



Údaras Réigiúnach an Iar Dheiscirt
South West Regional Authority



Regional Planning Guidelines

2010 - 2022



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Preface

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000, the South West Regional Authority adopted and published Regional Planning Guidelines in 2004. Legislation requires that the Guidelines are reviewed by the authority within six years. This review covers the next strategic planning period from 2010 to 2022 and will again be reviewed in 2016. The review builds on policies adopted in 2004 and retains a strong focus on the realisation of the National Spatial Strategy.

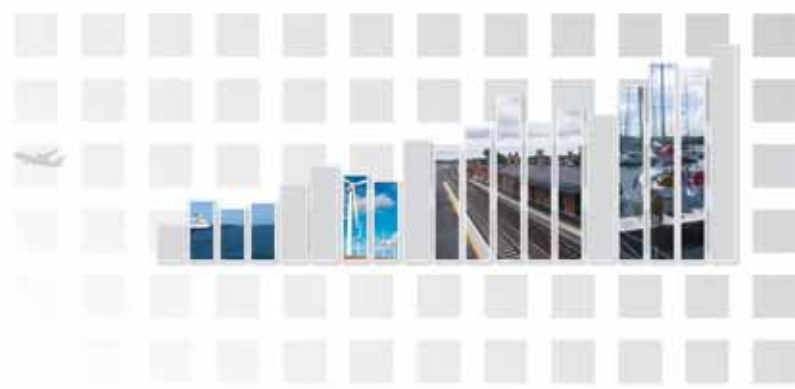
The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) formulate public policy for the region, covering Cork and Kerry, integrating land-use, transport, economic growth and investment, to enable the region to continue to grow as a sustainable high quality location for investment and one in which to live, work and visit.

The RPGs set out a series of recommendations to local authorities, which are clearly linked to and support national investment priorities and are designed to strengthen integrated approaches to policy making and planning at local level, in line with regional and national planning frameworks.

Sustainable growth is a key theme of the Guidelines, relating to the development and strengthening of the regional economy; the quantum and location of future housing; environmental improvement and sustainable living with a high level of service integration, all within the context of heightened protection of the region's biodiversity.

Delivery of these many aims requires a coordinated and increasingly integrated approach by the three principal local authorities (Cork City Council, Cork County Council and Kerry County Council) together with a range of government departments and state agencies among which are the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, the Department of Transport, the Department of Education & Science, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation, the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and the Department of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs, The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Forfás, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.

Forfás made very significant inputs to the preparation of the Regional Economic Strategy contained in Chapter 3 of this document and this has resulted in a closer integration of physical planning and economic development policies, to allow the South West to continue to retain and attract international business investment and importantly to foster growth in the indigenous sectors.



Executive Summary

The South West Regional Authority is the statutory authority for the South West Region of Ireland, covering Cork City and County and County Kerry. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires Regional Authorities to make Regional Planning Guidelines in respect of their region and to review the Guidelines at intervals not exceeding six years.

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) is a strategic policy document designed to steer the future growth of the region over the medium to long term and works to implement the strategic planning frameworks set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) published in 2002 and National Development Plan 2007-2013. The RPG sets out high level strategies, in line with the NSS and promotes the overall sustainability and growth of the region. The RPG policies inform and advise the Local Authorities in the preparation and review of their respective Development Plans, thus providing clear integrated linkages from national to local levels, in terms of planning and development policy.

The first RPGs for the South West Region were adopted in 2004 and set out a strategic framework for planning and development for the region up to 2016. This RPG review updates the 2004 document and looks forward to 2022. The RPG is due to be again reviewed in 2016.

The following summarises the various chapter in the guidelines.

Chapter 1 sets out the planning context at national and regional levels for the preparation of the RPGs. It examines the delivery to date of the 2004 Guidelines in terms of population, housing growth, economic activity, public transport, roads investment, port and airports, water supply, waste water treatment, waste management, natural heritage and environment, built and cultural heritage, open space and recreation, rural development and social inclusion.

Priorities for the 2010 RPGs are discussed identifying economic growth, linking of land use and public transport investment; the requirement for investment in water

services, energy, broadband and flood and environmental protection.

The Chapter ends with a summary of key development issues facing the region today and a definition of what is meant by sustainable planning and the role of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Directive Assessment (HAD) in the regional planning process.

Chapter 2 sets out the regional vision statement as follows:

“The broad vision for the south west region is to maintain and develop a sustainable and competitive economy, optimise the quality of life of its residents and visitors, protect and enhance its unique environment, culture and heritage.

By 2022, the South West Region will be realising its economic potential and providing a high quality of life for its people by meeting their employment and housing, educational and social needs in sustainable communities. At the same time it will reduce its impact on climate change and the environment, including savings in energy and water use and by strengthening the environmental quality of the Region.”

The delivery of this vision is set out in the Overall Development Strategy for the Region.

For the purposes of the RPG, the region is divided into four main planning areas:

- **Greater Cork Area** (comprising the Cork Metropolitan Area or Gateway and the Ring Towns and Rural Area in the CASP area);
- **Tralee/Killarney** Linked Hub area surrounding the functional planning area of the County Kerry hub towns;
- **Northern Area**- a combination of the northern parts of County Kerry and County Cork, which exhibit similar characteristics, and
- **Western Area** – a combination of the peninsulas of County's Kerry and Cork. The vision is also implemented through the relevant broad chapters



dealing with the economy, settlements, transport and infrastructure and the environment.

Chapter 3 is the Regional Economic Strategy, which sets out an overarching policy for future economic development in the region. The chapter identifies region strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for development and provides policies and objectives to steer economic growth up to 2022. This chapter was closely informed by the work of Forfás in the preparation of the Regional Competitiveness Agenda, for the South West, as well as by national strategies such as 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy' and 'A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal'.

The Chapter also gives guidance to local authorities on the quantum and type of employment expected in the region and the possible sustainable locations for further growth within strategic employment locations located in the Gateway, Hubs and main towns in the region.

Chapter 4 describes the Settlement Strategy for the region, having examined the pattern of past growth and housing trends. The chapter sets out the population and housing targets for each planning area in the region, to be incorporated by local authorities into their Development Plans through the Core Settlement Strategy.

