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11th September, 2020

**RE: Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 Pre-Draft Consultation
SRA File Ref: 20/005**

A Chara,

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) welcomes the publication of the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the preparation of the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the opportunity to consult with the Council under Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000).

The SRA makes this observation in accordance with Section 27 A of the Act which obliges the Regional Assembly to make submissions or observations regarding a number of matters including:

- Policies and objectives in relation to national and regional population targets.
- Distribution of residential development and related employment with a view to:
 - Promoting consistency as far a possible between housing, settlement and economic objectives of the Draft Plan, Core Strategy and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).
 - Assisting in the drafting of the Core Strategy of the Draft Development Plan.
- Objectives of providing physical, economic or social infrastructure in a manner that promotes regional development through maximising the potential of the Region.
- Planning for the best use of land having regard to location, scale and density of new development to benefit from investment of public funds in transport infrastructure and public transport services.
- Collaboration between the planning authority and the Regional Assembly in respect of integrated planning for transport and land use and the promotion of sustainable transport strategies in urban and rural areas.
- Promotion of measures to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to Climate Change.

The opportunity to engage with Waterford City and County Council through the pre-draft phase of the process is also important in relation to Section 22 (A) (3) of the Act which requires that public bodies (including local authorities) consult with the regional assemblies, as appropriate, when preparing its own strategies, plans and programmes to ensure that they are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional objectives set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Continued collaboration throughout plan development is welcomed.

The RSES was made on the 31st January 2020.

1.0 Overall Observation

The SRA highly commends the approach taken by the Council through the publication of the Strategic Issues Paper in association with the public consultation period.

The SRA commend the accessible nature of the publication, its focus on key issues and questions for Waterford City and County and use of visual images. The issues and potential future direction for change are clearly set out in the Issues Paper, which assists in effective engagement with the public and stakeholders on the direction for the next development plan.

At this stage of the process, the SRA intend to outline high level points. Appendix 1 provides a summary of some of the key Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) and Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan Policy Objectives (WMASP POs) that support the themes raised in the Issues Paper.

The final RSES should be consulted across the themes covered in the Issues paper as the Council moves to preparation of a Draft Development Plan. The RSES is available through the following link:

<http://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/regional-spatial-and-economic-strategy>

2.0 Ensuring Consistency with the RSES

Under Section 10 (1 A) of the Act, the development plan shall include a core strategy which shows that its development objectives are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework, the RSES and with specific planning policy requirements specified in guidelines under subsection (1) of section 28.

The following key areas of the RSES in chapters 2 and 3 are identified for attention.

Chapter 2 sets out the Strategic Vision and Strategy for the RSES. Section 2.2 ‘The Strategy’ and the associated Strategy Statements and Key Enablers are particularly relevant including in the context of securing funding sources for the delivery of the Development Plan. It should be noted that Strategy Statements and RPOs are aligned to the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF.

Chapter 3 references the settlement strategy and I refer in particular to Section 3.2 (Sustainable Place Framework) and Section 3.3 – A Tailored approach and the settlement typology set out in Table 3.2 including:

1. Cities – Metropolitan Areas - Waterford
2. Key Towns – Section 3.5 including Dungarvan
3. Towns and Villages – Section 3.6
4. Rural Areas – Section 3.7, and
5. Networks – Section 3.8.

3.0 The Key Challenge – Developing Waterford as a Regional City of Scale and a Metropolitan Area.

In identifying Waterford as one of five Cities in the state for targeted growth and the designation of a Metropolitan area around the City, the NPF has presented a unique opportunity for the accelerated growth and transformational development of Waterford, which needs to find strong expression in the new development plan.

The RSES adopted in January 2020 implements the NPF National Policy Objectives for the targeted growth of Waterford through the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (WMASP), which sets a high level strategic framework for the Metropolitan Area.

The Strategic Issues Paper addresses the challenge for the city when it states that ‘*growth will occur within the existing built-up footprint of the city, through brownfield, infill and regeneration sites*’ and

that *'this requires a development strategy to build up Waterford City's population and employment base'*.

In order to fully implement the RSES and MASP ambition for the growth, the new Development Plan will require a strong and distinct focus and emphasis on the Metropolitan Area with development objectives to reflect MASP policy objectives.

The Draft Development Plan should be informed by the Vision for the Metropolitan Area set out in the WMASP:

'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.'

The Draft Development Plan should also be informed the Guiding Principles and Key Enablers at sections 3.2, 3.3 and 4.0 of the WMASP in formulating the development plan policy for the Metropolitan Area. The WMASP sets out the following Guiding Principles:

- 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, 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 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, the, the history/heritage and tourist attractions of Waterford, Dunmore East and Tramore.
- Employment density in the right places– Reintensify 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 draft RSES 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.

In RSES Chapter 3, Section 3.4 addresses the key challenge for our Cities and Metropolitan Areas and sets out key Regional Policy Objectives to support their development:

- RPO 6 Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas
- RPO 7 Delivery and Funding – for strategic investment priorities
- RPO 8 Investment to deliver on the vision for Metropolitan Areas
- RPO 9 Holistic Approach to Delivering Infrastructure
- RPO 10 Compact Growth in Metropolitan Areas.

These key objectives are addressed in more detail in subsequent paragraphs.

In addition, Appendix 3 of the RSES sets out shared goals shared across each of our Region's cities and metropolitan areas to be applied to each Metropolitan Area and integrated in to the Development plan:

Goal 1 Sustainable Place Framework

Goal 2 Excellent Connectivity and Sustainable Mobility

Goal 3 Economic Engines Driving Regional 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

We note that the Strategic Issues paper engages with all of the themes addressed in the above Goals, which are intended to assist in the development of the overall strategy for Metropolitan Areas in Development Plans.

4.0 Core Strategy

The Core Strategy will be a key element in the Draft Development plan to apply in detail the ambitious growth rates for the Metropolitan Area and to determine the hierarchy of settlements and appropriate growth rates for the County. The importance of the Core Strategy and Housing Strategy in planning for population growth and meeting housing needs is highlighted in the Section on Population and Settlement Hierarchy in the Strategic Issues Paper. RSES requirements relating to Core Strategy are set out in Section 3.3 of the RSES and include RPO 2 – Planning for Diverse Areas, RPO 3 Local Authority Core Strategies and RPO 5 Population Growth and Environmental Criteria.

For the Metropolitan Area the population projections are set out at MASP Section 5.0, where the accelerated targets of **60% population growth to 2040** are set for the City and suburbs in the Metropolitan Area with a long term objective for an increased proportion of the population to live north of the River Suir so as to create a balanced and concentric Metropolitan Area. The population projections for the Metropolitan Area are for an increase of 14,610 up to a population of 74,464 by 2026 and a projection of 81,769 for 2031. Table 1 in Section 5.0 of the WMASP provides more detailed population projections in the two local authority areas and for the built-up area of City and suburbs.

