter city.
- d. Support the initiatives of the Cork Smart Gateway to enable a better quality of life, greener and more innovative and smarter city and metropolitan area.
- e. Support Cork County Council's Digital Strategy for the County, harnessing the roll out and delivery of high capacity ICT infrastructure and high-speed broadband to improve "relational proximity", where peripheral locations can interact more successfully with larger urban centres and the metropolitan area.
- f. Support and seek investment in initiatives enhancing digital infrastructure access in our public buildings and spaces, such as Cork's participation in the WiFi4EU Initiative.

8.3 | Distribution of Employment Growth

As an open economy at the innovation edge, where technologies and business models evolve at a rapid pace, it is difficult to specify jobs targets for every type of economic activity and location in the MASP.

However, as a functional economic area, certain assumption can be made. The NPF used a ratio of 1.6 between the population growth targets and employment growth targets for the whole Region. Applying a similar ratio to the population growth targets for the metropolitan area can provide an indication of additional jobs targeted in the Cork MASP. Additional jobs to 2026 would be in the order of at least 44,000 and additional jobs to 2031 at least 65,000. The sustainable distribution of employment growth needs to consolidate and regenerate existing strategic employment locations, acknowledging older established, lower density industrial areas in the city and suburban areas will transition under the next Core Strategies to higher density, higher value mixed use locations. It will be a requirement that all

strategic employment locations are accessible via the integrated Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy with significantly enhanced public transport and sustainable travel infrastructure.

The larger scaled high value manufacturing operations across the Cork Metropolitan Area in sectors including technology, engineering, life sciences and food and beverages will be supported as strategic enterprise and employment assets into the future as these sectors evolve and embrace new disruptive technologies.

The Cork MASP identifies strategic employment centres within the metropolitan area. However, achieving NPF growth targets will require in depth consideration for new locations and initiatives by each local authority in consultation with the Enterprise Agencies including IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. The MASP recognises the need to be flexible to accommodate opportunities and that additional sites may emerge. It is critical however that any such opportunities are integrated with sustainable land use and transport planning objectives of the RSES.

The table below shows the existing strategic employment locations from a regional perspective as an indication of existing strategic initiatives and locations.

Table 2 | Strategic Employment Locations

Location	Brief Description	Infrastructure Priorities
City Centre	As noted above for Strategic Residential. Significant existing property assets, lands and growth potential for jobs and employment growth in these locations.	
City Docklands and Tivoli		
Mahon		
Hollyhill-Apple		
Blackpool/Kilbarry		
Cork Science and Innovation Park	The CSIP when completed, will be a critical piece of economic infrastructure for the Smart Economy in Metropolitan Cork.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Public transport and local road connectivity -CMATS. N40 Junction improvements.
Zoned Enterprise Lands in Metropolitan Area for high value manufacturing	The MASP recognises the strategic importance of existing high value, larger-scaled manufacturing sectors in the Cork Metropolitan Area in sectors including technology, engineering, life sciences, food and beverages and their future role.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas.
Higher Education Institutes - main campus and associated off campus facilities, R&D and innovation centres.	UCC has a student population of over 21,000. Elite research centres embedded in UCC include the Tyndall National Research Institute, the APC Microbiome Institute (both recognised as global leaders), the Environmental Research Institute, the Beaufort Laboratory and MaREL. CIT has a student population of 15,000. The Rubicon Centre at CIT is one of Ireland's strongest-performing on-campus incubators; CIT partnerships include its key research centres and Enterprise Ireland-supported technology gateways (NIMBUS, CAPP, and BIOEXPLORE). A consortium involving CIT and IT Tralee have been designated the Munster Technological University (MTU). Co-location opportunities for industry/enterprise with academia and R&D	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. University Masterplans.
Cork University Hospital	State's largest university teaching hospital, centre for medical innovation and a significant employer.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Hospital Masterplans.

Location	Brief Description	Infrastructure Priorities
Model Farm Road Technology Park and South Environs	Employment in the existing Technology Park and potential for re-imaging the Tramore Road/ Kinsale Road industrial area more intensively for mixed employment and residential uses.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Public transport connectivity -CMATS.
Ringaskiddy	Specialist employment area for life sciences, significant IDA enterprise assets and world leading marine research and innovation centres.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Enhanced public transport connectivity -CMATS.
Marino Point	Opportunity to optimise the rail connection, deep water wharf facilities and utilities connections for port/marine industry related activity as an economic enabler for Cobh	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Rail Connectivity. R624 to Marino Point and Cobh.
Little Island	Little Island is a Strategic Employment Area, with a business park, industries and access to a rail station and the N25.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Enhanced public transport connectivity -CMATS.
Carrigtwohill	IDA, business park and IDA Carrigtwohill East/Ballyadam Strategic site, strategic industrial lands accessible to rail corridor and N25.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Enhanced public transport connectivity -CMATS. IDA Carrigtwohill East/Ballyadam lands requirement for access and rail connectivity.
Whitegate- Ireland's Energy Park	It is the location of the State's only oil refinery, three power stations, state of the art energy efficient technology and gas storage/carbon storage capability. Whitegate can deliver 25% of the country's energy needs. The refinery is considered a key national and regional asset in terms of developing bio-energy.	As per Chapter 3 Objective on investment for holistic infrastructure for metropolitan areas. Enhanced connectivity-R630.
Tier 1 Port of Cork	See Specific Objective	
Cork Airport	See Specific Objective	



Cork MASP Policy Objective 12

Infrastructure for Strategic Employment Locations

- a.** It is an objective to support the sustainable development of identified and future Strategic Employment Locations and to ensure the delivery of associated infrastructural requirements subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.
- b.** To seek investment and inter agency co-ordination to the delivery of infrastructure packages to assist the sustainable growth, regeneration and integration of employment land use and sustainable transport planning for existing and future identified locations in the Cork Metropolitan Area.
- c.** To seek sustainable infrastructure investment and support masterplan implementation of HEIs including UCC and CIT and associated centres of research, development and innovation which are supported as strategic regional economic drivers in the Cork MASP.
- d.** To seek sustainable infrastructure investment and support masterplan implementation of the Cork Science and Innovation Park at Curraheen which is supported as a strategic regional economic driver in the Cork MASP.

8.4 | Role of Tier 1 Port of Cork

The Tier 1 International Port of Cork is a multi-purpose deep-water port facility. The Port is recognised as a strategic national and regional driver for economic growth. In 2017, the Port of Cork handled over 10.3 million tonnes of trade traffic and 68 cruise liners visited, bringing over 142,000 passengers to the Region.

Balanced with the protection of the natural environment, the Cork MASP supports the role of the port and the sustainable delivery of infrastructure to fulfil this role. The objective below is identified in addition to an objective for the role of Cork Harbour (Section 2.3 of the Cork MASP) and objectives under RSES Chapter 6 supporting the role of ports and connectivity to ports on the TEN-T Network.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 13

Port of Cork

- a.** Support sustainable development and investment in the Port of Cork balanced with the protection of the natural environment and Cork Harbour SPA and promote its role as a Tier 1 International Port and driver for the metropolitan, regional and State economy. To support this role, the Cork MASP seeks the following subject to the outcome of required feasibility, assessment and environmental processes:
- The sustainable development of port infrastructure and facilities under the port's strategic development plans balanced with the protection of Cork Harbour's natural environment. Improved quality of inter-regional transport connectivity and networks improving access to the Port of Cork particularly for freight movement and the quality of the TEN-T Corridor. The delivery of strategic transport network improvements under Cork MASP Objectives 6-9 including improved strategic road access to the Port of Cork Ringaskiddy, Cobh, Marino Point and Whitegate is supported as a critical component for unlocking the full potential of the Port of Cork and to enable regeneration of the Cork Docklands;
 - Investment in strategic transport corridors as referenced in CMATS and Cork MASP;
 - The relocation of existing port activities from Cork City and investment in infrastructure to remediate sites and enable regeneration of the Cork City Docks and Tivoli;
 - The appropriate location of SEVESO activities and relocation of these activities from the city docklands subject to required planning and environmental processes;
 - The sustainable development and strengthening of cruise tourism;
 - Support the feasibility, in co-ordination with relevant stakeholders, to create a more integrated and streamlined approach between planning, environmental and foreshore consenting;
 - Co-ordinate with the relevant Government departments and stakeholders to align the RSES and MASP with opportunities for the Region under Marine Spatial Planning;
 - Support investment in the sustainable renewal, development and key interventions that will drive forward the potential of key assets in the Cork Harbour area balanced with protection of the nature conservation values of Cork Harbour, including City Quays and Tivoli renewal, Marino Point, Cork Dockyard, Cobh, Ringaskiddy, Whitegate and Bantry.
- b.** Undertake feasibility studies to determine the carrying capacity of ports in relation to potential for likely significant effects on associated European sites including SPA and SAC.

8.5 | Role of Cork International Airport

Cork Airport is the State's second international airport, with over 50 international destinations.

Nearly 2.4m passengers moved through Cork Airport in 2018. It is a key asset attracting business investment

and tourism directly into the Region, a key service for the population and business community and a key employment location. The strategic role of the airport as a driver of State and regional growth is supported by the following objective.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 14

Cork Airport

a. It is an objective to support the sustainable development of the airport and seek investment in infrastructure and facilities that promote the role of Cork Airport as an international gateway, employment location and economic driver for the Region including the following subject to the outcome of required feasibility, assessment and environmental processes:

- Support the sustainable development and investment in infrastructure and facilities under the Cork Airport Masterplans and updates to the Cork Airport Special Local Area Plan (subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA/AA undertaken);
- Support the sustainable development of enhanced public transport connectivity to the airport including the provision of bus priority lanes on the N27 and an improvement in the alignment of the R600 south of the Airport.

b. Development Plans should incorporate policies to control inappropriate development which could adversely impact the potential for growth in either airport infrastructure or expansion of routes to international destinations. Safeguard the operation of Cork Airport by way of land use planning under the relevant County Development Plan and Local Area Plans. Airport safeguarding priorities required include:

i. Airport Noise Zones (Inner and Outer Zones).

Spatial planning policies in the vicinity of the airport shall recognise and reflect the noise zones associated with Cork Airport.

In particular within the Inner Airport Noise Zone provision of new residential and/or other noise sensitive development shall be actively resisted. Within the Outer Noise Zone provision of new residential and/or other noise sensitive development shall be strictly controlled such that future airport expansion on a 24/7 basis is anticipated and planned.

ii. Airport Public Safety Zones

In assessing applications for development falling within Public Safety Zones, regard shall be had to the recommendations of the ERM Report "Public Safety Zones, 2005" (or any update thereof) commissioned by the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, in assessing proposals for development falling within Airport Public Safety Zones.

iii. General Airport Safeguarding

In assessing applications for development within the vicinity of Cork Airport, regard will be had to the precautionary principle concerning potential risk to aircraft safety. This includes avoidance of any bird attracting feature or use; unacceptable glint and glare impact towards key airport infrastructure; or intrusion into/infringing of airspace which might create an obstacle or danger to aircraft in flight.



8.6 | Role of Tourism

Tourism has a key role in both the economy and Quality of Life of residents, workers and visitors. Cork City Council and Cork County Council have prepared a joint strategy integrating assets and initiatives to diversify and drive the role of a vibrant tourism sector under the Pure Cork brand and Growing Tourism in Cork, A Collective Strategy.

Section 2.0 of the Cork MASP has highlighted the strong urban tourism and culture assets of the City. There are

significant heritage, tourism, recreation amenity assets in Metropolitan Cork which complement the assets of the city including access to the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Maritime Paradise, Harbour Greenway Blarney Castle, close access to Kinsale Fota Wildlife Park, Spike Island (2017 European No 1 Tourist Attraction), Fort Camden Meagher, Midleton Distillery, Cobh Heritage Centre, walkways, cycleways. The potential to develop a greenway linking Midleton to Youghal along the railway corridor, (without precluding future options for re-use of that corridor for rail), has potential for inter-regional greenway connectivity. River valleys, mountain ranges, extensive coastline, beaches, all within or easily accessible to the metropolitan area.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 15

Cork MASP Tourism

- a. Support the role of Metropolitan Cork's tourism assets as a significant domestic and international tourism destination capitalising on its tourism attractions, Ireland's Ancient East corridor, Wild Atlantic Way Corridor, Ireland's Maritime Paradise theme and support initiatives creating a sustainable tourism future, diversifying the tourism product into non-traditional areas and extending the tourist season taking particular care of the natural and built environment.
- b. The SRA seeks investment in the sustainable development of tourism infrastructure and tourism services across Cork and support initiatives arising from the Pure Cork brand and the "Growing Tourism in Cork: A Collective Strategy subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.
- c. Support the delivery of large-scale all year-round tourist attraction(s) in Cork City and in County Metropolitan Cork.
- d. Value and support cultural amenities, conservation, protection and enhancement of Cork City's natural heritage as key assets to attract tourism.
- e. Seek sustainable tourism development which reflects the city's distinctive history, culture and environment.
- f. Promote diversification and innovation in the tourism sector.
- g. Seek an integrated approach to tourism development in conjunction with a wide range of stakeholders including state agencies, communities and stakeholders in the tourism sector.

8.7 | Role of Retail

The Cork MASP recognises the importance of a Cork City and County joint retail strategy and the need for a holistic future assessment of the retail needs for a growing metropolitan area between both local authorities with a changed retail context.

The Cork MASP recognises that retail is a significant part of the metropolitan economy through the high level of employment generated and the contribution to the life, vitality and attractiveness of the Metropolitan Area. The retail sector in Cork faces the same challenges as

other cities in combating the negative impact of online shopping on the city centre and other retail locations in the metropolitan area. The Cork MASP also recognises the importance of the tourism sector, with retail services contributing to the attractiveness of a location for tourists and tourist visitors increasing footfall and potential increased vibrancy for the retail sector.

The Cork Metropolitan Area is a priority location for retail services within the Region. It is important that future provision of retail reaffirms the hierarchy of retail locations with the city centre at the heart of the metropolitan area, a Tier 1 location.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 16

Retail

- a. Support the role of Metropolitan Cork as a Level 1 location for retail provision and the retail hierarchy for as identified in the Metropolitan Cork Joint Retail Strategy 2013 which identifies:
- **Level 1:** Metropolitan Cork: Cork City Centre
 - **Level 2:** Large Metropolitan Towns: Ballincollig, Carrigaline, Cobh and Midleton.
 - **Level 2:** District Centres: Blackpool, Douglas, Wilton, Mahon Point, Ballyvolane, Cork Docklands, Hollyhill.
 - **Level 3:** Smaller Metropolitan Towns: Carrigtwohill, Glanmire, Passage West, Blarney, Monard.
- b. Support the role of the Metropolitan Cork Joint Retail Strategy and seek further preparation of joint retail strategies for Metropolitan Cork between Cork City Council and Cork County Council in accordance with Section 28 Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).
- **Level 4:** Neighbourhood Centres and Large Village Centres.
 - **Level 5:** Local centres, corner shops and smaller villages.

9.0 | Environment

The Cork MASP seeks to integrate sustainable economic and social development with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment whilst ensuring our transition to a climate resilient society.

Placemaking initiatives such as investment in public realm will create a more attractive area to live, visit and invest.

High-quality green and blue spaces are important not just for nature but for peoples' health and wellbeing, particularly in an increasingly urban society and increasing settlement densities. There is a need to plan more strategically for green and blue infrastructure in the Cork Metropolitan Area, particularly considering climate action strategies and plans. This is important in the context of the transformative changes that will take place in the metropolitan area.

Natural and semi-natural assets should be recognised as 'infrastructure' and like any type of infrastructure, these assets will only continue to provide us with these benefits if we actively plan, invest in and manage them sustainably. Green and blue infrastructure brings

considerable value to the Cork Metropolitan Area. This value needs to be recognised and utilised to ensure sustainable funding of these assets.

The better integration of biodiversity into economic and development decisions will ensure better projects and will mitigate against unforeseen negative climate change consequences. As per Chapter 5 of the RSES, the incorporation and consideration of an ecosystem services approach can lead to significant enhancements in relation to planning policy and decision-making. An ecosystem services approach can be a major catalyst in bringing the different pieces of the jigsaw together while assisting us all to better understand and articulate the potential win win outcomes.

The RSES actively seeks measures to achieve a low-carbon society and enhance the environment through the reduction of greenhouse gases, minimising energy demand and waste in order to reduce the increasingly adverse effects of climate change. This includes a shift to clean mobility, improved walking and cycling environments and a reduction in car-demand. Refer to RSES Chapters 5 and 6.



Cork MASP Policy Objective 17

Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy

It is an objective to achieve a healthy, green and connected metropolitan area through the preparation of a Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy. This will require co-ordination between relevant stakeholders to deliver the sustainable development of parks, recreation and high quality public open space in the Cork Metropolitan Area. This Strategy may include, inter alia:

- a. An enhanced network of regional scaled parks in Metropolitan Cork and invest in upgraded facilities including Tramore Valley Park, Marina Park, Bishop Lucey Park Redevelopment, Northwest Regional Park, Riverside Public Walk (Lee Field to the Marina), Lee Fields Walk/Cycle extension to Ballincollig, Lough Redevelopment, Tivoli Docks Park, neighbourhood parks and public parks in the Metropolitan Towns.
- b. The sustainable development of green infrastructure as an interconnected series of green spaces including parks, natural green spaces and

ecosystems, greenways and blueways.

- c. The implementation of Greenway initiatives that provide important economic, leisure and tourism, health, active and sustainable travel and environmental benefits to the metropolitan area including the Lee to Sea Greenway initiative subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.
- d. In order to support decision-making in increasing recreation and tourism opportunities along the coastline, which is in close proximity to European Sites, the carrying capacity of SACs/SPAs will need to be established to understand what limits should be set for the extent of development.
- e. Protect and proactively manage and integrate natural spaces.
- f. The sustainable development of key recreation, sports and community facilities across Metropolitan Cork.
- g. The development of a Metropolitan Greenbelt Strategy in co-ordination between Cork City Council and Cork County Council.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 18

Transformational Areas and Public Realm

Subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process:

- a. Seek investment in transformational area projects and public realm enhancements in metropolitan urban areas with a focus on city centre regeneration through such initiatives as the Cork City Centre Strategy 2014 and Grand Parade/South Main Street Transformational Area.

- b. Support and seek investment in the sustainable remediation of Haulbowline Island and its transformation into a public recreational amenity.
- c. Support the acquisition and development of the City Quays in Cork for a high-quality water front public realm for public use.
- d. The cultural and economic significance of the Cork Event Centre is recognised, and delivery of the facility is supported.
- e. Seek investment in the strategy and investment programme of the Crawford Art Gallery.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 19

Flood Risk Management

Seek investment in the sustainable development of the Lower Lee Flood Relief Scheme to enhance climate change resilience and flood risk management in the metropolitan area.

The challenges of climate change and the transition to a low carbon society are a key component of the RSES and relevant objectives are set out in Volume 1, particularly in Chapters 2 and 5. Responding to these challenges will be particularly relevant to the MASP and the Guiding Principles for the Cork MASP seek to develop a balanced, compact and sustainable Metropolitan Area through integrated land use and transport planning based on support for sustainable transport modes.

10.0 | Social Inclusion and Infrastructure

The Cork MASP supports ongoing collaboration with regional stakeholders to ensure the provision of social infrastructure such as education, health and community facilities, and, in particular, to ensure that opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration are realised. See also Chapter 7 (Quality of Life) for further details.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 20

Lifelong Learning and Skills

- a. Support Cork as a Learning City and seek investment in initiatives which supports the Cork Learning City initiative, support Cork's role in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and
 - b. Support initiatives under the Learning City Key Strategic Actions 2017-2021.
- support the spread of such initiatives throughout the metropolitan area and wider region.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 21

Healthy Cities, Healthy Environment and Health Infrastructure

- a. Seek investment in smart technologies which have an increasing role to play to improve air quality, water quality, flood management, noise and light pollution to promote a clean and healthy environment. Additional support is required to ensure a wide penetration of relevant sensors and data collection and analysis support to provide accurate information for people using and managing the city.
 - b. Support the role of Cork as a WHO Healthy City and seek investment in the delivery of recreation, environmental improvements, active travel and
 - c. Seek investment in health service infrastructure within the Cork MASP to meet existing and future regional population growth including facilities for Cork University Hospital, the Southern Region's tertiary referral centre and other existing hospitals, the sustainable development of a new acute hospital and new elective hospital to service the increasing population of the metropolitan area and wider Region.
 - d. Seek delivery and supports to achieve Healthy Ireland objectives.
- health services infrastructure that retains and improves on this status, in support of a "healthy heart" to the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Cork MASP Policy Objective 22

Social Inclusion

- a. Seek investment in delivering actions and stakeholder initiatives of the Local Economic Community Plans (LECPs) of Cork City Council and Cork County Council to strengthen community infrastructure and promote social inclusion for all citizens across all our communities
 - b. Seek continued investment in initiatives that achieve the physical, economic, social and environmental regeneration of disadvantaged areas in the City and Metropolitan Area, in particular supporting the ongoing regeneration of the Cork
 - c. Support the development of an Inter-agency Social Enterprise Strategy to support the retention and expansion of existing social enterprises and the development of new social enterprises.
 - d. Recognise, support and value diversity, especially within the city population and workforce and the implementation of Government policy "The Migrant Integration Strategy".
- City RAPID areas of Fairhill/Gurranebraher/Farranree, Knocknaheeny/Churchfield, Mayfield/Blackpool/The Glen and Togher/Mahon.

Limerick- Shannon

Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

1.0 | Introduction

1.1 | Overview

Limerick City is the largest urban centre in Ireland's Mid-West and the country's third largest city. The NPF supports ambitious growth targets to enable Limerick City to grow by at least 50% to 2040 and to achieve its potential to become a city of scale.

The NPF recognises the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area's growth potential with existing third level institutes and international airport and port facilities. The NPF aims to build on these strengths while improving liveability through key growth enablers including proposals to implement and extend Limerick City Centre in accordance with the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan, enhance opportunities for education and employment, and enhance connectivity to Shannon International Airport and Shannon Foynes Port, Cork and Waterford.

The NPF also aims to provide for a citywide public transport network with enhanced accessibility from the centre to the National Technology Park, the university and the airport, the development of a strategic

cycleway network, development, regeneration, and to diversification of the city. Shannon is a significant employment centre with assets such as Shannon International Airport, Shannon Free-Zone (SFZ) and the International Aviation Services Centre (IASC). Though located within different counties and 19km apart, both Limerick City and Shannon are interdependent, with complementary functions contributing to a combined strength - a primary economic driver for the Region.

Significant strategic investment in recent decades has helped unlock their joint potential, including the Limerick Tunnel (N7), improved links to Dublin via the N7 Dublin-Limerick motorway, and Galway via the M18.

This Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan provides a focus on Limerick City and the metropolitan settlement of Shannon. It sets out the framework for Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council and the various stakeholders to implement the NPF within the context of the RSES.

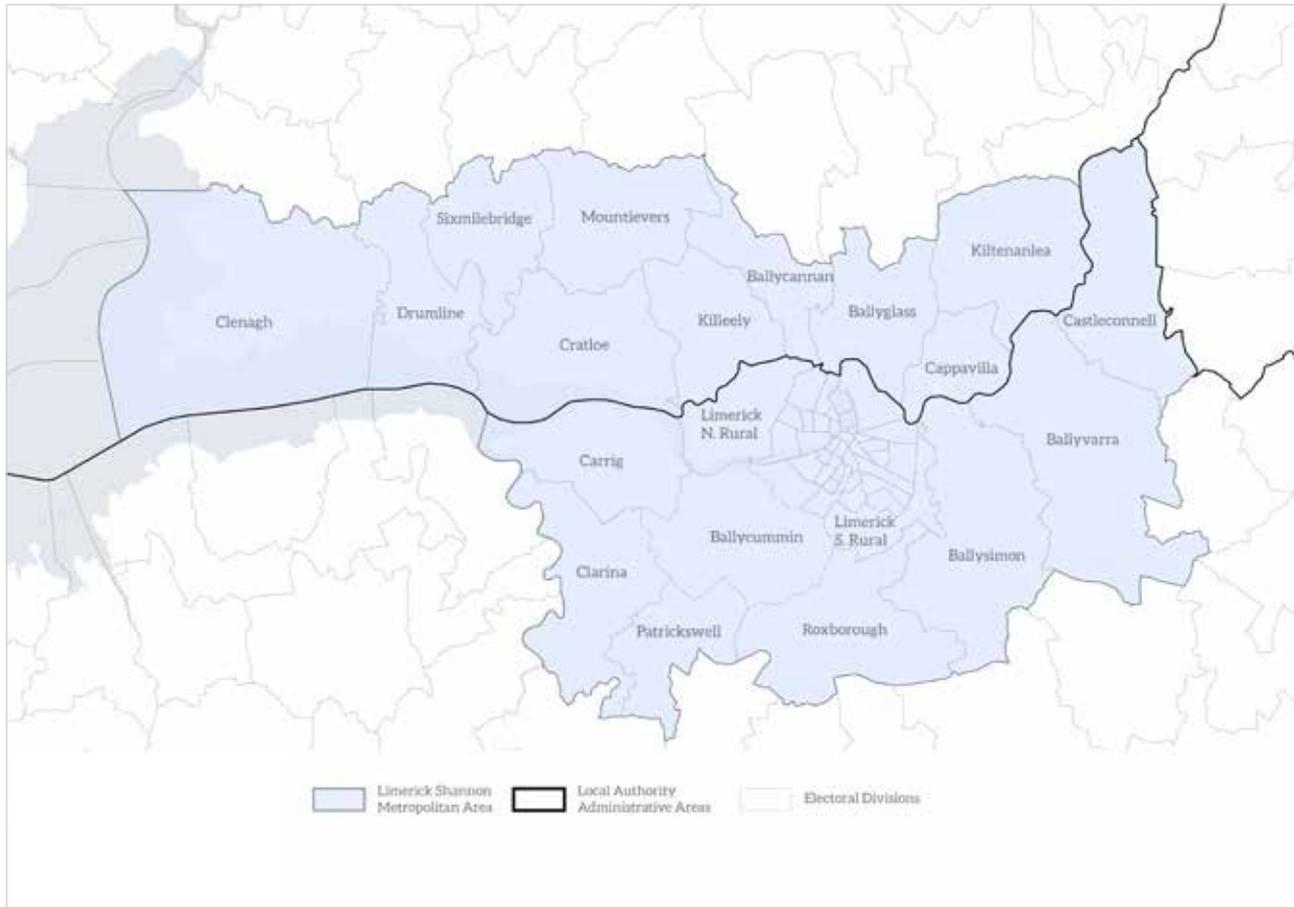
1.2 | Spatial Definition

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area includes Limerick City Centre at the core and the continuous built up area of Limerick City and Suburbs (as defined by the CSO). Shannon in Co. Clare is the largest metropolitan town with a population of 9,729.

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area also includes Annacotty (2,930), Castleconnell (2,107), Patrickswell (847), Clarina (294), Mungret (277) in Limerick and Sixmilebridge (2,625), Ardnacrusha (1,383), Clonlara (713), Cratloe (692), Ballycannan (638), Bunratty (349) and O'Briensbridge (396) in Clare³². The MASP area is almost evenly split, with 49% located in Co. Clare and 51% in the City and County of Limerick.



³². Population from Census 2016 of each listed settlement is contained in brackets.



Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 1

Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

- a. It is an objective to strengthen the role of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale, a complement to Dublin and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region.
- b. It is an objective to promote the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as a cohesive Metropolitan Area with (i) the City Centre as the primary location at the heart of the Metropolitan Area and Region (ii) compact growth and regeneration of Limerick City Centre and Suburbs, (iii) compact growth and regeneration of Shannon (iv) active land management initiatives to deliver housing and employment locations in a sustainable, infrastructure led manner.
- c. It is an objective to seek co-ordinated investment and delivery of holistic infrastructure packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and seek further investments to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals (see Volume III).
- d. Any reference to support for all plans, projects, activities and development in the MASP should be considered to refer to 'sustainable development' that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints), environmental assessment including EcIA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate
- e. The MASP seeks to protect, manage and through enhanced ecological connectivity, to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Region.

2.0 | Key Components and Attributes

2.1 | Limerick City

Limerick City¹ has a population of 94,192 persons and covers an area of 59km³³. An ancient city located on the banks of the River Shannon, its history dates back to its establishment by the Vikings as a walled city on King's Island in 812AD. Limerick's charter in 1197 makes it older than the City of London.

Limerick has already experienced successful economic and cultural rejuvenation. From record levels of high unemployment and emigration a decade ago, Limerick is now an exemplar of recovery and primed to take its place among the most dynamic emerging cities of Europe.

Limerick City has significant competitive advantages including its pivotal location in relation to other cities, its central location on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, national and international connectivity through Shannon International Airport and Shannon Foynes Port, tourism connectivity as a Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City, and a significant third level education and skills role including a world-class university.

It is a key economic driver for our Region and is a focus of employment for the surrounding areas with 44,635 jobs in 2016, an increase of over 4,000 over the previous five years. In 2016, over half the people working in the City were from outside with some 22,700 commuting into the City each day for work.

The Limerick 2030 initiative is key to unlocking the potential of the city and has been accelerated by the establishment of the Limerick 2030 Strategic Development Designated Activity Company, the first entity of its kind created by a local authority to deliver a city and county-wide programme of investment. It includes the biggest single Irish commercial property development programme undertaken outside of Dublin. Over €1 billion is being invested in enterprise and investment infrastructure as part of the Limerick 2030 vision, which aims to transform Limerick through economic, social and physical investment. The MASP supports this initiative, including the development of the Opera site, Gardens International, Cleeves Riverside Quarter and Mungret College lands.

This is complemented by Innovate Limerick, a delivery mechanism for key Limerick 2030 projects. Limerick is also transforming itself into Ireland's first Digital City with the integration of a number of public services, the creation of smart homes, smart buildings, energy districts and smart neighbourhoods.

The MASP supports Limerick City in becoming a major economic force in the Irish and European economy, a leading centre for commercial investment – both foreign direct investment and indigenous business growth – capitalising on the strengths of its higher education institutions and the skills of its workforce. The City Centre will be at the heart of this economic force – an attractive magnet for retail, leisure, residential, commercial, educational and cultural growth.

The MASP supports the following key infrastructure and transformative projects within Limerick City:

- **City Centre Consolidation and Revitalisation** based on Limerick 2030, comprising social, physical and economic regeneration and formation of a higher density Georgian Living City with all essential services and community facilities;
- **Densification of development** in the City Centre, including identification and assembly of brownfield sites for development;
- Development of **key strategic sites** including Opera site, Cleeves, Arthurs Quay and continuation of the riverside links;
- Potential for alternative uses in **Limerick Docklands**;
- Continued expansion and enhancement of the **retail offer** and experience in the City Centre;
- Continued investment in the City's **regeneration areas**;
- Development of a **new business park** on the north side of Limerick City linked with Limerick IT, Moyross and building on the regeneration process;
- **Industry 4.0**, Digital transformation and Smart City initiatives;
- **Public realm** improvements in the City Centre including the development of a city-wide interconnected set of public parks and urban renewal within the Georgian Quarter;
- Additional **child friendly amenities** within the City Centre including playgrounds that will help drive footfall;
- Improvements to **sustainable transport infrastructure** including the development of public transport, walking and cycling;
- Creation of a **Carbon Neutral City**;
- **Business incentive schemes** to further generate footfall and use of the City both during the daytime and in the evenings;
- The further development and promotion of **cultural, heritage and sporting offerings** (such as EVA International / The Red Mile) to further develop the desirability of the City Centre,

³³ Limerick City is taken to be the Census settlement of Limerick City and Suburbs.

- The growth and development of **health care facilities** as proposed by the University Hospital Limerick in their Strategic Plan,
- Delivery of the **Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR)** – a key strategic infrastructure priority for the Region.
- Progressing the sustainable phased development of areas for **housing** and the development of support public transport and infrastructure, in areas such as Mungret.
- The continued expansion of the City's **third level institutions** and integration with the wider city and Region, including the provision of specific facilities to address educational and social deprivation
- The construction of a **Digital Collaboration Centre** by Innovate Limerick,
- The **World Class Waterfront Project** along the River Shannon to reinvent the City Quays as the main entertainment and leisure destination for the City.
- **Climate resilience** measures including CFRMAs Flood Relief Scheme for the City Centre.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 2

Limerick-Shannon

The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises that for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the Mid-West to prosper and develop in a sustainable manner, a strong Limerick City is paramount. It is an objective to:

- Support the regeneration and continued investment into Limerick City through initiatives such as Limerick 2030 and Limerick Regeneration and to further enhance Limerick City as a primary economic driver for the Southern Region.
- Enhance the City Centre as the primary commercial area, supporting a range of retail, tourism, social and cultural activities.
- Strengthen the consolidation and regeneration of Limerick City Centre to drive its role as a vibrant living, retailing and working city, the economic, social and cultural heart of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and Region.
- Seek investment to achieve brownfield regeneration of City Centre sites as high quality, mixed use sustainable and transformative projects which set national and international good practice standards in innovation, quality design, exemplary urbanism and placemaking.
- Support collaboration between Limerick City and County Council and the Land Development Agency to masterplan and sustainably develop strategic City Centre and Dockland sites in Limerick City, utilising the appropriate planning mechanisms and subject to required environmental assessments.
- Seek investment to achieve regeneration and consolidation in the city suburbs.



2.2 | Shannon

Shannon occupies a strategic position as a gateway to the West of Ireland. It is a centre of international business and has strong synergies with Limerick City. The International Airport and the industrial park, are critical not only to the Metropolitan Area but to the country.

Shannon is central to delivering the ambition for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area's economic development and success. Shannon is identified for significant population growth i.e. greater than 30% population increase by 2040.

The 2016 census shows the population of Shannon as 9,729. Shannon has a daytime population of 18,000 people, with over 8,700 people working within the Shannon Free Zone in over 160 companies. Like Ennis, there is potential to capitalise on the growing linkages and synergies with Galway. The Limerick-Shannon MASP strongly supports Shannon's current and future role as a driver of growth.

The MASP identifies a significant opportunity for Shannon to expand as a globally recognised centre of excellence for software engineering/aviation/logistics talent. The MASP recognises and supports Shannon as a centre for research and development for autonomous vehicles that will complement Shannon's role as a world leader in aviation and as a centre for manufacturing, engineering, and distribution.

Shannon's attributes include:

- Centre of international business, aviation, aerospace and attracting emerging sectors such as CAV and Lifesciences, for example Jaguar Land Rover and Edwards LifeSciences;
- Major employment location which includes industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and transport;
- Shannon International Airport with a capacity for 4.5 million passengers and, with US Pre clearance for passengers, is the international gateway for the West of Ireland;
- Ranked No. 1 for economic potential, No. 2 for business friendliness and No. 4 for connectivity among Micro European Cities of the Future 2018/19 by FDI Intelligence;
- NUIG Shannon College of Hotel Management is Ireland's only dedicated hotel management college;
- Shannon Free Zone (SFZ) is home to 160 companies and employs over 8,700 people;
- Through the International Aviation Services Centre (IASC), Shannon hosts the largest Aviation/Aerospace Cluster in Ireland with over 65 Aviation Companies and 2,600 jobs;

- Westpark Business Campus is home to over 50 global and national businesses;
- Strong, well established economic and employment links between Shannon and Limerick City. The Limerick-Shannon MASP provides a unique opportunity to strengthen this relationship;
- Economic triangle of Limerick-Shannon-Ennis;
- Improved synergies between Ennis and Galway with significant potential and capacity for enhancement.

The infrastructural requirements for Shannon include:

- **Public transport** improvements to Shannon International Airport and Shannon Town. Shannon International Airport benefits from regular Bus Éireann services to Galway, however currently only five of these services per day are direct expressway services and do not coincide with flight times, creating a disincentive to use public transport to and from the Airport. Moreover, there are currently no direct public bus services providing connectivity between Cork and Shannon. Enhanced public transport connectivity from cities such as Galway, Cork and Limerick is particularly important to assist the continued growth of the Airport and the sustainable development of Shannon town;
- **Rail link** - an infrastructural safeguard has been incorporated into the existing Clare County Development Plan and Local Area Plan for a rail line to be provided to Shannon town and International Airport;
- **Road Access** - Investment is required in improving and upgrading the existing road access from the motorway to Shannon International Airport;
- **Limerick Northern Distributer Road** - linking Shannon International Airport, the SFZ and Shannon town with UL and Limerick City. The provision of this road will benefit regional interconnectivity which will result in social, economic and educational gains to our Region;
- **Electricity** infrastructure is required to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to facilitate expansion through the development of a Combined Heat and Power Plant;
- **Wastewater treatment** infrastructure requires investment in terms of increased capacity to facilitate future development and expansion in Shannon Town, the SFZ and airport;
- The MASP supports the continued investment in the delivery of the **Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan** and its projects such as the Shannon Town Park, Shannon Estuary Walk and the development of other amenity facilities;
- Improvements and enhancement to **Shannon Town Centre** to create a sense of place, up-grade public realm and promote re-development. This will be a central component in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 3

Shannon

- a. The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises Shannon as a significant regional strength and employment centre. It is an objective to support and promote Shannon as a centre for research and development for autonomous vehicles which will complement Shannon's role as a world leader in aviation, aerospace, engineering, manufacturing and distribution.
- b. It is an objective to seek investment to deliver a Connected and Autonomous (CAV) R&D testbed and smart infrastructure in Shannon.
- c. It is an objective to improve and enhance Shannon as an attractive residential location through placemaking and regeneration initiatives.

2.3 | Limerick-Shannon MASP and the Wider Region

Competitive cities drive competitive regions by promoting growth and employment and by joining up separate business hubs, infrastructural assets and clusters, to expand existing markets and create new ones.