The Chapter also identifies the numbers of households and calculates that an additional 91,857 housing units will be required, primarily in the Cork Gateway and regional hubs at Mallow and Tralee/ Killarney to accommodate the projected regional population of 795,000 persons in 2022. This guidance will assist local authorities in allocating land for residential development and other uses in their respective local development plans.

The Chapter also identifies the amount of land required for residential development by 2016 and 2022 so that local authorities can carry out detailed land availability studies on zoned land to identify adequacy of land in each area.

These studies will result in more reliable information on zoning land and ultimately lead to a more sustainable zoning pattern in the region in the future. Presently, as a region, there is an oversupply of zoned residential land for the 2016 plan period and local authorities are urged to identify areas where land supply can be managed more efficiently.

General policies and specific objectives are framed to guide local authorities in the identification and implementation of their own core settlement strategies in their Development Plans. In particular, there is guidance on the development of both urban and rural areas, supported by the provisions of the Guidelines on Sustainable Urban Areas and the Sustainable Rural Development Guidelines.

Chapter 5 sets out the key physical infrastructure needs for the region to ensure the sustainable delivery of the settlement and the economic strategy, providing an integrated framework for future of land use and national investment in infrastructure. The chapter also endorses the Smarter Travel national guidance and provides targets for modal shift in the region up to 2022. Important priority investments for transportation (public transport, roads, airports, ports, cycling and walking); Water, Waste Water and Surface Water Treatment; Energy & Communications; and Waste Management are identified.

Chapter 6 examines the landscape, environment and heritage of the South West region, its characteristics, assets, issues and opportunities. The region's landscape is recognised as one of the most valuable in the country. The need for a common approach to landscape assessment is demonstrated as is a more consistent approach to the management of landscape policies within the region. The Chapter also recognises that there are a number of important natural heritage designations of international significance. All local authorities will need to ensure that development proposals in their areas do not conflict with these designated areas under the requirements of the Natura 2000 and Bio-diversity Plans.



New legislation under the Water Framework Directive, requires more efficient management of waters under the jurisdiction of local authorities, who are encouraged to implement River Management Plans. Equally important in this chapter is the requirement for local authorities to manage the flood risk in their areas. It is a requirement for local authorities to implement the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. A requirement also exists for local authorities to identify possible areas of urban and rural poverty and social deprivation, potential for regeneration and to recognise the special needs of vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Chapter 7 describes the legal context of the RPGs and how they will be implemented over the six year period. It highlights the role of the RPGs prioritising investments in the south west and outlines the framework for ongoing monitoring of RPG delivery using a series of indicators and update reports.

Separate processes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) have been carried out as an integral part of the review and preparation of the Regional Planning Guidelines.



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Chapter 1: Context



Chapter 1: Context

1.1 The role and function of the regional planning guidelines

1.1.1. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000, and subsequent regulations Regional Authorities are required to prepare Regional Planning Guidelines and to review them on a six yearly cycle. The aim of Regional Planning Guidelines is to provide a statutory based long term regional strategic planning framework, which reflects national spatial planning policy and informs the development policies of local authorities within the region.

1.1.2. The first set of Regional Planning Guidelines for the South West Region was published in 2004 and is currently being reviewed. This review covers the period from 2010 to 2022 and will be due for a mid term review in 2016.

1.2 National Context of the South West Region

1.2.1. The South West Region of Ireland, comprising Cork City and the Counties of Cork and Kerry has an area of approximately 12,100 sq. kilometres. The 2006 census records the regional population as 621,130 persons. Cork City is the second largest city in the State and the Greater Cork Area (CASP area), with a population in 2006 of 377,596, is one of the most dynamic areas of modern Ireland in terms of education, research and development, internationally traded services and high-technology manufacturing. The region is the European Headquarters for many multinational corporations in the electronics, software, food pharmaceutical, bio-pharma and associated sectors.

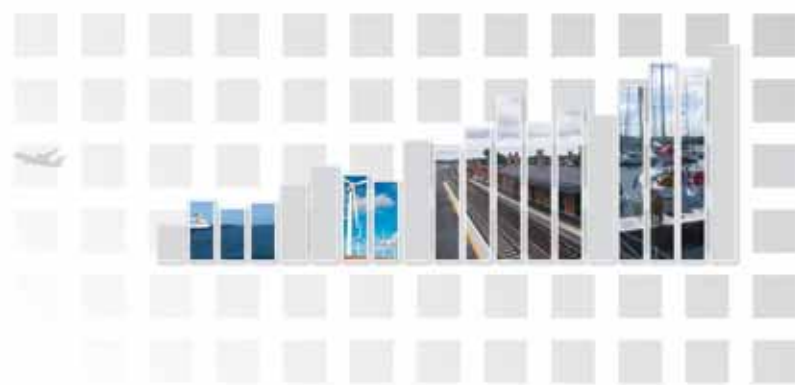


Figure 1: South West Region in national context

1.2.2. In terms of the overall national economy, the South West is a key player. This is based on high value manufacturing and other traded sectors, third level educational and research and also on the region's high quality scenic environment and rich culture and heritage, together with good national and international connectivity. This also makes Cork and Kerry the prime location for regional tourism in Ireland.

1.2.3. The aim of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to set out an overall strategic and sustainable approach to the future development of the region, its population and economic development, from the perspective of improving this region and the overall country as a location with the highest quality of life and an excellent location in which to live, work and visit.

1.2.4. Since the publication of the 2004 Guidelines a number of significant new policies and guidelines have been published which have influenced the formulation and direction of these reviewed Guidelines.



Draft Planning and Development Bill 2009

1.2.5. The draft Planning and Development Bill 2009 has significant implications for the role of the regional planning guidelines in framing the content of City and County Development Plans. The Bill stipulates that, in the future, Development Plans must contain a core strategy which shows how Development Plans and Housing Strategies are consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines and the National Spatial Strategy. Development Plans' Core Strategies must take account of national/ regional targets, urban settlement hierarchies and provide a policy framework for land use zoning at local level as well as other policy matters.

1.2.6. In this regard it is essential that this review of the regional planning guidelines for the South West region clearly set out national and regional planning policies and objectives as well as the population targets for the region in accordance with Ministerial directives and guidance. The RPGs aim is to establish a framework for the local level plans containing objectives and targets which are transparent and unambiguous for the purposes of preparing future core strategies.