The re-balancing of the City to the north of the River requires short term delivery of infrastructure (New Bridge Link to North Quays and Abbey Link Road) and the development of a medium and long term strategy to direct the physical development of the Metropolitan Area in support of additional housing and population growth north of the river.

As with all elements of Waterford MASP, the implementation of the ambitious growth targets for the Metropolitan Area will require close co-operation with Kilkenny County Council to plan for this scale of growth, secure investment in the necessary infrastructure and achieve an improved quality of life

and improved connectedness across the Metropolitan Area. The support of state agencies in the delivery of infrastructure will also be critical to the successful implementation of the ambitious growth targets for the Metropolitan Area.

The Draft Plan and Core Strategy should reflect the RSES Settlement Strategy for all other settlements in the County, which is set out at Section 3.3 – A Tailored Approach and Table 3.2 – Settlement Strategy. The RSES identifies Dungarvan as a Key Town with a significant sub-regional role and as a Gaeltacht Service Town for the Waterford Gaeltacht located nearby.

The Strategic role of Key Towns is set out in more detail at Section 3.5 in the RSES and at RPO 11. RPO 24 – Dungarvan identifies the key policy objectives and infrastructure requirements to develop its role as a Key Town.

After Waterford City and Dungarvan in its role as Key Town, the distribution of growth across the County's other towns, villages and rural areas is a matter for the Development Plan to address. The RSES does however seek prioritisation (see Section 3.6 Towns and Villages) in the growth allocation for settlements informed by guiding principles as set out under RSES Section 3.3. A Tailored Approach. These principles include:

- Existing scale of population, track record of performance, ambition and scope to leverage investment.
- Rate and pace of past development and extent to which there are outstanding requirements for infrastructure and amenities.
- Scale of employment provision, jobs to resident workers ratios and net commuter flows.
- An evidence base on the availability and deliverability of lands within existing built up footprints in the lifetime of the Development Plan (compliance with NPO 72 of the NPF).
- Extent of local services and amenities provided.
- Extent of sustainable modes of travel that can be encouraged.
- Accessibility as a service centre for remote and long-distance rural hinterlands.
- Environmental and infrastructure constraints.
- The appropriate density and scale of development relative to the settlement and location.
- Need for attractive, alternative options to rural housing within smaller towns and villages.

In Section 3.6 and in RPO 26, the RSES strongly supports the development of our rural areas, and recognises the loss of local services in villages and rural areas as a problem of regional importance and acknowledges the need for investment in towns and villages to reverse decline and attract enterprise growth. Initiatives supported by the RSES to assist renewal include:

- New homes in small towns and villages initiatives.
- Investment in town and village renewal initiatives to improve services and livability to attract population and enterprise growth.
- Coordination between Local Authorities, Irish Water and other stakeholders to deliver investment in water and wastewater treatment services (including Blue and Green infrastructure solutions).

Core Strategies in County Development Plans should identify areas under strong urban influence in the hinterlands of settlements. They will set an appropriate housing policy response to avoid ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas. New national guidelines for rural housing and development plans are awaited and will provide an important input to preparation of the Draft Development Plan when published together with a Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) to ensure a better balance of housing tenures to support revitalised towns and villages, achieve sustainable compact growth targets and protect the rural resource for rural communities.

The importance of our rural areas is highlighted throughout the RSES including, for example, rural economic development (see Section 4.5), and rural connectivity (see Section 6.3 RPOs 158 and 172) and we note the focus in the Strategic Issues Paper on the requirements for rural economies and communities.

The Draft Plan will need to demonstrate priorities based on the above RSES requirements and principles. In setting out the Development Plan Core Strategy to 2028, adherence to NPO 72 (a) to 72 (c) will be required to differentiate between zoned land that is serviced and zoned land that is serviceable within the life of the plan. When considering zoning lands that require investment in service infrastructure, planning authorities are required to include the reasonable cost estimates of delivering required services at both the draft and final plan stages.

5.0 Compact Growth and Regeneration

The RSES and MASP seek a dynamic approach to achieve Core Strategy growth targets and, as stated in the Strategic Issues paper, this requires ‘a development strategy’ to set out the approach the Council will take to achieve compact growth.

The RSES includes specific objectives in relation to compact growth and for Metropolitan Areas. In its preparation of the Draft Development Plan, the Council should implement *RPO 10 Compact Growth for Metropolitan Areas* with policies and actions to:

- 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.
- Identify strategic initiatives to achieve compact growth and regeneration.
- Consideration of Active Land Management Units with a remit to focus on the metropolitan areas and delivery of projects to achieve compact growth.
- Demonstrate partnerships with the Land Development Agency
- Support for the role of the Local Authority as a development agency to kick start regeneration.
- Deliver site briefs for strategic sites.
- Active initiatives to deliver renewal under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015
- Active initiatives to tackle derelict sites and under use of vacant property assets.
- Active initiatives for enhancing the public realm.
- Creation of data bases and systems for reporting progress and action across regeneration, development and infrastructure delivery.

For the Waterford the Metropolitan Area this will require detailed policy objectives to achieve at least 50% of all new homes in the existing built-up footprint of Waterford City and suburbs, focusing on urban regeneration, brownfield and infill development. This will require, for example, targeted approaches involving active land management to deliver new housing and mixed use development including lands identified in the Waterford MASP.

The MASP addresses Compact growth in Section 7.0 Housing and Regeneration at Section 7.0 with WMASP PO 8 supporting high quality compact growth and regeneration, promotion of well-designed high density residential developments and investment to deliver the comprehensive infrastructure packages to support compact growth. Key locations for delivering compact growth in the Waterford Metropolitan Area include the North Quays and City Centre. The North Quays SDZ now known as the North Quays Innovation District represents an opportunity to achieve multiple objectives including regeneration of former port facilities involving rehabilitation of brownfield land, the expansion of the city centre across to the North Quays via a new bridge and relocation of the railway station to form a new multi-modal transport hub. In the City Centre, Section 7.1 sets out criteria to develop a vibrant city centre including priorities for city centre consolidation and regeneration. Key MASP objectives to note are:

- Waterford MASP PO 8 - Housing and Regeneration
- Waterford MASP PO 9 - Vibrant City Centre
- Waterford MASP PO 10 - Development of the North Quays Innovation District / SDZ.
- Waterford MASP PO 11 - Strategic Residential Lands - to be facilitated by priority infrastructure
- Waterford MASP PO 20 - Strategic Employment Locations.

For Dungarvan and other towns and settlements, compact growth targets will be to achieve at least 30% of all new homes in the existing built-up footprint of settlements, looking at all opportunities for urban regeneration, brownfield and infill development. While Local Authorities are supported in targeting population growth of more than 30% in Key Towns such as Dungarvan, it is important to note that the nature, scale and phasing of growth will be determined by Local Authorities through the Core Strategy and should be subject to capacity analysis.

In this regard, Local Authority initiatives to deliver infrastructure led development and retrofit physical and social infrastructure are critical to improving the quality of life for existing communities in the Metropolitan Area and throughout the county, aligned with the principles of integrated land use and transport planning.