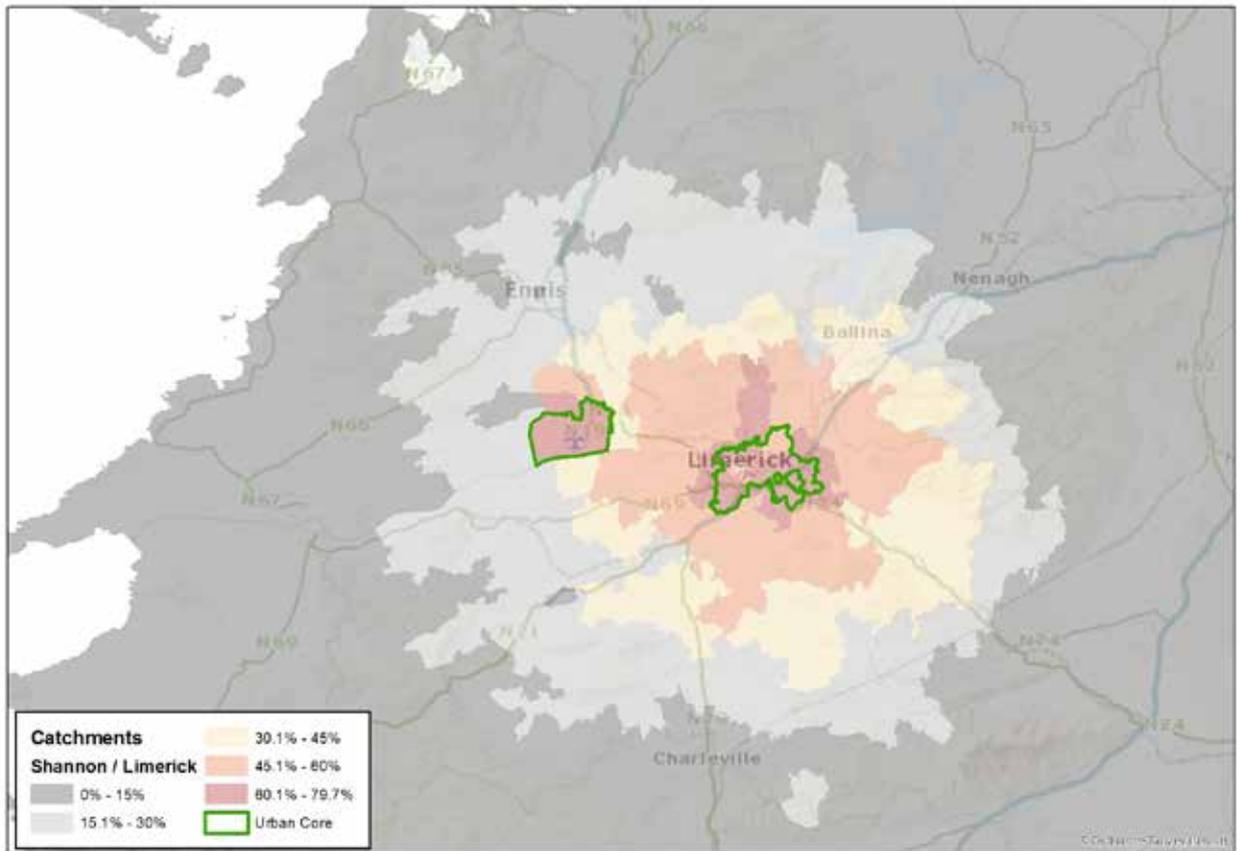
Analysis by the National Transport Authority (NTA) identifies the catchment of Limerick and Shannon MASP (see Map 2) and includes areas previously referred to as the Mid-West Limerick City Region. This sphere of influence of the Limerick-Shannon MASP will extend northward towards Galway, southwards towards Cork and Tralee, eastwards towards Tipperary Town and Nenagh, and west towards Kerry. The catchment has a number of dynamic relations including: international connectivity through the Port and Airport, connections to the Dublin, Galway, Cork and Waterford metropolitan areas, connection to Key Towns in the Mid-West and its relationship to surrounding towns, villages and rural areas. It contains a significant number of commuters to the Metropolitan Area and there are cultural, social, sporting, education, health services and amenity linkages in both directions.

There is need for a complementary focus to enable those areas outside of the metropolitan boundary to pursue a greater degree of self-containment of employment, services provision and patterns of commuting. Development of self-contained economic roles in settlements and rural areas will reinforce the economic strength of the Metropolitan Area.

The MASP recognises and supports the role of Nenagh, Ennis and Newcastle West as Key Towns well connected to the Limerick-Shannon MASP. Limerick 2030 highlights Newcastle West as a key location to complement the growth of the Metropolitan Area. Other settlements and rural areas have potential for complementary roles, interacting with the Metropolitan Area and benefitting from the economic spread from larger centres of scale, nurturing local enterprise growth, local jobs and developing strong roles that contribute to their mutual success. There are opportunities for networks of settlements, harnessing specialist roles and driving shared strengths to generate stronger economic interactions with the Metropolitan Area. Enhanced connectivity (transport and digital) within the Metropolitan Areas, between other settlements and between other Metropolitan Areas is an essential enabler to strengthen these opportunities.



Map 2 | Catchment of Limerick City and Shannon Urban Cores



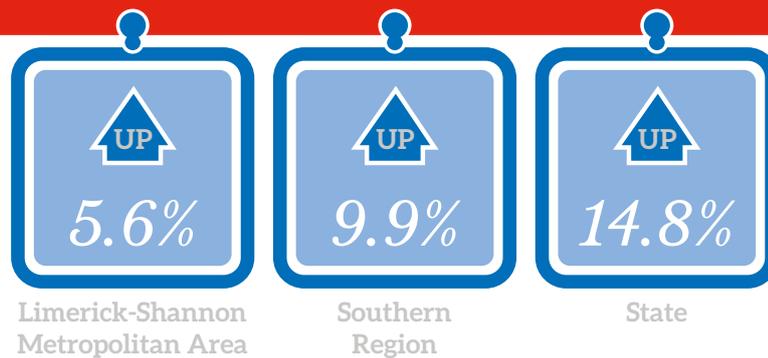
SOURCE | NTA Hinterland analysis



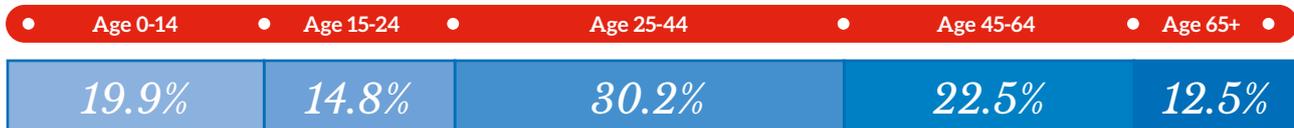
2.4 | Example Trends for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

The following infographics provide details of the key components and attributes of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

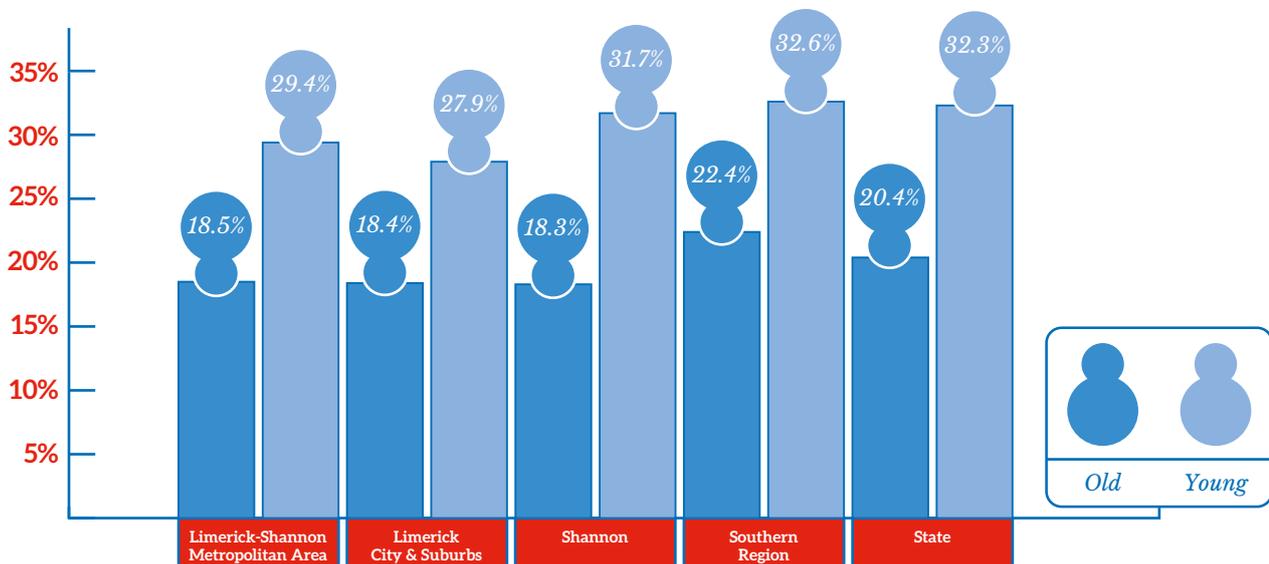
Population Change 2006 - 2016



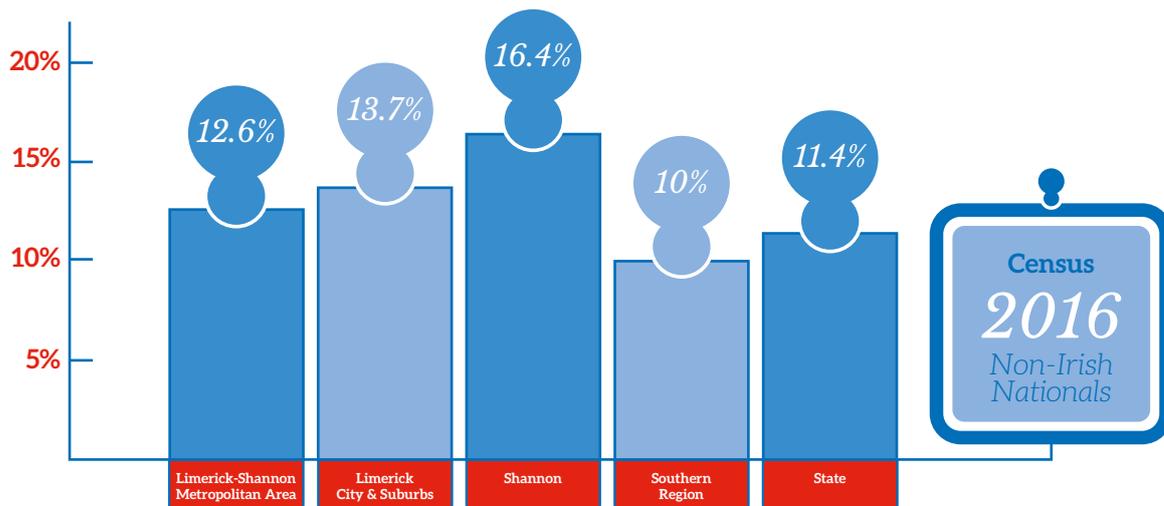
Population by Age



Old & Young Age Dependency Rate



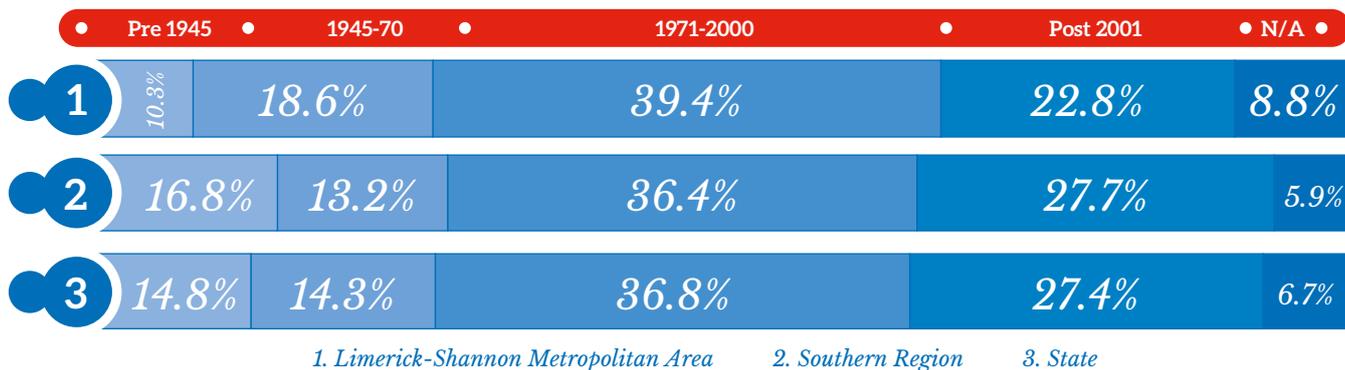
Diversity and our Migrant Communities



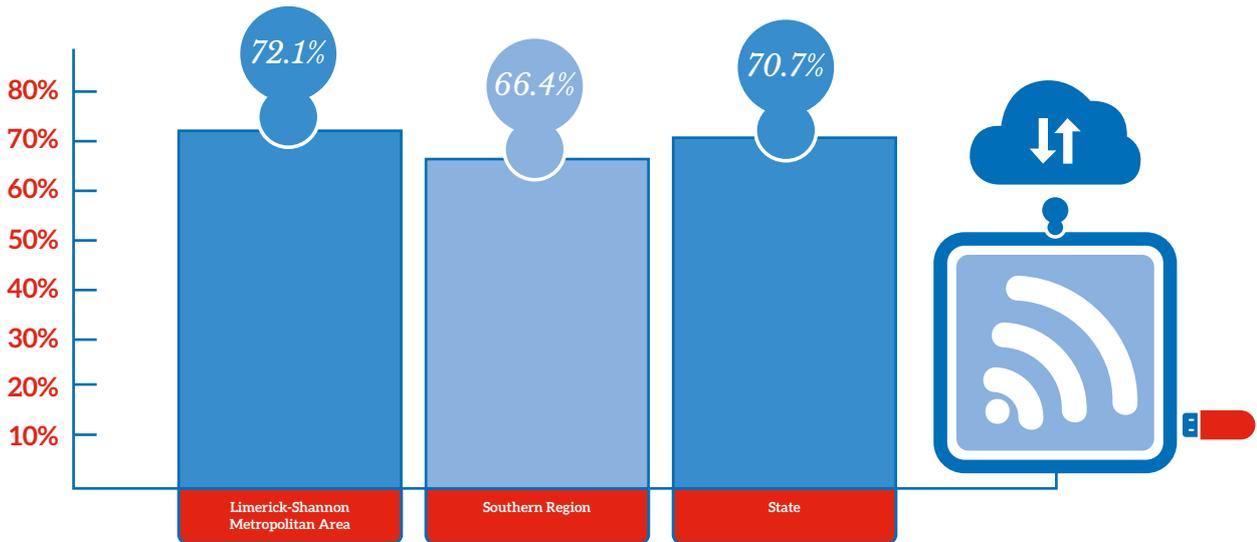
Housing Tenure



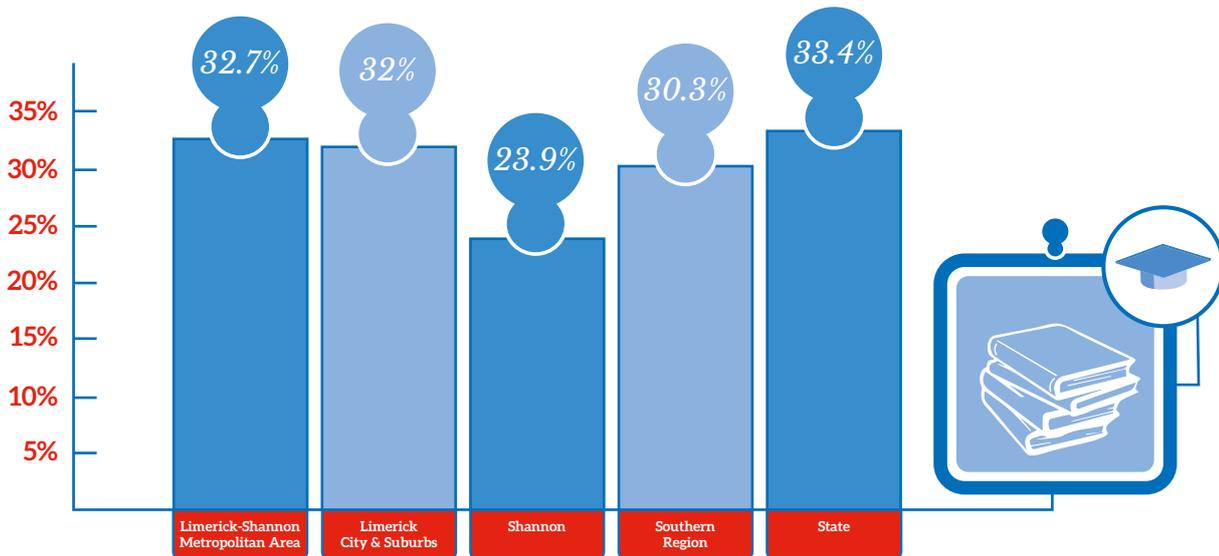
Housing Year Built



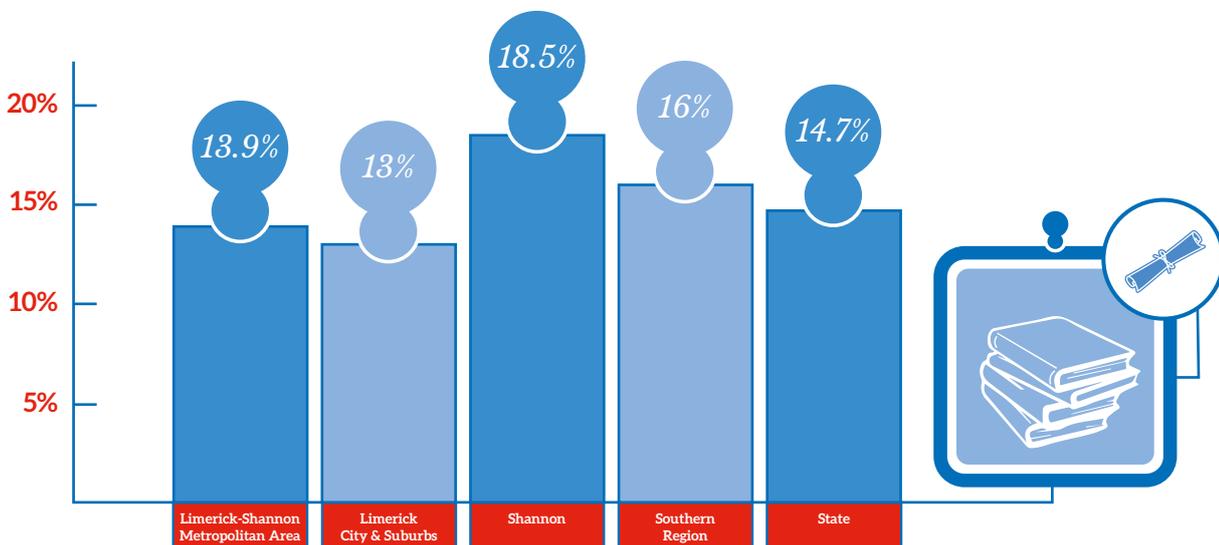
Households with Broadband



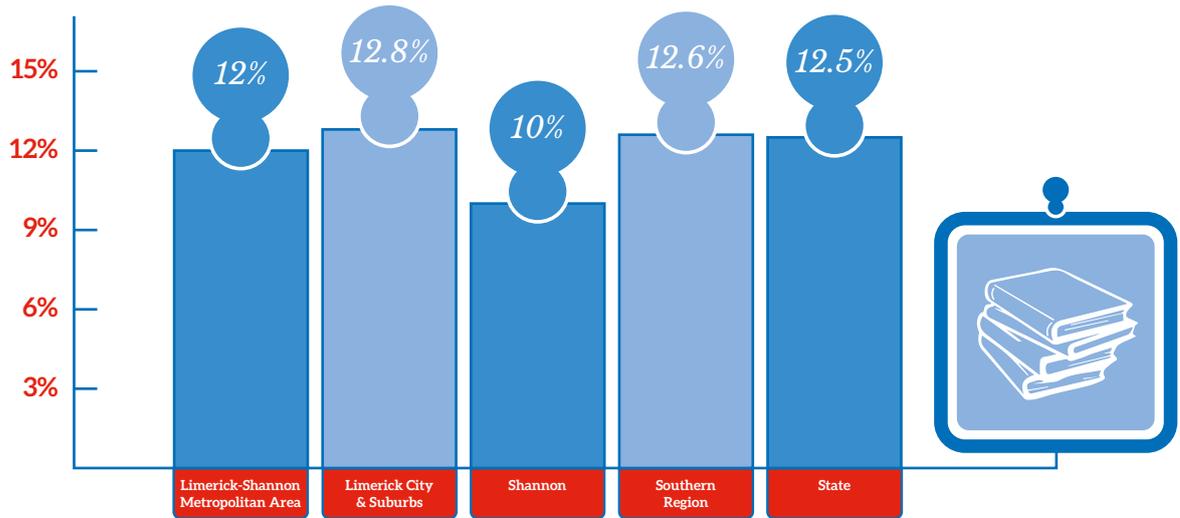
Education Attainment: All Third Level



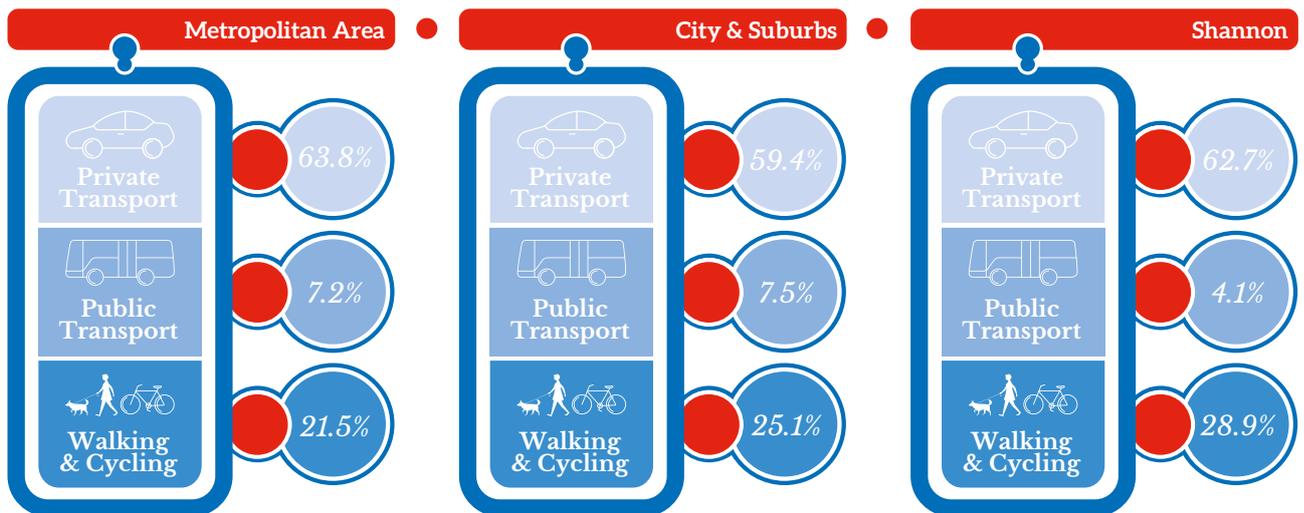
Education Attainment: Tech/Apprentice/Cert



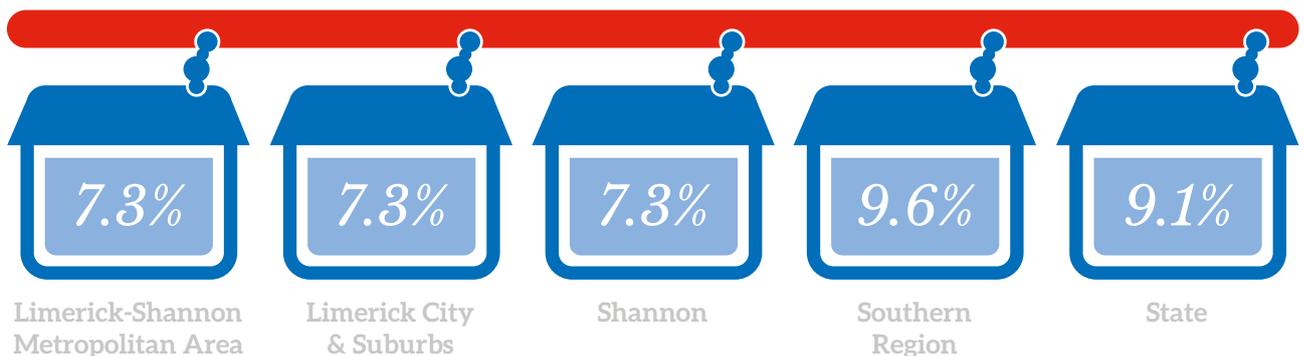
Education Attainment: No Formal/Primary



Mode of Travel to Work/Education



Housing Vacancy*



*Excluding Holiday Homes

2.5 | Signals of Confidence

Recent signals of confidence include:

- Significant progress in the transformation to Ireland's first Digital City with the integration of a number of public services, the creation of smart homes, smart buildings, energy districts and smart neighbourhoods;
- Advancement of the development of a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) R&D hub and testbed in Shannon including the decision by Jaguar Land Rover to open a CAV R&D facility in Shannon;
- The people of Limerick voted for the introduction of a directly Elected Mayor that will be the first in the State;
- Government go-ahead to advance procedures to deliver the Foynes to Limerick Road (incl. Adare Bypass) project;
- Launch of Propeller Shannon Incubator Programme;
- Gardens International (officially opened in 2019)
- won the top prize in the New Build Workplace category in the prestigious Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland annual awards;
- Progress on the upgrade of the N19 to the Airport to facilitate the continued expansion and regeneration of Shannon;
- Collaboration between Limerick City and County Council, the Land Development Agency (LDA), CIÉ and other stakeholders to create an urban neighbourhood at Limerick's City Centre train and bus station, Colbert Station where there is a 50 ha landbank;
- Active regeneration initiatives and plans for significant investment in the Shannon Free Zone, Shannon International Airport and key tourist attractions in the MASP area;
- Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) has resulted in the creation of over 300 jobs.

3.0 | Vision and Guiding Principles

3.1 | Vision

Sustainable management and compact growth will offer a platform to address key challenges related to housing, transport, environmental sustainability and liveability to ensure the Metropolitan Area can increase competitiveness and continue to attract talent and investment on a global scale.

There is a need to enable regeneration and employment opportunities for established communities where re-

development and re-intensification occurs, particularly in areas of deprivation. While the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is young, diverse and multi-cultural, areas of on-going deprivation will require a long-term planning response to meet existing and future needs.

Implementation of the MASP needs to be flexible to adapt and respond to external risks such as climate change, technology disruption, demographic and cultural change and economic shocks.

The Vision Statement for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is:

“To create a sustainable, inclusive, smart, climate and economic resilient Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, which is competitive and of a scale which can exert critical-mass leverage at an international level, maximising the economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities in a manner for all those who live, work and visit the Metropolitan Area, Mid-West and for the benefit of the country.”

3.2 | Guiding Principles

The future growth and ambition for the Limerick-Shannon MASP is based on the principles of the Sustainable Place Framework³⁴ as identified in the RSES Settlement Strategy (Chapter 3).

To achieve the vision of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area the MASP has identified several Guiding Principles for its sustainable development:

A Living City and Metropolitan Area - Investment must be supported in revitalising and reinvigorating Limerick City for higher density living and high value jobs. Limerick City and Shannon should be well-functioning and energising places providing residential, employment, health, business, political, recreation, educational, commercial and transport functions driving our Region. The high capacity transport corridors needed to support this scale of growth will be delivered incrementally in line with growth and intensification of the city.

It is recognised that there is a need to collaborate, rather than compete, for the benefit of the Limerick-Shannon MASP on the issue of employment creation. The Metropolitan Area needs a dynamic, diverse and high-profile City Centre to function and the city centre needs a fully functioning and progressive Metropolitan Area to prosper.

Limerick-Shannon as a global gateway - A competitive, properly resourced and well-functioning Shannon International Airport and Shannon Foynes Port is essential to facilitate their growth and to ensure excellent international access.

Compact sustainable growth - The development of brownfield and infill lands to achieve a target of at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the existing built up area in Limerick City and 30% in Shannon and other settlements.

Integrated transport and landuse - Target growth along high quality public transport corridors and nodes linked to the delivery of key public transport projects.

Accelerate housing delivery - Activate strategic residential development areas such as Mungret and support the steady supply of sites to accelerate housing supply, supported by better services and public transport.

Employment density in the right places - Re-intensify employment in Limerick City and Shannon and activate strategic employment locations to complement existing employment hubs in the City Centre and near third level institutes.

Social regeneration - Realise opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration, particularly in areas with pockets of deprivation.

Future development areas - having regard to the long lead time for planning and development, identify future growth areas that may be delivered beyond the lifetime of the MASP but within the long term 2040 horizon of the NPF. For example, enabling infrastructure such as the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) will open lands to the north of the city for consolidation and expansion.

Metropolitan scale amenities - Provision of regional parks and blue green infrastructure including greenways/blueways along the River Shannon and the re-opening of the Errina Canal.

Enabling infrastructure - Identify infrastructure capacity issues and ensure water services needs are met. Improve sustainability in terms of energy, waste management and water conservation.

Co-ordination and active land management - Limerick 2030 provides an excellent platform to promote even more active urban development and land management actions that focus on the development of under-utilised, brownfield, vacant and public lands.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 4

Investment to Deliver Vision

a. It is an objective to seek the identification of investment packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Limerick-Shannon MASP and seek further investments into the Limerick-Shannon MASP to deliver on the seven Metropolitan Area Goals (see Volume 3).

b. It is an objective to ensure quality infrastructure and quality of place is prioritised as an incentive to attract people to live and work in sustainable settlement patterns in the Metropolitan Area.

34. As per Goal 1 of the Metropolitan Area Goals in Volume III

4.0 | National Enablers

The following are identified for the Limerick-Shannon MASP.

- Implementation of the Limerick 2030 economic strategy to create modern, City Centre office accommodation and a series of transformational City Centre public realm projects;
- Complementary further development of the Limerick 2030 plan through measures to encourage significant inner urban residential regeneration and development, to include the City's Georgian Quarter;
- Extending the ambition of the Limerick 2030 plan to include extension of the City Centre towards Limerick Docks;
- Identifying infill and regeneration opportunities to intensify housing and employment development;
- Enabling enhanced opportunities for existing communities as development and diversification occurs, particularly through employment, learning and education support;
- Progressing the sustainable development of new greenfield areas for housing and the development of supporting public transport and infrastructure, such as at Mungret;
- Provision of a Citywide public transport network, with enhanced accessibility from the City Centre to the National Technological Park, UL and Shannon International Airport;
- Development of a strategic cycleway network with several high capacity flagship routes;
- Enhanced road connectivity to Shannon Foynes Port, including local by-passes;
- Enhanced regional connectivity through improved average journey times by road to Cork and Waterford;
- Ensuring that water supply and wastewater needs are met by new national projects to enhance water supply and increase wastewater treatment capacity;
- Improving sustainability in terms of energy, waste management and resource efficiency, to include district heating and water conservation;
- The fast-track delivery of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) which is a strategic investment priority for the MASP;
- Enhanced connectivity to Shannon Foynes Port, including local by-passes;
- Development of a new business park on the north of the city accessible by public transport, linking with Limerick IT and Moyross to build on the regeneration progress;
- Supporting an application for the designation and subsequent development of the lands zoned as University in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 as an economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ);
- The continued expansion of Limerick City's third level institutions and the NUIG Shannon College of Hotel Management along with integration with the wider Metropolitan Area and Region;
- Creating a sustainable urban design town centre through the development of an Action Area Plan for Shannon Town Centre;
- Enable a digital and innovation economy and make this Ireland's leading smart Metropolitan Area;
- Develop a Connected and Autonomous (CAV) R&D testbed and put the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area at the forefront of a global mobility revolution;
- Delivering a 55% level of non-car based transport in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area;
- The delivery of measures and infrastructure which will transition cycling and walking as the primary mode of transport within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area;
- Interconnecting and integrating walking and cycling infrastructure;
- Continue to develop workforce skills and talent and enhance the attractiveness of living and working in the Metropolitan Area;
- Protecting built and natural assets;
- Achieve a step-change in progress toward a low carbon economy;
- Managing flood and climate change risks;



The following are some examples of projects identified in the National Development Plan (NDP) in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area³⁵.

NDP and Limerick-Shannon MASP

Limerick Regeneration Programme

Current Status: In progress.
Estimated Cost: €170 million.
Estimated Completion Date: 2023

The NDP states that there will be continued investment in the Limerick Regeneration Programme to see the completion of works identified in the 2013 Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan with the delivery of some 400 new homes and the upgrading of 900 homes across the areas of Moyross, Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and St Mary’s Park. A programme of social and economic initiatives will also be advanced over the coming years. The scheme is scheduled for completion by 2023.

Airports and Ports

- **Shannon Foynes Port Company** will invest €27 million towards capacity extension works at the Port. The Shannon Foynes Port Company’s Infrastructure Development Programme will consist of a jetty expansion programme, the joining of the East and West Jetties and the infill behind, land purchase and site development at Foynes considering the land bank shortage at Foynes Port and the Foynes Rail Reinstatement.

- The NDP states that in line with the 2015 A National Aviation Policy for Ireland, the roles of **Shannon International Airport** as key tourism and business gateways for their regions, and particularly about the development of niche markets, will be supported
- **Shannon Group** through its subsidiaries Shannon Airport Authority (SAA), Shannon Commercial Enterprises and Shannon Heritage have plans to invest more than €150 million in its capital programme to 2022. This includes €100 million for the development of the property portfolio, designed to deliver high quality advanced manufacturing, warehousing and office space solutions. Also included is the construction of a wide body paint hangar at Shannon International Airport to encourage the development of the International Aviation Services Centre (IASC) at Shannon as well as plans for the €10 million redevelopment of Bunratty Castle in partnership with Fáilte Ireland.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 5

National Enablers

- a. It is an objective to deliver the investment priorities as identified in the NDP for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and to seek progress and co-ordination between the principal stakeholders for the delivery of the priorities as identified in the NPF. Identification of suitable sites for regeneration and development should be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental concerns.
- b. It is an objective to implement innovative and collaborative projects through funding mechanisms such as the Urban Regeneration and Development, Rural Regeneration and Development, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies funds.

35. Some projects outside of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area are referenced as it is considered that they have a strong link to the MASP area. For a complete listing of all projects please refer to the National Development Plan (NDP).

5.0 | Population Projections

The NPF and Implementation Roadmap provided by the DHPLG set out the population allocations and targets for our Region and local authorities including projections to achieve accelerated urban growth³⁶. The NPF sets out ambitious targets for Limerick City and Suburbs of a population of least 141,000 by 2040 (as per Table 4.1 of the NPF).

The NPF and Implementation Roadmap also refer to further qualified allowances which may apply to deliver on accelerated urban growth in Metropolitan Areas. National Policy Objective 68 states a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan may enable up to 20% of the phased population growth targeted in the principle city and suburban area, to be accommodated in the wider Metropolitan Area i.e. outside the city and suburbs or contiguous zoned area, in addition to growth identified for the Metropolitan Area.

This will be subject to:

- Any relocated growth being in the form of compact development, such as infill or sustainable urban extension.
- Any relocated growth being served by high capacity public transport and/or related to significant employment provision; and
- National Policy Objective 9.

This may be relevant in the Limerick-Shannon context given for example the need for change to a more balanced concentric city through strategic proposals for development at Mungret and by opening the north eastern quadrant (in both Limerick and Clare) facilitated by the development of the LNDR. The application of NPO 68 will be subject to review by the MASP Implementation Group.

As required under the NPF, 50% of all new housing within Limerick City is to occur within the existing city and suburbs footprint through brownfield, infill and regeneration. Outside of Limerick City, 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements is to occur within their existing built-up footprints as per National Policy Objective 3 (c) of the NPF.

Table 1 | Population Projections for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area³⁷

Area	Population 2016	Projected Population 2026	Projected Population 2031
Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick)	89,671	112,089	123,289
Limerick City and Suburbs (in Clare)	4,521	5,607	6,150
Subtotal	94,192	117,696	129,448
Remainder Metropolitan Area (Limerick)	15,281	19,453	21,611
Remainder Metropolitan Area (Clare)	22,947	25,414	26,463
Subtotal	38,228	44,867	48,074
Total Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area	132,420	162,563	177,552



36. In addition, the Department have clarified that the 25% Headroom identified in the Roadmap can apply to the County Clare area of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

37. The overall population projections for each county, as provided in the NPF Implementation Roadmap (July 2018), do not change in light of these MASP projections figures.

6.0 | Integrated Land Use and Transport

The principles underpinning the MASP include the effective integration of transport planning with spatial planning policies, from regional to local level and the alignment of associated transport and infrastructure investment.

To the extent practicable, development within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area should be carried out sequentially, whereby lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport – including infill and brownfield sites – are prioritised. The transport capacity of the strategic national road network should also be maintained and protected and larger scale, trip intensive developments, should primarily be focused in locations which are well served by existing or proposed public transport corridors.

The Mid-West Area Strategic Plan 2012-30 identified that local passenger and national freight activity return from the available rail infrastructure is underutilised. The rail links to Limerick via Nenagh and Ballybrophy are in need of investment. There is a new opportunity to examine the potential for increased line usage, given future population growth in the Limerick-Shannon MASP and Nenagh as a Key Town in the RSES. There does not appear to be an immediate need for a rail link to Shannon International Airport, but the corridor should be protected into the future and regularly reviewed. Opportunities for improvement to commuter rail services including the provision of new stations could be assessed against the location of future population growth and value for money.

Enhanced public transport connectivity with Dublin, Galway, Cork and Waterford is particularly important to assist the continued growth of Shannon International

Airport. Transport investment requirements in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area will be identified and prioritised through the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Transport Strategy (LSMATS). Sustainable transportation is addressed in more detail in Chapter 6 of the RSES.

In terms of strategic road infrastructure, the development of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) is a key priority. The LNDR will improve access to the University of Limerick and the IDA National Technology Park and will reduce City Centre traffic. It will provide a direct link between Shannon International Airport, the businesses and industries in the Shannon area and the university campus. Furthermore, the delivery of the LNDR will improve transport links to the regeneration area of Moyross, across east and north County Limerick, south County Clare and onto the national road network and will open significant areas of land for potential development.