1.2.7. Population targets for the region are set out in the Settlement Strategy in Chapter 4 of this volume. These targets have been further broken down into figures for Cork City, County and Kerry County. Significantly, specific targets are given for the Cork Gateway and Hub Towns of Tralee-Killarney and Mallow as well as the remainder of the regions planning areas.

1.2.8. Throughout the document there are policies and objectives outlining the planning strategy for the region. These are identified in objective boxes in each chapter. These objectives and population /housing targets should form the central tenets of the future core strategies of the Development Plans in the region.

National Development Plan 2007 – 2013

1.2.9. The 2007-2013 National Development Plan (NDP) sets out a roadmap for Ireland until 2013 and envisages that Ireland will undergo a transformation in its economic and social composition with increased emphasis on high value added activities and industries. The Plan addresses infrastructural bottlenecks, improving skills and education, creating and sustaining high value economic opportunities. The goal of the National Development Plan is to integrate strategic development frameworks for regional development, for rural communities, for all-island co-operation, and for protection of the environment with common economic and social goals. Funding for projects will be almost entirely sourced from national resources. It is noted however that since the NDP was developed, the international and national fiscal situation has altered dramatically and it is envisaged that this will impact on the level of available funding for the projects, impacting on prioritisation and timing of delivery.

1.2.10. The Plan sets out a strong framework for the promotion of regional development with a particular focus on investment in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) Gateway centres. Strong urban centres are strategic to regional growth and development, employment and wealth and quality of life in each of the Irish regions.

1.2.11. The key to sustainable regional development will be the efficient and timely targeting of NDP investment, especially in infrastructure. The Regional Planning Guidelines identify investment priorities in line with the vision for the South West, as set out in the National Spatial Strategy.

The National Spatial Strategy

1.2.12. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS 2002) is a 20 year planning framework designed to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development between regions. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) is undertaking an NSS Update and Outlook comprising a detailed analysis of



NSS implementation to date and ongoing challenges, effectiveness of planning and delivery mechanisms at central, regional and local levels and identification of critical investments necessary to grow the Gateways' and regions' economic performance and competitiveness. In view of the current challenges facing Ireland and planning for the medium to long term, the update and outlook focuses on how the NSS can contribute to economic renewal and competitiveness through:

- enhanced prioritisation of infrastructure investment
- strengthening governance arrangements in Gateways and
- improved integration of environmental considerations within the planning process.

1.2.13. Key concepts from the NSS are:

- that each area should develop to its full potential through the use of its various

natural, economic and social resources:

- that critical mass plays a key role in economic and social development. In effect, that size and density of population enable a location to enhance its services, economic activity and consequently, quality of life;
- and, those linkages supported by highly efficient public transport and modern Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are critical in enabling areas of the region to develop to their full potential.

Transport 21

1.2.14. Transport 21 (2006-2015) forms part of the NDP and comprises an investment programme for the development of the national road network, public transport and airports. It aims to expand capacity, increase public

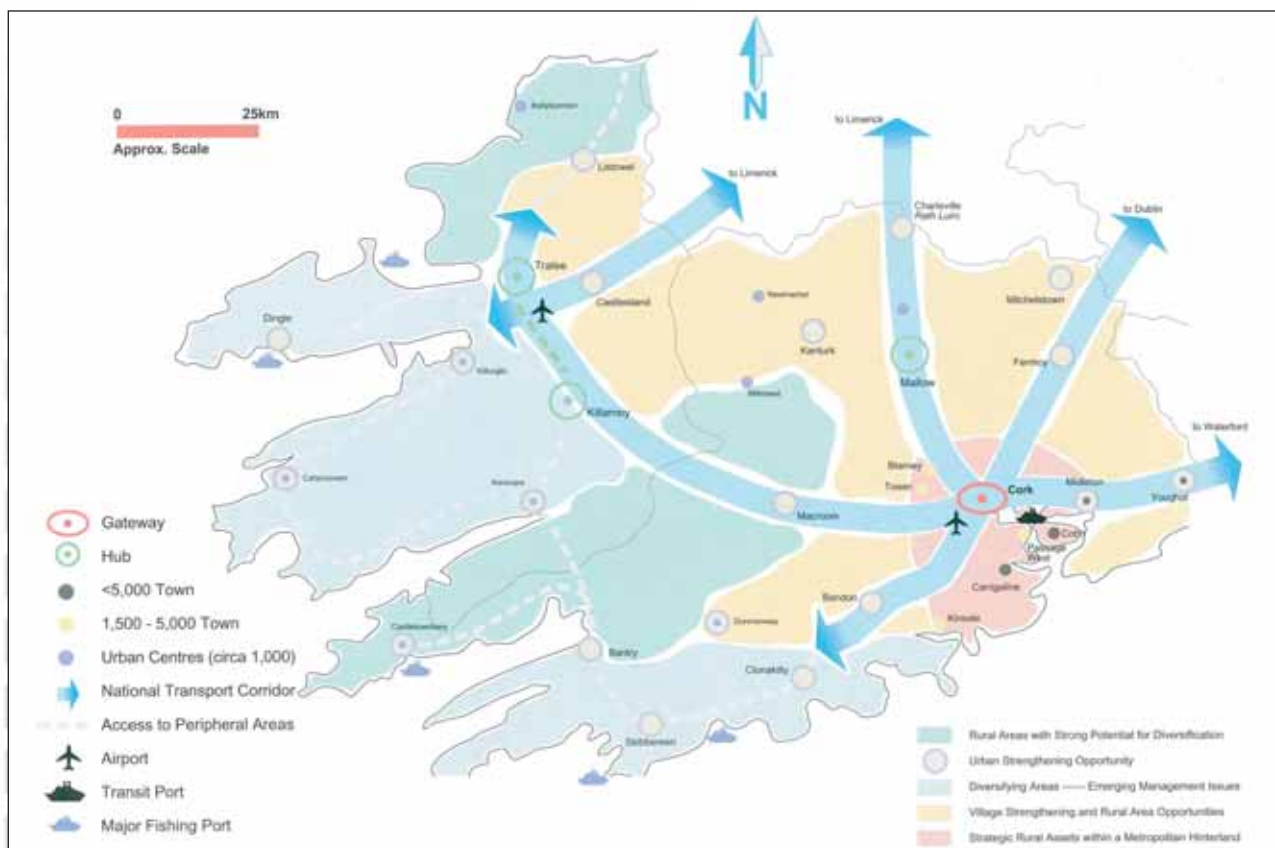


Figure 2: National Spatial Strategy: South West Region



transport use, increase accessibility and integration, enhance quality and ensure sustainability.