Through the RSES, Irish Water (IW) Investment Plans must align with the objectives and settlement strategy of the RSES and assist the strategic role played by Key Towns. Collaboration is required between IW and Local Authorities to agree phasing, water and waste water services to accommodate growth in a phased, sustainable manner.

6.0 Networks for Collaboration

The RSES recognises the importance of strategic transport and economic axis which can support economic collaboration between settlements.

The three Cities of Cork, Waterford and Limerick-Shannon are the engines of Southern Region's economy and the primary network for collaboration to drive balanced Regional Development and achieve the rates of population and employment growth envisaged in the NPF and RSES.

Preparation of the new Development Plan for the period up to 2028 is an opportunity to harness the combined strengths of the 3 Cities and their Metropolitan Areas. Section 3.4 and RPO 6 – Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas should inform the development of Waterford and the other two Cities as an alternative to Dublin and how the region can foster new partnerships to support Collaboration.

The Strategic Issues Paper highlights the strategic position of Waterford on an East-West Axis with the N24 Road/rail axis between Waterford and Limerick-Shannon (the Limerick and Waterford Transport and Economic network/axis) and onwards to the Atlantic Economic Corridor and the N25 linking Waterford to Rosslare Europort and the Eastern Corridor, Dublin and Belfast.

These Networks and Axis are recognised and supported section 3.8 and RPO 30 of the RSES and in WMASP Objective 2 – Driving Regional Growth WMASP Objective 7 –Regional Connectivity

Another potential inter-regional network opportunity is along the M9 road and rail axis to Dublin, Kilkenny, Carlow and Dublin. The establishment of the Technological University of the South-East (TUSE) with its major campus locations at each end of this axis could, for example, be an opportunity to forge new opportunities for collaboration and innovation through the development of the new University.

The RSES also identifies the economic role played by smaller scaled settlements for their surrounding rural hinterlands and the opportunities for sharing assets and opportunities (see RPOs 28-30) between different settlements to drive rural economic growth.

The SRA support initiatives through the Development Plan to harness the potential of such networks.

7.0 Placemaking

The Strategic Issues Paper makes important points about the how Placemaking can contribute to positive change in the economic vitality and attractiveness of our urban environments and includes key questions to directly engage with the issues about places where we live. This approach is strongly welcomed and supported by the RSES and MASP, which outlines objectives for Placemaking at section

3.9 and RPO 31 –Sustainable Place Framework, Section 4.7 - Placemaking for enterprise growth, creating attractive places to attract skills and talent and at Appendix 3 – Goal 1 Sustainable Place Framework.

The growth of compact settlements must be in tandem with infrastructure and facilities that enhances the unique identity and quality of life offer of different places. The need for closer alignment between where people live and work is signaled in the Introduction which frames the question around how to configure and organise for work and education so as to be more accessible from home.

Successful placemaking will require sustainable higher densities in our towns and villages to increase activity, support local services and support sustainable mobility.

The RSES supports 10 Minute Cities and Town neighbourhoods as a 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 services by connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services. Our urban communities will need sufficient densities to realise the potential of a 10-Minute Town and its benefits for placemaking. The Draft Development Plan should include measures to support opportunities for sustainable 10 Minute Cities and Town neighbourhoods and to develop good practice in the concept.

A strong emphasis on such initiatives in the Development Plan which links place-making policy to connectivity will be supported by RSES under:

- Section 3.9 Placemaking
- RPOs under Chapter 6 Connectivity
- Chapter 7 Quality of Life, RPO 176 -10-Minute City and Town Concept.

The SRA are a partner region in the EU Interreg Europe MATCH-UP project which aims to achieve significant improvements of modal interchange to foster low-carbon urban mobility. An outcome from the project is to set a framework of good practice to implement 10 Minute City/Town concepts successfully in the Region. The important role of Local Transport Plans to support place-making and to achieve more connected communities and this is further noted below in comments for Transport and Connectivity.

8.0 Economy and a Smart Region

The Role of the Waterford City and Metropolitan Area as a Regional Economic Driver and major employment centre in the region is highlighted in the Strategic Issues Paper section on economy and employment. The recognition of this role is supported and welcomed and the task for the Draft Development Plan, therefore, is to ensure that this role is developed around the unique strengths and opportunities of Waterford in delivering on RSES Strategy Statement 5 to build ‘a competitive, innovative and productive economy’

The RSES identifies Waterford and the other two Cities as the Region’s Economic Drivers which can drive the region’s economy with our Key Towns, smaller towns and villages, economic corridors and axis and rural development. The development of WIT into a Technological University (TUSE) will establish Waterford as a University City. The establishment of TUSE will be a catalyst for Waterford and the regional economy and, as identified in the Strategic Issues paper, *‘TUSE will increase the intellectual capital of the Region and be a key driver for innovation and entrepreneurship’* supporting enterprise and increasing the attractiveness of Waterford for Foreign Direct Investment and supporting its development as an international location of scale. The RSES identifies the establishment of TUSE as a Key Enabler for the Region at Section 2.2 – Strategy and this is supported in *RPO 184 – TUSE and MTU* and in the MASP at *MASP PO 14 – TUSE*.

The Strategic Issues Paper Issues also highlights this international dimension – recognising the importance of international trade and physical links through the Port of Waterford for the Region, the potential of Waterford Airport and accessibility to other regional ports and Rosslare Europort in particular.

The RSES Economic Strategy states that opportunities for economic growth will be achieved 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 and diversifying local and rural economies.

The Strategic Issues paper identifies the direct involvement of Council through its Development Plan in supporting attracting inward investment and job creation as well as the key role in facilitating infrastructure-led development. The RSES supports building a competitive, innovative and productive economy and greater economic resilience through the five principles that underline the RSES economic strategy (refer to Section 4.2 of the RSES) and which should be reflected in the economic policies of the Development Plan. These are:

- Smart Specialisation
- Clustering
- Placemaking for Enterprise Development
- Knowledge Diffusion and
- Capacity Building

It is important that the Development Plan's economic policies should integrate these principles to secure greater economic resilience across our Region so that opportunities for Smart Specialisation and Clustering can be harnessed. The Strategic Issues Paper highlights important questions about how to attract inward investment in the context of the new Technological University. This approach is welcomed and supported in the RSES, with regard to Knowledge Diffusion (RSES supports a Learning Region, developing skills, talent and access to life-long learning) and Capacity Building (capacity to bid for funding and to respond to emerging challenges).

The Strategic Issues Paper highlights the strength of tourism in the City and County, built around its rich heritage and natural environment and its importance for the local economy attracting 288,000 tourist visitors in 2018 and contributing €52 million and 509,000 national visitors in 2019 who contributed €111m. The theme in the Issues paper of Sustainable Tourism is welcomed and RSES addresses the tourism sector at section 4.6, RPOs 53 – Tourism, RPO 54 – Tourism and the Environment. In Section 8.5 of the WMASP, key actions are identified for Waterford including further development of the brand Ireland's Ancient East brand, supported by WMASP PO 18 –Tourism.