Interregional transport connectivity between Metropolitan Areas is a priority in this MASP. In addition, collaboration is required to address similar challenges and to harness opportunities. The Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network is a potential network which promotes greater collaboration between the metropolitan areas of Galway and Limerick-Shannon and the Key Town of Ennis. It offers potential opportunities for partnership to drive economic growth and innovation on a sub-regional basis. This potential network is underpinned by the presence of public transport and motorway infrastructure that connects the two cities on the West coast of Ireland. Increasing collaboration across this potential network can create the conditions for achieving critical mass, population and jobs growth in a sustainable manner.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 6

Integration of Land Use and Transport

- a. It is an objective to prepare a Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Transport Strategy during the lifetime of this MASP and it is an objective to ensure its investment and implementation.
- b. It is an objective that Core Strategies of local authority Development Plans will identify public transport corridors and nodal points on corridors in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area arising from the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Transport Strategy which have potential to support high density development/regeneration. Core Strategies shall identify the appropriate land use zonings for these nodal points and demonstrate the effective alignment between land use and transport infrastructure planning and delivery of

the NPF Compact Growth targets as they apply to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

- c. It is an objective to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF, through the sustainable and infrastructure led:
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of the City Centre and Suburbs.
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of Shannon Town.
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along public transportation corridors
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along strategic bus network corridors
- d. It is an objective to seek sustainable higher densities where practicable at public transport nodal points.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 7

Sustainable Transportation

a. It is an objective to support the following sustainable transport priorities in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area subject to their consistency with the recommendations of LSMATS and the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process:

- Investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and public transport services;
- The implementation of an integrated, multi modal public transport network across the Metropolitan Area servicing strategic residential and employment growth locations.

b. Other transport measures for consideration, across the wider Mid-West area, may include the following:

- Implementation of improved public realm, walking and cycling routes and facilities;
- Development and promotion of existing intercity rail and commuter links from Limerick to Dublin, Cork, Galway, together with Ennis, Nenagh, Thurles and Clonmel;
- Upgrade and enhancement of the rail line between Limerick and Nenagh and onward to Ballybrophy;

- Upgrade and enhancement of the Western Rail Corridor between Limerick and Ennis and onward line to Athenry;
- Reinstatement of the Limerick to Foynes rail line, linking Ireland's deepest port to the national rail network;
- The MASP supports the ambition to create a rail link between Limerick City and Shannon International Airport and this should be investigated further;
- Investigate the potential for a higher speed rail link between Dublin and Limerick City;
- Improved sustainable transport links between the City Centre, Shannon International Airport, LIT, UL and the National Technology Park;
- Implementation of improved public realm, walking and cycling routes and facilities including delivery of the Great Streets project;
- The provision of a high-quality cycle network in Limerick City as set out in the Limerick Metropolitan Area Cycle Network Study/ LSMATS;
- The provision of three new pedestrian/ cycle bridges in the City Centre as set out in the World Class Waterfront proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle permeability to key sites.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 8

Strategic Road Infrastructure

It is an objective to maintain and deliver the sustainable development of strategic road infrastructure for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and improve transport connectivity to the wider Region. This will include the delivery of the following subject to their consistency with the recommendations of LSMATS, the outcome of appropriate appraisal, environmental assessments and the planning process:

- Improved inter regional connectivity to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area including M20 Limerick to Cork and the upgrading of the N24 to Waterford;
- Limerick Northern Distributer Route (LNDR);
- Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme (including Adare Bypass);
- Improved accessibility to Limerick Southside

including the possible provision of a motorway interchange connection from the M20/M7 to Limerick Southside;

- Upgrade of the N19 road access to Shannon International Airport;
- Upgrade of arterial roads from the motorway network to increase capacity including the provision of public transport infrastructure and Park and Ride, including, for example, R527 Dock Road, R445 Dublin Road, including Junction 28 and R527 Tipperary Road;
- Upgrading of the R471;
- Works to upgrade and improve the road alignment of the L3126;
- The upgrade of the Childer's Road/ Ballysimon Road in Limerick City to accommodate bus and cycle facilities.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 9

Potential Collaboration Network-Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network

a. It is an objective to deliver the effective planning and development of the Metropolitan Area and Key Towns along the potential Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network.

b. It is an objective to deliver excellent public

transportation connections in the potential GESL Economic Network.

c. It is an objective, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process, to deliver excellent inter-regional transport connections between the GESL, North Kerry/West Limerick/Shannon Estuary Network and the Kerry Knowledge Triangle along the AEC.

7.0 | Housing and Regeneration

7.1 | Housing and Regeneration in the MASP

Chapter 3 of the RSES sets out the framework to increase residential density in our cities and larger towns through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill and site-based regeneration.

The MASP supports a sequential approach to development with a primary focus on the consolidation of sites within or contiguous to the existing built up and zoned area of Limerick City and Suburbs, supported by Shannon.

Limerick City is one of the most affordable urban areas in Ireland to both rent and buy residential property. Coupled with higher disposable incomes than the national average, this is key competitive advantage for attracting people and investment.

The MASP recognises the progression of sustainable development areas for housing in Mungret and Castletroy. Limerick 2030 Designated Activity Company are preparing a Masterplan of a 42-hectare residential site at Mungret Park. The site comprises 26 hectares of lands owned by Limerick City and County Council in Mungret, including the former Mungret College and associated buildings. Mungret is a zoned urban extension of Limerick City under the Southern Environs Local Area Plan. The site has obtained funding through the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) for

a distributor road, which will unlock substantial lands within public and private ownership and trigger the development of additional residential sites, supporting community and employment uses. The MASP supports the provision of sustainable transport options to and from the City Centre and nearby amenities and employment.

Shannon attracts a daytime working population of approximately 18,000 people per day however its population growth rate remains stagnant. The interdependence between Shannon as a residential area and its employment assets – Shannon Free-Zone and Shannon International Airport - have weakened to the detriment of Shannon. The challenge for Shannon is to transform into a dynamic, vibrant place to live. Opportunities exist to create a new image that is fresh and welcoming, and capitalises on the existing strengths and assets of Shannon. This should be pursued through placemaking, including improving the quality and sense of place in the town centre. The development of an Action Area Plan for Shannon Town Centre to create a sustainable urban centre and a sense of focus would be a positive initiative. Consideration should be given to initiatives to encourage regeneration of existing residential areas.

Local authorities, through their land use plans, will identify metropolitan settlements that have the capacity to achieve higher residential densities in tandem with the provision of public transport, infrastructure and services. This should be consistent with the RSES and the guiding principles, objectives and goals of the MASP.

Table 2 | Mungret

Mungret	
Start Date	Procurement of Masterplan / Development Appraisal services commenced Q1 2018
Estimated yield	Potential of 2,000 housing units on all of the residential zoned lands
Stakeholders	Limerick City and County Council / Limerick 2030 /LIHAF
Current Project Status	Progressing Masterplan



7.2 | City Centre Consolidation and Regeneration

National Policy Objective 3b of the NPF requires that at least half (50%) of all new homes should be constructed within existing built-up footprints. The Limerick-Shannon MASP supports the densification of Limerick City and Suburbs, the assembly of brownfield sites for development and City Centre rejuvenation and consolidation. The MASP strongly promotes and supports a Living City as per the “Guiding Principles” of this MASP.

The development of additional housing within Limerick City Centre will achieve a redeveloped and vibrant, walkable core. This should be connected to the wider Metropolitan Area by an extensive, reliable and state of the art public transport network. The development of additional housing stock within Limerick City Centre will be achieved by (i) developing high-density housing at strategic locations, (ii) upgrading, modernising and densifying areas containing social housing stock and (iii) the development of underutilised landbanks.

The regeneration process is a key driver of change across Limerick City. Its contribution to the overall economic rejuvenation of the City is critical to sustained socio-economic vibrancy. The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) centres on three key pillars – Economic, Physical and Social renewal.

New housing construction with mixed unit sizes and types and retrofitting of existing housing stock are key elements of the LRFIP. This will lead to the delivery of nearly 600 new homes and the upgrading of over 1,500 homes across the areas of Moyross, Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and St Mary’s Park. This will raise standards of living, opportunity, health and wellbeing for all residents of the regeneration areas and involves a high level of cooperation between all the various public sector organizations and agencies. The significant work in the four regeneration areas across Limerick City is having a very positive impact on the communities across the three pillars. It has resulted in the creation of over 300 jobs, increased participation in support services and in school attendance, facilitated a reduction in youth crime and has created safer communities. Over 50% of new build homes have been completed and 80% of 1,493 homes earmarked for thermal upgrading are in progress.³⁸

Actions will be identified at the local authority level to improve housing stock and quality and to bring buildings back into use. These actions will include improvements to public realm and amenities to create more attractive streetscapes and desirable neighbourhoods. The MASP supports collaboration between local authorities and the Land Development Agency to masterplan and develop strategic City Centre and Dockland sites in Limerick City, utilising the appropriate planning mechanisms. Considering that regeneration issues in Limerick City are similar to Shannon, there are opportunities for both local authorities to work together to overcome challenges.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 10

Housing and Regeneration

- a. It is an objective to support the environmentally sustainable densification of Limerick City Centre, the assembly of brownfield sites for development and the regeneration and redevelopment of Limerick City and Suburbs to accommodate residential use. The MASP recognises that initiatives such as the Living City and Living Georgian City initiatives and other interventions by agencies such as the Land Development Agency (and any environmental mitigation arising from the environmental assessment of such strategies) are essential to facilitate compact growth and increased residential density in the City Centre.
- b. It is an objective to enhance Shannon Town as an attractive residential centre through regeneration, active land management initiatives and the redevelopment of Shannon Town Centre. An Action Area Plan for Shannon Town Centre and required environmental assessments including SEA and AA will be prepared within 3 years of the publication of this RSES and MASP.
- c. It is an objective to ensure investment and delivery of holistic physical, social and environmental infrastructure packages to meet growth targets that prioritises the delivery of compact growth and sustainable mobility in accordance with NPF and RSES objectives.

38. As of January 2019

8.0 | Employment and Enterprise

8.1 | Introduction

Investment in the creation of 'place', access to talent and the presence of an innovative and smart economy are key factors to realising the potential of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. Together with improvements in existing sectors such as retail and tourism will play an important role in creating a stronger economy.

Limerick City and Shannon are Ireland's most connected fulcrum; the Metropolitan Area is the only location in Ireland with access to all other regional urban centres within 2 hours and within 90 minutes of Dublin. The continued growth of Shannon International Airport, Shannon Foynes Port and third level education facilities is essential for future growth based on leveraging national and international connectivity, higher education capacity and quality of life to secure strategic investment.

8.2 | Economic Resilience and Clusters

The diversification of industry and the development of clusters will increase economic resilience and reduce overall risk. By developing industrial clusters, benefits such as lower production costs, increased innovation among related businesses and increased co-location of similar and supporting businesses can be realised.

There are positive examples of clusters in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. The IASC recently became the first Irish member of the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP). Firms within the cluster can co-operate on a European level to identify new projects, funding sources and development opportunities. The National Sports Business Cluster will leverage elite sporting facilities established at UL's sports campus and LIT's Sportslab (Europe's leading strength and conditioning centre) in Thurles in addition to thirty sport-related companies currently operating in Limerick and its catchment.

Working together, companies can be more innovative, create more jobs and register more international trademarks and patents than they would alone. The EU Cluster Portal³⁹ provides tools and information on key European initiatives, actions and events for clusters with the aim of creating more world-class clusters across the EU.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 11

Economic Resilience and Clusters

It is an objective to develop, deepen and enhance the economic resilience of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area through creating a vibrant and diversified enterprise base, with strong, healthy, connected Clusters drawing on Eolas Comhroinnte Obair le cheile / Shared Knowledge Working Together (ECOLC / SKWT) to assist in bringing disruptive technologies and innovations to national and global markets.



39. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/cluster_en

8.3 | A Smart Metropolitan Area and Strengths in Attracting FDI

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is an important information and communications technology (ICT) hub for FDI. Acting as a cornerstone for the burgeoning IDA Artificial Intelligence (AI) Island strategy, companies such as Analog Devices, Jaguar Landrover, Dell/EMC, General Motors (GM) and J&J are drawing on the talented pool of graduates and researchers being developed by UL, LIT, SFI research centres, incubators, Enterprise Ireland/IDA Technology Centres and community enterprise centres.

The HEIs that serve the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area are responsive to the upskilling needs of industry. This collaboration has led to the development of an innovative portfolio of Skillnet-funded higher diplomas in software engineering, data analytics, middleware, embedded systems and security. UL is home to the world's first industry driven national postgraduate MSc in Artificial Intelligence.

Limerick City and County Council was the first local authority to establish an innovation company, Innovate Limerick, which acts as the delivery mechanism for key Limerick 2030 projects. Innovate Limerick has attracted Troy International Film Studios to Limerick City and developed the Innovation Hub and ENGINE, which provides office solutions for start-up and accelerating businesses. This innovative process encourages a positive business ecosystem which is essential to achieve the vision of the MASP.

Ireland's First Digital City

Limerick's Digital Strategy will enable the development of a smart, sustainable, city and Metropolitan Area where digital technologies improve quality of life, empower communities and enable economic growth.

The Strategy supports development of Smart Homes and Smart Buildings and sets the foundation for Smart Limerick, where data, automation and artificial intelligence will fuel the knowledge and digital economies and lead to better services and improved quality of life for all.

The Limerick Digital District comprises connected infrastructure that traverses the city, equipping key actors with the capabilities to regenerate and accelerate Limerick's transition to becoming Ireland's first digital city.

The Digital District is the backbone on which the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area can implement and develop novel technologies, build a sustainable knowledge base and engage citizens in digital transformation, while minimising the risk of digital inequalities. The foundation constituents of the Digital District will include the Digital R&D Hub at Park Point, and the Digital Quarter in Georgian Limerick. The Digital District will support compact sustainable growth in Limerick, transforming a vacant development into an 8,625m² landmark R&D/educational/business incubation space with future plans to develop and transform Limerick City's Georgian Neighbourhood.



Limerick has recently become a “Lighthouse Smart City” as part of the EU Research and Innovation funding programme, Horizon 2020. Lighthouse cities develop, and tests integrated innovative solutions at district scale and act as exemplars across Europe. The +CityxChange (positive city exchange) is a smart city project. Limerick City along with partner cities will work together to develop through citizen engagement a series of demonstration projects on how to become smart positive energy cities. This MASP supports the establishment of Limerick as a “Smart Lighthouse City” as proposed under the + CityxChange project

The focus in Limerick will be on the development of a new “community grid”, the use of smart meters, innovation in new energy sources (including hydrokinetic energy) and storage, to create a ‘Positive Energy District’ in Limerick City Centre. A Positive Energy District contributes more energy than it consumes. Limerick’s demonstration project will be centred in the Georgian Innovation District in the City Centre (Georgian/Newtown Pery areas).

Jaguar Land Rover will locate their new research and development centre in Shannon, leading to the creation of 150 new jobs. The Shannon facility will play an important role in realising the company’s vision for electric and automated driving vehicles. New technologies will be developed at the test facility to support electrification and self-driving features including the next generation of electrical architecture as well as advanced driver assistance systems. This is an ideal opportunity to make Shannon a globally recognised centre of excellence for current and future software engineering talent and recognising Shannon as a centre for R&D for autonomous vehicles. The MASP supports transformative projects which provide strategic opportunities for the Metropolitan Area such as the development of a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) testbed in Shannon.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 12

A Smart Metropolitan Area and Strengths in Attracting FDI

- a. It is an objective to seek investment and improve quality in high speed, high capacity digital infrastructure and to seek access for all to digital infrastructure in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.
- b. It is an objective to seek investment in the initiatives of local authority Digital Strategies and investment in initiatives to deliver a greener, more innovative and smarter city and Metropolitan Area.
- c. It is an objective to deliver high capacity ICT infrastructure and high-speed broadband so peripheral locations can interact more successfully

with larger urban centres and the Metropolitan Area.

- d. 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 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.
- e. 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 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. In this regard it is an objective to support the Limerick Digital District and to accelerate Limerick’s transition to becoming Ireland’s first digital city

8.4 | Employment Distribution

The delivery of business and enterprise potential is dependent on understanding and identifying the main economic drivers and removing obstacles. The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area meets these key elements as a business location of choice.

The Limerick-Shannon MASP identifies strategic employment locations within the Metropolitan Area. However, achieving NPF growth targets will require consideration of new locations and initiatives by each

local authority. Additional locations may become available and this MASP recognises the need for flexibility to accommodate future growth opportunities that may emerge during the lifetime of the MASP. In particular, it is recognised that a new Northside Business Campus could be identified and developed. Future growth proposals should be consistent and integrate with the Limerick-Shannon MASPs aim of revitalising and reinvigorating Limerick City for higher-density living and high-density, high-value jobs.

Future growth in employment will place additional resource demands on the local economy. As an open

market economy at the innovation edge, where new technologies and business models continuously evolve at a rapid pace, it is difficult to specify jobs targets for every type of economic activity and location in the Limerick-Shannon MASP. However, as a functional economic area, certain assumptions can be made. The NPF, used a ratio of 1.6 between population growth targets and employment growth. Applying a similar ratio to the population growth targets for the Metropolitan Area can provide an indication of additional jobs in the Limerick-Shannon MASP. Therefore, with a projected increase in the population of 30,134 (2026) and 45,132 (2031), additional jobs to 2026 would be in the order of at least 19,000 and additional jobs to 2031 at least 28,200.

The recent economic revival in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area has been generally concentrated on financial service companies, such as Northern Trust, and high-end manufacturing and research, such as Regeneron and Jaguar's new autonomous vehicle research centre. These sectors place different infrastructural requirements on the local economy.

Table 3 lists some of the main employment centres. Modern service companies require high quality office space in areas that offer a good quality of life and reliable public transport. The completed Gardens International Centre, the Opera Centre and the planned Cleeves development have the capacity to add 7,000 additional jobs. There is also existing capacity in Ballysimon (c. 54.6 hectares), Clondrinagh (c. 27.7 hectares) and Annacotty (c. 37.5 hectares). The MASP supports further plans for development of central sites for continued employment growth, which should also add to the core regeneration of Limerick City. The proposed development of the Dock Road provides significant potential. Concentrations of employment outside the City Centre area are predominantly at locations in Shannon, Castletroy and Raheen. The MASP area has capacity for expansion of scale at these primary locations. These strategic locations offer the capacity to cater for companies that complements access to an international airport and third level graduates.

Table 3 | Strategic Employment Locations

Name/Type	Employment Numbers/ Status	Description	Capacity
Higher Education Institutes	3,000+	25,000+ students with 6,300 graduates per annum. Strong synergies with extended region and local businesses. UL is recognised for the employability of its students. CONFIRM, based at UL, is a new research centre that develops future smart manufacturing technologies. LIT has strong industry connections and is internationally recognised for its industry focused "Active Learning" courses.	Large capacity for growth at UL including the proposed South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) and a City Centre Campus. Recent expansion of LIT campus to Coonagh with potential for further growth.
Shannon Free Zone (SFZ)	8,500+ 160+ companies	Largest agglomeration of American companies outside Dublin. Plans to develop SFZ as part of a Mid-West high-tech ecosystem. An established industrial base in the technology and automotive sectors, with Jaguar Land Rover recently planning for a research centre in autonomous driving. Supportive start-up environment with Propeller and Gateway Hub Innovation Centre.	195 hectares

Name/Type	Employment Numbers/ Status	Description	Capacity
Public Hospitals	3500+	Hospitals within the MASP group include UHL, the Maternity Hospital and St. Johns. It caters to a regional population of up to half a million people.	New Accident and Emergency department recently opened, with plans approved for a new 60 bed unit. Plans for expansion including relocation of Maternity Hospital.
National Technological Park	3000+ 80+ companies	Large graduate pool from UL. Opportunity for industry collaborations. Supportive environment for start-up companies including the Nexus Innovation Centre.	71 hectares
Raheen	3000+ 50+ companies	Located 3 miles from City Centre, offering brownfield and greenfield sites.	57.5 hectares
Garden's International Centre	Complete (2019)	The newly completed Garden's International Centre offers state of the art office space, with the first tenants in place in Q2 2019. It is the first completed part of the Limerick 2030 plan.	750+ (estimated)
Opera Centre	Funding Secured	High quality City Centre office space. Easy access to graduate pool, international connectivity and a vibrant City Centre location.	3,000 (estimated)
Cleeves Site	In development	Cleeve's is an iconic 10 acre site, located on the northern bank of the Shannon River, just off the city centre. The site is suitable for a mix of uses including education, tourism and commercial space.	1,500 (estimated) 4 hectares
Dock Road	In development	The Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy aims to grow existing commercial activity at SFPC's 23 hectare Ted Russell Docks, and also provide for the major development of non-core activities along a further 49 acre site.	113.2 hectares
Northside Business Campus	In development	A new business park on the north of the city accessible by public transport, will be developed on the basis of strong links between, and synergies with, LIT and various employment agencies, and will build on the regeneration progress in Moyross.	

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 13

Strategic Employment Locations

- a. It is an objective to support the sustainable development of identified and future Strategic Employment Locations and to ensure the delivery of associated infrastructural requirements subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process;
- b. It is an objective to seek investment to deliver a Connected and Autonomous (CAV) R&D testbed and smart infrastructure in Shannon and a smart city demonstrator in Limerick;
- c. It is an objective to support the development of the Limerick Docklands Strategy within the context of both commercial and potential future residential development.



8.4.1 | Shannon Free Zone

Shannon Free Zone (SFZ) is 243 hectares in area with more than 7,000 employees in over 100 companies and is home to the largest cluster of American companies in Ireland outside of Dublin.

The site is part owned by Shannon Commercial Properties and part privately owned. It consists of greenfield and brownfield lands. There is considerable potential for development within this existing zoned landbank. It is important to ensure that a range of property solutions are available for different business life stages and that adequate investment in the utilities infrastructure is provided.

The following are key priorities for SFZ:

- Shannon Group is transforming the SFZ to create the environment for a high-tech eco-system in the Mid-West. Given the success of Phase 1 of the redevelopment, it is now necessary to fast track the continued regeneration of SFZ;
- The SFZ Masterplan, currently under development, will provide a detailed development framework strategy for the undeveloped landbank at SFZ East

and the brownfield regeneration of SFZ West. The Masterplan will ensure that the land use potential of the lands is maximised and future development takes place in a co-ordinated manner;

- Shannon can be at the forefront of a global mobility revolution. It has an established industrial base in the technology and automotive sectors, including global market-leading firms with ambitious investment plans, a plethora of expert SMEs and depth of research expertise. The MASP supports the future development of the automotive and mobility sector in Shannon;
- Investment in the sustainable development of the CAV sector in Shannon including the development of a testbed for this transformative technology which can be a key enabler for decarbonising our transport sector;
- Cross-agency cooperation in the promotion and development of the IASC cluster;
- Investment in the utilities infrastructure is necessary to ensure the continued regeneration of the SFZ. Much of the utilities date back to the 1950's and requires upgrading. Upgrades to the electricity network, the water and wastewater network is necessary to ensure that the economic potential of the SFZ can be achieved;
- Westpark which has 2,500-3,000 jobs on a modern campus and has plans for expansion.

8.4.2 | South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone

In common with other higher education institutes, UL is a key economic driver in the Metropolitan Area and wider region. An opportunity for the development of a South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) has emerged at UL on a large scale strategic site zoned as a University Zone.

The proposal which is being developed by the University in conjunction with Clare County Council, prior to consideration by the Government, reflects the strategic economic role of UL which is located in both Clare and Limerick. The establishment of a SDZ at this strategic location will be a catalyst for the further economic and social development of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the wider region. It will establish a zone of substantial scale and strategic importance, advancing the Metropolitan Area by creating a prime global site for international investment with the potential to generate 3,500 jobs. Investment by industry will involve collaboration with the University in a new model of learning delivered by industry-partnered academies directed at attracting the best multinational employers with a guaranteed recruitment feed. The zone will create the potential for world-class learning, research and development.

Based on the existing zoning in the Clare County Development Plan, the proposed South Clare Economic SDZ is planned to become Europe's first 21st Century University town and gown environment, merging education, enterprise and employment, modelled on the very best of modern on-campus living. It will be a model of sustainable urban living, education and

enterprise, building on the standards of the existing campus. The development of the proposed SDZ will also allow for the redevelopment and integration of the Errina Canal to link the nearby villages of Clonlara, O'Briensbridge and Castleconnell, and provide a direct inland waterway connection between Limerick City and Belfast to reopen the historic all-island inland waterways system. The envisaged re-opening of the canal will significantly boost economic activity in these villages, as has been the experience in each settlement on the route of the Ballinamore-Ballyconnell canal project. The proximity to Ireland's first hydroelectric power station at Ardnacrusha will provide a direct feed of green energy to the zone.

The impact of the zone on the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area would also be significant as the site's enterprise population focus would be on an international scale with partnerships with Europe, the United States and Asia. Local settlements in the Metropolitan Area would also benefit from the appropriate placemaking infrastructure of the zone that will enhance its attractiveness to residents from overseas. The site will be accessible through a new link from the planned LNDR linking the zone directly to Shannon International Airport and onto the cities of Dublin, Cork and Galway via motorway.

This is a potential project of scale from a European perspective. From a national perspective this is an exemplar project enabling an early win to the balanced regional development strategy set out in the National Planning Framework. At local level, the economic resurgence effect of this development will be highly significant for Limerick City and will complement the Limerick 2030 plan.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 14

South Clare Economic / UL proposed Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

It is an objective of the MASP to support an application for the designation and subsequent development of the lands zoned as University in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 as an Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ), subject to the provisions of the Planning Act and all environmental considerations.



8.5 | Shannon International Airport

The second largest airport in Ireland with a capacity of 4.5 million passengers annually, Shannon International Airport is a strategic national asset. It serves a catchment area beyond the Mid-West and is experiencing significant growth. The Airport has the longest runway in the country allowing it to cater for fully-laden flights to Asia and South America and is the only airport in the country operating with no flight time restrictions.

Research by the ESRI shows that foreign firm's value airport access above access to motorways. Access to airports is particularly important for high tech FDI and knowledge intensive firms, key drivers for economic development. The importance of Shannon International Airport is also evident in the fact that over 40% of US FDI companies in Ireland are within the airport's catchment area. The IASC is a significant part of the aviation industry and the Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises and supports the role of IASC as a significant opportunity to be a truly global player in the aerospace industry. The MASP supports the continued sustainable development and investment in the airports surrounding land bank, zoned in the Shannon Town LAP to act as a catalyst for economic growth in the Region.

International Aviation Services Centre (IASC)

Shannon International Airport and the Shannon Free Zone are home to the IASC, the largest aerospace cluster in Ireland. IASC is home to over 60 companies and employs over 2,600 people in Shannon. The worldwide aircraft fleet is expected to double in the next 20 years, and there is a unique opportunity for Ireland to become a global leader in aerospace and aviation services sector, with Shannon at the heart of this endeavour.

Shannon Group has secured planning permission to build a wide body aircraft paint hangar at Shannon International Airport. This is in accordance with the National Aviation Policy to "encourage the development of the IASC at Shannon". This will be the first new widebody hangar constructed at an Irish airport in over 20 years and will assist the growth of a globally recognised and internationally competitive

aviation industry cluster in and around the airport campus.

The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises and supports the role of IASC as a significant opportunity to become a truly global player in the aerospace industry. The MASP supports the development of the IASC cluster at Shannon as recognised in National Aviation Policy and aims to ensure that cross-agency cooperation will continue to develop IASC at Shannon to meet industry demand. Multi-agency collaboration is required to improve and develop the infrastructure to support the development of the IASC cluster. Further development of maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) related infrastructure would be important to support the future development of the IASC cluster and the spin off industries in the Metropolitan Area and wider region.



Enhancing connectivity from Shannon International Airport to drive economic development along the entire west coast of Ireland, the Region and beyond is a priority for the Limerick-Shannon MASP. It is imperative that the connections from Shannon are maintained and improved. Year-round connectivity to transatlantic and European hubs will be vital to support both business and tourism.

While passenger numbers reached nearly 1.9 million in 2018, it has capacity to deal with 4.5 million passengers. Nearly 95% of Irish air traffic growth in the last five years goes through Dublin Airport, putting greater pressure on the capital's airport. It is important to note that Shannon International Airport can immediately relieve the congestion in Dublin Airport.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 15

Shannon International Airport

- a. The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises Shannon International Airport as a national and infrastructural driver of economic, social and tourism growth. It is an objective to develop and enhance the strategic role of Shannon International Airport and to advocate for a policy environment that supports a regional distribution of air traffic and for a greater regional focus by national agencies.
- b. It is an objective, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process, to support the utilisation of the existing

- c. investment in Shannon International Airport and its surrounding land bank to act as a catalyst for economic growth in our Region.
- c. The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognises and supports the role of IASC as a significant opportunity for the Metropolitan Area to become a global player in the aerospace industry. It is an objective to develop the IASC cluster at Shannon as recognised in National Aviation Policy and to work to ensure that cross-agency cooperation will continue to develop the IASC to meet industry demand.



8.6 | Shannon Foynes Port

As Ireland's second largest port in terms of total throughput/trade handled and access to deep-water resources, Shannon Foynes Port is designated as a Tier 1 Port of National Significance.

This means that the port must continue to play a key role, both regionally and nationally, in meeting the external trading requirements of the Irish economy and that the continued successful commercial development of the Port represents a key policy objective. While it is located outside the MASP area, the Port is of strategic importance to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

The MASP supports the continued development of Shannon Foynes Port and recognises the significant opportunities for the Region and Ireland due to its deep waters. The MASP supports and promotes the inclusion

of Shannon Foynes Port onto the EU core network corridor as it brings significant investment opportunities in the form of FDI potential and as well as supporting enhanced connectivity with Ireland's European partners.

The N69 route to Foynes does not meet the standards of reliability and connectivity required to serve a port to support foreign and indigenous investment, nor to maximise tourism potential. The delivery of the Foynes to Limerick Road improvement scheme is a key infrastructural project. Connectivity to the motorway network will be critical to increasing the Ports economic impacts in the future.

Reinstatement of the Limerick to Foynes rail line, linking Ireland's deepest port to the national rail network is a key priority for Shannon Foynes Port. The MASP supports this ambition, as it will enhance Shannon Foynes Port as key future growth enabler.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 16

Shannon Foynes Port

- a. It is an objective, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process, including SEA and AA as appropriate, to support the continued expansion of Shannon Foynes Port and to recognise the significant opportunities for the Southern Region and Ireland by virtue of its deep waters.
- b. It is an objective to support and promote the inclusion of Shannon Foynes Port onto the EU core network corridor as it would bring significant investment opportunities to the region in the form of FDI potential and as well as supporting enhanced external connectivity with Ireland's European partners.
- c. It is an objective to support the reinstatement of the Limerick to Foynes rail line and the delivery of the Foynes to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme.
- d. It is an objective to safeguard and maintain Foynes Island as a vital port asset and to support the provision of natural deep water berthage on the island.

8.7 | Retail

Shopping habits and retail are subject to continuous change. Furthermore, a lack of population density, the growth of suburban shopping centres and the significant growth in online shopping are contributing to low levels of footfall within city centres. With the loss of retail activity, urban centres lose attractiveness, vitality and liveability.

Retail plays a central role in placemaking and creating attractive liveable environments, enabling strong mixed-use urban cores and facilitating regeneration. Retail and the City Centre experience must be reshaped and adapted to this changed circumstance. This will require improvements to access, enhanced sustainable transport connectivity and a significantly improved customer experience of visiting Limerick City Centre and Shannon Town Centre.

The Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-16 highlighted that Limerick City Centre fell behind other Irish cities and no longer performed to its Tier 1 Status in the shopping hierarchy⁴⁰ and that too much trade was lost to suburban locations. The Strategy sought to re-establish Limerick City Centre at the top of the regional hierarchy as the preferred location for new retail development. The need to regenerate Shannon Town Centre and improvements in the retail offer to create a sense of focus on arrival at the town centre is also a priority.



40. Colliers CRE, Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010 – 2016

The heart of retail activity in Limerick City focuses on the core area of Cruises Street, O'Connell Street, Roches Street, William Street and Henry Street. Arthur's Quay is the only purpose-built shopping centre in the City Centre. The transition to Irish Town and the Milk Market area offers a concentration of restaurants, bars and night clubs which represent the core of the night time economy.

It is an objective to reposition Limerick City Centre at the top of the retail hierarchy by improving the range and quality of shopping on offer, enhanced customer experience of visiting the City Centre. A contemporary shopping offer with leisure – food, drink and entertainment at the heart of the experience. This can be achieved by radically improving the City Centre experience in the prime shopping area.

The retailing business model is evolving in a digital direction. Therefore, retail should be at the centre of any digital strategies developed by local authorities. A city or town centre should attract consumers by offering a unique retail experience and to evolve in line with data about shopping preferences and behaviour. The MASP supports funding mechanisms to support traditional retailers in the transition to technology led, experiential retail models.



Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 17

Retail

- a. Within one year of the adoption of the RSES/MASP a Joint Retail Strategy shall be commenced for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines. The Joint Retail Strategy shall include – inter alia – the defined area of the Core City Shopping Area, the location of Suburban or District Shopping Centres, a map to indicate sustainable travel routes to/from each shopping area.
- b. It is an objective to support Limerick City Centre in maintaining its dominant retail function in the Mid-West hierarchy. The RSES supports and promotes the continued expansion and enhancement of retail development within the City Centre.
- c. It is an objective to protect and enhance customer experience of visiting Limerick City Centre through facilitating a mixed expansion of services including high order comparison retailing in conjunction with service, cultural and entertainment facilities through appropriate and sensitive redevelopment and infill development.
- d. It is an objective to develop a distinct shopping character to increase Shannon's attraction and to complement the retail function of Limerick City Centre.



8.8 | Strong Education Assets and availability of Talent

Building economic resilience will require innovation, productivity and competitiveness across all sectors. A resilient economy will support job creation and higher education institutes have a key role to play in supporting this growth. There is an increasing demand for employees to engage in upskilling, re-skilling and lifelong learning to respond to changing employment patterns and demands by developing skills resilience.

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is home to four of Ireland's most prestigious third level academic institutions. UL, LIT, Mary Immaculate College and Shannon College of Hotel Management (NUIG), which offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes. These produce over 7,500 graduates per year in a variety of disciplines including IT, life sciences, business administration, hotel management, engineering and technology and education. The Shannon College of Hotel Management is Ireland's only dedicated hotel management college, offering degree programmes and has a worldwide reputation for careers in business and hotel management. The Metropolitan Area offers further education and training through the Limerick Clare Education Training Board.

8.9 | HEIs addressing Social Disadvantage

In many parts of Limerick city, the proportion of the population leaving school with just a primary education is considerably higher than the national average. In 18 EDs, the rate is 20% or higher, with nine EDs recording an early school leaving rate more than 30%. Solutions to these historic issues require a broad spectrum of responses such as lifelong learning and upskilling, which are advocated strongly in Chapters 4 and 6 of the RSES.

Higher education institutes play an important role in addressing social disadvantage. They can provide accelerated and supported pathways by establishing dedicated facilities to help address disadvantage in their immediate communities. The proposed development by LIT to create a large multi-use Community Engagement

Gateway (CEG) facility at its northern boundary with the Moyross Regeneration Area, is a progressive initiative.

The primary focus of the CEG will be a modern, vibrant and flexible facility, which will deliver new community, education and sports facilities. The CEG aims to address the low educational attainment issues prevalent in the area, by breaking down physical and psychological barriers between northside RAPID areas and the provision of a higher education facility in the community.

UL plans to open a City Centre campus which will support the enhancement of the City Centre. This will bring up to 2000 students and over 100 staff into the heart of the City. This will support the objective of the MASP to strengthen the consolidation and regeneration of Limerick City Centre. The MASP supports the ambition of UL to develop an international identity, to expand and integrate with the City Centre and to develop the proposed South Clare Economic SDZ.

8.10 | Linking Enterprise and Higher Education

The enhancement of linkages between enterprise and higher education and research is critical. This can be achieved by the provision of enterprise development programmes, accessing research opportunities and the provision of dedicated centres focusing on particular aspects of the enterprise/third-level interface such as the planned Mid-West Regional Design Centre. The MASP supports initiatives such as these and seeks investment to facilitate their implementation.

Academies of Learning will distinguish the next phase of UL's Co-op principle. Academies will be developed between UL and individual institutions in enterprise to build programmes of learning. Enterprise will collaborate with UL through programmes of learning devised with

the University to meet the specific needs of industry. The MASP supports the ambition of the University to develop enterprise-led academies of learning demonstrating cohesion with enterprise supported by fit for purpose infrastructure.

There is a need to future proof the Metropolitan Areas long-term talent stream. There are several collaborative education-industry initiatives already underway, which focus on increasing the quality and quantity of the talent stream for the Mid-West. These include the Shannon Consortium, Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for IT, a dedicated Hospitality Education & Training Centre, Regional Skills Forum, UL and Hospital Group (Clinical Research Unit). As per Chapter 7 of the RSES, this MASP acknowledges the work in Limerick as a UNESCO Learning City. This positions the real opportunity to communicate the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas selling point as a hub of internationally recognised learning excellence.





Examples of Collaboration

Limerick for Engineering is an industry led initiative pioneering collaboration between industry and education and training providers. The primary goal of Limerick for Engineering is to increase the quality and quantity of engineering talent (apprentice, technicians and engineers) available. The group is a consortium of over 50 engineering companies located across the Mid-West and reaching into Galway, who work in partnership with the education institutions including LCETB, MIC, LIT and UL to 'increase the quality and quantity of talent'.

Similarly, the consortium of companies in **Limerick for IT** work with the education institutes to develop and deliver specific and targeted up-skilling courses (particularly using Springboard). The model is supplying a talent pipeline for businesses while allowing existing multinationals secure further operational mandates and activities, creating a

virtuous circle of emerging skills and jobs. These interventions have supported the creation of over 1,000 additional jobs in the past five years.

The **Shannon Consortium** is an education partnership between UL, LIT, Mary Immaculate College and the Institute of Technology, Tralee. The Shannon Consortium is a dynamic group of institutions actively working together as equal partners to coordinate and develop specific innovations.

The MASP supports these and other collaborative initiatives as innovative and collaborative efforts which will be the cornerstone to ensuring the sustainable growth and development of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 18

Education and Access to Talent

- a. It is an objective to support the existing educational facilities in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area which includes UL, Mary Immaculate, LIT and the Shannon College of Hotel Management as critical drivers of economic development and the fostering of an innovative, knowledge-based economy for the Metropolitan Area.
- b. The MASP recognises that the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan (REP) and the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum works collaboratively with all the agencies focusing on key actions and opportunities that the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area can offer in terms of employment generation and the fostering of the knowledge based economy, in particular relating to clustering of expertise e.g. aviation, med-tech, agri-food etc. It is an objective that the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan and the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum continue their work to deliver significant benefits to the Metropolitan Area and Mid-West.
- c. It is an objective to support investment in Higher Education Institutes, Education and Training Board, apprenticeships and skills development in the Metropolitan Area as an enabler for jobs growth. This includes, inter alia, investment in LIT, UL, associated research institutes and facilities, the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and initiatives applied to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area under the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum and Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan (REP).
- d. It is an objective to support Limerick as a Learning City, and Limerick's role in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. It is also an objective to seek investment in initiatives under the Learning City initiative and to support the spread of such initiatives in the Metropolitan Area and wider region.
- e. It is an objective to support the delivery of a Regional Design Centre to provide the focus for linkages between third level institutes, private design companies and enterprise.

8.11 | Tourism

The MASP aims to ensure collaboration between local authorities and tourism agencies to develop attractions such as the Wild Atlantic Way, Irelands Ancient East, and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The MASP recognises Shannon International Airport as a national and infrastructural driver of tourism growth and as an international gateway to the tourism assets of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, Mid-West and wider Region.

Opportunities to develop tourism in the MASP area are primarily based on developing its tourism attractions and by acting as a gateway to the regional tourism assets. Limerick City offers a strong competitive advantage regarding value for money for accommodation⁴¹. The MASP supports the facilitation of visitor experience development including capital investment in flagship tourism products that can create an attraction of scale.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 19

Tourism

- a. It is an objective to support investment in infrastructure, utilise the existing spare capacity of Shannon International Airport and to improve road and rail accessibility to maximise the potential of tourism subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.
- b. It is an objective to support the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as a tourism destination.

This will require the promotion of the tourism assets of the Mid-West, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

- c. It is an objective to ensure collaboration between local authorities and tourism agencies to develop attractions such as the Wild Atlantic Way, Irelands Ancient East, and Ireland's Hidden Heartland's.



9.0 | Environment

The Limerick-Shannon MASP seeks to integrate sustainable economic and social development with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment whilst ensuring our transition to a climate resilient society. Placemaking initiatives such as investment in public realm will create a more attractive area to live, visit and invest⁴². Placing significant effort and focus on the environmental pillar is central to delivering the goals of placemaking.

High-quality green and blue spaces are important not just for nature but for health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of an increasingly urban society and increasing settlement densities⁴³. A greater effort

is needed to plan for blue and green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, particularly considering climate action strategies and plans.

Green and blue infrastructure brings considerable value to the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. This value needs to be recognised and used to help attract sustainable funding to ensure the benefits continue to be felt.