1.2.15. Major infrastructure to be delivered under Transport 21 includes the completion of the Major Inter-urban network and the remaining stages of the Cork Suburban Rail Network, improvement within the Bus fleet as well as investments at the Regional Airports. Future Transport 21 priorities will include the completion of the Atlantic Road Corridor, as well as other key national primary routes and the targeted improvement of certain national secondary routes’.

Smarter Travel

1.2.16. Smarter Travel (Department of Transport, 2009) is a policy document which sets out a broad vision for the future and establishes objectives and targets for transportation. The document examines past trends in population and economic growth and transportation and concludes that these trends are unsustainable into the future. The main objectives are to reduce dependency on car travel and long distance commuting, increase public transport modal share and encourage walking and cycling, in line with national policies such as the National Cycle Policy Framework.

1.2.17. The aim is that by 2020 future population and economic growth will have to predominantly take place in sustainable compact urban and rural areas which discourage dispersed development and long commuting. The document sets out ambitious targets which involve a complete turnaround on current trends. It is envisaged that these targets will be achieved through a number of key actions which can be grouped into four main areas:

- Actions to reduce travel by private car and encourage smarter travel
- Actions to provide alternatives to the private car
- Actions aimed at improving fuel efficiency
- Actions aimed at strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets.

The National Climate Change Strategy

1.2.18. Under the Kyoto Agreement Ireland is legally bound to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to protect the environment. The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-12 sets out a programme of actions for achieving this reduction. The main focus is on reducing transport emissions, encouraging renewable energy sources, changes in agricultural practices and changes in waste disposal policies and plans. The strategy both feeds into and is reinforced by other national level policies including Smarter Travel, the National Energy Efficiency Plan, the NDP and the National Energy Policy.

The Atlantic Gateways Initiative

1.2.19. This is a Government initiative aimed at improving linkages and cooperation between the ‘Gateway’ cities of Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford, and together with the intervening Hubs of Mallow and Ennis, and nearby Hub of Tralee/Killarney developing an economic zone with the critical mass of population, educational facilities, employment opportunities and recreational facilities, capable of achieving greater sustainability than the Greater Dublin Region and promoting location choice and appropriate balance in the delivery of jobs, services and opportunities.

National Energy Policy

1.2.20. The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009–2020 sets out a strategy to reduce Ireland’s dependence on imported fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency across a number of sectors and ensure a sustainable energy future. Improving our energy efficiency is a key step in a sustainable energy policy. Energy efficiency is internationally recognised as the most cost-effective means of reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The Government’s energy policy framework for the period 2007–2020 incorporates this goal at its heart and is designed to steer Ireland towards a new and sustainable energy future; one that helps to increase security of supply, makes energy more affordable, improves national competitiveness and reduces our greenhouse gas emissions.



1.2.21. Other key policy documents which have informed Guidelines policy on energy are the South West Regional Bioenergy Strategy (South West Regional Authority 2009), Eirgrid 25 (2008) dealing with the national network and the National Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) published by the DEHLG.

National Sustainable Development Strategy

1.2.22. The DEHLG is currently preparing a renewed National Sustainable Development Strategy which is intended to replace the first strategy Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland (1997) and Making Ireland's Development Sustainable (2002).

1.2.23. The principal goals and policies defined in the Document "Sustainable Development – A strategy for Ireland" will continue to inform the development of policies in the area of environmental protection and sustainable development into the future.

Strategic Assessments

1.2.24. The Regional Planning Guidelines are subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Directive Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment. Full consideration has been given to the incorporation of these assessments into the process of developing the Guidelines, details of which are set out in the Appendices.

Other Government Guidelines

1.2.25. The Regional Planning Guidelines are obliged to have regard to government guidelines in setting out a framework for the development of the region. These guidelines include the following:

- Landscape and Landscape Assessment
- Retail Planning Guidelines
- The Provision of Schools and the Planning System
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines
- Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines

- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.

Local Development Plans

City and County Development Plans

1.2.26. The Regional Planning Guidelines are intended to form strategic guidance documents for the future of the South West Region. The Guidelines are intended to inform the future reviews of the city and county development and local level plans in Cork and Kerry. All three authorities have recently published new county/city development plans, 2009 -2015. These documents have also informed elements of this review of the regional planning guidelines.

Other Strategic Plans

1.2.27. The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) 2001 - 2020 is a joint strategic planning initiative by the local authorities and other transport and infrastructural providers in the Cork Area. CASP was updated in 2008 and these guidelines have taken account of its conclusions.

1.2.28. At sub-regional level a number of other important strategic documents have been produced such as the North and West Cork Strategic Plan. The Tralee and Killarney Hub area is covered by the Kerry Hub Strategy and Kerry Hub Settlements Plan. These documents have acted as inputs in the overall consideration of the RPG Review.

Other Plans

1.2.29. Other influential documents include the Regional Tourism Development Plan 2008-20 (Fáilte Ireland South West), the City and County Development Board Strategies, the draft River Basin Management Plans, Housing Strategies, Retail Strategies, Heritage Plans, Biodiversity Plans and Waste Management Plans.



Figure 3: Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) Update 2008

1.3 The Regional Profile

1.3.1. Physical, social and economic profile

The South West of Ireland is characterised by its broad diversity of social, cultural, economic, physical and environmental assets. The region, comprises the 'Gateway', which is defined as Cork City and the Metropolitan Area in County Cork, and includes the 'Hub' towns of Mallow in County Cork and Killarney/Tralee 'Hub' in County Kerry. Its inhabitants enjoy an attractive choice of places to live and work ranging from modern urban settings to smaller rural towns & villages or isolated farms in mountain areas and islands.

1.3.2. The region has an established reputation as an attractive area, with a highly developed, modern, high-technology-based economy and excellent 3rd and 4th level education and research opportunities, supported by a high-quality environment, where its residents and visitors enjoy an attractive city and towns, beautiful landscapes

and a unique depth of cultural heritage. The past decade has witnessed sustained investment in new roads, new and refurbished railways, water services, telecommunications and related infrastructure.