Another area addressed in the Strategic Issues paper is the impact of COVID 19 on the economy and how we go about our daily lives. Complementing the Council's concern about the economic impact of COVID 19, the three Regional Assemblies published the COVID 19 Regional Economic Analysis to inform policymakers at a local, regional and national level of the extent of economic exposure and resilience across Ireland. This is consistent with the key principal of building economic resilience as supported in the RSES (RPO 75 Anticipating Economic Structural Changes).

This report developed a COVID-19 Exposure Ratio which represents the total number of its commercial units that were operating in the sectors likely to be worst affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, as a proportion of its total commercial stock as of September 2019. The higher this ratio is for an area, the more likely this area is exposed to significant economic disruption.

The report shows County Waterford has a relatively low "COVID-19 Exposure Ratio", with 45.8 per cent of its commercial units operating in the sectors likely to be worst affected. The report indicated an Exposure Ratio of 45% for Waterford City (higher in context of other cities) and a relatively low Exposure Ratio for Dungarvan of 47.4%.

Supporting the delivery of actions under the South-East Regional Enterprise Plan, South-East Regional Skills Forum and in the Local Economic Community Plan are also important and should be supported through draft Development Plan policies.

Strengthened connectivity across the region (digital and transportation, especially with a focus on the efficient movement of freight) will enable interaction between regional economic drivers. This includes collaboration across the region between metropolitan areas, Key Towns and our network of towns and villages in addition to efficient freight movement between ports and airports (essential for an island open market economy). RSES Chapter 4 - A Strong Economy and Chapter 6 Connectivity both address the importance of digital and transport connectivity to underpin the Region's economic drivers.

The theme of Rural Economic Development in the Strategic Issues Paper is strongly supported in the RSES. The RSES supports diversity in the rural economy and innovation in the County's network of rural towns, villages and rural areas to ensure economic resilience and job creation. RSES Section 4.5 and RPOs 43- 50 set out key policy areas to support rural development including the need for digital and physical infrastructure and policies in support of rural innovation and diversification, for example, RPO 28 in support of collaboration/partnership in support of rural clusters such as Blackwater/West Waterford/Comeragh Uplands cited in the Strategic Issues Paper. The Strategic Issues paper also refers to energy production and the bio-economy and RPOs 56 to 58 are supportive of the development of the bio-economy and low carbon economy.

In relation to the County's extensive coastal locations, RSES supports development of the Blue Economy and RPOs 80 to 86 should inform Development Plan policies for coastal communities.

Digital infrastructure and smart technologies are critical enablers for economic and social revitalisation. A Smart Region, embedding digital technology across many functions to improve our quality of life, is central to achieving the RSES vision. The RSES specifically seeks to develop the Smart Cities concept and develop good practices for towns and rural areas as part of a Smart Region. Such initiatives will enhance our Region's competitiveness, attractiveness and economic resilience. Actions arising from the Council's emerging Digital Strategy should be strongly supported through Development Plan policy.

9.0 Transport and Connectivity

The Waterford MASP identifies integrated land-use and transportation as one of the key elements required for the transformation of Waterford to become a livable Regional City of Scale with a high quality of life.

The preparation of transport and mobility policies in the new Development Plan is a major challenge to represent the ambition of the NPF, RSES and MASP for Waterford City and for the County where the strategic policy framework for transport and mobility will have to address four distinct elements:

- (1) Policy for sustainable mobility and public transport improvements for a Metropolitan Area with a population increase of 60% plus to 2040 and increased urban area with an expanded population north of the River.
- (2) Improved regional accessibility by road and rail to/from the Metropolitan Area as the much larger Regional City will increasingly provide functions including public services for a wider regional population.
- (3) Improvements to local public transport services and sustainable transport modes for the Key Town of Dungarvan and for the wider county with improved connectivity from towns, villages and rural areas as alternatives to use of the private car.
- (4) Policies to support the Port of Waterford, Airport and the sustainable movement of freight through the County and to and from the Regional Ports

For the Metropolitan Area, the MASP sets out key objectives for the Metropolitan Area in WMPO 6(a) – Integration of land-use and transport and WMPO 6 (b) sustainable transport. These objectives should be incorporated into the Draft Development Plan to support enhanced connectivity across the Metropolitan Area and to improve North-South linkages.

The Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (WMATS) currently in preparation will add additional detail to the development of a sustainable transport framework for the Metropolitan Area, which will need to be incorporated into the Draft Plan.

Key Enablers to improve transport connectivity and support modal shift to sustainable means of transport are identified in the MASP at Section 6.1 and include major transport investment requirements including the relocation of the Railway Station located on the North Quays with more direct access to city centre; via a pedestrian/public transport bridge; future provision of an additional Downstream Crossing to provide an additional north-south link; a New Link Road from Abbey Road to Belmont to improve sustainable connectivity; and greater investment in the bus network and in a compact urban area like Waterford, the objective to develop sustainable travel options will require a strong focus on cycling and walking, making Waterford a more Walkable City.

In the Strategic Issues Paper section 'Transportation and Mobility' the emphasis on the integration of land-use planning and with the transport system is welcomed and supported. It is also recognised that the support of state agencies will be critical to the implementation of WMATS and associated transport infrastructure, as identified at WMPO 5.

RPO 151 "Integration of Landuse and Transport" and RPO 152 "Local Planning Objectives" underpin this approach. Successful integration of employment, housing and services with improved transport infrastructure is therefore a priority issue for the wider County beyond the Metropolitan Area and particularly Dungarvan, identified in the RSES as a Key Town with a significant sub-regional role. The SRA support the role of Local Transport Plans to be prepared for Key Towns and other settlements (RPO 157).

It is noted that the Strategic Issues paper sets out the need for 'an efficient and well-managed transport network that not only provides ease of access and movement but serves to improve the quality of life'. The RSES provides strong support for this approach at Section 6.3.3.2, which sets out the framework for Integration of Transport and Spatial policies, in the RPOs identified above and RPOs 160 to 163 and 174.

The RSES also addresses the movement of freight and the Regional Assembly will engage with Waterford City and County Council later this year in the development of a Regional Freight Strategy. In this regard, the RSES emphasises the need to improve connections to the major ports at section 6.3.4.1 and in RPOs 140 to 144.

The delivery of cycle routes and greenway and blueway corridor projects such as expanding on the success of the Waterford Greenway are cited in the RSES for regional support but of equal importance from a regional perspective are smaller, cost effective measures to enhance walking and cycling permeability within and between our settlements. RPO 174 especially is a strong support for Local Authority policy and actions to improve walking and cycling facilities within and between settlements.

RSES support for intra-regional rural connectivity and improvements to transport networks along the regions' national tourism corridors in Chapter 6 are important for Development Plan policy on strengthened rural connectivity. Road based transport is often the only viable mode for rural and peripheral locations. The Development Plan should ensure investment in road infrastructure is also framed in economic, social, environmental and sustainable transport terms (the opportunity to strengthen rural public transport and bus networks).