Green and blue infrastructure should be strategically planned to enhance ecosystem services that benefit all and to create a climate resilient and adoptable society.

The better integration of biodiversity into economic and development decisions will ensure better projects and will mitigate against unforeseen negative climate change consequences.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 20

Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy

a. It is an objective to achieve a healthy, green and connected Metropolitan Area through the preparation of a Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy. This will require co-ordination between relevant stakeholders to deliver the sustainable development of parks, recreation and high quality public open space in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. This Strategy may include, inter alia:

- The sustainable development of green infrastructure as an interconnected series of green spaces including (inter alia) Parks, Greenway, Blueways, natural green spaces and ecosystems.
- The identification of key requirements for recreation, sports and community facilities.
- Identification of a location for a Regional Scale Park within the Limerick-Shannon

Metropolitan Area as well as the development of neighbourhood parks and open spaces.

- Identification of measures which improve and strengthen the metropolitan area's natural environment and habitats for flora and fauna.
 - The development of a Metropolitan Greenbelt Strategy in co-ordination between Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council and relevant stakeholders.
- b. It is an objective to support and encourage sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities represented by the Shannon Estuary, the potential to create new walkways by linking existing areas of open space and woodland and the opportunity to develop Greenways for cycling and walking. In order to support decision-making in increasing recreation and tourism opportunities along the coastline, which is in close proximity to European Sites, the carrying capacity of SACs/SPAs will need to be established to understand what limits should be set for the extent of development.

⁴². Place-making is instrumental to attracting a high skilled workforce and thus ensuring the Region captures sufficient human capital and talent

⁴³. Ireland's Environment - An Assessment, EPA (2016)

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 21

Public Realm and Placemaking

It is an objective to deliver improvements in the public realm in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area to create more active and vibrant urban centres which are attractive as locations of choice to live, work and visit. Examples of projects which can strengthen placemaking and public realm in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area include but are not confined to:

- A 'World Class' Waterfront – a renaissance of Limerick's entire Waterfront;
- The 'Limerick Cultural Centre' – an iconic destination building on the Waterfront;
- 'Great streets' – a transformation of the City's three main streets – O'Connell Street, Catherine Street and Henry Street;
- A new City Square/Plaza – to define the focal point or 'heart' of the City Centre;
- Colbert Station renewal – a new public transport interchange and enhanced station environment;
- Renewal of the Georgian Quarter – a concentrated programme to restore the Georgian part of the City to its former glory;
- Improvements and enhancement to Shannon Town Centre to create a sense of place, to upgrade public realm and promote redevelopment;
- The enhancement of Shannon the Living Town

The challenges of climate change and the transition to a low carbon society are a key component of the RSES and relevant objectives are set out in Volume 1, particularly in Chapters 2 and 5. Responding to these challenges will be particularly relevant to the MASP and appropriate climate adaptation and mitigation measures are supported.

10.0 | Social Inclusion and Infrastructure

There are significant issues relating to social deprivation in both Limerick and Shannon with parts of Limerick City identified as the most disadvantaged area in the Region. Eight of Ireland's top ten unemployment black spots are located in the MASP area. To achieve an inclusive Metropolitan Area offering equal opportunities for all citizens and to increase the number of persons active in the labour market, a specific focus is required on access to education and training.

The working population has grown significantly in recent years. Nonetheless established issues of long-term unemployment in parts of the Metropolitan Area remain. There is a requirement for focus and investment in ensuring long-term measures to systematically tackle these issues.

The Limerick-Shannon MASP supports ongoing collaboration with regional stakeholders to ensure that social infrastructure such as education, health and

community facilities are provided and to ensure that opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration are realised. The Community Engagement Gateway planned for the LIT Campus in Moylish is an example

Limerick City is a recognised World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy City affiliated with the National Healthy Cities and Counties Network. Healthy Limerick aims to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life by ensuring all sectors are aware of and collaborate to achieve a healthy society.

Limerick is a centre for regional health care services with Limerick University Hospital, a Model 4 hospital providing major surgery, cancer treatment and care, emergency department services as well as other medical, diagnostic and therapy services. University Maternity Hospital, Limerick is the second largest maternity hospital outside of Dublin. The Bon Secours Hospital at Barrington's is an important private health care provider in the City. The capacity for hospital expansion through intensification and redevelopment of their existing sites and/or buildings needs to be supported.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 22

Social Inclusion

- a. It is an objective to seek investment in delivering actions and stakeholder initiatives of the Local Economic Community Plans (LECPs) of Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council to strengthen community infrastructure and promote social inclusion for all citizens across all our communities
- b. It is an objective to seek continued investment in delivering initiatives to achieve the physical, economic, social and environmental regeneration of disadvantaged areas in the Metropolitan Area, in particular supporting the ongoing regeneration of the Limerick City RAPID areas.
- c. It is an objective to support the development of an inter-agency Social Enterprise Strategy to support the retention and expansion of existing social enterprises and the development of new social enterprises.

Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 23

Healthy Cities and Health Infrastructure

- a. It is an objective to seek investment in health service infrastructure within the Limerick-Shannon MASP area to meet existing and future regional population growth including supporting University Hospital Limerick to develop a consolidated integrated health district incorporating acute care, primary care, health education, innovation and research.
- b. It is an objective to grow and develop health care facilities as proposed by the University Hospital Limerick in their Strategic Plan.
- c. It is an objective to support the role of Limerick as a WHO Healthy City and seek investment in the delivery of recreation, environmental improvements, active travel and health services infrastructure that retains and improves on this status.



Waterford

Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

1.0 | Introduction

1.1 | Overview

As Ireland's oldest City, Waterford is long recognised as an International Gateway and Port with its origins dating back to the Viking Settlement of 914AD. The City experienced a significant expansion in the 18th century, including the establishment of Waterford Crystal in 1783.

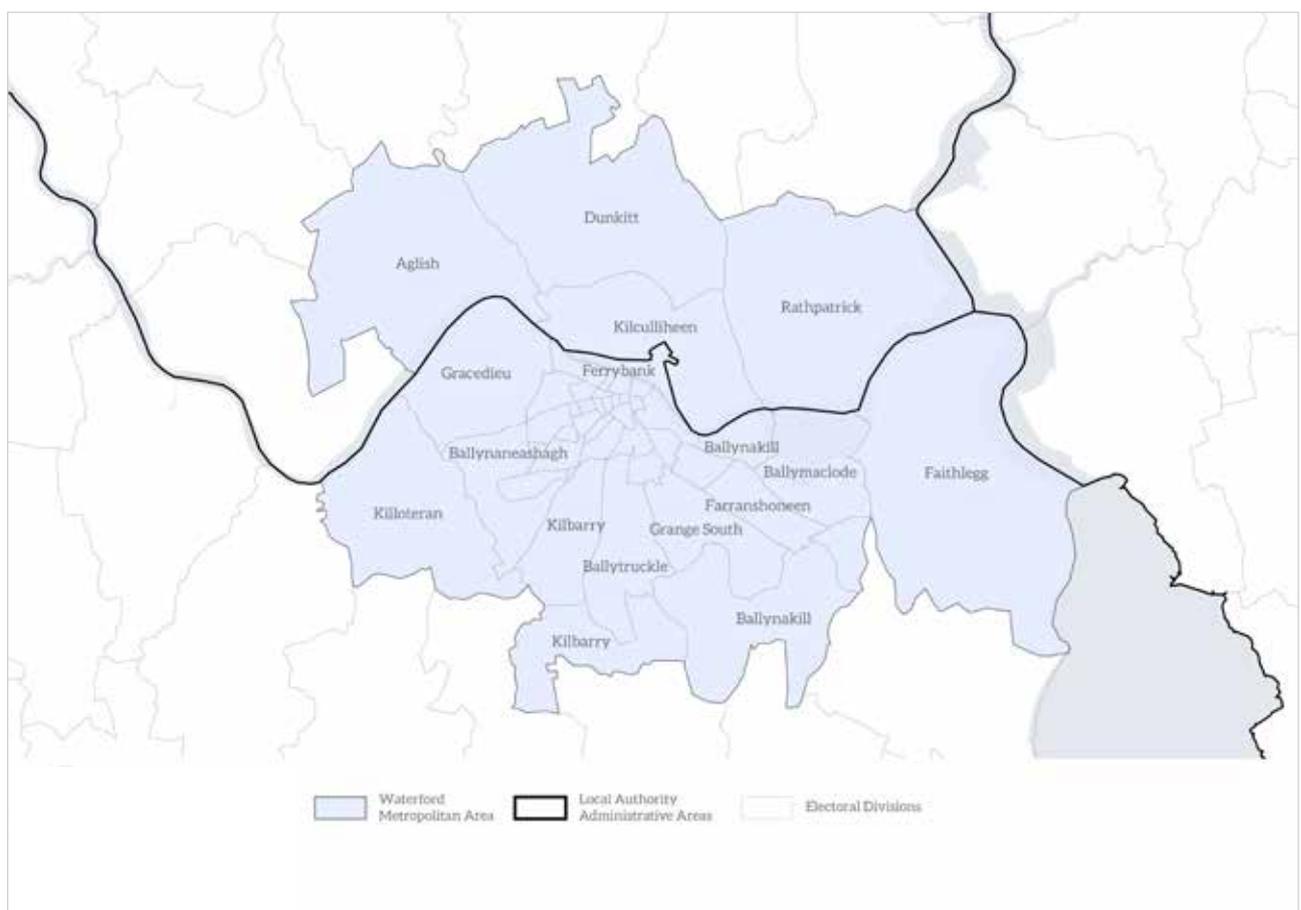
The City was the site of significant manufacturing and trade activity through to the late-20th century when changes in global economic structures and practices, amongst other factors, severely impacted its economic base. In more recent years, the city and wider area has reoriented its economic activity towards more knowledge intensive, innovation-based activity, in particular ICT and pharmaceuticals. The City and suburbs have since expanded to a population of 53,504 (2016 Census) with a wider regional population looking to the City for

employment, education, health and public services as well as retail and entertainment.

The NPF has confirmed Waterford's status as the principal urban centre of the South-East with the objective for the City to become an important driver of national growth and a **'Regional City of Scale'** with a defined Metropolitan Area. This requires a development strategy to build Waterford's population and employment base to drive metropolitan and regional enterprise growth in combination with surrounding urban centres.

The MASP provides a high level strategic framework for the sustainable development of the Waterford Metropolitan Area based on the ambition for the City and Metropolitan area as an innovation-centred, enterprising, University City with a diverse population, a vibrant cultural sector, a thriving economy, and a significant and substantial profile that brings European and international recognition.

Map 1 | Waterford Metropolitan Area



1.2 | Spatial Definition

The Waterford Metropolitan Area is located around Waterford Harbour and the River Suir. It is centred on the City of Waterford and its suburbs with an extensive rural area beyond the built-up area which includes a number of small rural settlements such as Passage East, Cheekpoint, and Slieverue.

The Port of Waterford is located at Belview, approximately 5km east of the City Centre. The Waterford MASP area encompasses an area of **143sq.km** of which **85.05sq.km** is in Waterford City and County Council and **57.60sq.km** is within Kilkenny County Council.

The majority of the population (89%) lives in the built-up area of the City and suburbs located mainly on the southern side of the River Suir but also extending to the north side of the river into Co. Kilkenny.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 1

Waterford Metropolitan Area

- a. It is an objective to strengthen the role of the Waterford Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale, a complement to Dublin and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region.
- b. It is an objective to promote the Waterford Metropolitan Area as a cohesive metropolitan area with (i) the city centre as the primary location at the heart of the metropolitan area and region (ii) compact growth and regeneration of the Metropolitan Area across the city centre and suburbs, (iii) active land management initiatives to deliver housing and employment locations in a sustainable, infrastructure led manner.
- c. It is an objective to secure co-ordinated investment and delivery of holistic infrastructure packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Waterford Metropolitan Area and seek further investments to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals (See Volume 3).
- d. Any reference to support for plans, projects, activities and development in the MASP should be considered as referring to 'sustainable development' that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints), environmental assessment including EclA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate
- e. The MASP seeks to protect, manage and, through enhanced ecological connectivity, to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Region.

2.0 | Key Components & Attributes

The Waterford Metropolitan Area recorded a population of 59,854 in the 2016 Census. National Policy Objective 7 states that the strategy for Waterford, Cork, and Limerick is, 'to accelerate the development of these Cities to grow by at least half, i.e. by 50% to 60% to 2040'.

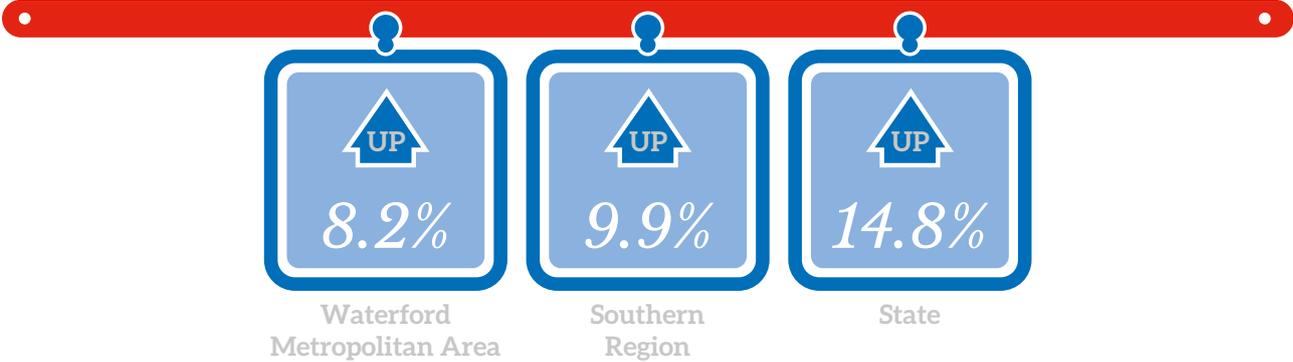
NPO 8 sets out the **Minimum Target Population** for Waterford City and Suburbs by 2040 of 81,000⁴⁴. This will require targeted growth focused on significant housing and employment locations identified.



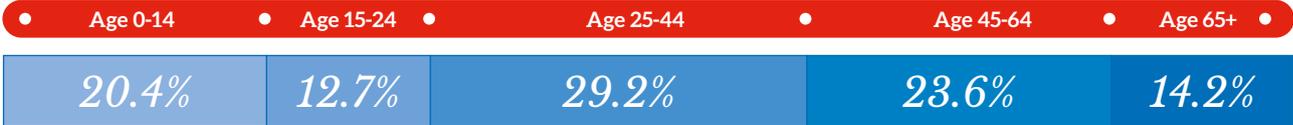
44. NPF Table 4.1

The following infographics provide details of the key components and attributes of the Waterford Metropolitan Area.

Population Change 2006 - 2016



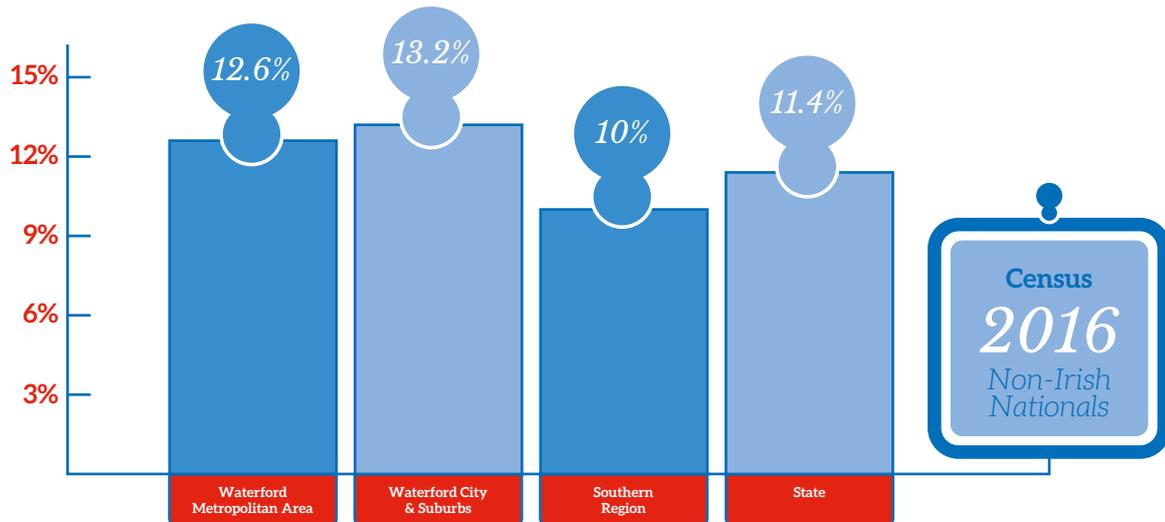
Population by Age



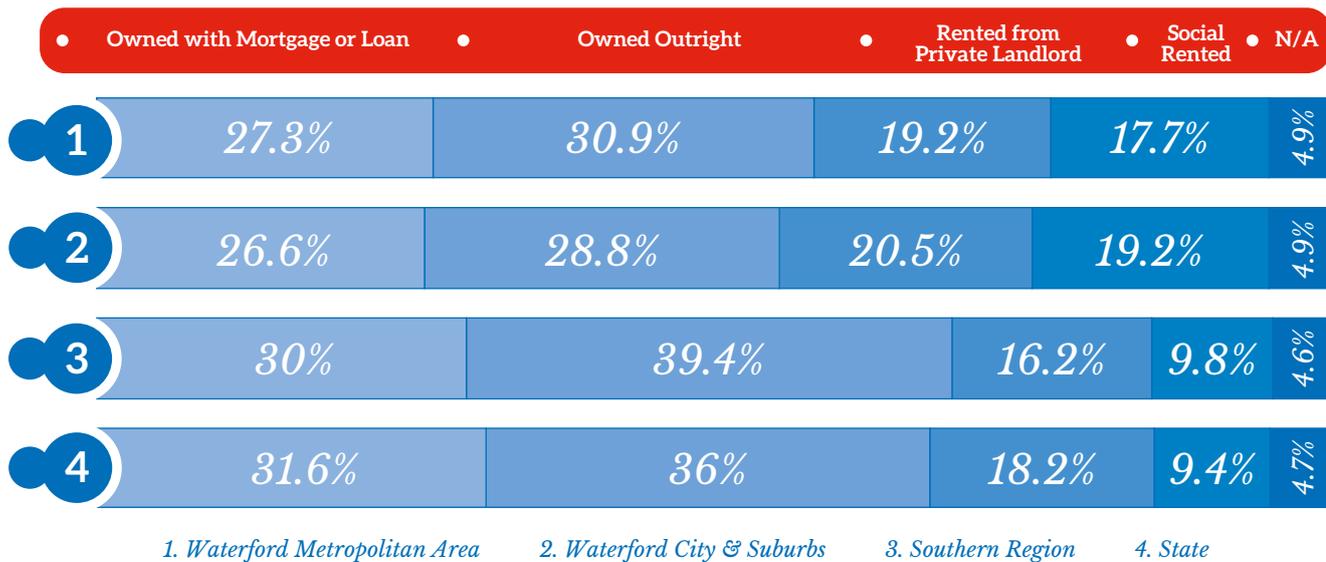
Old & Young Age Dependency Rate



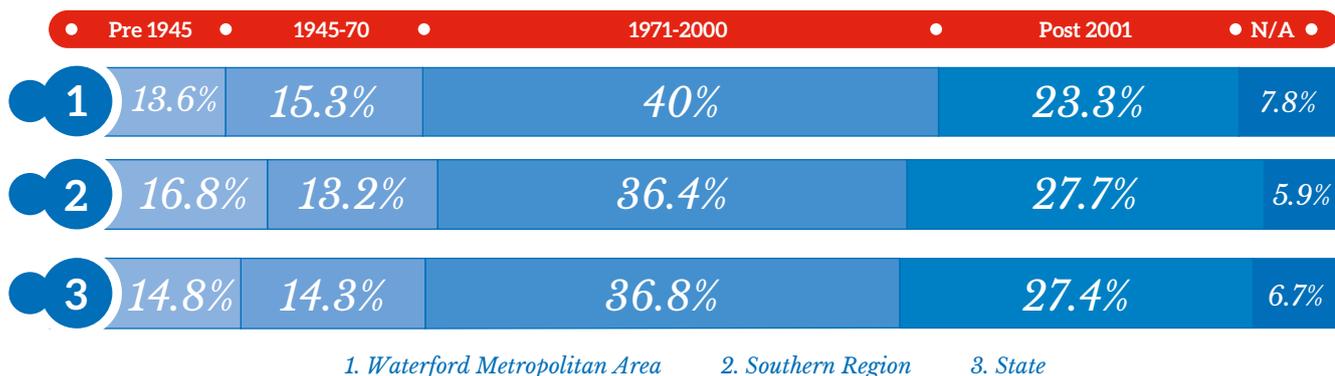
Diversity and our Migrant Communities



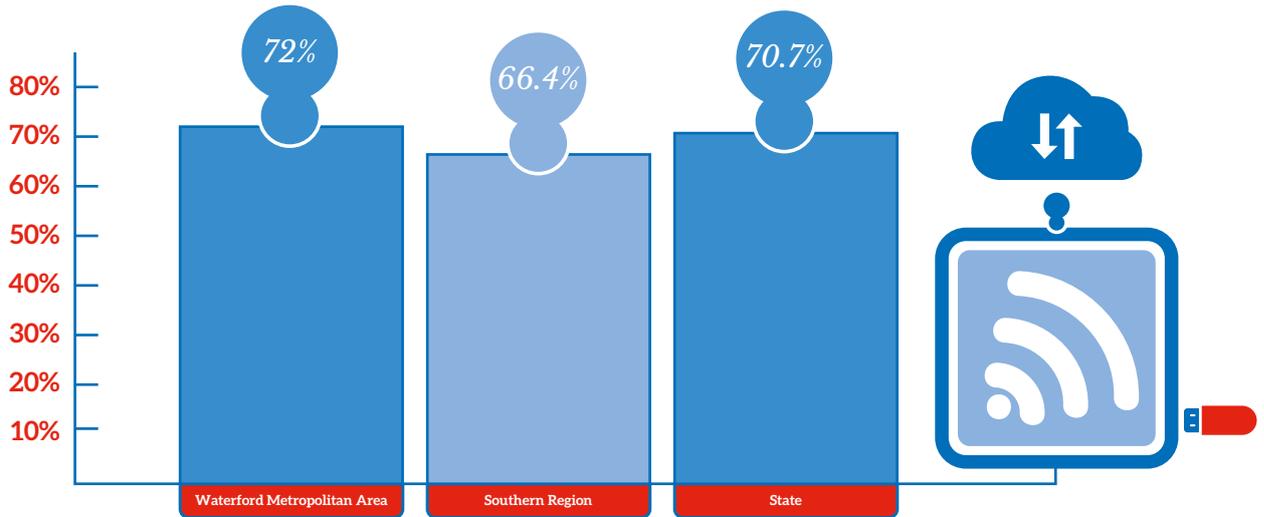
Housing Tenure



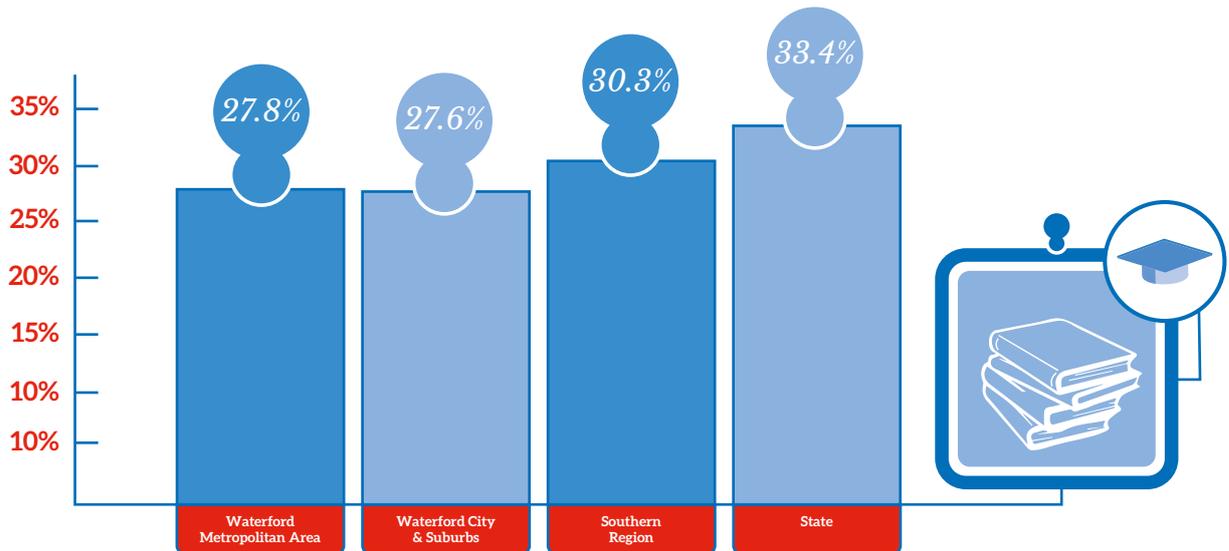
Housing Year Built



Households with Broadband



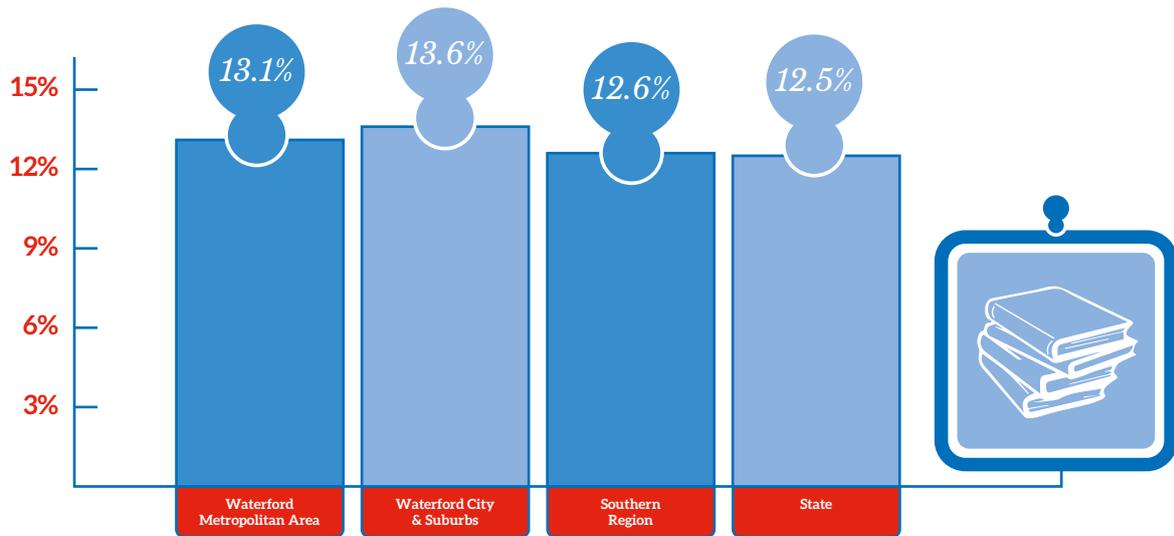
Education Attainment: All Third Level



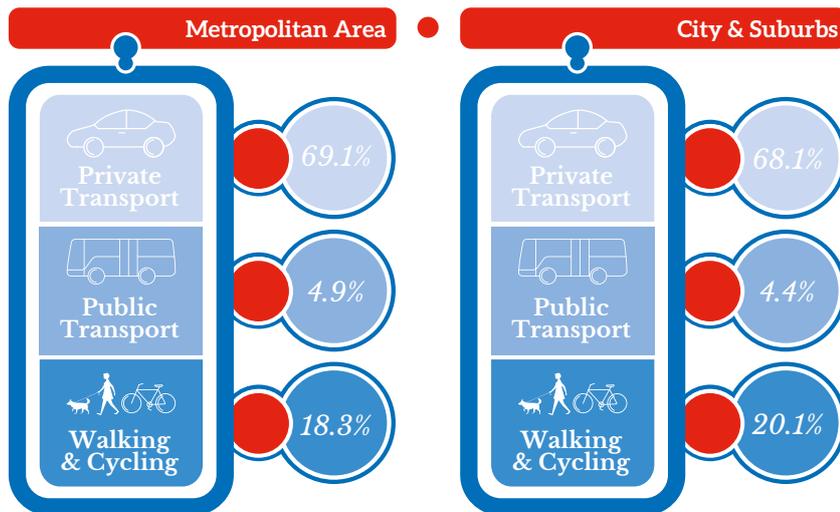
Education Attainment: Tech/Apprentice/Cert



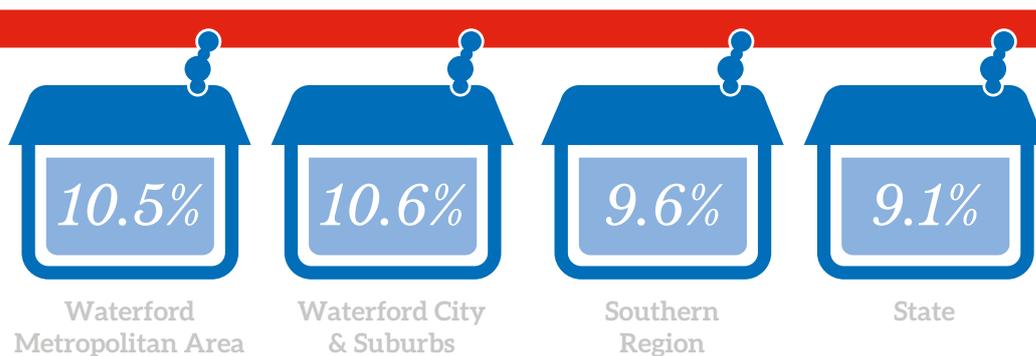
Education Attainment: No Formal/Primary



Mode of Travel to Work/Education



Housing Vacancy*



*Excluding Holiday Homes

2.1 | Attributes of the Waterford MASP area

The Waterford Metropolitan Area attributes include:

- Expanding **Population** of Waterford City & Suburbs: 53,504 in 2016;
- Part of a wider **Metropolitan Area** including Ferrybank in South Kilkenny (Pop 59,854);
- **5th Largest Employment Location** in the State;
- **Ireland's Oldest City** & Viking Centre;
- **International Gateway** to the Region with the **Port of Waterford** - Belview and **Waterford Airport**;
- **Good Connectivity with M9 Motorway to Kilkenny/Dublin, National Roads to Cork, Limerick and Wexford/Rosslare and Rail links to Dublin & Limerick**;
- Regional Centre for **Health and other public services** including University Hospital Waterford;
- Regional Centre for **Leisure and Recreation**;
- Regional Centre for **Higher Education** through **WIT** and Development of the **Technological University of the South-East (TUSE)**;
- **Innovation Hub** and **Smart City for the South-East**;
- The Waterford Metropolitan Area has **its own beach resort at Tramore** with high frequency City Bus route **Connecting the City to the Beach & Coastal Town**;
- **Gateway** to extensive **coastline**, attractive **Fishing Ports & Harbours**, **UNESCO GEOcoast** and attractive river and **upland and mountain scenery** in Comeraghs/Knockmeal Downs & long the Rivers Barrow and Suir;
- Located in **Ireland's Ancient East** & destination for Arts, Culture, Heritage & Festivals;
- Home of the Waterford Greenway.

2.2 | Signals of Confidence

The following **Signals of Confidence** are identified which support the realisation of the Vision for the Metropolitan Area and the Key **Enablers/Priorities identified. These include:**

- URDF Funding for a new bridge to link The North Quays SDZ to the City Centre and advanced proposals to develop a re-imagined urban space;
- Continued investment to improve the public realm in the City Centre including works to the Apple Market;
- Redeveloped Court House including associated public space and walkways;
- Investment in the Arts to develop the Waterford Cultural Quarter;
- Progress made in planning the extension of the Waterford Greenway through the City Centre to link to the Waterford – New Ross Greenway;
- Investment by Bus Éireann in a new bus fleet and improved services levels.

2.3 | Waterford – A Metropolitan Area at Work

Waterford's Daytime Working Population

Waterford City and suburbs is the fifth largest location for employment in the State. With major employment in the University Hospital, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), pharma industry and retail, the Waterford Metropolitan Area is a major regional employment centre and an economic driver. Of the 16,610 workers residing in the City, 21% worked elsewhere, while 11,274 workers travelled to the city and suburbs for work,

bringing the daytime working population to 24,375 in 2016. The large daytime working population is reflected in the Jobs to Workers Ratio of 1.2. According to the 2016 census, just over half of commuters to the city and suburbs are from County Waterford (5,807) with 27% from Kilkenny (2,994) and 10% from Wexford (1,145).

Education plays a significant role in the working life of the Metropolitan Area and over 10,000 students are enrolled at WIT with approximately 1000 staff employed across different campus locations in the City.

2.4 | The Waterford Metropolitan Area and the Wider Region

The **Waterford Metropolitan Area** has dynamic relationships with the wider Region and beyond requiring strengthened connectivity to realise its potential.

- International Connectivity through the Ports & Airport
- Relationship and connection to the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) – Waterford can provide capacity and alternative locations/choices
- Connection to Cork and Limerick and to the Eastern Corridor and Atlantic Economic Corridor
- Supporting role of Key Towns in the South-East
- Relationships to the Hinterland settlements

Digital connectivity is increasingly important for modern cities and further enhancement of Waterford's digital infrastructure through investment in an Internet Exchange facility at the ArcLabs Innovation Campus, with the associated data centre, is vital for the future development of the city and region's innovation economy.

Priorities for the Port of Waterford and Rosslare Europort include investment in capacity and infrastructure, including full freight rail accessibility and services using extant rail infrastructure and road upgrades to provide improved access routes to the Ports which will support sustainable development.

The growth and development of the Rosslare and Waterford Ports and the return of passenger services to Waterford Airport are key to the development of the Metropolitan Area and the major urban centres of the South-East.

Waterford, along with the other cities in the Region, will need to become alternative locations that can be considered as realistic alternatives to Dublin in order to realise the goal of Project Ireland 2040. This will create a more balanced approach to national growth, avoid the overconcentration of growth, population and economic activity in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and also ease development pressure and congestion in the GDA. At the same time, it is recognised that connectivity to the State's largest urban centre is also important. Waterford is well-connected by motorway to Dublin, but enhanced rail connectivity, especially between Waterford and Dublin via Kilkenny, and between Waterford and Limerick is an investment priority.

There is a network of strong urban centres in the South-East. A key relationship is with the larger Key Towns of Carlow, Clonmel, Kilkenny, and Wexford. Each benefits from proximity to Waterford, but have their own distinct function, catchment area and influence. These have capacity for significant growth and to act as critical drivers and compliment the role of the Waterford Metropolitan Area. Part of the task of implementing the RSES will be to ensure that the Key Towns can work in tandem with Waterford city to drive economic, social and cultural development across the Region, including development of networks and axis identified in Section 3.8.

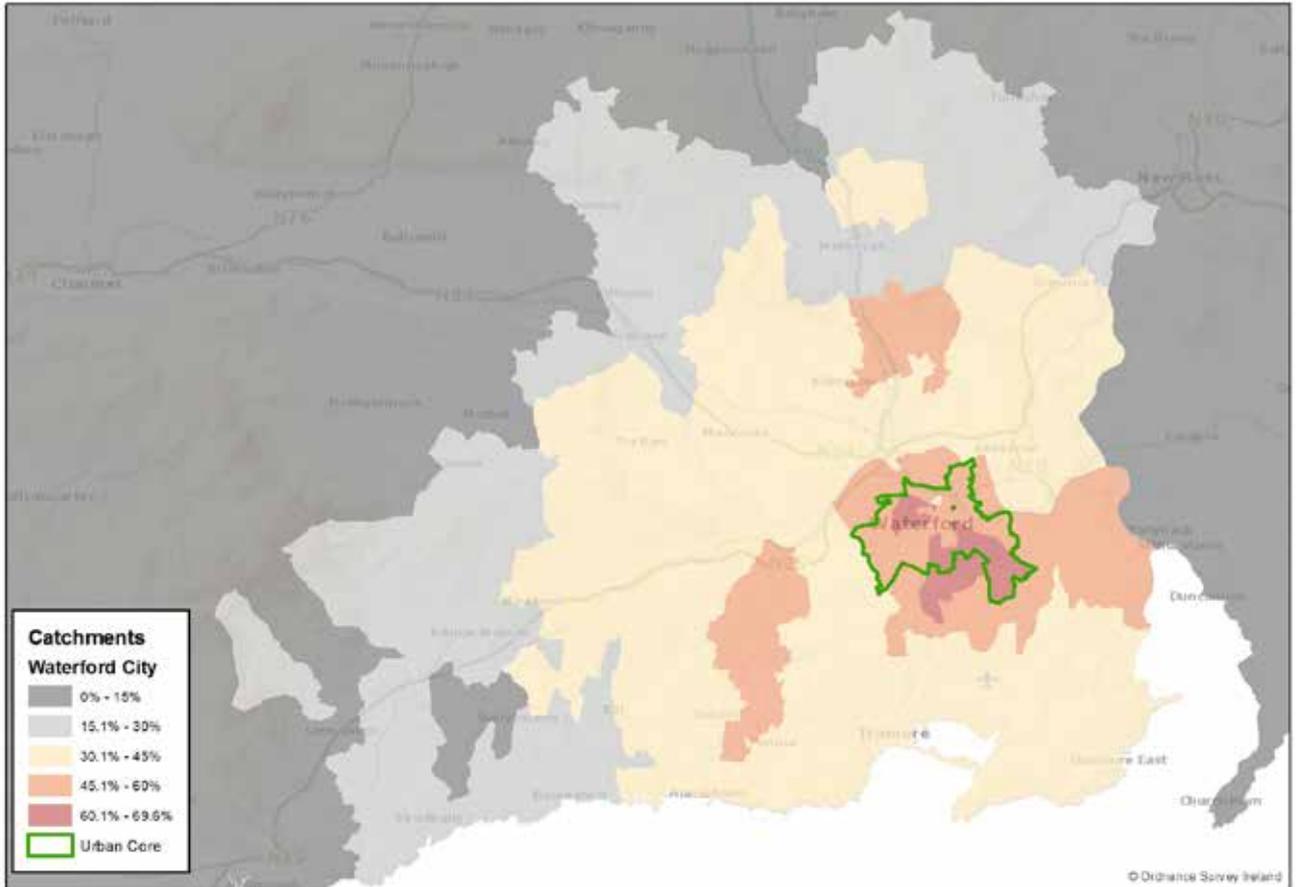
The hinterland area around the Waterford MASP area needs to be effectively managed. Sustainable growth of settlements in the Hinterland Area provides long-term options for employment and residential locations, where the towns of Carrick-on-Suir, New Ross and Tramore can be supported by sustainable transport links to the Metropolitan Area.

2.5 | Catchment Area Towns & Coast

Outside of the Waterford Metropolitan Area there is a wider catchment area where in excess of 15% of the working population travel to work in Waterford City and suburbs. Tramore, New Ross and Carrick-on-Suir have strong functional relationships to Waterford and are identified as Hinterland Towns located close to the Metropolitan Area.

There is a need to support the socio-economic development of these towns to become more self-contained in terms of employment, services and amenities. This includes opportunities to develop specialist roles for the Hinterland Towns through nurturing local enterprise growth and job creation to strengthen each town to complement the function of the Metropolitan Area.