Population Growth

1.3.3. With 621,130 persons recorded in the 2006 Census, the region has the second largest population in the state after Dublin. Table 2.1 below illustrates the population changes experienced throughout the South West Region during the period 2002 – 2006. Whilst overall population growth for the region was strong in recent years at 7.03%, this rate of growth was less than the average for the state (8.24%) for the same period. In fact, the South West Region has performed consistently below national population growth rates (e.g. 86% of the national rate in the period 1991-06).

1.3.4. At a sub-regional level the region experienced variations in population growth over the 2002-2006. The Greater Cork Area (C.A.S.P. area) as a whole recorded



population growth broadly in line with the National average at just over 8%. However, within that area there were wide disparities. The population of Cork City fell by just under 3% whilst the surrounding Metropolitan area recorded a relatively high rate of growth within the region at over 14%. Therefore the Gateway as a whole grew at a rate of 11.1% over the intercensal period.

1.3.5. In 2002, almost 74% of the population in the Greater Cork Area lived in the Gateway, while by 2006, the percentage of population located in Gateway had fallen to 71%, showing that there was proportionally more growth

in the CASP Ring Area than the Gateway. Although starting from a relatively small population base, the hub town of Mallow recorded the third fastest growth of all the hubs with population growth of over 14%. The remaining ring towns and rural areas in the Greater Cork Area also grew strongly at over 14%. Although not shown in table 1.1, it is of concern that the villages and rural areas within CASP Ring area of the Greater Cork Area recorded a higher growth rate than the urban areas.

1.3.6. As a consequence, high rates of development in the villages and rural areas in the CASP Ring area have

Table 1.1 Population Change 2002-2006

Planning Area	2002	2006	Growth	Percent
Cork City	123,062	119,418	-3,644	-3.0
County Metropolitan	134,293	153,123	18,830	14.0
Cork Gateway	257,355	272,541	15,186	6
CASP Ring (excl Mallow)	83,096	94,814	11,718	14.1
Mallow Hub Town	8,937	10,241	1,304	14.6
Greater Cork Area	349,388	377,596	28,208	8.1
Tralee Killarney Hub	34,624	36,683	2,059	5.9
Villages and Rural	32,920	35,933	3,013	9.2
Total Linked Hub Area	67,544	72,616	5,072	7.5
Total Northern Area	77,959	81,459	3,500	4.5
Total Western Area	85,465	89,459	3,994	4.7
Total SW Region	580,356	621,130	40,774	7.0



contributed to unnecessarily low growth rates for the Gateway (mainly the City), thereby resulting in excessive car-based commuting in order to access employment, shops and other services.

1.3.7. This trend, if allowed to continue, represents a significant weakening of the urban structure of the Cork Gateway, itself the urban-core on which the South West Region depends. If not corrected, this trend may cause a weakening in the attractiveness of the Gateway to inward investment in future jobs and services. In part, the problem is related to the long lead times for strategic Gateway infrastructure which have prevented key areas, such as the Cork Docklands, from attracting population growth to the City.

1.3.8. In the Killarney/Tralee Linked Hub Area (functional area), overall population growth (7.5%) was only modestly behind the overall growth achieved in Greater Cork Area. However there was a disproportionate growth between the villages and rural areas in the Area (9.2%) compared to the actual growth of the urban areas of Tralee and Killarney (5.9%), showing a similar pattern as was experienced in the Greater Cork Area. Between 2002 and 2006, 59% of

the population growth occurred in the villages and rural areas of this functional area and as a consequence the urban population had fallen to below 50% by that date.

1.3.9. As with the trend in the Greater Cork Area, if allowed to continue this represents a weakening of the urban structure of the Killarney/Tralee Hub Area. Although on a smaller scale, this trend is likely to have adverse effects on the functional area similar to those referred to in respect of Greater Cork.

1.3.10. In the remainder of the County Areas, there has been a below average growth of population of between 4.5 and 4.7 % between 2002 and 2006. Although not shown in the table, the census has confirmed that since 2002 74% of population growth in both the Western and Northern Areas has occurred outside of the main towns. Some of the existing plans for these areas are based on securing future growth that is equally balanced between the towns and the villages/rural areas. This approach aims to ensure that both urban and rural areas achieve their full economic and social potential.

Economic Performance

1.3.11. To assist the Regional Authority in the development of its regional economic analysis and in the formation of future regional economic development scenarios, Forfás, which is Ireland's national policy advisory body for enterprise and science, has completed a Regional Competitiveness Agenda. This report, which is available as an accompanying document to the Regional Planning Guidelines, has informed this section.

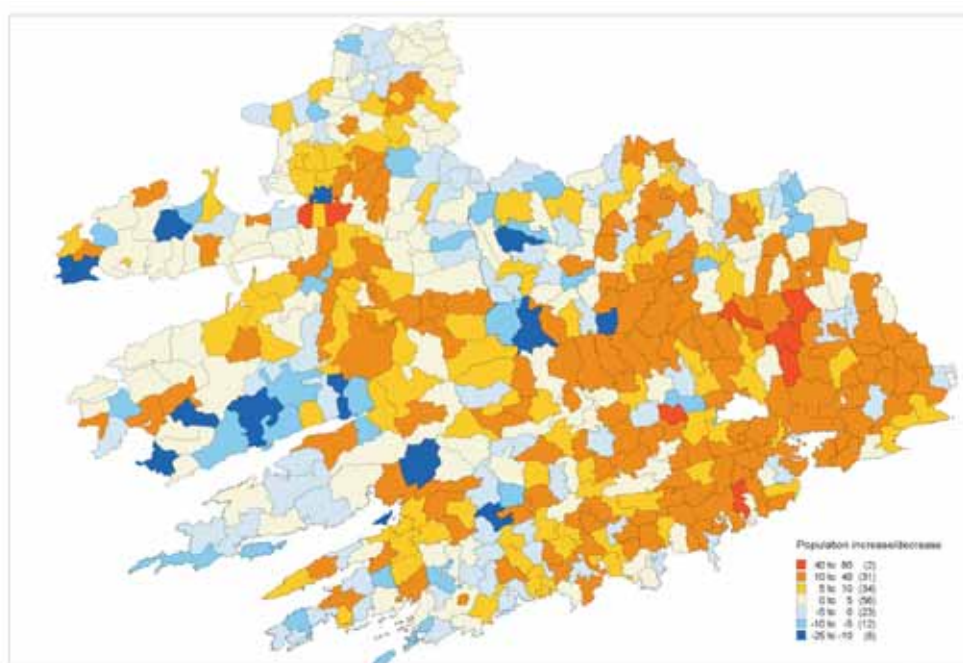


Figure 4: Population Change Map 2002 - 2006



1.3.12. Nationally, the ten years up to 2007 was a period of very strong employment growth, with an increase in employment from 1.46m to 2.14 m people. The South West has emerged as one of the country's wealthiest regions, in terms of GDP per capita. Strong growth rates in both the level of employment and output have occurred above the national average. This is due in part to a large cohort of high value industries, particularly in the life science sector which results in the region's workers having the highest output in terms of GVA (gross value added) in the country.