10.0 Marine

The opportunities for the Southern Region under the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) are significant, with Waterford playing a significant role for our Region to be a first mover under Marine Spatial Planning (RPO 78).

The important roles of the Tier 2 Port of Waterford as a driver for national and regional economic growth, in addition to Waterford's coastal network of Ports and Harbours including the National Fishery Harbour Centre at Dunmore East are supported by RSES objectives.

The important role of the seafood sector, coastal tourism and potential for offshore renewable energy, research driven clusters in Marine ICT and Biotechnology are all assets that will drive the marine economy of our Region. These sectors will be central to Marine Spatial Planning and revitalising rural and coastal communities. RSES Section 4.9.2 Growing the Blue Economy and Section 6.3.4.2 Our Regions Strategic Port and Harbour Assets are important supports to Development Plan policy on marine potential.

Specifically, a Waterford Harbour Planning Framework Initiative to be prepared through the coordination of the Local Authorities and key stakeholders is required under RSES objective 79 and Waterford MASP Objective 21. Development Plan support to progress this initiative is strongly encouraged to assist a strong role for Waterford and the Region in Marine Spatial Planning.

11.0 Green Infrastructure

The SRA welcome the emphasis on green infrastructure in the Strategic Issues Paper and recommend expanding the reference to Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) and also Nature-Based Solutions (NBS). As indicated on page 18 of the Strategic Issues Paper, GBI should be a key concept of a local authority's Development Plan, informing actions and strategy around economic development, infrastructure and placemaking, implementing innovative GBI solutions such as Integrated Constructed Wetlands as highlighted in the Strategic Issues Paper.

The SRA notes and welcomes the support for SUDs in the Strategic Issues Paper and supports the important role work of Local authorities in collaborating with appropriate stakeholders and infrastructure delivery agencies to seek opportunities to appropriately design, deliver and manage green and blue infrastructure.

The RSES promotes the recognition of 'services' provided by the natural environment at Section 5.2, where the term 'ecosystem services' is applied to the benefits derived from our ecosystem. The promotion of ecosystem services is evident in Urban Blue Corridors which 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 RSES promotes the guidance document, *Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment* published by Inland Fisheries Ireland which provides an integrated watercourse protection strategy. RSES also states that 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). Development Plan policies that support these good practices are strongly encouraged.

The SRA will welcome continued engagement with the Local Authority throughout the pre-draft stage to support these concepts and through RSES implementation and learnings from the EU Interreg Europe Blue Green City project. The SRA are a partner region on this project and through it, the SRA will seek to disseminate good practices and knowledge to improve GBI policy and improve the integration of GBI infrastructure in projects throughout the Region.

11.1 Metropolitan Open Space

For the Waterford Metropolitan Area, the development of GBI will be an essential element in providing for quality of life and placemaking so that our green and blue spaces and the links between them will create attractive new urban areas for a growing city.

The Waterford MASP also requires that a Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy is developed including the identification of a location for a new Regional Scale Park within the Metropolitan Area (Refer to WMPO 21). The Strategic Issues paper addresses this question directly to the public and this is welcomed. The development of a Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and

Greenbelt Strategy will clearly require close co-operation with Kilkenny County Council and this will be supported by the Regional Assembly.

12.0 Climate Action

The direction of change signaled in the Strategic Issues Paper demonstrate that climate actions are central to policy proposals for future generations to be incorporated into the draft development plan. This is welcomed and should be reinforced in the draft Development Plan by reference to the RSES, which places a priority on Climate Action as part of the strategic vision for the Region.

The strong body of work established by the *Waterford City and County Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024* is highlighted in the Issues paper. This is noted and the SRA recommends the inclusion of policies to reflect this strategy and the climate action priority areas set out in Chapter 5 of RSES - for decarbonisation, climate resilience and resource efficiency as part of a Transition to a low carbon economy and society.

The SRA also recommend support for the initiatives of the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs). This will align with RSES support to the role of CAROs under RSES RPO 88 which states it is an objective to ensure effective co-ordination of climate action with the Climate Action Regional Offices and local authorities to implement the Climate Action Plan, National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework in the development and implementation of long-term solutions and extensive adaptation measures.

The SRA also recommend an emphasis on proposals for smart and innovative approaches to waste management, promotion of the Circular Economy and opportunities in Biomass.

13.0 Heritage and Culture.

The SRA welcome the themes addressed in the Strategic Issues Paper section on Heritage and Culture. The RSES recognises the value of our built and natural heritage in creating vibrant communities and sustaining local communities including the Gaeltacht communities of An Rinn and An Sean Phobal. Section 7.2.2 and RPOs 191 to 194 sets out Regional Policy objectives for the cultural and creative sectors. Section 7.2.3 and 7.2.4 and RPOs 195 to 197 sets out Regional Policy objectives for Gaeltacht areas. Section 7.3 and RPOs 202 to 207 sets out Regional Policy objectives for natural and built heritage.

14.0 Inclusive Communities and Places

The SRA welcome the themes addressed in the Strategic Issues Paper section on Sustainable Communities and commitment to developing sustainable neighbourhoods that provide for the educational, cultural, sporting, childcare, environmental health and social needs of communities.

The challenge for the new Development Plan will be to address the community and social infrastructure needs and wider requirements for Education and Healthcare to cater for an expanding and changing population profile. Reference should be made to RSES policies for Healthy Communities at section 7.1.2 and for Childcare, Education and Lifelong Learning at Section 7.1.3. For the Waterford Metropolitan Area, MASP section 10.3 and MASP Policy Objectives 24 to 27 support working for social inclusion and diversity.

The RSES places a strong emphasis on education, skills development and life-long learning in sections 7.1.6 to 7.1.9, with a key enabler being the establishment of an inclusive Learning Region for urban and rural centres across our region.

For Waterford there is a specific objective to extend the UNESCO Learning City status to Waterford to maximise the opportunities for lifelong learning for all its citizens. This designation will build on the success of Cork and Limerick as UNESCO Learning Cities and their membership of the Irish Network of Learning Cities. Through access to learning for all, enterprise growth, social inclusion and work and job opportunities and our quality of life is enhanced.

In preparation for policy objectives in the Draft Development Plan, reference should be made to RPOs 186 – Lifelong Learning, 190 Lifelong Learning and Healthy Cities, MASP Section 10.2 and WMASP PO 23.

15.0 Environmental Assessment

The Strategic Issues Paper and Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report sets out how environmental considerations will be integrated into the review and preparation of the new City and County Development Plan through Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

The RSES is informed by extensive environmental assessments, contained in the SEA Statement, AA Determination and Natura Impact Report, which are available on the SRA Website. These assessments looked at environmental sensitivities for all parts of the Region and we would recommend that Waterford City and County Council review these document to inform the Council's own environmental assessments, including mitigation measures identified to address environmental sensitivities and constraints.