Enhanced connectivity (transport and digital) between the Hinterland Towns and the metropolitan area is recognised as an essential enabler to strengthen these opportunities.



Tramore

The high level of commuting (40%) into the Metropolitan Area from Tramore reflects its attractive coastal location with seafront and close proximity to Waterford. It is a considerable recreational and amenity asset, with a relatively frequent bus route connecting Tramore to the City Centre. There is a low employment base in Tramore with a Jobs to Workers Ratio of 0.42 reflecting its role as a commuter town. Opportunities to improve the public realm and attractiveness of the Town Centre would support the sustainable development of the town as a place to live and work.

New Ross

New Ross is an historic port town with a population of 8,040 (2016) offering an alternative business location with an active port facility. The Town has developed as a tourist hub and is home to the Dunbrody Famine Ship and starting point for the Norman Way. The South-East Greenway linking New Ross to Waterford is under construction and due to open 2021.

The town is an important retail and service centre with its own hinterland area where a continued focus on improvements to the public realm and urban regeneration in the town centre will support rejuvenation of the town. Improved linkages to the Eastern Corridor and to Waterford are a priority with limited public transport (bus) services serving the town.

Carrick-on-Suir

Carrick-on-Suir is an historic mediaeval market town with a population of 5,771(2016). The Town is located on the main Limerick to Waterford N24 road and rail routes with bus and train services linking the town to the Waterford Metropolitan Area. The town is now the starting point for the Suir Blueway and Butler Trail with the Ormond Castle, walled town and mediaeval lanes supporting development of the town as a tourism destination.

Priorities for the town are continued urban renewal, improved public transport links to the Metropolitan Area and a focus on local job creation



Waterford MASP Policy Objective 2

Driving Regional Growth for the South-East

It is an objective to support the role of the Waterford Metropolitan Area as a primary economic driver for the Southern Region in conjunction with the Key Towns of Carlow, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Kilkenny and Wexford, to strengthen inter-regional and intra-regional connectivity (public transport, strategic road network and digital) subject to robust route/site selection and the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process:

- a. Between the Waterford Metropolitan Area, the Port of Waterford (Belview) and the other metropolitan areas of Dublin, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford, strengthen connectivity to the Southern Region Ports, Atlantic Economic Corridor and strengthen connectivity on the TEN-T Corridor.
- b. Between the Waterford Metropolitan Area and Key Towns in the Region, especially Key Towns in the South East.
- c. Between the Waterford Metropolitan Area and the Key Towns and settlements in the Limerick – Waterford Transport and Economic network/axis and the Extended Eastern Corridor (Dublin-Belfast Corridor extending to Rosslare Europort & Network linkage to New Ross /Waterford) which include Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford as strategic locations on the Corridor. These initiatives will be progressed through the County Development Plan process, to support the economic spread from the Waterford Metropolitan Area and to stimulate employment led growth and regeneration across the wider region.
- d. Between the Waterford Metropolitan Area and Hinterland Towns of Carrick-on-Suir, New Ross and Tramore.
- e. It is an objective to support the socio-economic growth and continued investment, development and the enhancement of connectivity of the Waterford MASP Hinterland Towns including Carrick on-Suir, New Ross and Tramore.

3.0 | Vision and Guiding Principles

3.1 | Vision

The Vision Statement for the Waterford Metropolitan Area is:

Waterford aims to be a dynamic, concentric, modern European city of scale and significance, a UNESCO Learning City, driving national and regional growth, prosperity, innovation and creativity which is supported by focused investment in transformational rejuvenation across the Metropolitan Area, a vibrant and diverse University City with a high quality of life for all through a high standard of physical and community infrastructure and housing options, education, amenities and opportunities for employment .

3.2 | Key Enablers/Priorities to transform Waterford into a Regional City of Scale:

1. The **North Quays Innovation District** has the potential to transform the City by extending the city centre across the river into a new integrated river side quarter with sustainable pedestrian and public transport links to the historic city centre
2. **Development of Technological University for the South East (TUSE) to allow Waterford to advance as a modern European University City**, supporting, innovation, creativity and enterprise in tandem with development of Waterford as a **UNESCO Learning City**
3. Continuing to build an **attractive & vibrant city centre** will give expression to Waterford's identity as a modern, dynamic, innovative European city, enhanced through public realm and urban amenity projects, focused on streets and public spaces creating a mixed use city centre with housing, retail and cultural life;
4. **Bridging the River Suir** to develop new **North-South Connections** and support development of the Concentric City – to be progressed in a compact and sustainable manner by the integration of land-use and transportation planning, expansion of public transport services and the extension of greenways and cycleways to link existing and planned urban neighbourhoods with one another and with the City Centre;
5. **Infill and regeneration** opportunities – to be identified to intensify housing and employment development throughout city centre and inner suburban areas;
6. **Enhanced bus and rail public transport** centred on a **new transport hub** located in the North Quays Innovation District and improved road/rail network linking Waterford to Cork, Limerick, Dublin, Rosslare Europort and the East Coast will significantly improve inter-regional connectivity.
7. Investment in infrastructure to realise the full potential of the **Port of Waterford** and **Waterford Airport** will boost international connectivity for the entire region
8. **Development of University Hospital Waterford(UHW)** as a 24/7 Acute Hospital & promote Health Care to make Waterford a **Healthy City**
9. Development of new Recreational Amenity & Green Infrastructure Spaces to create a **Clean and Green City and Harbour** for the expanded City.

3.3 | Guiding Principles

The establishment of a statutorily defined Metropolitan Area for Waterford provides a new opportunity to develop the work of the Waterford and Kilkenny local authorities undertaken over previous decades and, in particular, the Waterford Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study 2004-20 (Waterford PLUTS), published in 2004.

The Waterford PLUTS

The Waterford PLUTS set out a strategy for the balanced and sustainable growth of Waterford, which proposed to bring the North Quays and the northern suburbs fully into the social and economic life of the City. The study advocated more balanced growth between the north and south sides of the River Suir. More recently, Waterford City and County Council and Kilkenny County Council have described this objective as the 'Concentric City'. The principles outlined in PLUTS have been incorporated and developed in the Waterford MASP and provide the basis for a new set of Guiding Principles to build critical mass and transform the Waterford Metropolitan Area.



Guiding Principles for the Waterford MASP

Achieving Critical Mass through a City-focused Strategy for compact growth in population and employment;

Waterford as an International Gateway supported by increased capacity and improved accessibility at the Port of Waterford & Rosslare Europort and re-establishment of passenger services at Waterford Airport;

Development of a **Balanced - Concentric City**, North and South of the river;

A living City and a Metropolitan Area with revitalised well-functioning places including large scale urban regeneration at key locations such as the North Quays Innovation District;

Accelerated housing delivery to meet housing need supported by better public services and public transport; Integration of **Land-Use and Transportation** supporting movement by sustainable transport means;

Harnessing the excellence of **Education Resources** in WIT and seeking the development of a **University in Waterford**;

Building on existing higher education infrastructure and establishment of TUSE, enhance third-level provision in the city, and expand and integrate education provision more broadly in support of the designation of the city as a **UNESCO Learning City** and a University city;

Further enhance research and innovation capability and capacity across the city and region to support development of an innovation-centred city, with a vibrant enterprise culture and support infrastructure;

Recognising the **City's People** as the heart of the City's potential and utilizing key assets, particularly the **river and estuarial location**, linkages by sea and air and the **history/heritage** and **tourist attractions** of Waterford,

Dunmore East and Tramore;

Employment density in the right places - Re-intensify employment to activate strategic employment locations to complement existing employment hubs in the city centre and near third level institutes;

Social regeneration - Realise opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration, particularly in areas with pockets of deprivation;

Future development areas - having regard to the long lead in time for planning and development, identify future growth areas that may be delivered beyond the lifetime of the RSES/MASP but within the long term 2040 horizon of the NPF. For example, enabling infrastructure such as the additional bridge crossing and the Abbey Link Road at Ferrybank to support development of lands to the north of the river for consolidation and expansion;

Metropolitan scale amenities - Provision of regional parks and Strategic Green Infrastructure including greenways/blueways along the Rivers and abandoned rail alignments;

Enabling infrastructure - Identify Infrastructure capacity issues and ensure water services needs are met by national projects. Improve sustainability in terms of energy, waste management and water conservation;

Co-ordination and active land management that focus on the development of under-utilised, brownfield, vacant and public lands;

Any new development/infrastructure should be subject to robust site and/or route selection processes, which shall address all environmental constraints and be subject to the outcome of environmental assessment and the planning process.

The future growth and ambition for the Limerick-Shannon MASP is based on the principles of the Sustainable Place Framework as identified in the RSES Settlement Strategy (Chapter 3).

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 3

Investment to Deliver Vision

- a. It is an objective to identify and secure investment packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Waterford MASP and secure further investments into the Waterford MASP area to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Regional Policy Objectives at Section 3.4, the Guiding Principles set out above and the seven MASP Goals at Volume 3;
- b. It is an objective to develop the Waterford Metropolitan Area as a Concentric City, with balanced and compact growth north and south of the River Suir, supported by integrated land-use and transportation;
- c. It is an objective to ensure quality infrastructure and quality of place is prioritised as an incentive to attract people to live and work in sustainable settlement patterns in the metropolitan area.



4.0 | National Enablers

The following NPF Enablers are identified for the Waterford MASP:

- Delivering the **North Quays SDZ regeneration** project for integrated, sustainable development together with supporting infrastructure, including a new pedestrian bridge or a pedestrian/public transport bridge over the River Suir;
- Identifying **infill and regeneration opportunities** to intensify housing and employment development throughout **city centre and inner suburban** areas;
- Enabling enhanced **opportunities for existing communities** as development and diversification occurs, particularly through employment, learning and education support;
- Progressing the **sustainable development of new greenfield areas for housing** and the development of supporting public transport and infrastructure;
- Development of the **Link Road** from Abbey Road to Belmont on the R711;
- **Smarter Travel improvements** to Abbey Road;
- **Improvement of the N29** to enable employment growth at Port of Waterford, Belview;
- **Public realm and urban amenity projects**, focused on streets and public spaces, in the existing built footprint of the Metropolitan Area – North & South in support of urban intensification;
- Enhancement of the **higher education infrastructure** through the expansion and development of Waterford Institute of Technology in the context of the Technological University of the South East, aligned with plans for the Metropolitan Area and the wider region;
- Provision of **Metropolitan wide public transport and strategic cycleway networks**;
- **Extension of the Waterford Greenway** to link WIT to the City Centre and to the Greenway linking Waterford to New Ross;
- **Enhanced regional connectivity** through improved average journey times by road and rail to Dublin, Cork, Limerick and the region's ports;
- Ensuring that **water supply and waste-water needs** are met by new national projects to enhance Waterford's water supply and increase waste water treatment capacity;
- Improving sustainability in terms of **energy, waste management and resource efficiency** and water, to include district heating and water conservation.

Evolving innovative, collaborative projects will be funded through the National Development Plan (NDP) on a competitive bid basis under the Urban Regeneration and Development, Rural Regeneration and Development, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies funds. Delivery of projects through these funds has the potential to be transformative and assist the Waterford Metropolitan Area achieve its Vision and Objectives.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 4

National Enablers

It is an objective to support the investment priorities as identified in the NPF and NDP for the Waterford Metropolitan Area and to seek progress and coordination between the principal stakeholders for delivery of these priorities, subject to required feasibility, planning and environmental assessment processes, enabling the Waterford Metropolitan Area to achieve its vision and objectives. Identification of suitable sites for

regeneration and development should be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental concerns. The SRA will support the sustainable implementation of innovative, collaborative projects through the Urban Regeneration and Development, Rural Regeneration and Development, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies funds within the Waterford Metropolitan Area.



5.0 | Population Projections

The NPF and Implementation Roadmap sets out projections to achieve accelerated urban growth and sets out ambitious targets for the Waterford MASP.

The NPF and Implementation Roadmap also refer to potential qualified allowances which may apply to deliver on accelerated urban growth in Metropolitan Areas⁴⁵. National Policy Objective 68 states a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan may enable up to 20% of the phased population growth targeted in the principle city and suburban area, to be accommodated in the wider metropolitan area i.e. outside the city and suburbs or contiguous zoned area, in addition to growth identified for the Metropolitan Area.

This will be subject to:

- Any relocated growth being in the form of compact development, such as infill or sustainable urban extension;
- Any relocated growth being served by high capacity public transport and/or related to significant employment provision;
- National Policy Objective 9.

Additional qualified allowances relating to population targets provide an important mechanism in the Waterford context given the need for change to a more balanced concentric city which would require significant growth, development (and infrastructure) on the northern side of the River Suir (predominantly in Co Kilkenny) and this should be subject to review by the MASP Implementation Group.



⁴⁵. The Department have clarified that the 25% Headroom identified in the Roadmap can apply to the County Kilkenny area of the Waterford Metropolitan Area

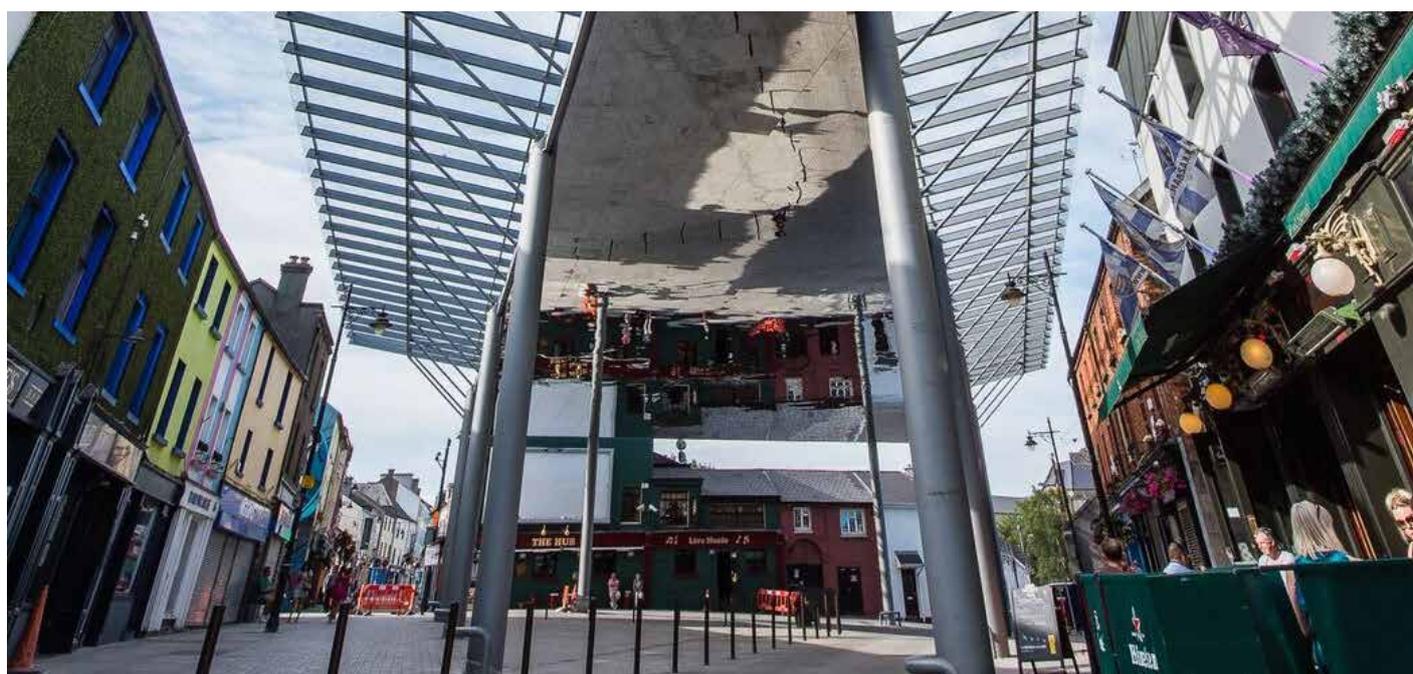


Table 1 | Population Projections for the Waterford Metropolitan Area⁴⁶

Settlement	2016	2026	Uplift	2031 (See Note 5)	Uplift (See Note 5)
City & suburbs (Kilkenny) + 60% to 2040	5,288	6,608	1,320	7,268	660
Remainder Metropolitan Area (Kilkenny) + 30% to 2040	2,951	3,321	370	3,506	185
City and suburbs (Waterford) + 60% to 2040	48,216	60,716	12,500	66,966	6,250
Remainder Metropolitan Area (Waterford) + 30% to 2040	3,399	3,819	420	4,029	210
METRO AREA TOTAL POP. (+34,007 to 93,861 in 2040)	59,854	74,464	14,610	81,769	7,305

Notes:

1. Waterford City and Suburbs: Population 2016 53,504 as per NPF/Census 2016
2. County Population Growth as per NPF & Implementation Roadmap
3. Metro Area Pop Growth to 2040: +60% for Waterford City and Suburbs in Cos Kilkenny & Waterford as per NPF NPO 8
4. Metro Area (Remainder) in Cos Kilkenny & Waterford +30% to 2040
5. Final Projections for period 2026 to 2031 to be determined by Implementation Body



⁴⁶. The overall population projections for each county, as provided in the NPF Implementation Roadmap (July 2018), do not change in light of these MASP projections figures.

Prioritising a balanced Concentric Metropolitan Area for Waterford

The ambitious targets for over 60% population growth by 2040 seeks to build the critical mass of Waterford as a balanced Concentric Metropolitan Area, north and south of the River Suir. In the long term an increased proportion of the population will live north of the River. The steps required to achieve this Core MASP objective are both long term and short term.

Short term

In terms of physical development, the early enablers that will start the process are (a) the development of a new bridge to link the City Centre to the North Quays, (b) relocation of the railway station to a new Integrated Transport Hub on the North Quays and (c) development of the Abbey Link Road in Ferrybank. All three enablers support significant population and employment growth north of the river. All three enablers are identified in the RSES & MASP and both the New Bridge and Abbey Link Road are currently in the planning phase and could be ready to proceed in the next two years with funding.

Long Term

In order to rebalance the city, there is a need for a high degree of co-ordination across the entire Metropolitan Area. The implementation structures will need to oversee a rebalancing of overall population in favour of higher

growth and population allocations north of the River. Significant growth targets set for the overall Metropolitan Area will not impede growth or development in the city centre and suburbs south of the river.

The long terms goals include, building additional river-crossings for sustainable movement networks across the metropolitan area, increasing north-south connectivity, and creating attractive high-quality urban neighbourhoods with local amenities using LAP and Masterplan processes.

Delivery

Delivery of these goals requires the early establishment of MASP implementation structures following adoption of the RSES, a distinct multi-annual funding stream linked to the NDP, and the early development of the critical infrastructure identified as 'key change parameters' that will deliver both 'compact regeneration and growth' to deliver the NPF Strategy for Metropolitan Areas.

As required under the NPF, 50% of all new housing within Waterford City and Suburbs is to occur within the existing footprint, through brownfield, infill and regeneration. Outside of Waterford City and Suburbs, 30% of all new homes targeting settlements is to occur within their existing built-up footprints as per National Policy Objective 3 (c) of the NPF.

Refer to Chapter 9 regarding implementation of the MASP

6.0 | Integrated Land-Use and Transport

The population growth targets set for the Waterford MASP area requires that the growth and development of the Metropolitan Area is managed effectively through a strategic approach based on Integrated Land-use and Transportation.

The integrated approach will support key elements of the MASP in creating an attractive, liveable City and Metropolitan Area with a good quality of life. Key Priorities/Projects to support this approach relate to (1) Sustainable Mobility and Metropolitan Area Public Transport and also (2) Improved Regional Accessibility to/from the Metropolitan Area:



6.1 | Sustainable Mobility & Metropolitan Area Public Transport Including New Bridges/Link Roads

The publication of Transforming Waterford – A Sustainable Transport Proposal 2017 represents an important step in the development of the Connected City & Metropolitan Area with a holistic vision for public transport and improved walking and cycling infrastructure, incorporating the shared vision of a Concentric City & a Balanced Metropolitan Area.

Improvements to transport and communications infrastructure to create a more attractive, greener and better-connected Metropolitan Area include:

- Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning supported by high quality infrastructure;
- Relocation of the **Railway Station** to the North Quays with more direct access to city centre;
- Improved connectivity between the city centre and the North Quays and wider Ferrybank area including provision of a pedestrian/public transport bridge;
- Provision of an additional Downstream Crossing to provide a link to the south bank of the River Suir in the vicinity of Maypark or Ardkeen, which would serve to create greater connectivity between lands to the North and South of the Suir, improve access to University Hospital Waterford and ease congestion on the existing crossing;
- New **Link Road** from Abbey Road to Belmont to improve sustainable connectivity;
- Development of a comprehensive **Metropolitan Area Public Transport system** (bus network) including routes from the City Centre to WIT, Waterford University Hospital, Port of Waterford at Belview and from nearby towns including Tramore. Development of sustainable travel options to support and facilitate

improved access to the City Centre, from the wider urban area, north and south of the river by walking, cycling and public transport including provision for Park and Ride facilities in tandem with a Green Route and additional cycle lanes;

- Quick, frequent and convenient bus services in the city;
- Measures to encourage Modal shift to bus and rail for commuters into the city from surrounding towns;
- The development of intergrated land-use and transportation will be supported by the preparation of a Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.

National and Regional commitments on transition to a Low Carbon Society and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will require the Metropolitan Area to function in a more sustainable way, including reduced emissions through Modal Shift to more sustainable means of travel for people and for freight and the development of digital connectivity to support the transformation of Waterford to a greener, more innovative and smarter city and metropolitan area.

In a compact urban area like Waterford, the objective to develop Sustainable Travel will require a strong focus on cycling and walking, making Waterford a more Walkable City.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 5

Investment in Infrastructure & Digital Connectivity

a. It is an objective to seek investment and stakeholder co-ordination on the sustainable development of infrastructure capacity (physical, multi-modal transport networks, digital/smart, green and social/community) to enable the Waterford Metropolitan Area fulfil its role as a primary economic driver in the region subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process;

b. It is an objective to seek investment and improve quality in high speed, high capacity digital infrastructure and access for all to digital infrastructure in the Waterford Metropolitan Area;

c. It is an objective to seek investment in the initiatives of Local Authority Digital Strategies and investment in initiatives to deliver a greener, more innovative and smarter city and metropolitan area;

d. It is an objective to deliver high capacity ICT infrastructure and high-speed broadband connections internationally and to the larger urban centres and peripheral locations in the wider region.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 6 (a)

Integration of Land Use and Transport

- a.** It is an objective to prepare a Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (WMATS) during the lifetime of this MASP with all relevant stakeholders. Transport investment requirements in the Waterford Metropolitan Area will be identified and prioritised, subject to the recommendations of the WMATS and outcome of environment assessment and the planning process including mitigation under SEA/AA as appropriate:
- b.** It is an objective that Core Strategies of Local Authority Development Plans will identify the public transport corridors and nodal points on corridors in the Waterford Metropolitan Area arising from the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy which have potential for high density development/regeneration. Core Strategies shall identify the appropriate land use zonings for these nodal points and demonstrate the effective alignment between land use and transport infrastructure planning and delivery of the NPF Compact Growth targets as they apply to the Waterford Metropolitan Area.
- c.** It is an objective to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes for Regeneration through:
- Regeneration, consolidation and growth of the City Centre, Cultural Quarter and suburbs;
 - Delivery of the North Quays Innovation District SDZ regeneration project for integrated sustainable development through the provision of supporting transport infrastructure and services;
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along public transportation corridors;
 - Regeneration, consolidation and growth of strategic residential, employment and nodal locations along strategic bus networks corridors.
- d.** It is an objective to seek sustainable higher densities where practicable at public transport nodal points.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 6 (b)

Sustainable Transport

It is an objective to support the following sustainable transport priorities in the Waterford Metropolitan Area subject to their consistency with the recommendations of the WMATS, the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process including mitigation under SEA/AA as appropriate:

- Relocation of the Railway Station to the North Quays Innovation District with more direct access to city centre;
- Improved connectivity between the city centre and the North Quays Innovation District and wider Ferrybank area including provision of a pedestrian/public transport bridge and proposed road bridge from The Mall to Ferrybank;
- Provision of an additional Downstream Crossing to provide a link to the south bank of the River Suir in the vicinity of Maypark or Ardkeen, which would serve to create greater connectivity between lands to the North and South of the Suir, improve access to University Hospital Waterford and ease congestion on the existing crossing. The policies and objectives outlined would assist in the realisation of objectives relating to transportation;
- New Link Road from Abbey Road to Belmont to improve sustainable connectivity;
- Development of a Metropolitan Area Public Transport system including routes from the City Centre to WIT, Waterford University Hospital, Port of Waterford at Belview and consideration of routes from strategic settlements outside the metropolitan area including Tramore, New Ross and Carrick-on-Suir. Development of sustainable travel options to support and facilitate improved access to the City Centre, from the wider urban area, north and south of the river by walking, cycling and public transport including Quick, frequent and convenient bus services and provision for Park and Ride facilities in tandem with the Green Route and additional cycle lanes;
- Measures to encourage Modal shift to bus and rail for commuters into the city and measures to support regeneration, consolidation and employment led growth of strategic settlements along the Rail Corridor from Clonmel into Waterford;
- Bus Services: Extensive bus network across the Metropolitan Area with longer operational hours and increased frequencies to encourage the significant modal shift from the private car to sustainable transportation;
- Development of new sustainable travel routes including greenways & blueways. Potential for further extensions exists which could build a metropolitan wide cycle network with the Waterford Greenway established as a sustainable economic corridor through the county;
- Development of a more Walkable City;
- Support traffic calming measures to make the Metropolitan Area safer such as shared streets and pedestrian friendly environments with wider footpaths, identification of walking routes with improved signage, creation of places and spaces to meet and rest with street tree planting;
- Development of the 10 minute city concept for Waterford to drive integration of sustainable mobility with land-use planning, zoning, transport infrastructure (particularly public transport modes) in local level planning.

6.2 | Improved Regional Connectivity to / from Waterford

The development of strong regional connectivity requires improved connectivity to the other two Metropolitan Areas of Cork and Limerick-Shannon and the Key Towns of Carlow, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Gorey, Kilkenny and Wexford in the South-East by road and rail.

Improvements to the N25 towards Cork and to the N24 road and rail link towards Limerick-Shannon will strengthen links and develop economic synergies across the Region, supporting the role of the three Cities as a strong counter-balance to the Greater Dublin Area.

Improvements to road and rail infrastructure and services along the route to Limerick-Shannon will also strengthen the Limerick - Waterford Transport and Economic network /axis and provide greater accessibility to/from Shannon Airport, Shannon-Foynes Port and to the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC).

Faster rail services with improved journey times and timetabling are required across the rail network in the South-East. Priorities for service improvements include the line from Waterford to Dublin via Kilkenny and Carlow and Waterford to Limerick-Shannon and the West. Investment in the rail network will support **sustainable economic development of the Waterford Metropolitan Area** and improved connectivity through the efficient use of existing transport infrastructure.

Connectivity to the Extended Eastern Economic Corridor (Dublin-Belfast Corridor extending to Rosslare Europort & Network linkage to New Ross /Waterford) is important to link the **Waterford MASP Area** to **Rosslare Europort** as a key **International Gateway** for passengers and freight. A significant upgrade to the N25 including the new bridge across the River Barrow opened January 2020 has improved linkages between Waterford and Wexford/Rosslare. Retention of the mothballed rail link from Waterford to Rosslare is vital for the future development of Rosslare Europort. Any proposals for a Greenway along this route should be configured to allow future use of the rail line.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 7

Regional Connectivity

It is an objective to support the development of improved Regional Connectivity through development and maintenance of strategic transport infrastructure to support the sustainable development of Waterford and the South-East subject to the outcome of WMATS where applicable, appropriate appraisal, environmental assessments and the planning process.

Local Authorities and public bodies including state transport agencies shall prioritise investment in the following road and rail infrastructure subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process to deliver enhanced regional connectivity:

- a. The maintenance and enhancement of the national roads network, catering for transport demand within the Waterford Metropolitan Area, for improved inter-urban / interregional connectivity/reduced journey times and for improved access to international gateways, including Port of Waterford, Rosslare-Europort and Waterford Airport, through:
 - i. Delivery of current Government programmed and proposed national road network improvement schemes relating to the Waterford Metropolitan Area and associated inter-urban connecting roads.
 - ii. The maintenance and optimisation of the strategic road network's capacity and utility, through the implementation of appropriate demand management measures.
- b. Improvements to the Waterford -Limerick/Shannon Strategic Transport network to include upgrading of N24 and Rail line for faster journey times and improved public transport frequencies on public bus and rail services.
- c. Improvements to the Waterford -Cork Strategic Transport network to include upgrading of N25 and additional options for Park and Ride into Cork and Waterford.
- d. Improvements to the Waterford - Rosslare Europort & Wexford Strategic Transport network to include improved road and rail connectivity into Rosslare Europort from Waterford, recognising the important role of Rosslare Europort as a passenger and freight port for the Waterford Metropolitan Area and the wider Southern Region.
- e. The optimal use of the rail network, connecting Waterford at a regional and national level, in catering for the movement of people and goods including development of commuter rail services into Waterford.
- f. Retention of the Waterford -Rosslare Rail line for future freight and passenger rail connectivity to for Rosslare Europort.
- g. Measures to support Modal Change through transfer of freight from road to rail through increased use of freight sidings (or creation of new rail connections) at the ports and other locations throughout the South-East.

7.0 | Housing and Regeneration

Successful urban regeneration and placemaking can help build on the good work already done with public realm works to develop a vibrant living and working city centre at the heart of the Metropolitan Area.

Regeneration and housing initiatives also need to drive the social, physical and economic **renewal of inner-city neighbourhoods** and **compact urban development** on brownfield, under-used and derelict backland sites/locations. The two areas key to achieving these goals are (1) The **City Centre** and **inner city** and (2) **Development of the North Quays SDZ**.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 8

Housing and Regeneration

- a. It is an objective to support the high-quality compact growth of Waterford City Centre and suburban areas, the assembly of brownfield sites for development and the regeneration and redevelopment of Waterford City Centre to accommodate residential use. The MASP will support initiatives which facilitate compact growth and which promote well designed high-density residential developments which protect amenities and in the city centre and suburban areas.
- b. It is an objective to ensure investment and delivery of comprehensive infrastructure packages to meet growth targets that prioritises the delivery of compact growth and sustainable mobility in accordance with NPF and RSES objectives.

7.1 | Develop a Vibrant Urban Centre focused on Waterford City Centre

The City Centre and inner urban areas at the heart of the Waterford Metropolitan Area will have a pivotal role in the development of the Waterford MASP area.

The city centre will give expression to Waterford's identity as a modern, dynamic, innovative European city and to its future status as a Learning City, a Smart City, and a University City.

The City Centre Management Plan identifies **opportunities for change** and actions around specific **node locations** in the City Centre. An integrated approach to develop the node locations and link them together could contribute significantly to the change dynamic for the City. Over time other nodes will be identified as the City Centre becomes more diverse and vibrant with more people living in or close to the City.

- **The Retail Node** around City Square, George Street and developing into the Apple Market area;
- **The Tourism and Heritage Node** around the Viking Triangle and The Mall;
- **The Evening and Night Time Node** around John Street and Apple Market;
- **The Cultural Node** around O'Connell Street and Garter Lane – The Waterford Cultural Quarter;
- **The North Quays Node** comprising the mixed-use development of the SDZ area – the North Quays Innovation District;
- **The Court House and Environs** – Lifting the Quality of the urban environment for a wider urban area extending out from the City Centre.

Change will be driven by the focus on making the City Centre more **Accessible, Vibrant** and **Attractive**. Funding from sources such as the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) will support specific projects in the City Centre to drive change.

The City Centre should become more **Accessible** through:

- **New Bridges** connecting the North Quays / wider North Shore & Ferrybank area to the City Centre;
- **Relocated Railway Station** to the North Quays with more direct access to city centre on the south shore;
- Improved **access into the City Centre for City Bus Services** and improved services under the new contract with Bus Éireann with more **Bus Priority** on city streets and through neighbourhoods;
- Improved **links to the existing Waterford Greenway** and the planned Greenway to New Ross and planned cycle route to WIT.

The City Centre should become more **Vibrant** through:

- Development of the North Quays adding a mix of uses at high density and creating a new city centre quarter on the north shore of the River Suir;
- Urban Regeneration to bring under-used or derelict land and buildings in the city centre and inner areas back into residential use. Regeneration will bring back more people into the City and a mix of uses which can provide flexible spaces for business and social enterprise, as well as arts and cultural uses;
- Active Land Management in the City Centre to support the regeneration process;
- Actions to support and develop the primacy of the City Centre for Retail supported by a Joint Retail Strategy for the MASP Area between Kilkenny County Council & Waterford City and County Council;
- Actions to deliver Arts and Cultural Space in the Cultural Node and growing Festival Activity bringing more people to the City.

A Key Action is to develop A Cultural Quarter for Waterford.

The Waterford Cultural Quarter (WCQ) centred on O'Connell Street recognises the existing cultural assets of the area including the Garter Lane Arts Centre. Through a partnership approach the WCQ will drive the ongoing

regeneration of the area through cultural and mixed use development of this historic quarter of the city.

The City Centre should become more **Attractive** through:

- Ongoing Public Realm works improving the quality of the urban environment to make the City more walkable and pedestrian friendly;
- Development of Tourism and Heritage facilities around the Viking Triangle and Waterford Glass.

City Centre Consolidation and Regeneration

Priorities for City Centre Regeneration include:

- Continuation of the ongoing programme of urban renewal in city centre including improvements to public realm and greening of city centre streets;
- Continued support for a range of measures (such as the Living City Initiative) including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill and site-based regeneration to provide city centre housing and refurbished floorspace for commercial, educational, cultural and other uses;
- Development of tourism sites and facilities, particularly involving the re-use of vacant property
- Infrastructure that enables improved accessibility, in particular sustainable modes such as walking and cycling, public transport and multi-modal interchange, which support city centre consolidation including roads, bridges and car parking;
- Infrastructure related to economic or skills development (including enterprise and tourism), digital and services infrastructure;
- Regeneration works that support transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society, in an urban context.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 9

Vibrant City Centre

It is an objective to support Local Authorities and Public Bodies in seeking investment and implementation of actions to develop a vibrant urban centre focused on Waterford City Centre, including priority for investment in the infrastructure to deliver New Bridges connecting the North Quays / wider North Shore & Ferrybank area to the City Centre, Relocation of the Railway Station to the North Quays with more direct access to city centre on the south shore, improved access into the City Centre for City Bus Services, improved services with more Bus

Priority on city streets and through neighbourhoods and development of additional Greenway links through the City Centre, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process, including:

- a. Support for improvements to the public realm and streetscapes.
- b. Investment in the culture, arts and heritage of the City Centre and wider Metropolitan Area, enhancing facilities, infrastructure, attractions and visitor experience for citizens and tourists.

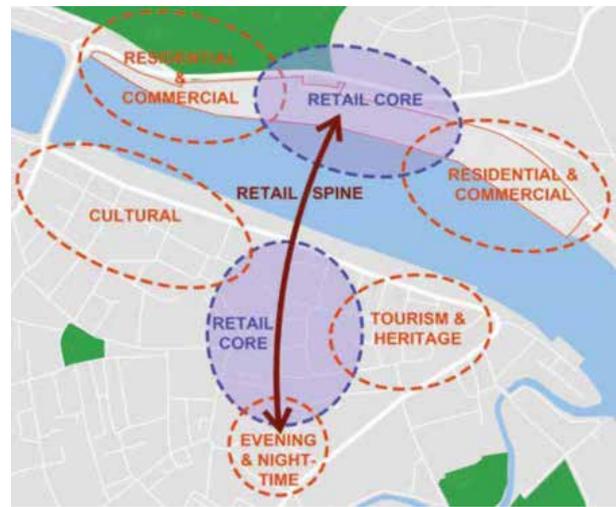
7.2 | Development of the North Quays Innovation District

Development of the North Quays Innovation District and City Centre Expansion provides an opportunity for Transformational Regeneration for Waterford and the Region through development of a modern high-quality riverside city quarter.

The North Quays Innovation District provides an opportunity to create a sustainable, compact extension to the City Centre served by an integrated multi-modal transport hub around a re-located railway station and new bridges to greatly improve access to the city centre.

The North Quays Innovation District has the potential to become a high profile destination for living, working, shopping and entertainment that will boost Waterford's profile and provide a new urban district to support integration of the Waterford Metropolitan Area north and south of the river. As an Innovation District and potential Clustering Location, it can provide a Regional focus for technological advancement and function as an urban science park.

The North Quays Innovation District (North Quays SDZ) comprise 8.23 ha and the SDZ Scheme prepared by Waterford City and County Council estimates that the site could accommodate mixed use development of c200



new housing units and potential, c150,000 sq.m of City Centre type development including retail, food, office, and c10,000 sq.m hotel and leisure.

Required infrastructure includes pedestrian and vehicular links from the North Quays to the South bank of the River Suir (averaging 220m river width), relocation of the main City Railway Station to create a new transport hub and provision of road access and internal road network to serve the area. Facilities for berthing of Cruise Ships may also be considered for the North Quays development.



Waterford MASP Policy Objective 10

Development of the North Quays

Local Authorities and Public Bodies shall implement actions to support the extension of the City Centre into the North Quays and develop a vibrant urban centre focused on the North Quays including priority for investment in the infrastructure to deliver New Bridges connecting the City Centre on the south bank of the River. All such development and infrastructure shall address brownfield and contaminated land issues and shall be subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

7.3 | Strategic Residential Lands

The provision of adequate residential accommodation for different housing needs and household sizes will require each local authority to identify housing needs in Development Plan Housing Strategies and to place priority on the development of Strategic Housing Locations, including lands already identified by the local Authorities below:

- North Quays Innovation District, Waterford SDZ (c200 new housing units)
- Kilbarry (LIHAF location) with a potential for 450 new housing units by 2021
- Gracedieu (LIHAF location) with a potential for 200 new housing units by 2021.
- Development of lands zoned for residential development in Ferrybank for c 850 units.
- Bilberry (former Waterford Stanley Site) 252 units
- St. John's and St. Otteran's Hospitals: 200 units
- Former Waterford Crystal Site (Student accommodation): Phase 1 delivering units for 1,000 student places thereby delivering indirectly c. 250 units back to residential market.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 11

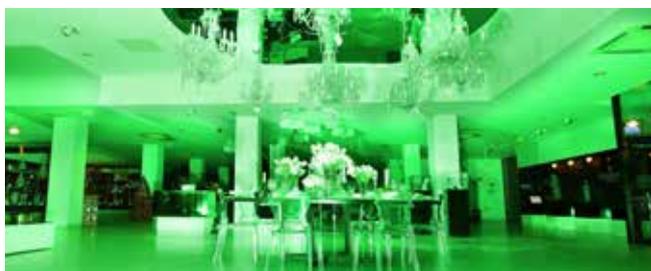
Strategic Residential Development

Local Authorities and Public Bodies shall support the delivery of Priority Infrastructure to support the delivery of strategic housing development in support of the overall development and planned growth of the Waterford Metropolitan Area, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

8.0 | Employment and Enterprise

For the Waterford Metropolitan Area to develop its potential as an enterprising place and stronger employment location, it needs to expand its range of services and facilities to support growth in the enterprise dynamic and build critical mass into the economy.