1.3.13. In 2007, there were 306,700 people employed in the region. In terms of absolute employment the public sector was the largest employer (22%), while the manufacturing sector was the second largest employer (15.1%) followed by construction (14.4%) and wholesale /retail (13.7%). Four sectors employed more than 5,000 people each in the South West in 2007. These were food, chemicals, (including pharma-chem), computer, and electronics products and information and communication services. Other sectors which grew in this period include the medical devices sector which grew from a low base to become a regionally significant employer.

1.3.14. The primary production employment sector (agriculture, forestry, fishing) accounted for 12% of the workforce in the region in 1998 but this has declined to 7% in 2007, a decline of 13.5% marginally lower than the national average.

1.3.15. The South West Region is the only region in Ireland where output from the manufacturing sector exceeds the value of output from the services sector. Manufacturing accounts for 54% of GVA while services add 44%. It should however be noted that the services sector grew by 70 % between 2000 and 2005 compared to manufacturing growth of 47 % in the same period.

1.3.16. Despite this overall picture of a prosperous and successful economy, within the region itself, there are disparities in economic performance. It is significant that the majority of the successful, high-value, high-technology

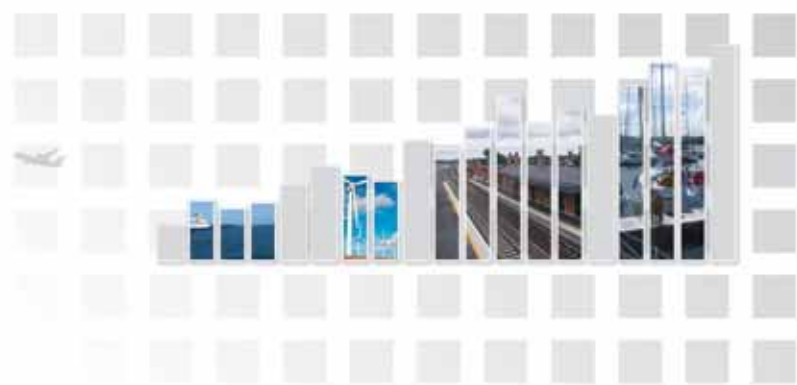
businesses are based in the Greater Cork Area; particularly in locations within the Cork Gateway itself. Indeed the penetration of this type of business into the other urban locations in the region, including the Mallow and Killarney/Tralee Hubs has been poor. There are notable differences in performance in terms of employment and wealth creation between Cork and Kerry, and indeed between Greater Cork and the remainder of the county. There are also marked differences in disposable income levels between Cork and Kerry. Cork has 99% of the national average income compared with Kerry at 86%, with the region as a whole recording disposable income levels at 96% of the national average.

1.3.17. There are some notable examples (such as the Clonakilty Enterprise Park in West Cork, Fexco in Killorglin and Caherciveen, County Kerry) where modern office based industry has successfully located in a more remote rural location, but the general trend is that these areas continue to rely on the traditional economic sectors of agriculture/fishing, tourism and construction. As a result, there has been a significantly lower rate of increase in general prosperity in these areas.

1.3.18. The region is facing an unprecedented challenge against the backdrop of a world recession and these guidelines will be operating within tough budgetary and fiscal constraints. Furthermore the growth and development that has occurred in the region to date has not been balanced across the region. Recent trends in employment show significant losses particularly in the construction sector. In particular Tralee has suffered from a significant reduction in its industrial base with a number of large companies and industries closing in recent years.

Skills and Innovation Capacity

1.3.19. The region has a relatively high educational attainment (over 28% of the population possessed a third level qualification in 2006), perhaps reflective of the demand for highly skilled workers in many industries and of the fact that the region is excellently served in terms of higher education, with a University and two large Institutes



of Technology, the Tyndall Institute and other specialist research facilities. It also has a lower than average number of early school leavers. These indicators of higher than average educational attainment are considered to have played a key role in the decision of many of the new technology industries to locate in the South West and, clearly, the maintenance of educational standards and facilities across the region is a critical factor for the future.

1.3.20. The region has significant capacity for research and innovation. The main Institutions with research capacity are;

- University College Cork;
- Cork Institute of Technology;
- Tralee Institute of Technology;
- The National Maritime College at Ringaskiddy; and
- Teagasc Moorepark Research Centre, Fermoy.

1.3.21. Over the period 2005-2006, University College Cork attracted more research funding than any other third level institution in the state. A Regional Innovation Cluster has been established by the South West Regional Authority as a mechanism to develop stronger and more active linkages between Research, Industry and State, Regional and Local Development Agencies and to foster a greater culture of innovation throughout the South West. The region performs well in terms of Higher Education Research and Development (HERD). However Business Expenditure on Research and Development (BERD) is not as positive, while approximately in line with other regions outside of Dublin, given the south West's very large base of high-value industries, there should be significant potential to achieve a higher R&D and innovation performance at firm level.

Transportation and Infrastructure

1.3.22. There have been significant investments in public transport and road infrastructure within the region and connecting into other regions in recent years:

1.3.23. Public Transport Investments have been made in the following:

- The most significant investment in local public transport has been the upgrading of the Cork Suburban rail network including the reopening of the disused line to Midleton.
- Upgrading of railway track, rolling stock, signalling and timetabling of the Cork-Mallow-Dublin; Mallow-Killarney-Tralee, Cork-Cobh
- New passenger terminal, Cork Airport.
- The Bus Éireann station at Parnell Place in Cork operates more than 300 services per day with passenger movements in excess of 3 million per annum. Developments in bus services have included Improved and Integrated bus services -improvements to the Bus Eireann fleet and in the development of green routes/ bus corridors in Cork City since 2004
- Improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure - within Cork City making the City Centre a much more attractive environment for citizens and visitors. However, cycling facilities, throughout the region including the main urban centres are still only nominal in their extent and nature.