16.0 Other Comments

Appendix 1 further aligns the main themes presented by the Issues Paper with specific RSES RPOs and MASP POs to support the preparation of the Draft Development Plan.

Conclusion

The SRA welcomes the pre-draft public consultation and commend the Planning Department for the attractive and accessible presentation of the Issues Paper, including the discussion of key themes and the framing of questions.

The preparation of this next Development Plan comes at a critical stage in the development of Waterford with the establishment of a Metropolitan Area and national focus on Waterford as one of five cities identified for accelerated growth and development. The new Development Plan needs to provide a robust pathway to achieve the transformative change identified in the NPF, the RSES and the Waterford MASP.

The SRA supports the strategic focus and direction of change signaled across the main themes of the Strategic Issues Paper, which will meet the objectives of the RSES and MASP to enhance place making and quality of life in the City, Metropolitan Area, County and Region so as to attract people, jobs and visitors. Recommendations are provided to assist and strengthen the approach under themes raised and to strengthen alignment between the regional and local tier in the draft plan.

In providing our observations, the SRA have had due regard to Section 27A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

As the pre-draft process advances and details emerge for the Core Strategy and the distribution of growth targets within this development plan cycle of 2022-2028, especially through Housing Need Demand Assessment, the SRA will have further recommendations at the appropriate stages.

Further engagement between the SRA as a key stakeholder and the Planning Department of Waterford City and County Council in the development of the Draft Development Plan is encouraged. The RSES team are available for future consultation and for any clarification required regarding this submission and during the pre-draft preparation stages.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and the last name "Kelly" clearly distinguishable.

David Kelly
Director Southern Regional Assembly

Appendix 1

Alignment of Key Themes in the Issues Paper with RSES and MASP Policy Objectives

Population and Settlement Hierarchy

Refer to RPO 2 “Planning for Diverse Areas” which recognises the strategic role play by all areas, urban and rural and supports an overall strategy for the sustainable growth of our 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.

Key RSES Sections/RPOs for Waterford Settlement Hierarchy include:

- Section 3.2 Sustainable Place Framework
- Section 3.3 a Tailored Approach
- Table 3.2 Settlement Typology
- Section 3.4 focuses specifically on Cities and Metropolitan Areas
- RPO 6 Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas - and supports a collaborative intra-regional partnership approach
- RPO 7 Delivery and Funding – for strategic investment priorities
- RPO 8 Investment to deliver on the vision for Metropolitan Areas
- RPO 9 Holistic Approach to Delivering Infrastructure
- RPO 10 Compact Growth in Metropolitan Areas.
- Section 3.5 Key Towns
- RPO 11 Key Towns
- RPO 24 Dungarvan – Key Town
- Section 3.6 Town and Villages
- RPO 26 Towns and Villages
- Section 3.7 Rural Areas
- Section 3.8 Networks

Placemaking

Refer to RSES Chapter 3, Section 3.9 Placemaking, and the following RPOs which will support the initiatives of the Council:

- RPO 31 Sustainable Place Framework
- RPO 32 Rebuilding Ireland
- RPO 33 Housing Need Demand Assessment
- RPO 34 Regeneration, Brownfield and Infill Development
- RPO 35 Support for Compact Growth
- RPO 36 Land Development Agency
- RPO 37 Active Land Management
- RPO 38 Retrofitting Initiative Priorities
- Section 4.7 Placemaking for enterprise development
- RPO 61 Health Place Audit for Placemaking
- Chapter 7, RPO 176 “10-minute City and Town Concepts” and Good Practice example 10-minute city and town neighbourhoods at section 3.9

Metropolitan Area Development

The Waterford MASP sets out specific objectives to guide the growth and development of the Metropolitan Area which are addressed in the following sections MASP Objectives:

- WMASP PO 1 Waterford Metropolitan Area
- WMASP PO 2 Driving Regional Growth for the South-East
- WMASP PO 3 Investment to deliver the vision
- WMASP PO 4 National Enablers
- Section 5.0 Population targets
- Section 7.0 Housing and Regeneration

- WMASP PO 8 Housing and Regeneration
- WMASP PO Strategic Residential Development

Metropolitan Area Placemaking

The Waterford MASP includes the following section POs in relation to Placemaking:

- Section 3.2 Key Enablers/Priorities that will transform Waterford into a Regional City of Scale
- Section 7.0 Housing and Regeneration
- WMASP PO 8 Housing and Regeneration
- Section 7.1 Develop a Vibrant Urban Centre focused on Waterford City Centre
- WMASP PO 9 Vibrant City Centre
- Section 7.2 Development of the North Quays Innovation District
- WMASP PO 10 Development of the North Quays

Economy, Employment, Education

1) Chapter 4 and Section 4.2 sets out the economic principles of the RSES under Smart Specialisation, Clustering, Placemaking for Enterprise Development, Knowledge Diffusion and Capacity Building. Refer to the following sections/RPOs

- RPO 40 Regional Economic Resilience
- Section 4.7 Placemaking for Enterprise Development including:-
- RPO 61 Health Place Audit for Placemaking.
- RPO 62 Locations for Employment Development
- RPO 63 Skills and Talent
- RPO 64 Facilitate new business formation, growth and industrial re-organisation
- RPO 65 Attracting overseas entrepreneurs and maintain Irish entrepreneurs
- RPO 66 Monitoring and evaluating economic performance
- RPO 67 Enterprise and Innovation Support
- RPO 68 Regional Investment
- RPO 55 Retail and WMASP PO 19 Retail
- RPO 53 Tourism
- RPO 54 Tourism and the Environment
- WMASP PO 18 Tourism
- Section 4.8 sets out principles and RPO for building resilience and capacity building.
- Section 4.9.2 sets out principles and RPO to support the marine and blue economy

2) A key element of the RSES Economic Strategy is for Waterford (along with the other two cities) to develop in its role as a driver of regional economic growth.

Refer to the following sections/RPOs:

- RPO 6 Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas
- Section 4.4 - Our Region's Economic Engines
- WMASP PO 2 Driving Regional Growth for the South-East
- Section 3.2 Key Enablers to transform Waterford into a Regional City of Scale
- WMASP PO 3 Investment to Deliver the Vision
- WMASP PO 5 Investment Infrastructure & Digital Connectivity
- WMASP PO 9 Vibrant City Centre
- WMASP PO 10 Development of the North Quays
- Section 8.0 Employment and Enterprise
- Section 8.4 Effective supports and Infrastructure for Enterprise and Industry
- WMASP PO 12 A Smart Metropolitan Area and Strengths in attracting FDI
- WMASP PO 13 Economic Resilience and Clusters
- WMASP 14 TUSE (in support of economic development)
- WMASP PO 17 Enterprise Supports