Waterford's location on the south coast accessible to the Greater Dublin Area, to continental Europe and to Britain through the ports and airport, underlines the importance of Waterford as a Regional City of scale.



The Waterford Metropolitan Area has a diverse economic base. Industry sectors (and sub-sectors) with a strong presence include:

- **Life Sciences:** BioPharma, Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices, Biotechnology, and Nutraceuticals;
- **ICT:** Ecommerce, VR, Cloud, IoT, Retail Tech, Device Management, AI, Data Intelligence, and Mobile Development;
- **Engineering:** Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering, Equipment Manufacturing, and Construction;
- **Financial Services:** Global business, Financial Services, Fintech, Regtech, Insurtech, and Global Payments;
- **Agri:** Agri Food and Drink, Agri-Tech, Bio-Economy, and Ingredients manufacturing;
- **Creative:** Design, Craft Industry, and TV & Film Production;
- **Tourism.**

Building Economic Resilience across the Waterford Metropolitan Area requires an ongoing commitment to ECOLC/SKWT (Eolas Comhroinnte Obair le cheile / Shared Knowledge Working Together) to ensure a partnership approach to implementation of objectives and actions. A key partner in this task is the South-East Development Office (SEDO) who along with the DBEI have published the South-East Regional Enterprise Plan (SEREP). The SEREP has a high degree of integration with the RSES and MASP in its strategic objectives and key actions and supports MASP objectives to build economic resilience and support the development of industry clusters such as the Crystal Valley Tech Cluster.

Key elements in making the Waterford Metropolitan Area a successful enterprising Economic Engine driving Metropolitan and Regional Enterprise Growth include:

- **Development of the North Quays** as an Innovation District and potential Industry Cluster for Advanced Technology (See sections 7.1 and 7.2) and as an **expanded** and **vibrant City Centre**;
- Creation of a high-quality, high-performing university of international standing, the Technological University of the South East, with a considerably expanded higher education footprint in Waterford;

- Development of the **Port of Waterford (Belview)** as a major **International Gateway**;
- The return of scheduled passenger services to **Waterford Airport** and associated investment in infrastructure;
- Invest in enterprise assets and technology to attract new enterprise and build a Smart Metropolitan Area;
- Identify and support opportunities for innovation, enhancing productivity and innovative capacity of locally trading and employment intensive sectors to drive sustainable job creation;
- Work with Industry partners, Government & enterprise agencies and TUSE through ECOLC/SKWT to strengthen the industry and employment base of the Metropolitan Area and its diversity and resilience;
- Industry clusters supported by research centres of excellence encouraging more employees/ businesses to locate and relocate to the Waterford MASP area;
- Provision of **effective supports and infrastructure** for **Enterprise & Industry**;
- Expansion of **Tourism and Retail**;
- Identification of **Strategic Employment Locations**;
- Promotion and support for social enterprise and community employment programmes, recognising the importance of funding streams such as the Social Innovation Fund.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 12

A Smart Metropolitan Area and Strengths in Attracting FDI

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.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 13

Economic Resilience and Clusters

It is an objective to develop, deepen and enhance the economic resilience of the Waterford Metropolitan Area through creating a vibrant and diversified enterprise base, with strong, healthy, connected Eolas Comhroinnte Obair le cheile / Shared Knowledge Working Together (ECOLC/SKWT) Clusters which assist in bringing disruptive technologies and innovations to national and global markets.

In strengthening the role of the Waterford Metropolitan Area as a Regional City of Scale and primary economic driver for the region, the following projections for employment across the Metropolitan Area are provided. Projections are in accordance with a **Ratio of 1.6:1** between the population growth targets and employment growth in the region as set out in the NPF.

Table 2 | Employment Projections for the Waterford Metropolitan Area

Waterford Metropolitan Area	2019 – 2026	2026-2031
Population increase	14,610	7,305
Additional Jobs	9,130	4,565

8.1 | Technological University of the South-East (TUSE)

Waterford is the only major City in Ireland without a University. The creation of the Technological University of the South-East (TUSE) will harness the excellence of education resources, research and innovation, industry, social and community engagement in WIT and IT Carlow, and develop a new university for the City of Waterford and the wider South-East that will be a catalyst for social, cultural and economic change.

The MASP supports the development of TUSE as a necessary enhancement of existing higher education options in the Region, along with the increased recognition a University will bring to the Waterford Metropolitan Area as a University City.

The direct benefits of the development of TUSE will coincide with the wider objectives of the MASP to transform and grow the Waterford Metropolitan Area through:

- Enhanced innovation capability in the region through considerably enhanced research and innovation infrastructure in support of the regional strategy to build knowledge-intensive industry and sustainable and high-quality employment;
- Improved capability to deliver the talent pipeline to regional industry and enterprise;
- An improvement in the ability of the South East to retain existing talent and to attract new talent from overseas;
- Greater range and volume of cultural activity which is normally associated with a University City;
- Greater access to finance to fund infrastructural development on campus sites in the city;
- Greater accessibility of higher education opportunities across the city and region.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 14

Technological University of the South-East (TUSE)

Local Authorities and Public Bodies shall prioritise the development of the necessary infrastructure and connectivity (including research and innovation infrastructure) to support the development of the Multi-Campus TUSE and support its future expansion so as to transform and grow the Waterford Metropolitan Area, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.



8.2 | Development of the Port of Waterford (Belview) as a Major International Gateway

The Port of Waterford is Ireland's closest multi-modal port to Continental Europe with significant capacity for growth. A Port of National Significance (Tier 2) and a Comprehensive Port on the Ten-T Network, it currently handles 1 million tonnes of bulk product (primarily Agri-Related) and 100,000 tonnes of break bulk (timber, steel).

The Port of Waterford Master Plan provides a framework to provide for future infrastructure investment requirements for enhanced capacity, which includes quay extensions, widening and deepening of shipping channels and installation of walling to reduce requirements for dredging, deeper berths at quays, and a larger turning basin.

The RSES supports development of freight rail services and facilities at the Region's ports. For the Port of

Waterford, this will require improvements to the Waterford to Limerick rail line as a key strategic freight corridor to build the Region's international connectivity. For the Port to function effectively for the State and support modal shift freight rail as part of wider climate action programmes, effective financial incentives should be provided. The Port has a significant industrial hinterland including the IDA's 55 ha Strategic Industrial landbank and the port has identified the need for further additional land and facilities to support port activity in the Master Plan.

Improvements to the N29 and the intersection close to the N25 will enable lands to be released for development and facilitate Port expansion.

Under Food Harvest 2020, the Port of Waterford will continue to be a key export point for the agri-food sector, and can support economic development through improved routes to market for SMEs and all industry sectors.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 15

Port of Waterford

Local Authorities and Public Bodies shall support the development of the necessary port infrastructure and associated road and rail connectivity required to support the development of the Port of Waterford Belview and to support the role of the Port as an Economic Driver for the South-East, subject to the outcome of appropriate appraisal, environmental assessments and the planning process.



8.3 | Waterford Airport

Waterford Airport provides key strategic infrastructure for the Waterford MASP area and is a Gateway for the wider South-East.

Investment in a runway extension will enhance the international connectivity potential of Waterford for

Business (including multi-national companies involved in export trade), support the development of TUSE, Research and Development with international partners and provide for increased tourist traffic. The runway extension of 500m sought by Waterford Airport would significantly increase the capacity of the airport to cater for larger aircraft and more frequent flights.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 16

Waterford Airport

It is an objective to support the further development of Waterford Airport and, in particular, the development of:

- an extension of the existing runway to accommodate larger aircraft;
- improved transport linkages and services between the airport, Waterford City and the wider South-East, i.e. roads and public transport;
- measures to encourage additional operators offering services from this location;
- the expansion and development of aviation-related industries at the airport.

In this regard, Development Plans should incorporate policies to protect longer-term flight path public safety zones and to control uses which could adversely impact on the airport's operations or the potential for new runway development and extensions sufficient to handle larger aircraft.

Local Authorities should ensure that consideration of airport-related infrastructure and facilities is informed by an adequate level of environmental assessment including assessment of potential impacts on designated European sites.

8.4 | Effective Supports and Infrastructure for Enterprise & Industry

The identification of effective supports for industry and enterprise will be critical to achieve propulsive growth of the Waterford Metropolitan Area. Improved international connectivity together with public transport links and infrastructure to Dublin and other cities will be required to support the targeted growth of Waterford.

As a Smart University city and with an objective to become a UNESCO Learning City, Waterford will be a city that will facilitate enterprise and growth through targeted, enterprise support allied to high-quality, internationally-recognised research activity with an emphasis on technology.

Investment in research capability and infrastructure is critical if these aims are to be achieved. Investment in digital connectivity, an Internet Exchange and associated infrastructure at ArcLabs would be transformative

for regional technology industries and would enhance the attractiveness of the region to high technology companies, as well as regional research capability.

The functioning of the enterprise ecosystem relies on collaboration and mutual exchange of ideas and resources. The **Eolas Comhroinnta Obair le Cheile / Shared Knowledge Working Together** (ECOLC/SKWT) Framework provides a collective approach (also known as the Quadruple Helix).

Through **ECOLC/SKWT**, actions to support enterprise and industry can be pursued including those listed below:

- Identification of diverse economic sectors with growth potential & clustering to build resilience to fluctuations in economy;
- Targeted development and supports for particular sectors to achieve the benefits of clustering, leading to a pool of skilled workers in that sector and additional job creation in specialist support services;
- Building on the existing WIT ARClabs model,

- create a network of innovation centres providing incubation space, business supports & links to training and skills development in HEIs and access to top quality research;
- Enhancing current work at WIT, expand the range of Research and Development Institutions linked to the University/WIT to support industry development;
- Support the development of a network of professional and business support services;
- Focus on the use and development of Smart City technology to assist in providing:
 - services to business;
 - energy efficiency programmes;
 - efficient environmental management and waste processes.
- Facilitate the increased diversification of available property/sites for new enterprises offering:
 - Office/Lab/ Industrial/Storage buildings

- Availability of infrastructure and services including ICT & Green Energy
- Accessible location to /within the Metropolitan Area.
- Facilitate the further development of logistics and freight handling facilities necessary for a Regional Capital;
- Further develop the Regional Port with commercial shipping providing strong export links to trading partners;
- Identify measures to promote Green Energy;
- Facilitate the consolidation of the city as a 'Tech-Hub' location.

The global dynamics of a healthy enterprise culture and the ability to respond rapidly to changes in the business environment requires access to global markets, people and resources and emphasises the importance of international and digital connectivity for the Waterford Metropolitan Area.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 17

Enterprise Supports

- a. It is an objective to support the existing educational facilities in the Waterford Metropolitan Area as critical drivers of economic development and the fostering of an innovative, knowledge-based economy for the Metropolitan Area.
- b. The MASP recognises that the Ireland South-East Development Office and the South-East Regional

Skills Forum works collaboratively with all the agencies, focusing on key actions and opportunities that the Waterford Metropolitan Area can offer in terms of employment generation and the fostering of the knowledge-based economy. It is an objective that the Ireland South-East Development Office and the South-East Regional Skills Forum continue their work to deliver significant benefits to the Metropolitan Area and the South-East.



8.5 | Tourism and Retail

Tourism

Waterford's physical and cultural attributes in the historic core of the City have been enhanced with high quality public realm works and the development of new visitor attractions such as the Waterford Treasures Mediaeval Museum and the House of Waterford Crystal in the Mall.

Key actions to build the tourism sector include:

- Support for further development of the Waterford experience centred on the Viking Triangle and Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre;
- Support continued investment in the public realm and improvements associated with development of a more Walkable City;
- Development of the Waterford Cultural Quarter;
- Extension of the Waterford Greenway through the City Centre and across the river to link with the

- proposed Waterford – New Ross Greenway;
- Improved access to the River Suir and Waterford Harbour through, for example, sustainable tourism initiatives and opportunities for boat trips and sailing;
- Development of regional scale public open space linked to development of green infrastructure.

The RSES supports the further development of the Ireland's Ancient East brand and actions for the Visitor Economic Development Plan for the Region.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 18

Tourism

- a. It is an objective to support investment in infrastructure, including increased capacity of road, rail, ports and Waterford Airport to maximise the potential of tourism subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.
- b. It is an objective to support the Waterford Metropolitan Area as a tourism destination. This will

require the promotion of the tourism assets in the South-East, which include, inter alia, Ireland's Ancient East, the Munster Vales, greenways, blueways, and other significant tourist locations in the South-East, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

- c. It is an objective to ensure collaboration between Local Authorities and tourism agencies to develop attractions as part of Ireland's Ancient East Brand.

Joint Retail Strategy

Waterford faces similar challenges to other large urban centres due to the increased spend on online retailing. The Retail Planning Guidelines published in 2012 states that 'Joint or Multi-Authority Retail Strategies must be prepared' for urban areas and identifies Waterford and Counties Kilkenny, Tipperary and Wexford as the planning authorities which should participate in the preparation of the Joint Retail Strategy.

The MASP will support the continued public realm improvements to the city centre including development of a more walkable city centre, improved access by public transport including development of the new transport hub and development of digital technologies to support and attract consumers to a unique retail experience.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 19

Retail

- a. Within one year of adoption of the RSES/MASP a Joint Retail Strategy shall be prepared for the Waterford Metropolitan Area in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines. The Joint Retail Strategy shall include – inter alia- the defined area of the Core City Shopping Area, the location of Suburban or District Shopping Centres and a map to indicate sustainable travel routes to/from each shopping area, which prioritise cycle and pedestrian access over cars.

- b. It is an objective to protect and enhance customer experience of visiting Waterford City Centre through facilitating a mixed expansion of services including high order comparison retailing in conjunction with service, cultural and entertainment facilities in the wider City Centre including the Cultural Quarter" and the heritage experience available in the "Viking Triangle as well as appropriate and sensitive redevelopment and infill development.



8.6 | Strategic Employment Locations

The following Strategic Employment Locations have been identified in the MASP area.

1. Waterford City Centre including the Viking Triangle
2. North Quays Innovation District
3. Port of Waterford - Belview
4. The Belview Port Industrial area & associated IDA site. The Port at Belview is a strategic national, regional and county asset with good road and rail links. The role and status of the port nationally and regionally and its industrial land capacity should be strengthened to support and promote a balanced multi-modal freight transport policy that safeguards the importance of rail transport as a means of access to the Port.
5. Waterford Airport and Business Park - significant potential for the development of Waterford and the South East, in terms of accessibility, supporting economic development and tourism. Lands are zoned at this location to facilitate the development and expansion of the Airport as 'Airport Area'
6. The Research and Innovation Centre at WIT's Carriganore Campus
7. IDA Business and Technology Park on the outskirts of Waterford city. In the context of the MASP there are potential synergies between the WIT ArcLabs Carriganore campus and the IDA Business and Technology Park located nearby with a view to creating an extended Knowledge Campus in support of innovation-centred industry
8. Former Waterford Crystal Site on the Cork Road,
9. Waterford Cultural Quarter centred on O'Connell Street

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 20

Strategic Employment Locations

Local Authorities and Public Bodies shall support the development of the identified Strategic Employment Locations and other potential sites/locations and provision of associated transport and services necessary to support the overall development of the Waterford Metropolitan Area, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

9.0 | Environment

9.1 | Recreational Amenity & Parks for the Expanding Metropolitan Population

The planned unprecedented growth of the Waterford Metropolitan Area will see increased demand for access to sporting and recreational amenities, parks and open spaces. Development of new regional parks and recreation areas in the Metropolitan Area is essential to provide an attractive Metropolitan Area with a high quality of life.

High-quality green and blue spaces are important not just for nature, but for health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of an increasingly urban society and increasing settlement densities⁴⁷. There is a need to strategically plan for Green and Blue infrastructure in the Waterford Metropolitan Area, particularly considering climate action strategies and plans. This is important in the context of the transformative changes that will take place in the Waterford Metropolitan Area. Natural and semi-natural assets should be recognised as ‘infrastructure’ and these assets will only continue to provide us with these benefits if we actively plan, invest in and manage them to ensure that they are utilised sustainably. Green and blue infrastructure brings considerable value to the Waterford Metropolitan Area. The better integration of biodiversity into economic and development decisions will ensure better projects and will mitigate against unforeseen negative climate change consequences.

As set out in Chapter 5 of the RSES, the incorporation and consideration of an ecosystem services approach can lead to significant enhancements in relation to planning policy and decision-making. An ecosystem services approach can be a major catalyst in bringing the different pieces of the jigsaw together while assisting us all to better understand and articulate the potential positive outcomes.

A Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy shall incorporate the following requirements:

- Seek investment in green infrastructure and green amenities to achieve international best practice and invest in delivering a parks, recreation and amenity strategy for the Waterford Metropolitan Area. This should include the identification of a location for a **Regional Scale Park** within the Waterford Metropolitan Area as well as the development of neighbourhood parks and open spaces and Greenbelt area. This should include development of a network of linier walks/cycleways and open spaces throughout the Metropolitan Area and links between residential areas;
- Development of an Integrated Framework Plan for the **Sustainable Development of Waterford Harbour**, in order to harness the economic and recreational potential and protect the environmental qualities of the area for all users.



⁴⁷. Ireland's Environment - An Assessment, EPA (2016)

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 21

Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy

It is an objective to achieve a healthy, green and connected city and metropolitan area through preparation of a Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy. This will require co-ordination between relevant stakeholders to deliver the sustainable development of parks, recreation and high quality public open space in the Waterford Metropolitan Area, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

The Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy may include, inter-alia:

- a. development of a Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy in co-ordination between Waterford City and County Council, and Kilkenny County Council and relevant stakeholders to deliver a network of Blue -Green Infrastructure - parks, Greenway and Blueway corridors, natural areas and habitats, functional spaces relating to flooding and drainage and pedestrian and cycling connections between metropolitan settlements. This shall include support for Greenway Extensions to WIT and New Ross.
- b. investment in green infrastructure and green amenities to reach international best practice and

invest in delivering a parks, recreation and amenity strategy for the Waterford Metropolitan Area.

- c. identification of a location for Regional Scale Park within the Waterford Metropolitan Area as well as the development of neighbourhood parks and open spaces
- d. development of a Metropolitan Greenbelt Strategy in co-ordination between Waterford City and Kilkenny County Council and relevant stakeholders.
- e. Development of an Integrated Framework Plan for the Sustainable Development of Waterford Harbour, in order to harness the economic and recreational potential and protect the environmental qualities of the area for all users
- f. support and encourage recreation and tourism opportunities represented by the extensive shore line, the potential to create new walkways by linking existing areas of open space and woodland and the opportunity to develop the abandoned railway line between Waterford and New Ross as a Greenway for cycling and walking, subject to the protection of natural heritage including the European sites (the Lower River Suir cSAC (Site Code 002137) and the River Barrow and River Nore cSAC (Site Code 002162).

The challenges of climate change and the transition to a low carbon society are a key component of the RSES and relevant objectives are set out in Volume 1, particularly in Chapters 2 and 5. Responding to these challenges will be particularly relevant to the MASP and the Guiding Principles for the Waterford MASP seek to develop a balanced, compact and sustainable Metropolitan Area through integrated land use and transport planning based on support for sustainable transport modes.



10.0 | Social Infrastructure

The projected growth and development of the Waterford Metropolitan Area will require the development of community, education, health and social services and infrastructure commensurate with the needs of a much larger population.

Additional investment is required in the short term to address legacy issues associated with social and economic deprivation. For Waterford to develop as a Learning, Welcoming and Socially Inclusive Metropolitan Area, priority areas for investment in health provision, education and social cohesion and diversity have been identified and are set out below.



10.1 | University Hospital Waterford

The vision for the Waterford Metropolitan Area requires the development of Health Services appropriate to the future size and scale of the Waterford Metropolitan Area and wider South-East.

The *National Development Plan Strategy 2018-2027* identifies University Hospital Waterford (UHW) under its Strategic Investment Priorities and development of UHW should be prioritised as a centre of excellence for the South East.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 22

University Hospital Waterford (UHW)

It is an objective to support the development of University Hospital Waterford as a centre of excellence for the South East capable of providing high quality health care for the expanding population of the Metropolitan Area and wider South-East, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process. The Regional Assembly will support the development of additional Acute Care Services and additional health services/facilities as identified in the National Development Plan Strategic Priorities and provision of a Second Cath Lab Facility.

10.2 | Development of the Learning City Approach for Waterford Metropolitan Area

The MASP is informed by a strong commitment to making Waterford an inclusive, innovative city. In this context, the MASP commits the City to seeking designation as a UNESCO Learning City, in common with partner cities in the Region. The linguistic diversity of the Metropolitan Area, including the Irish language, is recognised as an asset which can contribute to and enhance innovation potential.

Development of the Learning City approach will require:

- Co-ordination across all educational providers in the city to ensure inclusive learning is promoted at all levels and in all communities;
- Recognition of the value of linguistic diversity including Irish/Gaeilge in the Metropolitan Area and its potential for contribution to a Learning City and wider innovation potential;

- Promotion and support for the visibility of Irish/Gaeilge across the Metropolitan Area including in all signage and prioritise investment in educational and social infrastructure to support Irish/Gaeilge as a community language;
- Developing a Learning City strategy to guide all agencies;
- Investing in technology to facilitate inclusive learning;
- Fostering a culture of learning across the major public service organisations in the city and all employers;
- Supporting a network of innovation centres providing incubation space, business supports & links to training and skills development in HEIs;
- Targeting supports for education and training in areas of critical mass and future potential.

The enhancement of higher education provision in the city through the development of the Technological University of the South East is critical to the achievement of the goals associated with Learning City designation.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 23

Lifelong Learning and Skills

It is an objective to support measures to develop Waterford as a UNESCO Learning City, including community education initiatives and support for lifelong learning and skills training, recognising the requirements for accessible Irish Language Learning for children and adults and linguistic diversity in a multi-cultural society through the development of the necessary infrastructure and facilities, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.



10.3 | Working for Social Cohesion and Diversity across the Metropolitan Area

Social cohesion is fundamental to the success and attractiveness of any city. Urban and social deprivation, relatively high levels of unemployment, poverty, poor quality housing and environments are evident in data for Waterford (Southern Regional Assembly Socio-Economic Baseline Reports, prepared by AIRO) and require targeted interventions to address these issues and rebuild communities, such that they can experience a good quality of life and contribute to the success of the City.

The AIRO Reports highlight the situation in 2016, where the Pobal HP Development Index found the highest level of deprivation in the South-East in Waterford and in particular City South and for City West. These locations are identified as RAPID areas and require a targeted focus for their social and economic development. Educational attainment is also below the South-East average in Waterford City and suburbs.

Diversity

Waterford is a culturally diverse city, reflected in the diversity of new communities and languages spoken in Waterford. Waterford is also home to a Gaeltacht at Rinn Ua gCuanach (Ring) and An Sean Phobal (Old Parish) and connections to the Gaeltacht is another dimension to diversity in the City.

To become more **Inclusive** by 2031, key areas for action and further research/policy development are identified:

- Recognise the diversity and vibrancy of new communities in Waterford and the positive contribution of multi-cultural communities

to the social, cultural and economic life of the Metropolitan Area;

- Identify areas where there is acute housing need and requirements for additional resources for education, community and social infrastructure;
- Provide for an enhanced Regional role for University Hospital Waterford (UHW);
- Identify measures to improve access and connectivity from neighbourhoods to employment;
- Identify key environmental improvements which can support regeneration of the city and improve quality of life;
- Measures to address urban deprivation and poor-quality housing/lack of social housing;
- Targeted support to communities where there has been historically low educational attainment;
- Improvements to the physical urban environment in terms of public realm, improved green areas, provision of play facilities and the greening of the City with street tree planting to a high standard;
- Improved access to social and health services;
- Provision of adequate community infrastructure to support neighbourhood facilities (such as childcare) and support services to families;
- Improved public transport services to improve access and connectivity from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to employment locations;
- Provision of community services for ethnic minorities and travellers;
- Urban regeneration and rejuvenation of areas with high levels of dereliction and underutilised land, particularly in inner urban areas;
- Targeted measures to address housing need and provide for community and social infrastructure, improved education and training facilities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- Continued support for 'Healthy Waterford' as member of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network;
- Initiate projects associated with UNESCO Learning City designation in support of greater educational access and participation.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 24

Social Inclusion

It is an objective to support and seek investment in delivering the actions and stakeholder initiatives in the Local Economic Community Plans (LECPs) to strengthen community infrastructure and promote social inclusion and diversity for all citizens across all of our communities, supporting integration between established communities, new communities, refugees and asylum seekers. All actions and initiatives shall be subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 25

Healthy Cities

It is an objective to support the role of Waterford as a WHO Healthy City and seek investment in the delivery of recreation, environmental improvements, active travel and health services infrastructure that retains and improves on the Healthy City status, in support of Healthy Waterford, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 26

Community Infrastructure

Community infrastructure including health and education shall be retrofitted where improved facilities are needed for existing communities and shall be provided in tandem with future population growth. An interagency approach to promoting social inclusion is central to the Waterford MASP of which Lifelong Learning and Healthy City initiatives are essential components, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 27

Regeneration of Disadvantaged Areas

It is an objective to seek continued investment in initiatives that achieve the physical, economic, social and environmental regeneration of disadvantaged areas in the City and Metropolitan Area and, in particular, supporting the ongoing regeneration of the Waterford RAPID areas, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.





Volume 3

Appendices

Appendix 1

Transitional Local Authority Population Projections To 2031

NPF Implementation Roadmap – July 2018 – DoHPLG.

	2016	2026	Uplift 2016 to 2026	2031	Uplift 2016 to 2031
Mid-West					
Limerick	195,000	229,000-235,500	34,000 – 40,500	246,000-256,500	51,000 – 61,000
Clare	119,000	129,500-131,500	10,500 – 12,500	134,000-137,000	15,000 – 18,000
Tipperary NR	71,000	77,500-79,000	6,500 – 8,000	80,500-82,000	9,500 – 11,000
Subtotal	385,000	436,000-446,000	51,000 – 61,000	460,500-475,500	75,500 – 90,500
South-East					
Waterford	116,000	132,000-135,000	16,000-19,000	137,000-144,000	21,000-28,000
Wexford	149,000	163,000-166,000	14,000-17,000	169,000-172,500	20,000-23,500
Kilkenny	99,000	108,000-110,000	9,000-11,000	112,000-114,500	13,000-15,500
Tipperary SR	88,500	96,000-98,000	7,500-9,500	99,500-102,000	11,000-13,500
Carlow	57,000	62,000-63,000	5,000-6,000	64,000-65,500	7,000-8,500
Subtotal	509,500	561,000-572,000	51,500-62,500	581,500-598,500	72,000-89,000
Overall Tipperary	159,500	173,500-177,000	14,000 – 17,500	180,000-184,000	20,500-24,500
South-West⁴⁸					
Cork City	211,000	255,500-262,000	44,500-51,000	274,000-286,000	63,000-75,000
Cork County	332,000	367,500-377,000	35,500-45,000	382,000-398,000	50,000-66,000
Kerry	147,500	161,000-163,500	13,500-16,000	166,500-170,500	19,000-23,000
Subtotal	690,500	784,000-802,500	93,500-112,000	823,000-854,500	132,500-163,500
Overall Cork City and County	543,000	623,000-639,000	80,000-96,000	656,500-684,000	113,000-141,000
Total	1,585,000	1,781,000-1,820,500	196,000-235,500	1,865,000-1,928,500	280,000-343,500

48. Figures for Cork City and Cork County relate to the new revised administrative boundaries that came into effect in May 2019. The figures for 2016 are estimates. Core Strategies will address the alignment of the table in Section 5 of the Cork MASP with the new Cork City Council and Cork County Council boundaries. NPF projections indicate population potential of approximately 336,000 by 2040 for the revised Cork City boundary and approximately 437,000 by 2040 for the revised Cork County boundary.

Appendix 2

Overview of the Strategic Planning Areas (SPA)

The Strategic Planning Areas (SPA) are set out in Article 42 and Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) Establishment) Order 2014 to provide for consideration of sub-regional issues. There are three Strategic Planning Areas in the Southern Region; the Mid-West SPA (consisting of Counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary), South-East SPA (consisting of Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and Tipperary) and the South-West SPA (consisting of Counties Cork and Kerry and Cork City Council).

Overview of the South-East SPA

Introduction

The South-East Strategic Planning Area (SPA) comprises the Counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford with a population of 581,615 (510,333 when southern part of co. Tipperary is excluded as per CSO NUTS III region) is focussed on the Port City of Waterford – Ireland’s oldest city, dating back to its origins as a Viking settlement of 914AD. The South-East through the Ports of Waterford and Rosslare Europort acts as an important Gateway to Ireland from Britain and Continental Europe.

Waterford is the largest city in the South-East with a population of 53,504 (59,854 for Metropolitan Area) and is the **5th largest employment centre in the state**. **Kilkenny City is the 2nd largest settlement** in the South-East and **4th largest settlement in the Southern Region** with a population of 26,512 and is now the **8th largest employment centre** (previously 9th in 2011) in the state. The urban structure in the South-East is characterised by a significant number of medium to large sized towns and cities with 10 settlements with populations in excess of 8,000 persons in 2016 including the Key Towns of **Carlow** (24,272), **Wexford** (20,188 and **Clonmel** (17,140) **Dungarvan** (9,227) and **Gorey** (9,822).

The South-East has **strong links to the Greater Dublin Area** which is reflected in strong patterns of commuting out of the northern part of the area, particularly from north Carlow and north Wexford. The volume of commuters reflects the high quality of Road (M8, M9 and M11) and rail infrastructure on **south-north axis**. Parts of the South-East also have a strong connection to the Midlands, where Carlow Town is a key service centre for adjoining parts of County Laois. The other strategic **Transport routes** are from **Rosslare and Wexford to Carlow and the Midlands (N80)**, from **Rosslare and Waterford to Limerick and The West (N24 & Rail Line)** and from **Waterford to Cork (N25)**, which link these Strategic locations and intermediate towns along each route.

International Access

- Development of the **Ports of Waterford & Rosslare Europort** as National Gateways to Continental Europe, to boost the sustainable development of the South-East, supported by a strong logistics system for freight movement focussing on high quality sustainable access routes to the ports along strategic road and rail corridors;
- International Access through **Waterford Airport**.

Refer to **Waterford MASP** and **Chapter 6** for specific details and objectives

Waterford Metropolitan Area (see Waterford MASP)

- Development of a Waterford MASP including implementation by Local Authorities and other public bodies of Population & Employment Targets of +30k people by 2040;
- Development of a balanced ‘concentric city’ and improved north-south connectivity;
- 50% of all new city housing within existing City & suburb footprints;
- Development of University Hospital Waterford (UHW) for the predicted expansion in population in period to 2040;
- Providing improved **Quality of Life** with enhanced **Amenity & Recreational Space/Facilities**.

Networks in South-East

- Collective Capacity of the Waterford Metropolitan Area and Key Towns of Carlow, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Gorey, Kilkenny & Wexford as alternative locations/choices to the Greater Dublin Area;
- Develop the Eastern Corridor - Extending the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor to Rosslare Europort including Gorey-Enniscorthy-Wexford with strong connectivity to New Ross, Waterford/Belview Port;

- Potential examples of networks are cited in Chapter 3 and 4; in the South-East SPA these are:-
 - The Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/ Rail network/axis;
 - The Limerick- Waterford Transport and Economic network/axis.

Realise capacity and services at hospitals in South-East to complement/support Cork, Dublin and Waterford Hospitals.

Development of the Technological University for the South-East (TUSE)

- The development of the Multi-Campus Technological University of the South-East (TUSE) will harness the excellence of Education Resources in WIT and IT Carlow to develop a new University that will be a catalyst for the social, cultural and economic development of Waterford and the South-East.

Waterford Harbour

- Development of a Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for Waterford Harbour/ the River Suir and its connection to inland waterways to harness potential opportunities for multiple users.

Low Carbon Economy and Renewable Energy

- Harness natural assets and develop potential for renewable energy generation in wind/wave/tidal/solar/hydro/bio-energy & promote energy efficiency;
- Develop a low carbon transport sector by providing a focus on sustainable public transport, cycling and walking;
- Promote patterns of Modal Shift through public transport networks/services and development of sustainable transport modes as an alternative to the private car;
- Retain Waterford - Rosslare rail line as an asset for future sustainable transport options including freight rail access to Rosslare Europort.

Refer to Chapter 5 which contains details and objectives on the Region's transition to a low carbon economy.

Tourism

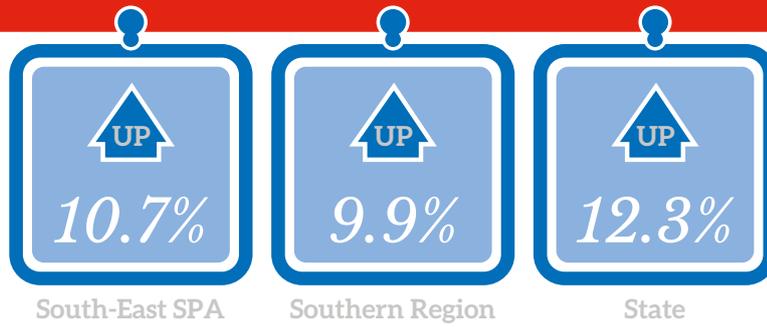
- Development of Ireland's Ancient East & Munster Vales tourism brands;
- Development of 'Hero Sites' in key locations;
- Development of interconnecting Blueways, Greenways and Peatways to revitalise local communities and support economic development.

ATTRIBUTES

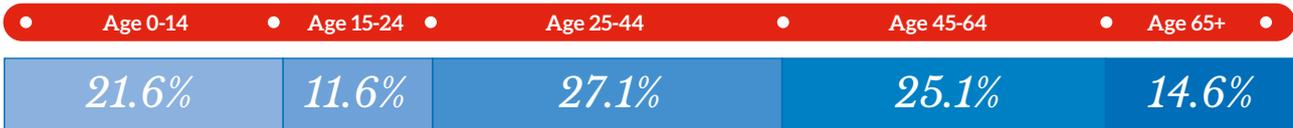
ATTRIBUTES OF THE SOUTH-EAST INCLUDE:

- A **critical mass of 582,000 people** with talent and human capital;
- **Co-operative structures through Local Authorities and Agencies serving the South-East;**
- **Waterford City & Metropolitan Area;**
- **Strong Urban Centres:**
Key Towns of Carlow, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Gorey and Kilkenny City- a Regional Settlement structure and availability of land capacity for future housing, and employment related development;
- **Waterford Airport;**
- The **Ports of Waterford – Belview, Rosslare Europort & New Ross Port;**
- **Motorway and Rail connectivity** to other regions;
- **Strategic Employment land banks;**
- **Established 3rd level institutes to be enhanced by development of the Multi-Campus TUSE;**
- **Regional Hospital and Healthcare Infrastructure:** University Hospital Waterford, Clonmel General Hospital, Wexford General Hospital, St. Luke's General and Kilcreen Orthopaedic Hospitals Kilkenny;
- **Cultural, heritage and environmental assets** including the Waterford Gaeltacht;
- A **strong rural economy** with high levels of agricultural output and coastal areas with strong fishing ports and attractive beaches & resorts.