1.3.24. Road Infrastructure Investments

- Completion of N25/N22 Ballincollig By-Pass, Cork.
- Completion of N25 Kinsale Road Interchange
- Completion of N25 Youghal By Pass
- Construction of the of M8 Motorway Cork-Dublin
- Improvement to N21 Tralee- Limerick
- Improvement of N22 Tralee- Farranfore
- Upgrading N23 Farranfore-Castleisland

1.3.25. This significant, but as yet incomplete, investment programme has focussed on the inter-urban routes linking the Cork Gateway and the Hubs to the other urban centres and regions in the state.



1.3.26. Major roads infrastructure to be delivered includes (not in order of priority) :

Note: The inclusion of these projects in the RPGs is a prelude to their inclusion in development plans (where this has not already happened), it must be noted that RPG endorsement is always subject to EIA and appropriate assessment (where relevant) of individual projects

- The completion of the M8 Cork - Dublin Motorway
- Cork Docklands Road and Bridge infrastructure
- The remaining stages of the Cork Suburban Rail Network
- The Atlantic Corridor linking Waterford- Cork - Limerick –Galway including
 - o The Cork Northern Ring Route
 - o M20 Cork-Mallow-Limerick
 - o Upgrading of N25 Cork-Waterford
- The N28 servicing the major industrial developments at Ringaskiddy,
- The N22 which is the regional internal and strategic economic corridor connecting the Tralee/ Killarney linked Hub with the Cork Gateway,
- The N21 linking the Tralee/Killarney Hub to the Limerick Gateway; and
- The N25 flyovers within Cork City.

1.3.27. Clearly continued investment is required in the encouragement of walking and cycling. Although there has been some recent success in providing new cycling facilities assisted by recent Government funding initiatives, many parts of the region's urban areas and its rural settlements still lack basic facilities that would allow many local journeys to be made conveniently by these modes.

1.3.28. A significant level of investment has taken place in water supplies through the Water Services Investment programme and the Rural Water Programme of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government. Significant investment has also been made in the waste water infrastructure in the region, particularly in the completion of the waste water treatment plant at

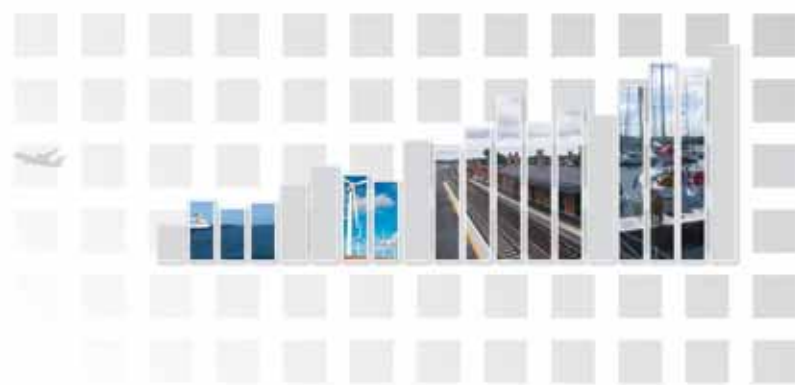
Carrigrennan, Little Island, serving Cork City and its environs. A considerable level of investment remains to be undertaken in the augmentation of water and sewerage supply and treatment plants in the Gateway and Hubs. A considerable number of other settlements including those located at coastal locations also require upgrading in terms of waste water treatment to ensure conformity with National and European Environmental Protection Regulations.

1.3.29. Aspects of the waste management strategies in the three local authority areas are progressing satisfactorily, in particular the engineered residual landfill facilities in both counties, there are however economic issues to be addressed in the operation of waste management. Progress is required on the development of a materials recovery facility to service Cork City and County. While there are material waste recovery facilities in County Kerry, the development of additional such facilities at sustainable locations is desirable.

1.3.30. Broadband coverage in the area has developed and improved, however take up appears relatively low, according to the latest available data. Standards of service quality and the cost of broadband services remains a serious issue. There is a lack of information and quantification on costs relating to how these issues impact on rural business.

1.3.31. The lack of an international broadband connection for the region results in greater costs than from Dublin or comparable UK regional cities. This clearly puts the South West at a disadvantage when competing for modern, data intensive service industries.

1.3.32. The region benefits significantly from the Cork International Airport which offers important links to major European air travel hubs including Dublin, Heathrow, Stansted and Amsterdam in addition to a wide range of direct European destinations. The development of long haul connections servicing Cork Airport is an important regional objective. The Kerry County Airport at Farranfore, which is at the centre of the Tralee / Killarney Hub,



provides a good range of national and international air connections. Shannon, in the adjoining Mid West region presently offers connectivity to the USA.

1.3.33. The Port of Cork is a key element of the regional economy and infrastructure and offers a wide range of shipping services to worldwide destinations. There is an immediate requirement to identify an appropriate location with deep water for enhanced port facilities within Cork Harbour to accommodate increasing traffic and to help secure the redevelopment of the City Docklands. In the past, proposals to relocate the port have raised concerns regarding the most appropriate land-side transport arrangements for freight. The rail network serving Cork does not provide an adequate means of collection/distribution of freight to the region and so future port facilities need to be well served by the road network

1.3.34. Fenit while a small port, plays a significant strategic role in the development of the Tralee/Killarney Hub. The deepwater potential of the Shannon/Tarbert/Ballylongford landbank area is considered of major strategic importance for the sustainable development of an industrial/energy hub for the area.

Energy

1.3.35. The principal energy resources of the region comprise:

- The region's natural gas resource including an extensive associated pipeline network;
- The ConocoPhillips oil refinery at Whitegate, County Cork;
- Major thermal electricity generating stations at Tarbert, County Kerry; Aghada/Whitegate, County Cork and Cork City Docklands;
- Inniscarra hydro-electric scheme, County Cork;
- A growing network of wind powered electricity generating stations in both Cork and Kerry.
- A modern electricity distribution grid serving the region

1.3.36. At present the electricity network in the region is at or near capacity and there will be difficulties in servicing major increases in demand and maintaining normal international standards of supply if significant investment is not progressed. Part of this involves an improvement in the capacity to take renewable energy into the National Grid and to build more network resilience through improving the electricity grid connectivity into adjoining regions.