- 3) Reference to the location of Waterford and its connectivity as a strategic asset relates to regional connectivity and international connectivity in support of economic development including links via the East-West Transport Axis to the economic corridors:
- RPO 141 Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)
 - RPO 142 Eastern Corridor (EC)
 - RPO 140 International Connectivity,
 - RPO 141 Regional Freight Strategy
 - RPO 145 Ports and Harbours Strategy for the Southern Region
 - RPO 146 High Quality International Connectivity – Ports
 - RPO 147 Economic Opportunities of Ports
 - Section 6.3.4.3 Our Region’s airports
 - RPO 166 Investment in Strategic Inter-Regional Multi Modal Connectivity to Metropolitan Areas and Economic Corridors,
 - WMASP Section 8.2 Development of the Port of Waterford (Belview) as a major International Gateway
 - WMASP PO 15 Port of Waterford
 - WMASP Section 8.3 Waterford Airport
 - WMASP PO 16 Waterford Airport
- 4) The theme of digital infrastructure supporting economic development and Smart Cities/ Smart Region are also strongly supported as follows:
- RPO 134 “Smart Cities and Smart Region”;
 - RPO 135 “High Quality High Capacity International Digital Transmission”;
 - RPO 136 “National Broadband Plan”;
 - RPO 137 “Mobile Infrastructure”;
 - RPO 138 “Digital Strategies”;
 - Waterford MASP Policy Objective 11 “Transition to Digital Future”;

Education

The RSES focus on Learning in the broader sense is represented by the Strategy for the Southern Region to become a Learning Region. Refer to the following sections and RPOs:

- Section 7.1.6 A Learning Region
- Section 7.1.7 UNESCO and the Southern Region
- RPO 186 Lifelong Learning
- RPO 190 Lifelong Learning and Healthy City Initiatives

Wider objectives for education, skills and talent are included in the following sections/RPOs:

- Childcare, education and Lifelong learning
- RPO 184 “MTU and TUSE”
- RPO 185 “New School Facilities”
- Section 7.18 Eolas Comroinnta Obair le cheile /Shared Knowledge Working Together
- Section 7.10 Skills and Talent
- RPO 187 Education and Training
- RPO 188 Regional Skills For a
- RPO 189 Further Education and Training

Learning, Education and Skills development are also key enablers for the Waterford Metropolitan Area with the specific objective for Waterford to become a UNESCO Learning City. Reference is made to the following sections MASP Sections/POs:

- Section 8.1 TUSE
- WMASP 14 “TUSE”
- Section 10.2 Development of the Learning City Approach for the Waterford Metropolitan Area
- WMASP PO 23 Lifelong Learning and Skills

Rural Economic Development

Refer to RSES Chapter 4 Section 4.5 Rural Development and the following RPOs:

- RPO 43 Rural Economy and EU Good Practices
- RPO 44 Common Agriculture Policy
- RPO 45 Action Plan for Rural Development & Rural Development Programme
- RPO 46 Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas
- RPO 47 Rural Partnership Models
- RPO 48 Innovation Hubs and Centres of Excellence
- RPO 49 Innovation in Rural Areas
- RPO 50 Diversification
- RPO 56 Low Carbon Economy
- RPO 57 National Policy Statement on Bio-economy
- RPO 58 Bio-economy and Rural Areas

Sustainable Tourism

Refer to Tourism is at the following sections/RPOs/MASP POs:

- Section 4.6 of the RSES
- RPO 53 – Tourism
- RPO 54 – Tourism and the Environment.
- Refer to Section 8.5 of the WMASP – Tourism and Retail and
- WMASP PO 18 –Tourism

Transportation and Mobility

The overall approach to Transport and Mobility to inform the preparation of the Draft Development Plan is set out in the Regional Transport Strategy at Section 6.3 of the RSES. Both the RSES and Waterford MASP set out transport priorities for the Waterford Metropolitan Area and support the implementation of infrastructure projects under the forthcoming WMATS.

- 1) Reference that support the development Draft Development Plan policies can be found as follows:
 - RPO 164 “Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies”;
 - Chapter 6 Section 6.3.6.5 Transport Priorities for the Waterford Metropolitan Area;
 - WMASP Policy Objective 5 “Investment in Infrastructure & Digital Connectivity”
 - WMASP Policy Objective 6 (a) “Integrated Landuse and Transport”; and
 - WMASP Policy Objective 6 (b) “Sustainable Transport”
 - WMASP Policy Objective 7 “Regional Connectivity”
- 2) References to strategic connectivity between metropolitan areas, economic corridors and freight are set out above under Economy, Employment, Education.
- 3) Strengthened emphasis on metropolitan greenways are supported by :
 - RPO 174 “Walking and Cycling”;
 - RPO 200 “Green Infrastructure and Recreation”;
 - RPO 201 “National Trails, Walking Routes, Greenways and Blueway Corridors”; and
 - WMASP Policy Objective 21 “Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy”.

- 4) Support for effective land use and transport planning integration, shift to sustainable modes is provided under RSES Section 6.3.6 Transport Investment Priorities. RPOs in support of the themes raised include:
- RPO 151 “Integration of Land Use and Transport”;
 - RPO 152 “Local Planning Objectives”;
 - RPO 157 “Local Transport Plans”;
 - RPO 160 “Smart and Sustainable Mobility”;
 - RPO 161 “Smart Mobility”;
 - RPO 162 “Multi-Modal Travel Integration”;
 - RPO 163 “Sustainable Mobility Targets”;
 - RPO 170 “Rail”;
 - RPO 171 “Bus”; and
 - RPO 174 “Walking and Cycling”

Principle Enabling Infrastructure, Energy and Communications

Water & Drainage

Refer to Chapter 8 Water and Energy Utilities and to the following RPOs:

- RPOs 208 “Irish Water and Water Supply”;
- RPO 209 “Strategic Water Supply Projects”;
- RPO 211 “Irish Water and Waste Water”;
- RPO 212 “Strategic Wastewater Treatment Facilities”; and
- RPO 213 “Rural Wastewater Treatment Programmes”.
- In relation to SUDs, please refer to RPO 122.

Energy

Refer to RSES Chapter 4 in relation to support the low carbon economy and bio-economy and the following RPOs:

- RPO 56 “Low Carbon Economy”.
- RPO 57 “National Policy Statement on the Bio-Economy”,
- RPO 58 “Bio-Economy and Rural Areas”

Refer to RSES Chapter 5 for Energy objectives connected with climate action, regional decarbonisation and renewable energy objectives:

References included in Chapter 5 Renewable Energy include:

- RPO 95 “Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation”
- RPO 96 “Integration of Renewable Energy Sources”
- RPO 97 “Power Stations and Renewable Energy”
- RPO 98 “Regional Renewable Energy Strategy”
- RPO 99 “Renewable Wind Energy”
- RPO 100 “Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection”
- RPO 101 “International Hub for Energy Innovation”
- RPO 102 “Energy Research Funding”
- RPO 103 “Interconnection Infrastructure”
- RPO 104 “Energy Storage and Carbon Capture”
- RPO 105 “Clean Electric Heat Technologies & District Heating”
- RPO 106 “Future Proofing and Retrofitting”

Refer to RSES Chapter 8 for RPOS in support of energy infrastructure including the following RPOs:

- RPO 219 New Energy Infrastructure
- RPO 220 Integrated Single Electricity Market
- RPO221 Renewable energy generation and transmission network
- RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure
- RPO 223 International Energy Interconnection Infrastructure

- RPO 224 Delivery of Energy Networks

Communications

In relation to Telecommunications and Broadband, this is addressed under the theme of digital infrastructure, Smart Cities and a Smart Region in RSES with relevant RPOs in Chapter 6 as follows:

- RPO 134 “Smart Cities and Smart Region”;
- RPO 135 “High Quality High Capacity International Digital Transmission”;
- RPO 136 “National Broadband Plan”;
- RPO 137 “Mobile Infrastructure”; and
- RPO 138 “Digital Strategies”.