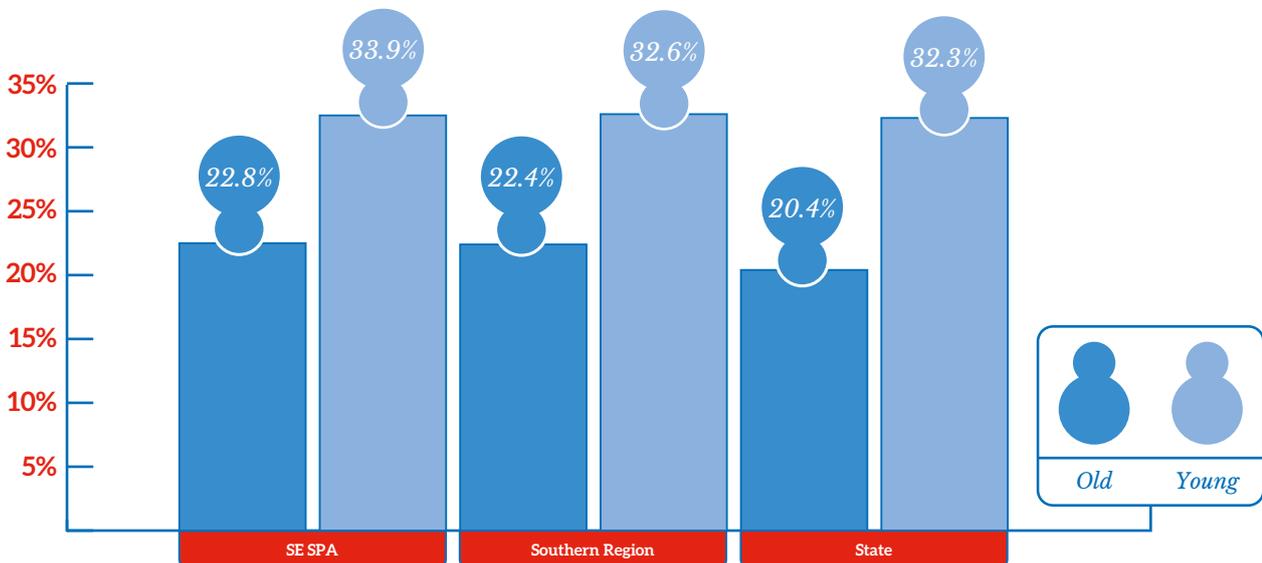
Population Change 2006 - 2016



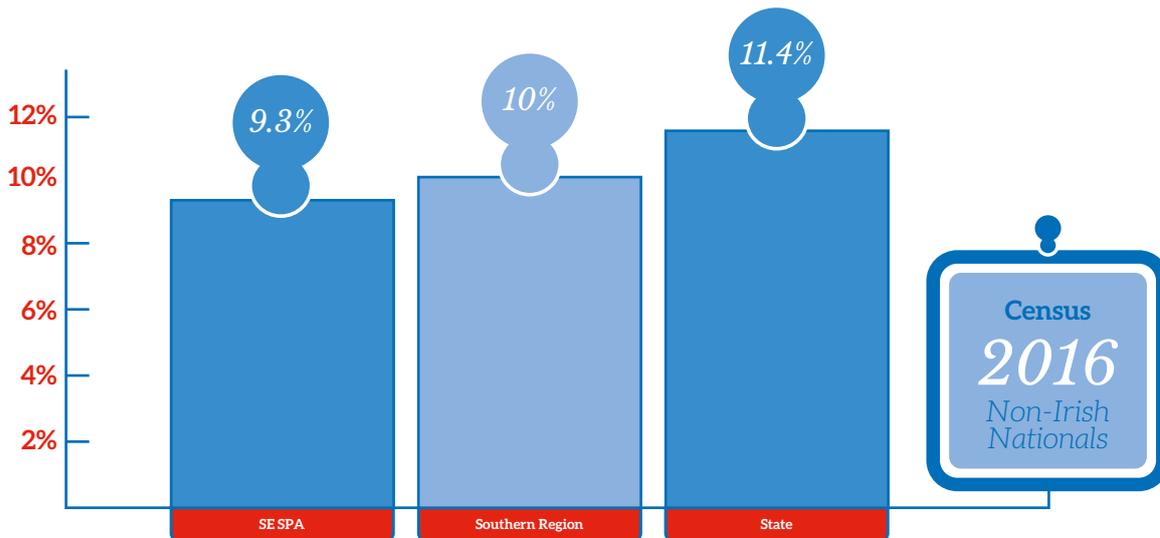
Population by Age



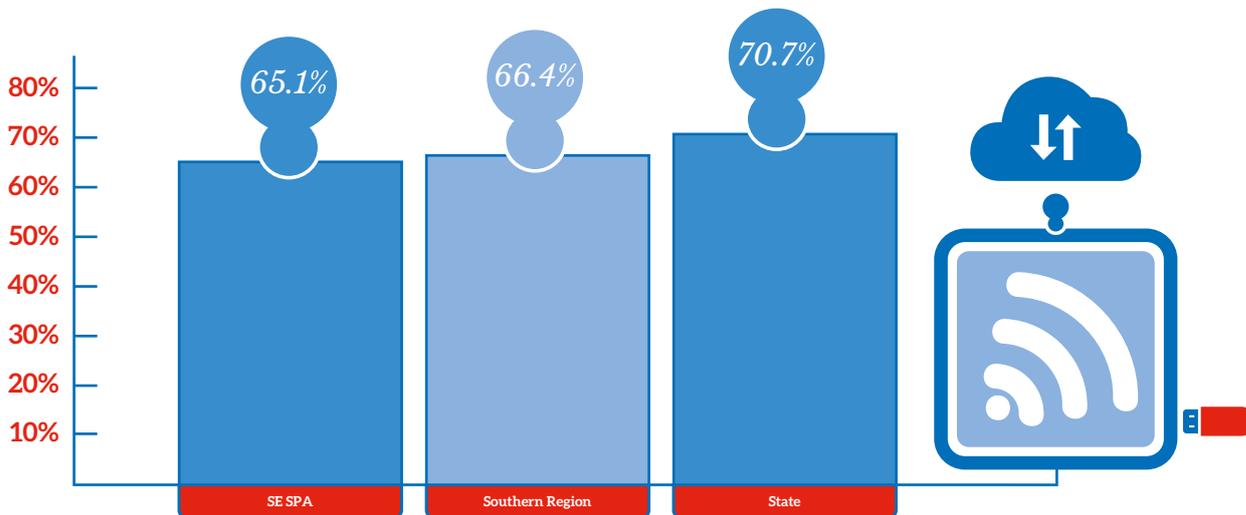
Old & Young Age Dependency Rate



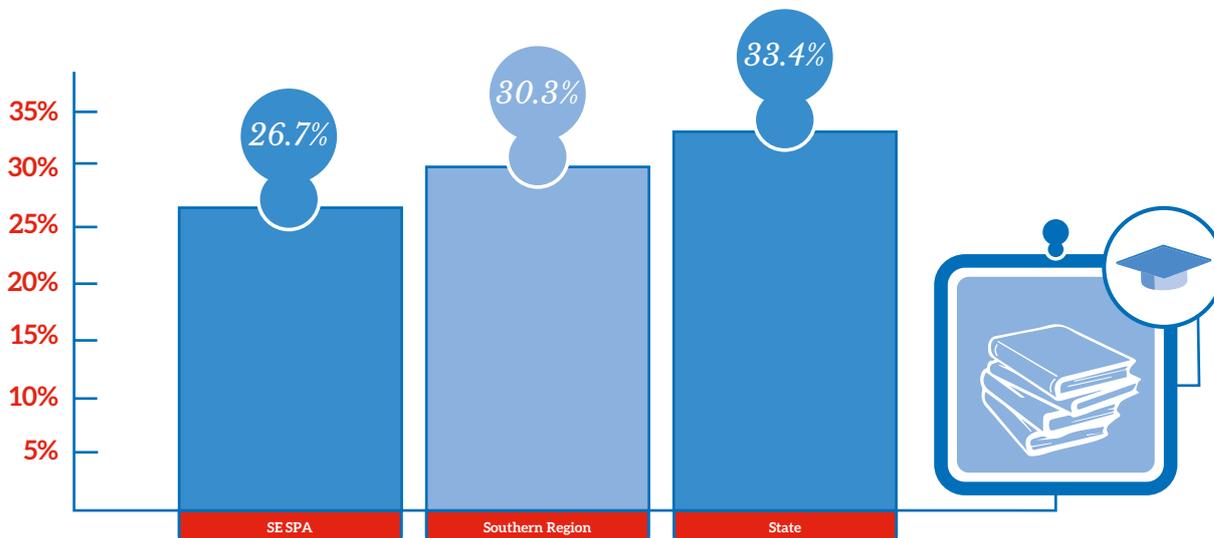
Diversity and our Migrant Communities



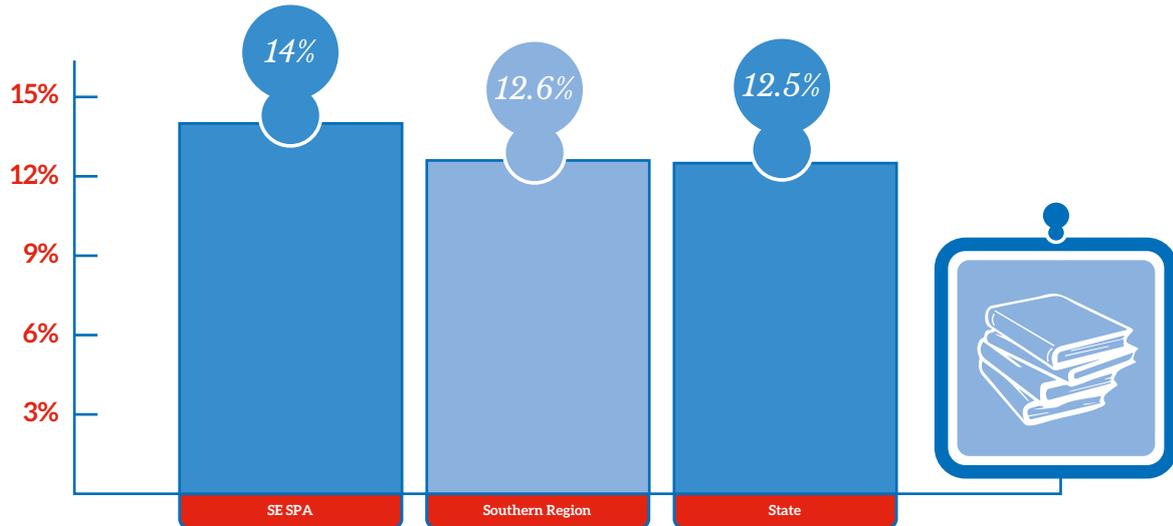
Households with Broadband



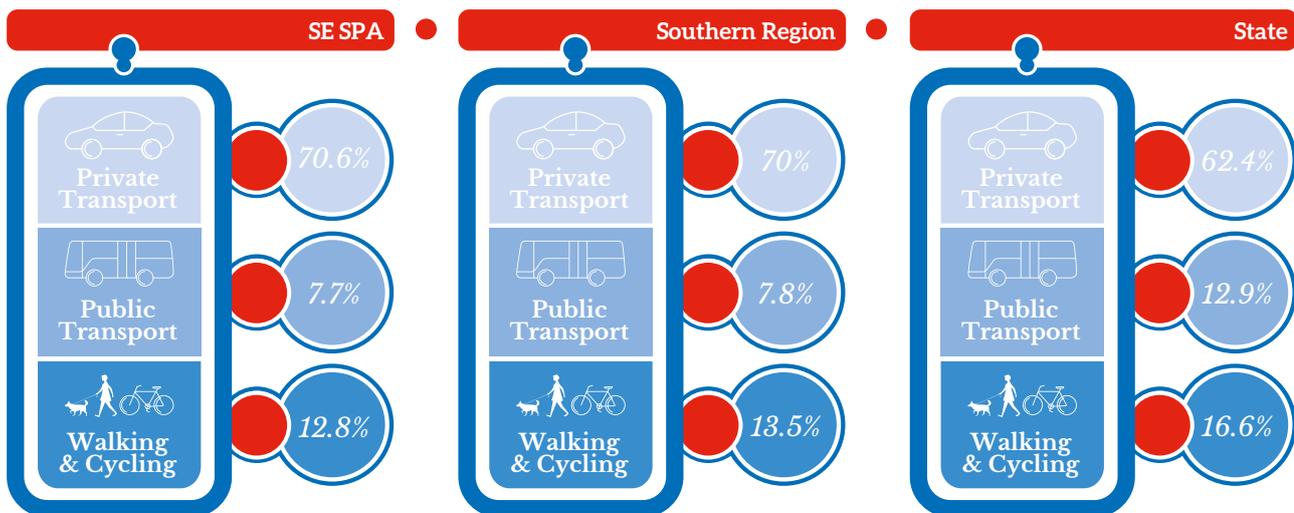
Education Attainment: All Third Level



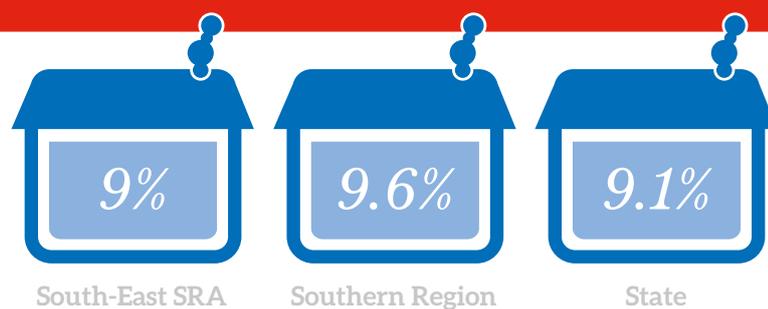
Education Attainment: No Formal/Primary



Mode of Travel to Work



Housing Vacancy



**Excluding Holiday Homes*

Overview of the South-West SPA

Introduction

The South West Strategic Planning Area (SW SPA) covers an area of 12,100 sq.km and recorded a population of over 690,000 people in 2016, 44% of the total Southern Region's population. The South West is accessed by strategic seaports (Tier 1 Port of Cork), Airports (Cork National Airport and Kerry Regional Airport), road and rail networks. It comprises the Counties of Cork and Kerry and three Local Authorities of Cork City Council (210, 853 population) Cork County Council (332,105 population) and Kerry County Council (147,707).

The population has grown 11.2% over the ten-year period 2006-2016, greater than the Region overall in the same period (9.9%). With a population of 304,169 in 2016, the Cork Metropolitan Area is the second largest Metropolitan Area in the State with Cork City and Suburbs at its core. Cork City and Suburbs is the largest urban settlement in the Southern Region and second largest settlement in the State after Dublin (population 208,669 in 2016 and 102,139 jobs).

Important corridors provide regional accessibility to the South West and include the M8 Cork to Dublin, N20 Cork to Limerick, N25 Cork to Waterford, N22 Cork to Tralee, N21 Tralee to Limerick, and N69 Tralee to Tarbert/Port of Foynes, N72 Killarney-Mallow-Fermoy-Dungarvan and N71 West Cork Corridor. The rail network connects Cork to Dublin, Cork to Limerick (via Limerick Junction), Tralee to Cork and Dublin (via Mallow) and Cork to Waterford (via Limerick Junction).

The South West has a strong network of urban settlements. Of the Region's 28 settlements greater than 5,000 population (outside of the three city and suburbs of Cork, Limerick and Waterford), the South West recorded 12 settlements greater than 5,000 population in 2016. The largest of these include: Tralee (23,691 population), Carrigaline (15,770 population), Killarney (14,504 population), Cobh (12,800 population), Middleton (12,496 population), Mallow (12,459 population), Youghal (7,963 population), Bandon (6,957 population), Fermoy (6,585 population), Passage West (5,843 population), Kinsale (5,281 population), Carrigtwohill (5,080 population).

Towns with the largest job numbers in 2016 include Tralee (12,517 jobs), Killarney (7,108 jobs), Middleton (3,871 jobs), Mallow (3,775 jobs), Clonakilty (2,376 jobs), Bandon (2,334 jobs), Charleville (2,249 jobs), Fermoy (2,168 jobs), Killorglin (2,038 jobs) and Listowel (2,030 jobs).



Cork Metropolitan Area

- Location of the State's second largest metropolitan area and city (Cork City and Suburbs and Cork Metropolitan Area);
- Location of Cork City Docklands and Tivoli, significant urban regeneration areas of scale and transformative projects for the Region;
- Potential transformative transport investment through the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) which includes a potential new Light Rail Corridor. Refer to Chapter 6 Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Investment Priorities and Cork MASP Objective 8 for specific details and objectives.

Refer to the Cork MASP for strategic housing and economic locations in the Cork Metropolitan Area.

.....

Cork Harbour (within the Cork Metropolitan Area)

- Europe's largest natural harbour in Cork, with significant multi-sectoral strengths across port, industry, recreation, tourism, heritage, the marine economy balanced with protection and enhancement of the ecology and natural heritage of the harbour. There are opportunities to support the role of the Cork Harbour area as a special driver for the Region through an integrated framework plan initiative. Refer to Chapter 4 Marine and Coastal Assets and Growing the Blue Economy and Cork MASP Objective 3 Cork Harbour for specific details and objectives.
-

Ports and Marine

- Tier 1 Port of Cork (within the Cork Metropolitan Area);
 - Cork regional ports and harbours include Cobh, Rushbrooke Dry Dock facilities, Kinsale, Bantry, Castletownberehaven, Youghal, Baltimore, Ballycotton, Union Hall and Schull;
 - Kerry regional ports and harbours include Tralee-Fenit, Daingean Úi Chúis;
 - Refer to Chapter 4 Marine and Coastal Assets and Growing the Blue Economy, Chapter 6 Our Region's Strategic Port and Harbour Assets and Cork MASP Objective 13 Port of Cork for specific details and objectives.
-

Air Connectivity

- Cork Airport (within the Cork Metropolitan Area);
- Kerry Airport;
- Refer to Chapter 6 Airports and Cork MASP Objective 14 Cork Airport for specific details and objectives.

Networks of Settlements

- The RSES promotes strengthening and growing the Cork Metropolitan Area and harnessing the potential for greater collaboration and combined strengths of our three cities and metropolitan areas to drive our Region's growth, as a counterbalance to the greater Dublin area;
 - In addition to Cork City, there is a strong urban structure with twelve settlements greater than 5,000 population;
 - Four Key Towns identified in the RSES including Mallow, Clonakilty, Tralee and Killarney. Refer to Chapter 3 Key Towns for further specific details and objectives;
 - Network of settlements driving sub regional growth across rural hinterlands with shared assets, strengths and opportunities for collaborative partnerships. Refer to Chapter 3 of the RSES for examples including Kerry Hub and Knowledge Triangle, North Kerry/West Limerick/Shannon Estuary, North Cork Agri-Food Network, West Cork Marine Network, Cork Ring Network;
 - Cork County boundary towns have potential for social and economic initiatives to drive sub regional growth in shared hinterlands. Examples include Charleville sharing hinterlands with Co. Limerick, Mitchelstown sharing hinterlands with Co. Tipperary, Youghal sharing hinterlands with Co. Waterford and Bantry sharing hinterlands with Co. Kerry.
-

Education and Research

The RSES promotes Cork's as a Learning City in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and supports the spread of such initiative's region wide.

- Higher Education Institutes of University College Cork, Cork Institute of Technology and Tralee Institute of Technology (both merging as the Munster Technological Institute);
- The SW Regional Skills Forum, actions driven through the SW Regional Enterprise Plan and Educational and Training Boards are further enterprise, training and skills development assets in the SW;
- Strength of the agriculture sector, research and development led by centres of international innovation such as Teagasc Moorepark Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre Fermoy;
- Examples in Kerry of creative design, innovation and enterprise centres include Tom Crean Business Centre, Service Design and Innovation I-Hub Killorglin, Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation (an outreach campus of UCC), Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub, Sneem Enterprise Centre, Kenmare Innovation Centre and Killarney Technology Innovation Centre;
- Refer to Chapter 4 for rural innovation, Chapter 7 for a Learning Region, skills and talent and the Cork MASP for further specific details and objectives.

Energy and Renewable Energy Production

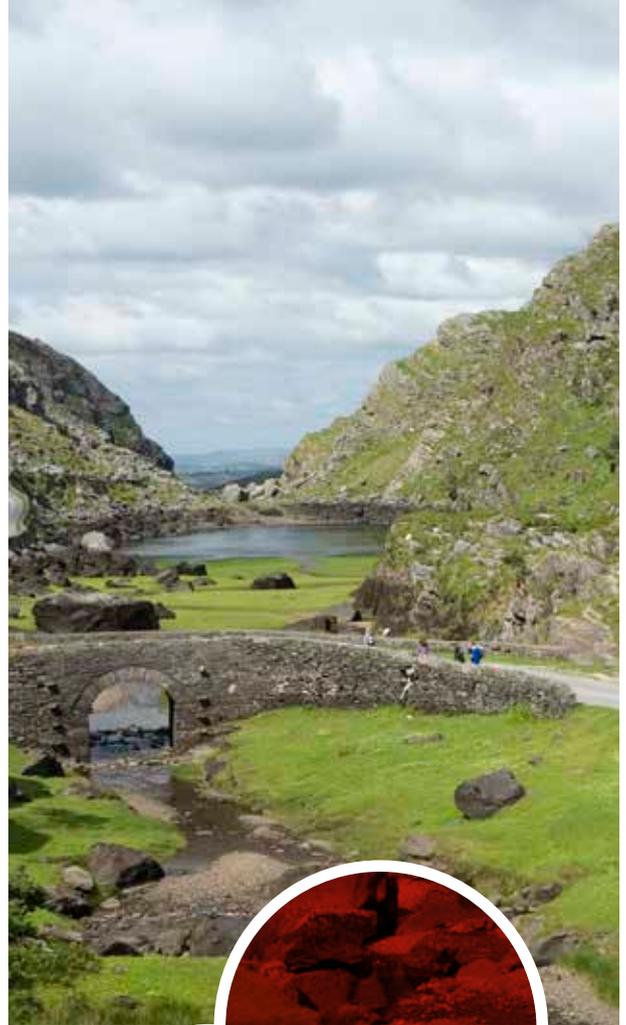
- The South-West has strategic energy assets, power generation infrastructure and is a significant contributor to State renewable energy production with more generation than demand;
- Opportunities for the Region through the Eirgrid Celtic Interconnector from a location in East Cork direct to Europe (France) enabling renewable energy connection to the grid and security of supply. Refer to Chapter 8 for further specific details and objectives;
- Example of an asset location: Whitegate-Ireland's Energy Park. Refer to Chapter 8 and Cork MASP objectives for specific details;
- Example of an opportunity: Tarbert- Ballylongford Landbank LNG and CHP Project, a key site identified in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. Refer to Chapter 8 for specific objectives. The SIFP is also cited as a Good Practices example in Chapter 4.

Tourism

- Significant attractions and destinations in the South West include, inter alia, the Wild Atlantic Way, Irelands Ancient East, Ireland's Maritime Paradise, Cork City (English Market, Cork City Goal, Shandon etc), Blarney Castle, Kinsale, Fota Wildlife Park, Spike Island (2017 European No 1 Tourist Attraction), Midleton Distillery, Cobh Heritage Centre, Doneraile Park, Munster Vales, Blackwater Valley, Ring of Kerry, Dingle Peninsula, Killarney National Park, Muckross House, Killarney, Blennerville Museum, Kerry County Museum in Tralee, UNESCO site of Skellig Michael, proposed UNESCO site at Valentia Island Cable Station, festivals, mountain ranges, extensive coastline and blue and green flag beaches, peninsulas and islands;
- Significant existing and future potential for Greenway and Blueway Corridors including proposals such as the South Kerry Greenway, North Kerry Greenway Corridors and Midleton to Youghal;
- Refer to Chapter 4 , Chapter 7 and the Cork MASP for further specific details and objectives

Island Communities

- West Cork Islands of Chléire, Bere, Whiddy, Durse, Long, Sherkin and Heir. The RSES supports initiatives to sustainably develop the physical, economic, social and cultural development of our Islands.
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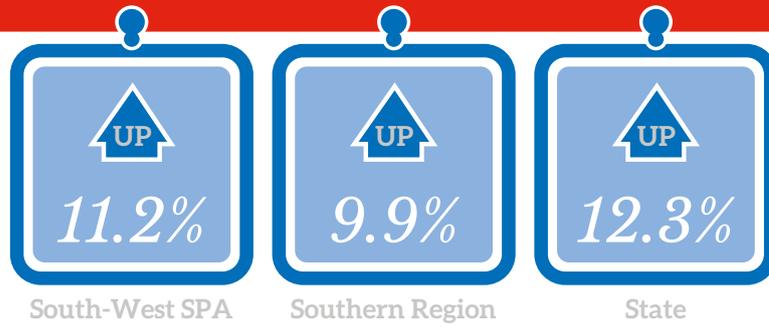


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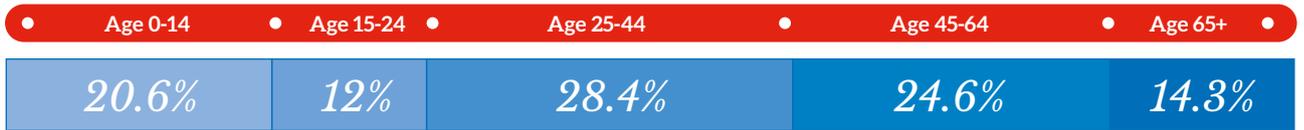
ATTRIBUTES OF THE SOUTH- WEST INCLUDE:

- **Critical Mass of South West** population 690, 575 people in 2016, 44% of the total Southern Region's population;
- **Atlantic Economic Corridor:** Extends to Kerry and close connectivity to Cork;
- **Cork City and Suburbs,** States second city with an international role, a population of 208,669 and location of 102,139 jobs in 2016. A WHO Healthy City and UNESCO Learning City and first in Europe for cultural vibrancy and business friendliness;
- **Cork Docklands Renewal:** Flagship regeneration project for the Region with 160ha brownfield renewal in Cork City Docks and 61.5ha in Tivoli Docks;
- **Cork Metropolitan Area,** State's second largest after Dublin 2016 population of 304,169;
- **Strong Urban Network:** 4 Key Towns of Tralee, Killarney, Mallow and Clonakilty. 12 towns over 5,000 population;
- **Tier 1 International Port of Cork:** A premier multi-purpose deep sea port facility. In 2017, over 10.3 million tonnes of trade traffic handled by the Port of Cork;
- **Cork Harbour:** Europe's largest natural harbour, multi-faceted roles, special driver for the region, potential for SW to be first mover in Marine Spatial Planning;
- **Other Regional Port and Harbour Assets:** Cobh, Kinsale, Bantry, Castletownberehaven, Youghal, Baltimore, Ballycotton, Union Hall, Schull, Tralee-Fenit, Daingean Úi Chúis;
- **Cork Airport:** State's second international airport, reaching over 40 international destinations. Over 2.3m passengers moved through Cork Airport in 2017;
- **Kerry Airport:** Important regional airport for business and tourism into the SW with Dublin, UK and Europe connections. 335,480 passengers used the airport in 2017;
- **Higher Education Institutes** including UCC, CIT and IT-Tralee (transitioning to Munster Technological University);
- **Strategic inter-regional rail connectivity** (Cork and Tralee on network to Dublin, Limerick and Waterford);
- **Strategic road network connectivity:** Connecting the Metropolitan Areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon, Waterford, Key Towns, Atlantic Economic Corridor, Ports and Airports;
- **Energy:** SW is a strategic location with surplus energy and renewable energy production supplying national grid. Existing Whitegate Energy Park and potential of Tarbert-Ballylongford;
- **Sectors:** Life Sciences life science (pharma, bio-pharma and med-tech), ICT Companies, Traded Services (extension to strong presence of manufacture base), Financial and Business Services, Fintech, Engineering Industries, Agri Food & Beverage, Agri Tech, Tourism, Energy, Renewable Technologies, Marine, Forestry, Research and Education;
- **Health:** Cork University Hospital, the Southern Region's tertiary referral centre, University Hospital Kerry, Tralee, General hospitals of Mallow and Bantry;
- **Tourism:** Significant culture, heritage, tourism (Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East corridors), natural heritage (national parks, river valleys, coastline, mountains, lakes, forests), UNESCO Heritage Sites, existing and potential greenway and blueway corridors and urban tourism assets.

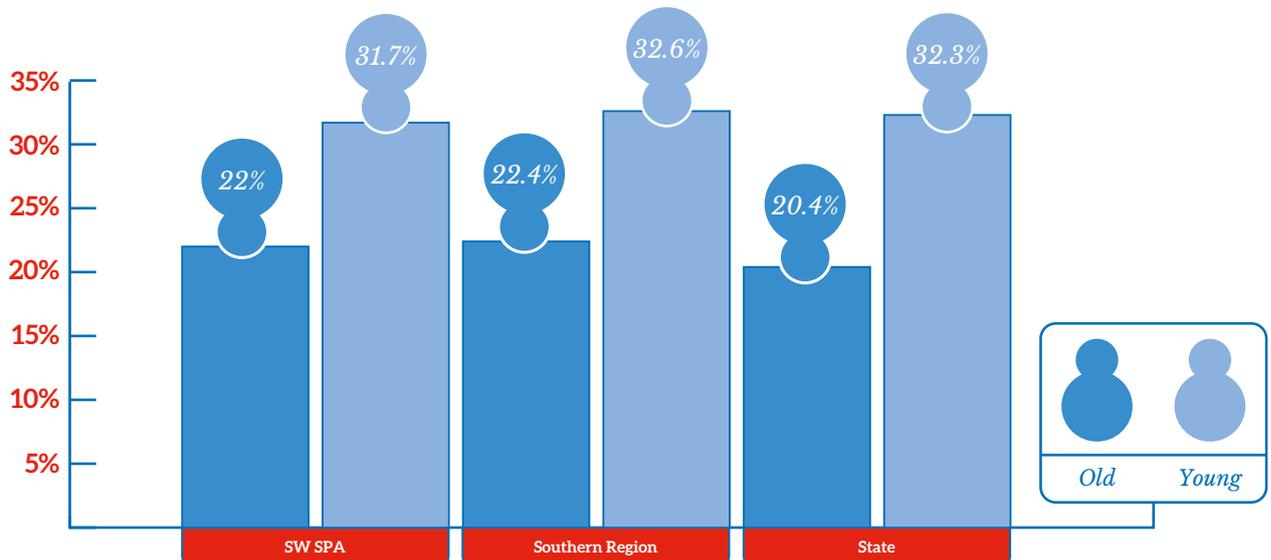
Population Change 2006 - 2016



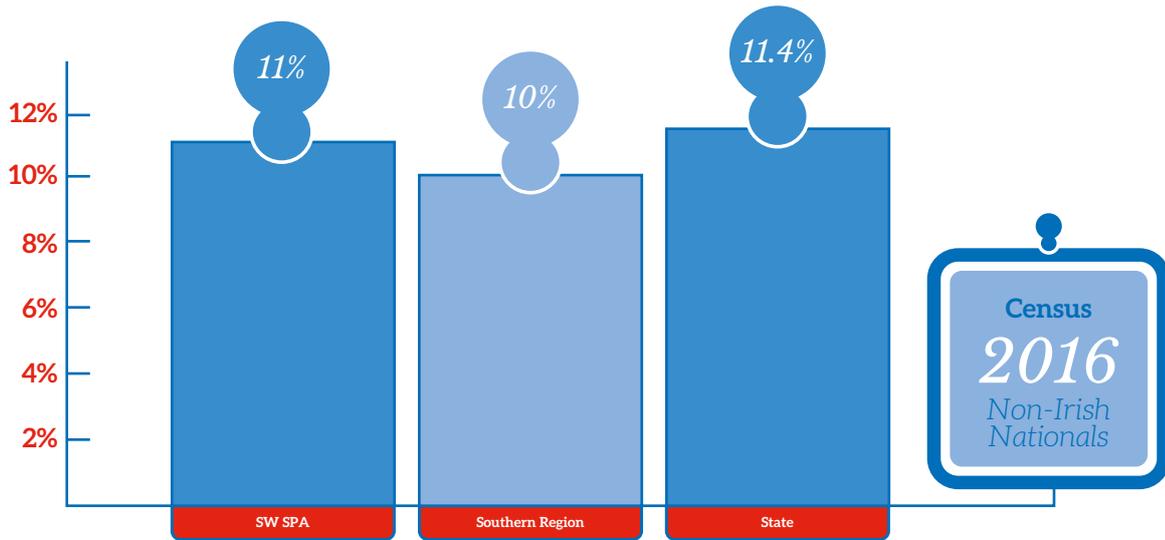
Population by Age



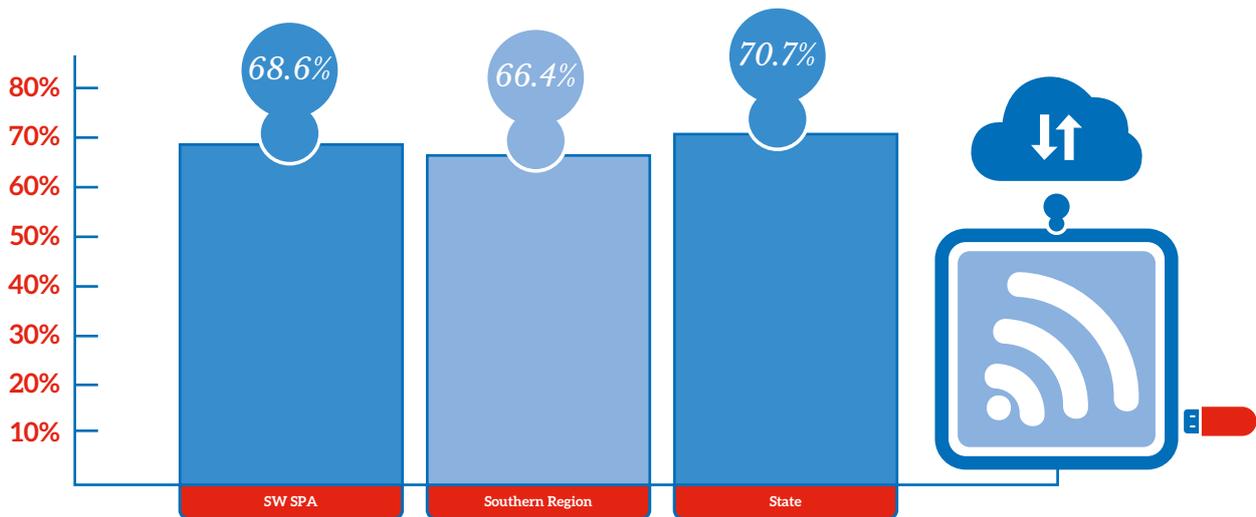
Old & Young Age Dependency Rate



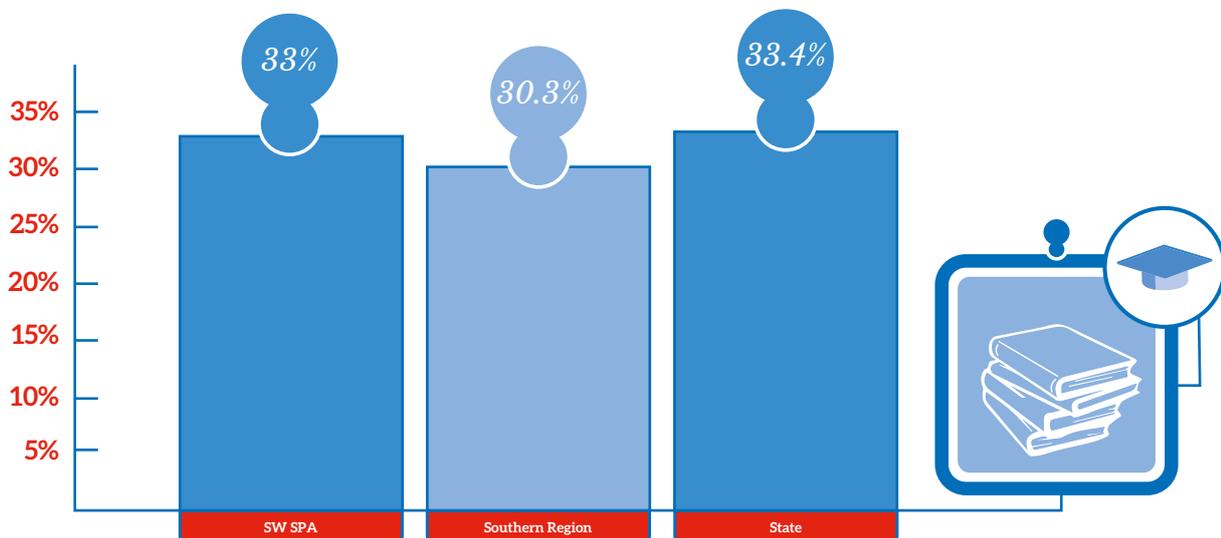
Diversity and our Migrant Communities



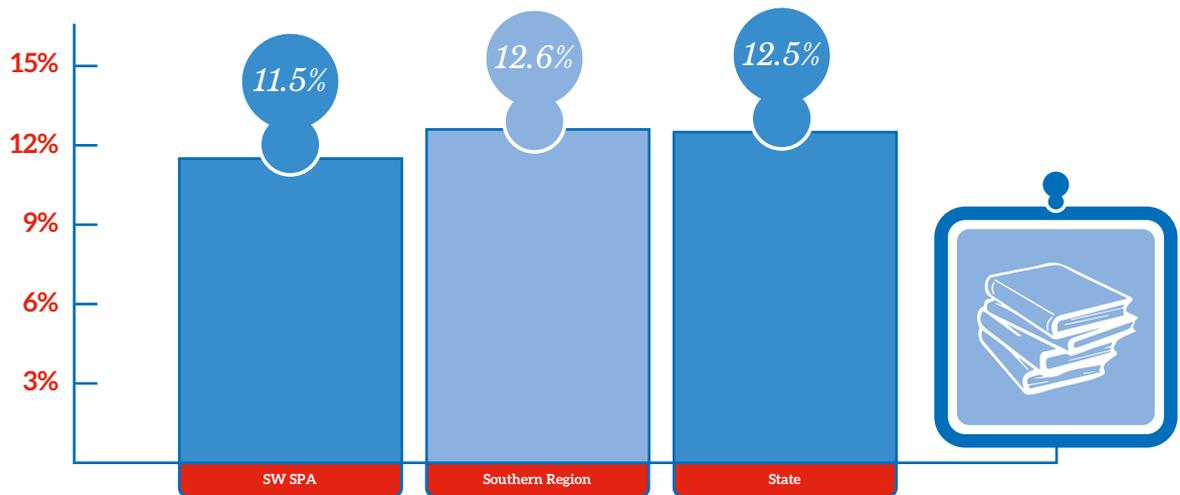
Households with Broadband



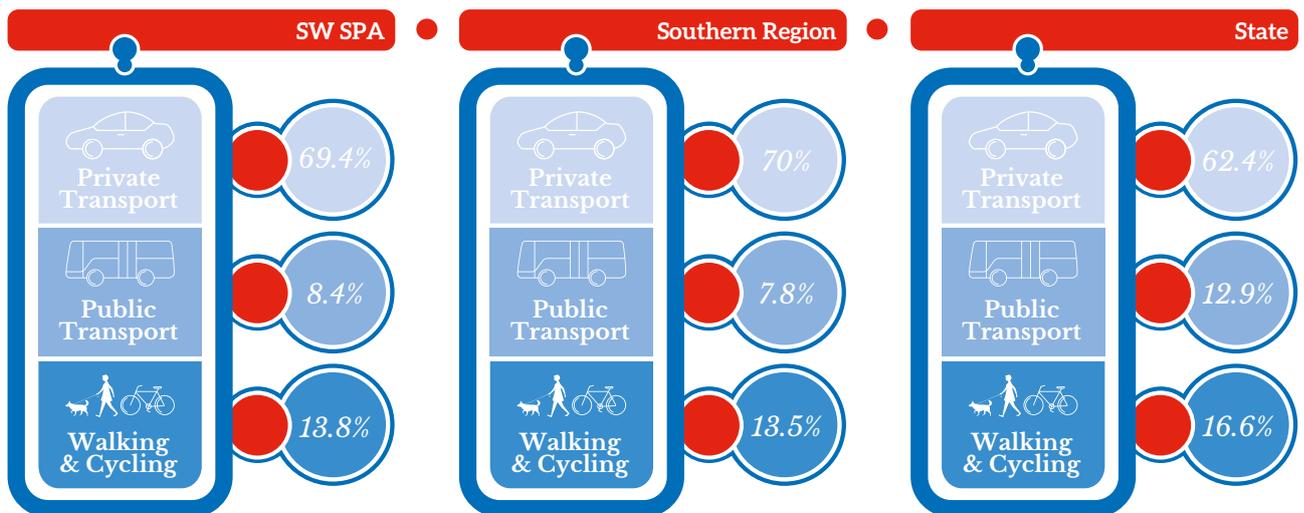
Education Attainment: All Third Level



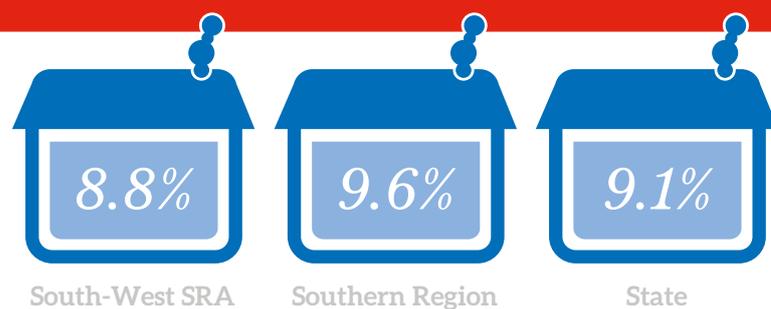
Education Attainment: No Formal/Primary



Mode of Travel to Work



Housing Vacancy



**Excluding Holiday Homes*

Overview of the Mid-West SPA

Introduction

The Mid-West Spatial Planning Area (SPA) includes the counties of Clare, Limerick and the northern part of Tipperary and comprises three Local Authorities - Clare County Council (118,817 population), Limerick City and County Council (195,175 population) and Tipperary County Council (159,553 population). The population of the northern part of Tipperary is 71,282. The area's population (excluding the south of Tipperary) is 384,998 (8.1% of the State population). Between 2006 and 2016, the Mid-West increased its population base by 23,970 or 6.6% (excluding South Tipperary).

The Mid-West is well positioned to build synergies between Galway to the north and Cork to the south due to improved and planned transport connections. However, creating a greater connection with Waterford is more challenging and is a key aim of the RSES.

The SPA is focused on the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area (132,420). This represents 3% of the State population and 8% of the Region's total population.

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is 387 sq.km and in population and in area terms, it is the third largest metropolitan area in the State. In 2016, the population of Limerick City and Suburbs was 94,192 people while Shannon recorded a population of nearly 9,729. The population of Limerick City and Suburbs increased by 3% between 2011 and 2016 and Shannon's population grew by 0.6% during the same period.