In the Metropolitan Area, refer to WMASP PO 5 – Investment in Infrastructure & Digital Connectivity

Climate Change and Environment

The RSES is committed to implement regional policy consistent with the Climate Action Plan 2019. Important RPO’s in support of climate action and transition to a low carbon society and economy to reference include:

- RPO 87 Low Carbon Energy Future;
- RPO 88 National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework;
- RPO 89 Building Resilience to Climate Change;
- RPO 90 Regional Decarbonisation;
- RPO 91 Decarbonisation in the Transport Sector;
- RPO 92 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
- RPO 93 CNG & EV Infrastructure
- RPO 94 Decarbonisation in the Agriculture Sector;

RPOs which relate to Renewable Energy include:

- RPO 95 “Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation”
- RPO 96 “Integration of Renewable Energy Sources”
- RPO 97 “Power Stations and Renewable Energy”
- RPO 98 “Regional Renewable Energy Strategy”
- RPO 99 “Renewable Wind Energy”
- RPO 100 “Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection”
- RPO 101 “International Hub for Energy Innovation”
- RPO 102 “Energy Research Funding”
- RPO 103 “Interconnection Infrastructure”
- RPO 104 “Energy Storage and Carbon Capture”
- RPO 105 “Clean Electric Heat Technologies & District Heating”
- RPO 106 “Future Proofing and Retrofitting”

Heritage and Culture

Natural Heritage

- 1) Reference RSES Chapter 5 - good practices and RPOs in support of the River Basin Management Plans, Biodiversity and support for initiatives by the Local Authority Waters Programme. Refer to the following supporting RPOs which include:
 - RPO 110 “Ecosystems Services”
 - RPO 111 “Water Resources”
 - RPO 112 Water Quality”
 - RPO 121 “Effective Collaboration to Implement River Basin Management Plans”
 - RPO 123 “ River Basin Management Plan and Spatial Planning”
 - RPO 126 Biodiversity
 - RPO 129 Landscape

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

In relation to Green Infrastructure, refer to Chapter 5 and Chapter 7 and the following RPOs:

- RPO 117 “Flood Risk Management and Biodiversity”
- RPO 122 “ Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)”
- RPO 124 “Green Infrastructure”
- RPO 125 “Green Infrastructure Corridors”
- RPO 200 Green Infrastructure and Recreation
- RPO 201 National Trails, Walking Routes, Greenway and Blueway Corridors

Also Refer to MASP Section 9.1 and WMASP Policy Objective 21 “Metropolitan Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy”.

For Biodiversity refer to Chapter 5 and the following RPOs:

- RPO 126 “Biodiversity
- RPO 127 Invasive Species
- RPO 128 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Built Heritage and Archaeology

Refer to RSES Chapter 7 – Section 7.3.3 with regard to Built Heritage and Archaeology and the following RPOs:

- RPO 202 “Natural Heritage, Bio-Diversity and Built Heritage Assets”
- RPO 203 “Revitalisation of Historic Cores”
- RPO 204 “Better Public Access”
- RPO 205 “Built Heritage”
- RPO 206 “Architectural Heritage”
- RPO 207 “Archaeological Investigation

Culture

Refer to RSES Section 7.2.2 – Culture Heritage and the Arts and Section 7.2.3 Gaeltacht and Linguistic Heritage and the following RPOs:

- RPO 191 Cultural and Creative Sectors
- RPO 192 Cultural Policies and Objectives
- RPO 193 Collaborative Regional Partnerships
- RPO 194 Arts, heritage and Culture,
- RPO 195 Language Plans
- RPO 196 Gaeltacht
- RPO 197 Irish Language Networks

Sustainable Communities and Place Making

Sustainable Communities:

- 1) The Draft Development Plan should be informed by the following RSES sections/policies in support of delivering sustainable neighborhoods and community and social infrastructure, delivery of high- quality services for our existing and changing population profiles and a focus on retrofitting to provide high quality infrastructure and services to communities who experienced past high rates of growth, but without corresponding physical and social infrastructure.

Refer to RSES Chapter 7 Quality of Life and the following RPOs:

- RSES Section 7.1.1 Inclusive Communities and Places for further support on building resilient, sustainable communities and initiatives.
- RPO 175 “Improving Regional Quality of Life through Infrastructure Led Planning – to tackle legacies in infrastructure provision

- RPO 176 “10-Minute City and Town Concepts”;
 - RPO 177 “Childcare, Education and Health Services”;
 - RPO 178 “Universal Health Services”;
 - RPO 179 “Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society”;
 - RPO 180 “Volunteering and Active Citizenship”;
 - RPI 181 “Equal Access”;
 - RPO 182 “Ageing Population”; and
 - RPO 183 Digital Strategies.
- 2) The RSES places a strong emphasis on education, skills development and life-long learning, with recognition of a Learning Region status. RPOs for reference include:
- RPO 184 (support for higher education institutes and the new Munster Technological University);
 - RPO 185 “New School Facilities”;
 - RPO 186 “Life Long Learning”
 - RPO 187 “Education and Training”
 - RPO 188 “Regional Skills Forum”
 - RPO 189 Further Education and Training
 - RPO 190 Lifelong Learning and Healthy City Initiatives
- 3) Support for culture and arts in our communities is central to our quality of life. The development plan should integrate strong support to the culture and creative sectors (RSES Chapter 7 Section 7.2.2 and RPOs 191-194).
- 4) Support for parks, sports and recreation are essential for quality place making and our well-being and need strong policy support (RSES Chapter 7 Section 7.2.6 and RPOs 198-201).
- 5) Refer to the following Sections/MASP POs of the Waterford MASP in support of Sustainable Communities:
- WMASP Section 10.0 Social Infrastructure
 - WMASP Section 10.1 University Hospital Waterford
 - WMASP PO 22 University Hospital Waterford
 - Refer to MASP PO 24 Social Inclusion - including implementation of LECP actions
 - Refer to MASP PO 25 Healthy Cities
 - Refer to MASP PO 26 Community Infrastructure
 - Refer to MASP PO 27 Regeneration of Disadvantaged Areas.

Placemaking

Refer above to section on Population and Settlement Hierarchy for relevant references.