Outside the Metropolitan Area, four Key Towns have been identified: Ennis (25,276 population), Nenagh (8,968 population), Thurles (7,940 population) and Newcastle West (6,619 population). Settlements such as Roscrea (5,446 population), Kilrush (2,719 population), Abbeyfeale (2,023 population), Newport (1,995 population), Templemore (1,939 population), Newmarket-On-Fergus (1,784 population), Killmallock (1,668 population) offer a vibrant mix of towns and contrasting landscapes, a high quality of life, a range of existing and planned social amenities, educational facilities and the availability of housing in the Mid-West SPA.

Settlements in the Mid-West SPA such as Adare, Askeaton, Ballina, Ennistymon, Killaloe, and Scarriff (inter alia) offer employment opportunities and services in strategically located areas. They provide services, social opportunities, employment, infrastructure and are home to a network of communities. The health and growth of the Region's towns and villages is essential for effective regional development.



Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

Location of the State's third largest metropolitan area and city (Limerick City and Suburbs and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area).

- Significant urban regeneration areas of scale and transformative projects through the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan and Limerick 2030;
- Employment locations such as Shannon Free-Zone (SFZ), Limerick City Centre and existing and future employment locations as identified in the MASP.

Refer to Limerick-Shannon MASP for specific details and objectives.

.....

Shannon International Airport

- Serves a catchment area which extends beyond the Mid-West SPA and is a strategic national asset;
- passenger numbers in 2017 was 1.75 million but existing infrastructure at Shannon has the capacity to deal with 4.5 million passengers without additional investment.

Refer to Limerick-Shannon MASP and Chapter 6 for specific details and objectives.

.....

Shannon Foynes Port

- Tier 1 Port of National Significance;
- key role, both regionally and nationally, in meeting the external trading requirements of the Irish economy;
- Key driver in supporting the realisation of important potential wider economic development benefits.

Refer to Limerick-Shannon MASP and Chapter 6 for specific details and objectives.

.....

Network of Settlements

- The RSES promotes strengthening and growing the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and harnessing the combined strength of our three cities, as a counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area, through quality development, regeneration and compact growth;
- Four Key Towns identified in the RSES: Ennis, Nenagh, Thurles and Newcastle West;
- The RSES promotes building on the strong network of towns and supporting the villages and rural areas in the Mid-West SPA and across the Region;
- Settlements collaborating and working together on shared initiatives can provide strategic opportunities to drive the regional economy. These networks present opportunities for collaborative projects

and shared benefits from strategic infrastructure investments. Potential examples of networks are cited in Chapter 3 and 4 of the RSES and in the Mid-West SPA these include the Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network, North Kerry/ West Limerick/Shannon Estuary/Clare, Limerick-Waterford Network/Axis.

Refer to Chapter 3, 4 and the Limerick-Shannon MASP for specific details and objectives.

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Shannon Estuary

- The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) (SIFP) provides a coherent spatial plan to recognise the economic potential of the Shannon Estuary;
 - SIFP aims to support the multifunctional nature of the Shannon Estuary and seeks to transform the estuary into an international economic hub;
 - SIFP has identified an additional 1,200 hectares for marine related development (9 no. strategic development locations) by building on existing industry connectivity and synergy as well as the existing infrastructure to create more sustainable and attractive network for further investment;
 - Moneypoint and Shannon Foynes Port are strategic national assets along the estuary;
 - Cahercon in County Clare is strategically located to provide a maritime centre of excellence with accommodation for maritime research which could work to create synergies with the considerable hinterland available, existing infrastructure and direct access to deep water;
 - The SIFP is cited as a Good Practice example in Chapter 4.
-

Low Carbon Economy and Renewable Energy

- The Mid-West SPA is a net contributor of renewable energy, building on a proud tradition of Ireland's first renewable energy power station in Ardnacrusha in 1927;
- Moneypoint electricity generating station produces 25% of national energy;
- The Limerick and Clare Energy Agency and Tipperary Energy Agency are established agencies in the research of renewable energy;
- Opportunities include Silvermines in Tipperary which has been identified as a location for the development of a hydro-electric station;
- Mount Callan in Co. Clare has been identified for a Pumped Hydro Electricity Scheme complementing the existing regional scaled Wind Energy Development.

Refer to Chapter 5 which contains details and objectives on the Regions transition to a low carbon economy.

Bio-economy

- Tipperary has become a 'European Model Demonstrator Region of the Bio-Economy';
- The National Bio-economy Hub at Lisheen, Co. Tipperary will enable industry, entrepreneurs and researchers to scale technologies that convert Ireland's natural resources (including residues) to products of high value for use in a wide variety of sectors including food ingredients, feed ingredients, pharmaceuticals, natural chemicals, biodegradable plastics and more.

Refer to Chapters 4 and 5 which contains details and objectives on the Bio-economy.

Tourism

- The RSES supports the promotion of the tourism assets of the Mid-West SPA, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process, which include, inter alia, the Hunt Museum, Adare Heritage Centre, the Milk Market, Ballyhoura Mountain Trails, Thomond Park, the Great Southern Greenway, the Frank McCourt Museum, Pery Square, Limerick Gallery of Arts, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Red Mile, Ireland's Lakelands, the Shannon Estuary and its islands, greenways, blueways, Munster Vales the Burren, Cliffs of Moher, West Clare NST tourism route, Loop Head, Bunratty Castle, Holy Island, Lough Derg, King John's Castle.

Refer to Chapter 4 for further details and objectives regarding the tourism sector.

Education and Research

- University of Limerick (UL), Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), Mary Immaculate College (MIC), St. Patrick's College Thurles, Burren College of Art, Gurteen Agricultural College, Templemore Garda College and the Shannon College of Hotel Management are critical drivers of economic development and the fostering of an innovative, knowledge-based economy for the Mid-West SPA. Encouraging collaboration between higher education institutes, the Regional Skills Fora and the Educational and Training Boards of the Region presents the potential to develop people's skills and knowledge in areas most exposed to technological disruption;
- The RSES promotes Limerick's role in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and supports the spread of such initiative's region wide.

Refer to Chapters 4, 7 and Limerick-Shannon MASP for further details and objectives.

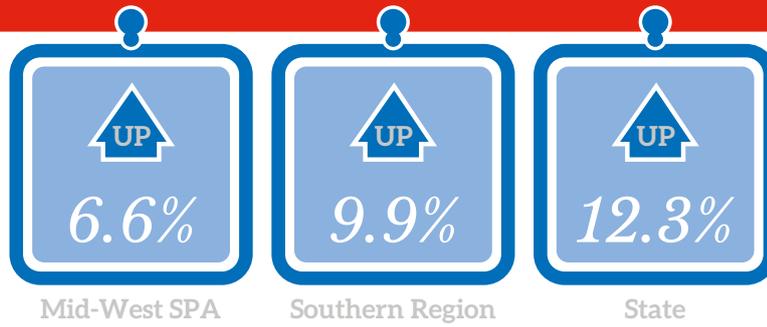


ATTRIBUTES

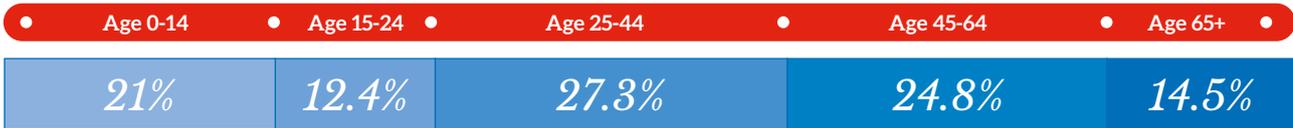
ATTRIBUTES OF THE MID-WEST INCLUDE:

- A critical mass of 384,998 (8.1% of the State population);
- **Limerick County and City** population of 195,175 (2016);
- Population of **Limerick City and Suburbs** 94,192 which is the third largest in Ireland;
- **Four Key Towns:** Ennis, Nenagh, Thurles and Newcastle West;
- **Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area** is the third largest in Ireland with a population of 132,420 in 2016 and a projected population of 172,188 by 2031;
- Established **high-tech sectors** in ICT, Medi-Tech, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Food and Drink;
- Limerick produces over **6,300 graduates** per year;
- The **Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development Company** was established to deliver on key strategic sites in the Limerick 2030 Plan including the Opera Site, Gardens International Office Development, Cleeves Riverside Campus and Troy International film studios;
- **County Tipperary** population in 2016: 159,553;
- **SIFP** provides a coherent spatial plan to recognise the economic potential of the Shannon Estuary;
- **Golden Vale** Brand for High Quality Food Production;
- Tipperary is a **'European Model Demonstrator Region of the Bio-Economy'**;
- The **National Bio-economy Hub in Lisheen, Thurles, Co. Tipperary** provides opportunities to promote more efficient use of renewable resources while supporting economic development and employment in rural areas;
- **Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Wild Atlantic Way** all in Mid-West;
- **County Clare** recorded a population of 118,817 in the 2016 Census;
- **Shannon International Airport** - over 40% of US FDI companies are within 1 hour of the airport's catchment area;
- **Shannon Free-Zone (SFZ)** is 243 hectares in area with more than 7,000 employees in over 100 companies and is home to the largest agglomeration of American companies in Ireland outside of Dublin;
- **Shannon Foynes Port** is a Tier 1 Port of National Significance. It has a key role, both regionally and nationally, in meeting the external trading requirements of the Irish economy;
- **International Aviation Services Centre (IASC)** - the largest aerospace cluster in Ireland. Home to over 60 companies and employs over 2,600 people in Shannon;
- Advancement of the development of a **Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) R&D hub** and testbed in Shannon;
- Strategic inter-regional **rail connectivity**;
- **Atlantic Economic Corridor** and central location to the Metropolitan Areas of Galway, Cork, Waterford;
- **Energy:** Mid-West SPA is a net contributor of renewable energy which significant opportunities in, inter alia, bio-economy, wind and wave energy;
- Significant **tourism assets** of the Mid-West SPA include, inter alia, the Hunt Museum, Adare Heritage Centre, the Milk Market, Ballyhoura Mountain Trails, Thomond Park, the Great Southern Greenway, the Frank McCourt Museum, Pery Square, Limerick Gallery of Arts, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Red Mile, Ireland's Lakelands, the Shannon Estuary and its islands, greenways, blueways, Munster Vales the Burren, Cliffs of Moher, West Clare NST tourism route, Loop Head, Bunratty Castle, Holy Island, Lough Derg, King John's Castle;
- University of Limerick (UL), Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), Mary Immaculate College (MIC), St. Patrick's College Thurles, Burren College of Art, Gurteen Agricultural College, Templemore Garda College and the Shannon College of Hotel Management are critical drivers of economic development and the fostering of an **innovative, knowledge-based economy** for the Mid-West SPA.

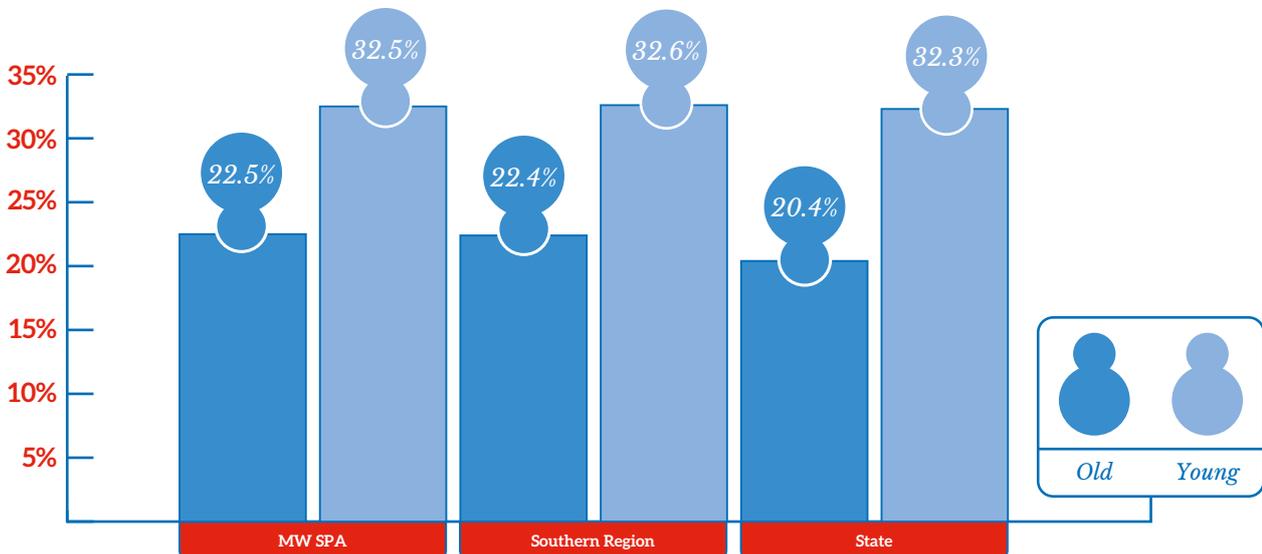
Population Change 2006 - 2016



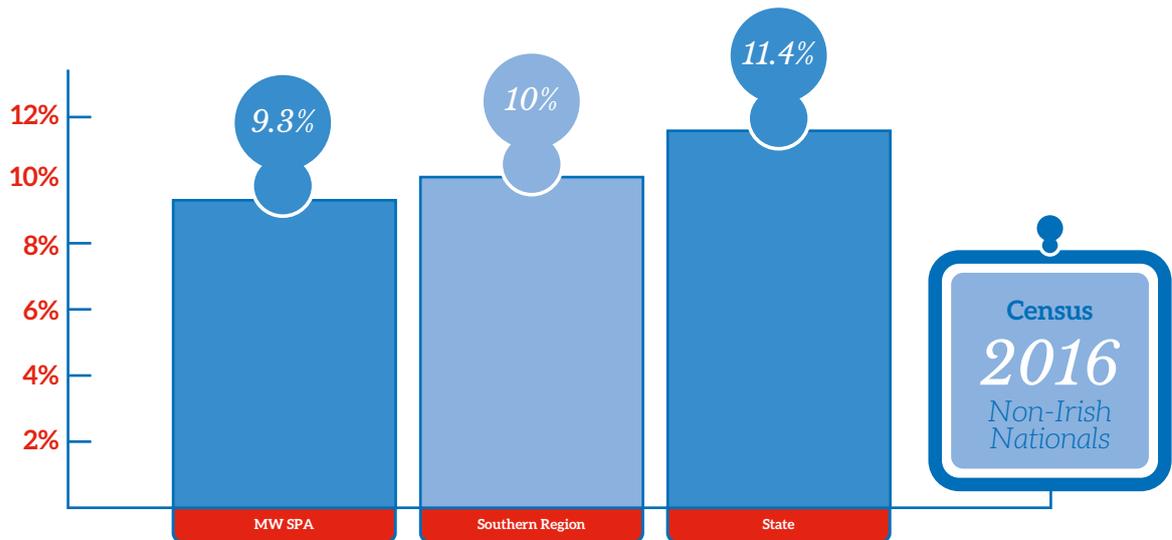
Population by Age



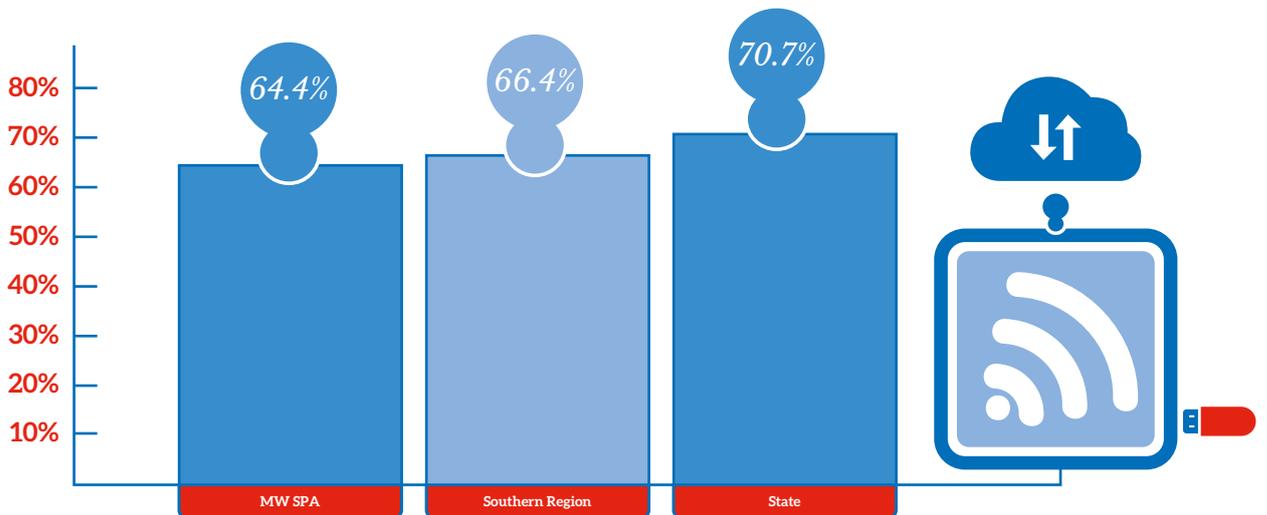
Old & Young Age Dependency Rate



Diversity and our Migrant Communities



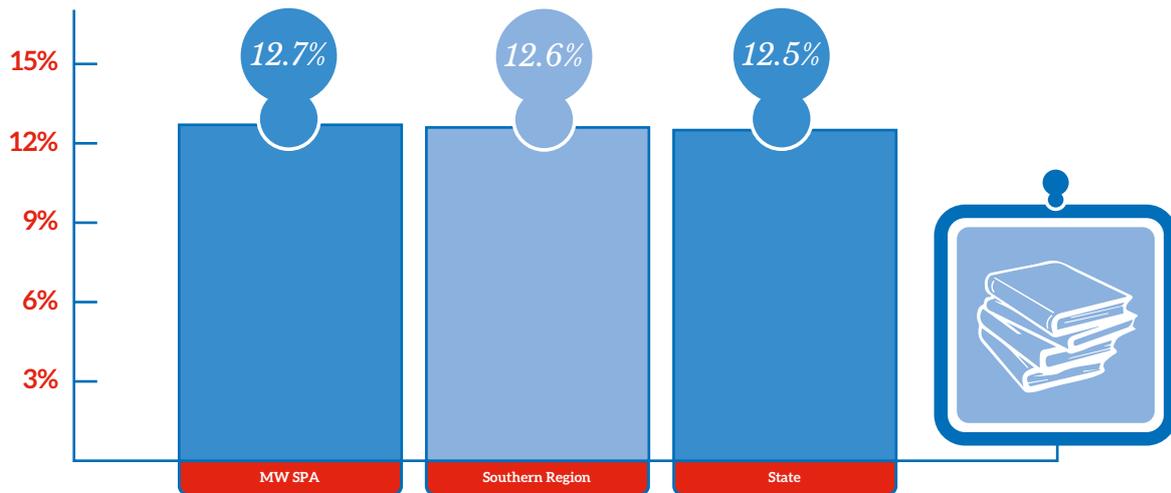
Households with Broadband



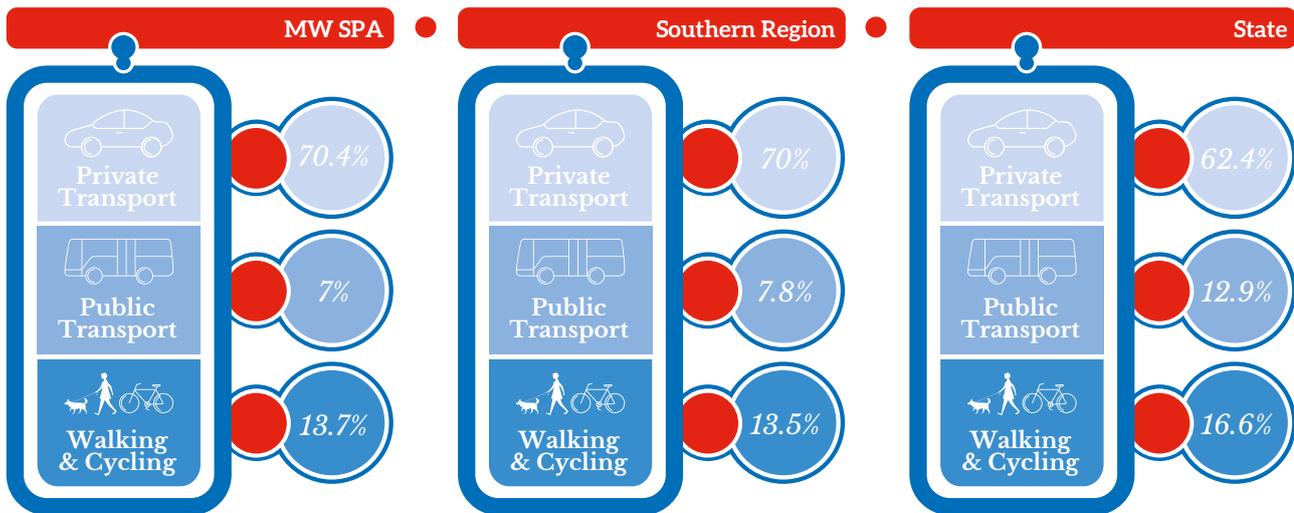
Education Attainment: All Third Level



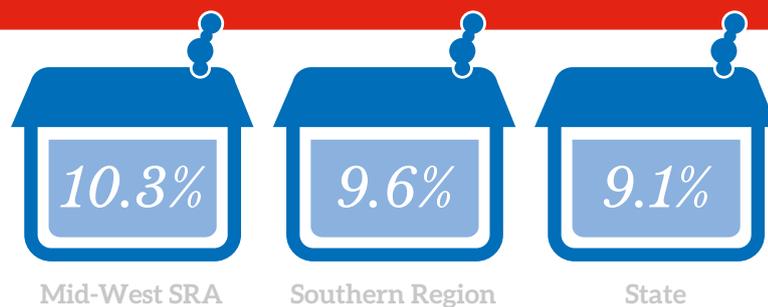
Education Attainment: No Formal/Primary



Mode of Travel to Work



Housing Vacancy



**Excluding Holiday Homes*

Appendix 3

The following goals are set out and apply to each of the Region's metropolitan areas.

Goal 1 | Sustainable Place Framework

The future growth and ambition for each MASP will be based on the principles of a **Sustainable Place Framework**. This framework reinforces the positive relationship between the city centre, metropolitan area and wider region as complementary locations, each fulfilling strong roles. It positions quality place making at the core.

This goal seeks:

- Vibrant living and working city centre at the heart of a thriving metropolitan area and region;
- Social, physical and economic renewal of inner city neighbourhoods;
- Compact urban development, achieving brownfield and infill targets through innovative design approaches to appropriate density and height;
- Provision for diverse residential accommodation types to accommodate the needs of different groups in society including older age cohorts;
- Network of compact metropolitan settlements and employment areas offering quality residential and working choices, interconnected with sustainable public transport, pedestrian and cycling networks;
- A metropolitan area complemented by a network of connected regional settlements, fulfilling strong population and employment roles for their rural hinterlands;
- Enhancing the quality of our existing places through retrofitting a high standard of infrastructure, services and amenities that improve the liveability and quality of place in existing settlements and communities, especially locations that experienced significant new population growth in the past (such as metropolitan towns) and existing areas experiencing positive growth (such as city centre neighbourhoods);
- Achieve mixed use “five-minute” or “ten-minute” sustainable city and town models where short travel time and ease of access via sustainable travel modes is achieved between where we live, work, access services, access recreation and amenity inter alia;
- Seek infrastructure led development where housing and job provision is integrated with high standards in sustainable transport, social and community infrastructure, quality public realm, recreation and amenities;
- Targeted urban regeneration measures to address dereliction and underutilised lands, particularly in inner city and disadvantaged areas to provide improved environmental quality including street tree planting;
- Rejuvenation of our existing built assets and public realm;
- Protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage and biodiversity;
- Working with/enhancing the amenities of the natural environment;
- Resilience to climate change and flooding.



Goal 2 | Excellent Connectivity and Sustainable Mobility

Our metropolitan areas shall be well connected through actions which will seek to deliver connectivity:

- Internationally through port and airport assets, Sustainable Freight and TEN-T Corridors;
 - For high quality, high speed digital infrastructure and optimisation of smart technology through Digital Strategies;
 - Inter-regionally through efficient rail, road, bus networks and services;
 - Intra-regionally, through multi modal transport options and services to access the metropolitan area and city centre efficiently;
 - To encourage the development of sustainable modes of transport to serve the smaller towns, villages and rural areas;
 - Within the metropolitan area, through an integrated network of high capacity public transport corridors and services, pedestrian routes and cycling corridors;
 - Within our urban neighbourhoods and employment locations to achieve high quality standards of public realm, public transport facilities, public transport interchange facilities, appropriate management of private transport and car parking, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and to promote a significant transition from private car usage to healthier and sustainable modes of travel where people and jobs are concentrated;
 - To achieve successful integration between land use and transport planning, achieving sustainable higher densities and appropriate uses at nodes serviced by public transport networks;
 - To achieve efficient mobility, with close alignment between home and work locations, ease of travel on sustainable transport modes, efficient and sustainable movement of freight and logistics, guaranteed journey times for inter-city and inter-regional travel.
-

Goal 3 | Economic Engines Driving Regional Enterprise Growth

Our metropolitan areas will have a competitive international edge through actions which support:

- Smart specialisation, strengthening and evolving existing economic sectors and clusters, supporting partnerships across academia and research centres, public bodies, business sector and local communities;
 - Embracing technology change, transitioning with resilience and innovation towards a smart technology future in how we live and work sustainably;
 - Offer excellent standards of infrastructure services and property assets for all scales of enterprise, from start-ups to FDI;
 - Quality of life offer, with attractive options for housing in the right locations, community infrastructure and recreation options easily accessible from locations of work.
-



Goal 4 | High Quality Environment and Quality of Life

A high-quality environment and quality of life in the metropolitan areas will be supported by actions which seek:

- Healthy city and healthy metropolitan area status with equity of access to health services, high ratios of access to quality open space and recreational amenities per population and attractive options to uptake active travel between home, work, education and access to services;
- Setting high quality performance standards for the metropolitan area to transition towards a zero-carbon future, achieve improved water and air quality, improved sustainable travel and other environmental and health performance standards as indicators for the healthy status of our metropolitan areas;
- Fostering a creative metropolitan area with vibrant cultural, arts and heritage scenes;
- Fostering a vibrant tourism scene with facilities and attractions that showcase the unique heritage, natural environments and culture of our Region, enriching the experiences of both visitors and citizens;
- Placing a greater emphasis on performance-based design criteria in developing our metropolitan area, incentivising and awarding innovation in design, energy efficiency, green infrastructure and smart technology integration.

Goal 5 | A Learning, Welcoming and Socially Inclusive Metropolitan Area

A socially inclusive, multi-cultural metropolitan area with equal opportunities for learning, supported by actions promoting:

- UNESCO Learning City status and drivers for a Learning Region;
- The role of HEI's and centres of innovation, regional skills, training and apprenticeships;
- Targeted initiatives that address social exclusion and prioritise regeneration of disadvantaged areas, especially RAPID areas including education and training;
- Valuing the participation of communities and Public Participation Networks;
- Community Services and engagement for ethnic minorities and travellers;
- Initiatives that protect and develop the potential of our younger and aging cohorts;
- Facilities that provide inclusive social, community and recreational facilities for mixed neighbourhoods.

Goal 6 | Pioneering Locations Networked Internationally and Regionally

Our metropolitan areas will be platforms for good practice implementation, pilot initiatives and innovation with actions seeking:

- Innovative approaches and multi-agency collaborations to identify, succeed and implement key enabler projects within the metropolitan areas under competitive bid funding through the NPF/NDP for Urban and Rural Regeneration, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies;
- Regional and international project partnerships and shared learning initiatives exploring new policy and good practice in addressing challenges and opportunities facing metropolitan areas, especially innovation to achieve successful compact growth outcomes;
- Development of tools in collaboration between the Local Authorities, research and learning institutes and others to assist implementation and monitoring of progress within our metropolitan area on achieving objectives, especially brownfield and infill renewal targets, improved environmental quality, integration of and use of smart technologies and overall quality of life improvement;
- Implementation of the MASPs.

Goal 7 | Evolve Innovative Approaches and Strategic Priorities

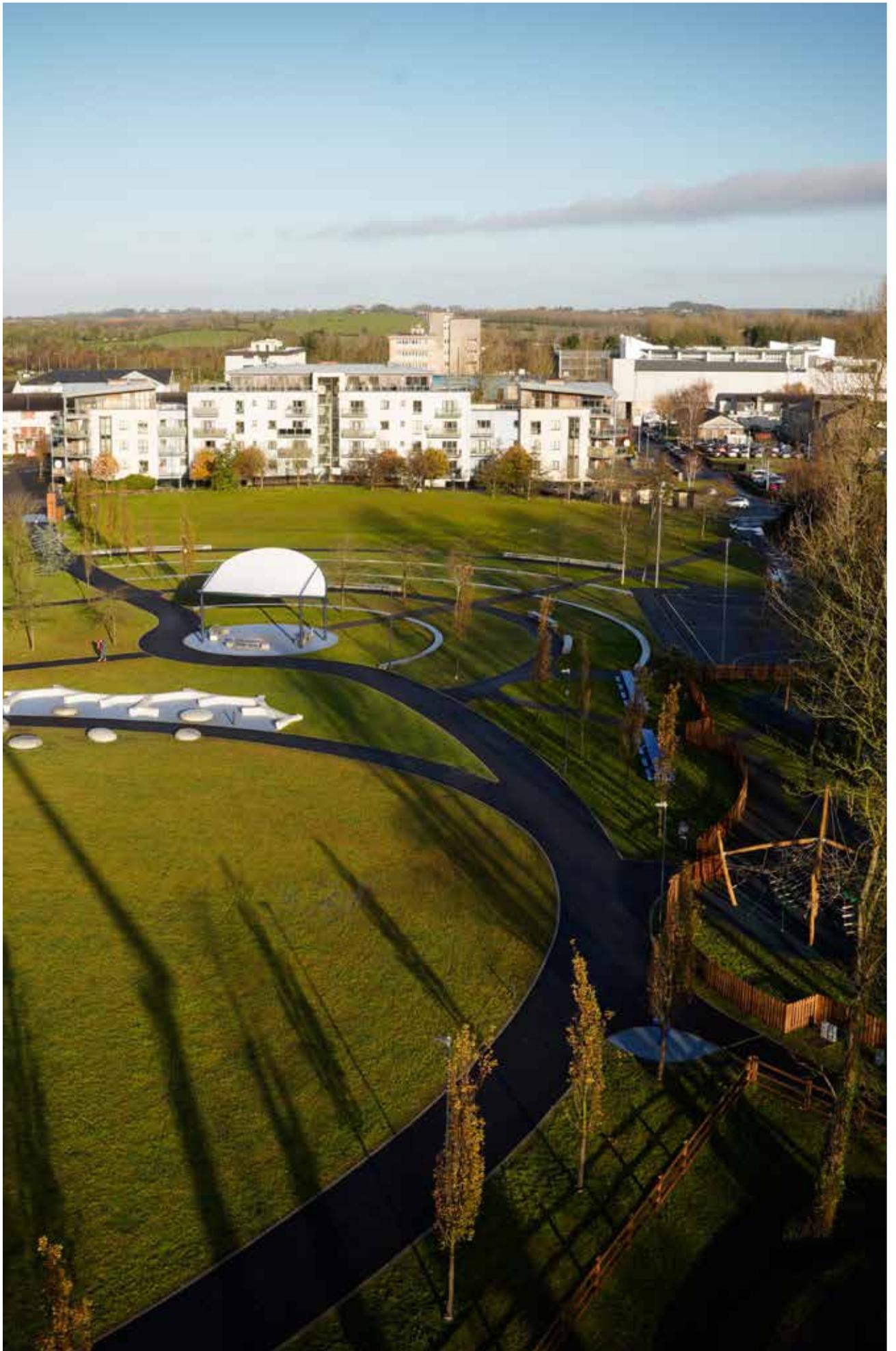
Each MASP identifies the strategic locations for population and jobs growth, which will act as a baseline indication of current priority projects. Achieving the NPF growth targets in compact forms will require in depth consideration for new locations and initiatives by each local authority. The existing priority locations alone will not fulfil targets, but they are a snapshot of current strategic priorities which the MASPs support investment in.

Opportunities for strategic regeneration of vacant and underused land and property, refurbishment, land use and transport planning integration, active land management initiatives and development agency type approaches are examples of the many different approaches that will need to emerge. Aligned with Goal 6 for pioneering approaches, the identification of new strategic priorities need to be informed by innovative solutions and demonstrate incorporation of good international and regional practices.

The MASPs allow flexibility therefore for new strategic priorities, further to those listed in each MASP, to emerge over the MASP/RSES timeframe and to be identified in City and County Development Plan Core Strategies, based on the following criteria which demonstrates that the priority initiative/location:

- Aligns with national and regional planning policies and objectives;
- Helps to achieve compact growth targets, provides infrastructure led development with identified packages of interrelated infrastructures, physical and social, and phasing proposals for delivery identified;
- Promotes effective alignment between land use and transportation planning, especially alignment with public transport networks, encouragement of sustainable travel and consolidation of suitable nodal points on public transport corridors;
- Where new infill locations are proposed, demonstrate how reinforcement and consolidation of the existing settlement pattern is achieved;
- Is identified in collaboration with all required landowners and stakeholder agencies with a role for delivery of enabling infrastructure;
- Is in accordance with national guidelines;
- Is assessed under flood risk and environmental assessments;
- Is informed by innovative solutions and good practice to achieve the overarching MASP goals;
- Is a demonstrator of good practice within the Region for integration of sustainable design, renewable energy, transition of the MASP to a zero-carbon future, green infrastructure and smart technology;
- Where applicable, demonstrates how the priority initiative/location can help the delivery of strategic regional projects funded through the NPF/NDP for Urban and Rural Regeneration, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies or from other funding streams;
- Where applicable, demonstrates how the priority initiative/location assists delivery of actions through the National Regeneration and Development Agency.





Glossary

ABTA	Area Based Transport Assessment
ACAs	Architectural Conservation Areas
AEC	Atlantic Economic Corridor
AR	Augmented Reality
Blueway	Blueways are a network of multi-activity recreational trails, based on or alongside lakes, canals and rivers
Blue Economy	The Blue Economy is sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.
Brownfield Site	Brownfield sites or Brownfield lands, which may be defined as “any land which has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations, excluding temporary uses or urban green spaces”, generally comprise redundant industrial lands or docks but may also include former barracks, hospitals or even occasionally, obsolete housing areas
CASP	Cork Area Strategic Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDP	County Development Plan
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
CFRAM	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management programme
CMATS	Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy
DBEI	Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation
DES	Department of Education and Science
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DTTAS	Department of Tourism, Transport & Sport
EcIA	Ecological Impact Assessment Report
Eco-System Services	Ecosystem services are the many and varied benefits that humans freely gain from the natural environment and from properly-functioning ecosystems
EDTs	Ecosystem Development Teams
ED's	Electoral Districts
EEA	European Environment Agency
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report

ELC	European Landscape Convention
EMR	Eastern & Midland Region
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Environmental Report
ERI	Environmental Research Institute
ES	Ecosystems
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
FET	Further Education and Training
FLAG	Fishing Local Area Group
GES	Good Environmental Status
GHG Emissions	Green House Gas Emissions
GI	Green Infrastructure
GLAS	Green Low Carbon Agri-environment Scheme
GNI	Gas Networks Ireland
Green Economy	The green economy is defined as an economy that aims at reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment.
Greenway	A Greenway is a recreational or pedestrian and cycling corridor for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area.
Greenfield Site	May be defined as open lands on the periphery of cities or larger towns whose development will require the provision of new infrastructure, roads, sewers and ancillary social and commercial facilities, schools, shops, employment and community facilities.
Green Roof	A green roof or living roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane. It may also include additional layers such as a root barrier and drainage and irrigation systems.
Green Wall	A green wall is a wall partially or completely covered with greenery that includes a growing medium, such as soil or a substrate. Most green walls also feature an integrated water delivery system.
GST	Gaeltacht Service Town
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HI	Healthy Ireland
HNDA	Housing Need Demand Assessment

HPA	Health Place Audit HPA
HOOW	Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan For Ireland
IAE	Ireland's Ancient East
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
IHH	Ireland's Hidden Heartland's
IOT	Internet of Things
ISAX	Irish Smart Ageing Exchange
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LA	Local Authority
LAP	Local Area Plan
LAWSAT	The Local Authority Water Support and Advice Team
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees
LECP	Local Economic Community Plans
LIHAF	Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund
LLAES	Locally Led Agri-environment Scheme
LNDR	Limerick Northern Distributor Route
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LPAs	Language Planning Areas
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MANs	Metropolitan Area Networks
MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
MaREI	Marine and renewable energy research, development and innovation centre supported by Science Foundation Ireland
MSP	Maritime Spatial Plan
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MTU	Munster Technological University
NBP	National Broadband Plan
NGO	Non-government organisation

NHA's	Natural Heritage Areas
NFHC	National Fisheries Harbour Centres
NIR	Natura Impact Report
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NLS	National Landscape Strategy for Ireland
NSO	National Strategic Outcomes
NUTS II	NUTS - EUROSTAT name of territorial units for statistics. NUTS II Region refers to the 3 regions in Ireland, Southern, Northern and Western and Eastern and Midland
NRDA	National Regeneration and Development Agency
NTA	National Transport Authority
NWRMS	Natural Water Retention Measures
NWR	Northern & Western Region
NWRP	National Water Resources Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORED	Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan
Peatway	Recreational and environmental trails through peatland areas
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PPNs	Public Participation Networks
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PLUTO	Planning Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040
PWS	Private Water Scheme
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment Programme
RAPJ	Regional Action Plan for Jobs
RBMPs	River Basin Management Plans
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zones
REDF	Regional Enterprise Development Fund
RFRA	Regional Flood Risk Appraisal
RPO	Regional Policy Objective
RPS	Record of Protected Structures

RRDF	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
RSES	Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy
RTS	Regional Transport Strategy
RWH	Rainwater Harvesting
RWSS	Regional Water Supply Scheme
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SDZ	Strategic Development Zone
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SFZ	Shannon Free Zone
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SIP	Strategic Investment Priorities
SKWT	Shared Knowledge Working Together
SMART	Sustainable, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.
SRA	Southern Regional Assembly
SR	Southern Region
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
TEN-G	Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure in Europe
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TUSE	Technological University for the South-East
URDF	Urban Regeneration and Development Fund
Urban Blue Corridors	Blueways are a network of multi-activity recreational trails, based on or alongside idyllic lakes, canals and rivers in Ireland. They provide scenic routes into the heart of rural Ireland by canoe, bike or on foot. Urban Blueway Corridors refers to an extension of these recreational routes within and through our Region's urban areas.
UWWT	Urban Waste Water Treatment
VR	Virtual Reality
WAW	Wild Atlantic Way
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WTP	Water Treatment Plant

Thank You!

Thank you to all those, including the Members and Staff of the Southern Regional Assembly (and Members who served in the 2014 to 2019 Assembly), Local Authorities, Government Departments, Public Bodies, Agencies, Community Groups, businesses, stakeholders and individuals who have contributed to the production of the RSES.



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