1.3.37. Demand for electricity in the region is expected to rise by 60% by 2025. Wave and wind technologies are expected to play a significant part in meeting additional demand with excess renewably generated power being exported through an enhanced transmission grid to other regions within the state.

1.3.38. The SWRA Regional Bioenergy Plan 2009-2020 supports the development of bioenergy resources and the designation of the Whitegate area of County Cork as a National Bioenergy Energy Development Area.

Quality of Life

1.3.39. The South West region is widely recognised as an area which offers an excellent quality of life, a factor which is extremely important to the wellbeing of its citizens as well as in attracting inward economic investment and population to the region. The region offers a strong mix of lifestyles choices with a range of attractions from the Gateway City and Hub Towns to the unique natural environment and strong cultural identity which characterises Cork and Kerry.

1.3.40. The unique qualities and diversity of the South West region has the potential to further contribute to the overall quality of life and attractiveness of the south west as a location in which to settle or visit. Among such is the potential in the region to sustainably develop significantly more walking and cycle routes, yachting marinas and other sporting, recreational, cultural and heritage facilities.



1.4 Key Planning and Development Issues

1.4.1. The South West Region has a rich asset base, comprising people, education, infrastructure, skills and a high quality environment. This creates an opportunity for the creation of wealth and significant economic development.

1.4.2. Taking the region in 2010, the following key issues have been identified:

Regional Planning Guidelines: RKI-01 Key Issues

1. Having regard to the need to compete nationally and internationally, it is very clear that the South West needs to expand its economic base by focussing its economic strategy on the Gateway and on the Hub towns. The Cork Gateway has emerged as the powerhouse of the region and the future lies in building on this capacity, particularly through investment in knowledge based industry and technical production.
2. In this regard, linkages with other regions, both physical and intellectual are essential. The Tralee-Killarney and Mallow Hubs will act as conduit for sustainable economic development connecting the strengths of the Gateway with the remainder of the region. For development to occur in the Hubs, they must aim to capitalise both on their indigenous strengths as well as provide viable alternatives for economic growth to the Gateway.
3. The imbalance in the population growth of the City and Gateway, the main towns and Hubs relative to the rural areas has emerged as a key issue in ensuring the future sustainability of development of the region, as well as resulting in unsustainable levels of commuting. In order to correct this imbalance, it is imperative that growth be directed to the Cork Gateway and the Mallow Hub and the Hub Towns of Tralee/Killarney, whilst allowing for balanced development in the main

towns, villages and rural areas and affording protection to environmentally sensitive areas.

4. Although there was substantial upgrading of the transportation network in the region over the previous guidelines period, the completion of many vital projects remains outstanding. In a period of limited resources, there is a requirement to prioritise transport and infrastructure expenditure in Gateway, Hubs and Main Towns where that investment will create capacity for sustainable development that will assist in economic recovery.
5. While the transportation links between Cork and Dublin have been largely provided, there is a need to prioritise investment in both intra and inter regional integrated transport links to improve regional connectivity and cohesiveness in a sustainable manner.
6. Investment in critical infrastructure to support the Cork Docklands project needs to be prioritised if critical mass in the Cork Gateway is to be achieved.
7. The proposed sustainable relocation and expansion of the Port of Cork facilities is required to facilitate both the growth in port activity and the redevelopment of the Cork Docklands to its full potential.
8. Significant improvement of public transport services as well as walking and cycling facilities is envisaged to be a critical component in the future development of urban areas.
9. The South West Region must meet its targets under the Water Framework Directive by 2015. There is serious under provision of water and waste water infrastructure across the region, in both rural and urban area, partially as a result of the significant levels of development in the period to 2007. While priority must be given to providing the requisite infrastructure in the Gateway and Hubs, careful planning of infrastructure in the villages and rural areas, when financial resources permit, will allow key



environmental issues to be addressed and sustain viable communities.

10. The South West Region has significant natural resources (renewable energy, primary production), the value and potential of which for economic development have not been fully realised. This provides a major opportunity for the future development of sustainable rural economies and tourism.
11. The South West Region supports a diverse range of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine habitats, which support species of local, national and international importance. In providing for the development of the region it is important that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is provided for.
12. There is a need to focus on rural diversification so that priority can be given to investments to achieve this potential in a sustainable manner, while also enhancing the quality of life for the residents.
13. In general from the perspective of realising the overall Guidelines objectives, the recent economic downturn will act as a brake on regional development and population growth in the short term. It does however highlight the need to make the best use of this period of recession as a time of consolidation, when hopefully more focussed policies which are now embedded in development planning in the region will begin to show more tangible results on the ground.
14. In addressing all of the foregoing, it is important to ensure compliance with the provisions of European and National environmental legislation.

1.4.3. Arising out of the above key issues, two important overarching goals have been identified which provide a framework for the development of the region.

- The principal priority for establishing new policies will be to place a strong emphasis on population and employment growth in the Gateway and Hub Towns, to meet targets as set out in these Guidelines. Within this challenge, there is a need for the local authorities to work in a co-ordinated manner to ensure that the Gateway and Hub Towns benefit from priority investment in the provision of infrastructure and ultimately that the overall physical, social and community infrastructure of the Gateway and Hub Towns are sustainably developed in a timely manner to accommodate the planned growth.
- The priority of ensuring that the remaining areas of the region, towns, villages and rural areas continue as sustainable communities, which are strongly positioned to build on opportunities which will arise locally for sustainable growth and development; where good transport and communication linkages are developed; where the quality of the built and natural environments are protected and enhanced, where quality of life for all age groups is enhanced and where adequately scaled environmental protection and other infrastructures are in place at the appropriate time.

1.5 Sustainable Planning

1.5.1. Throughout the Regional Planning Guidelines the term “Sustainable” is used widely. Sustainable is defined as that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

1.5.2. The conservation of species and habitats in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives is considered to be an important component of sustainable strategies, policies and objectives.



1.5.3. In reading the Regional Planning Guidelines it should be noted that this is a high level strategic planning document and its objectives and recommendations will be defined and operationalised through a series of future plans and actions by other public and private sector actors, all of such plans and actions, where appropriate, will be subject to Strategic Environment Assessment, Habitats Directive Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment.

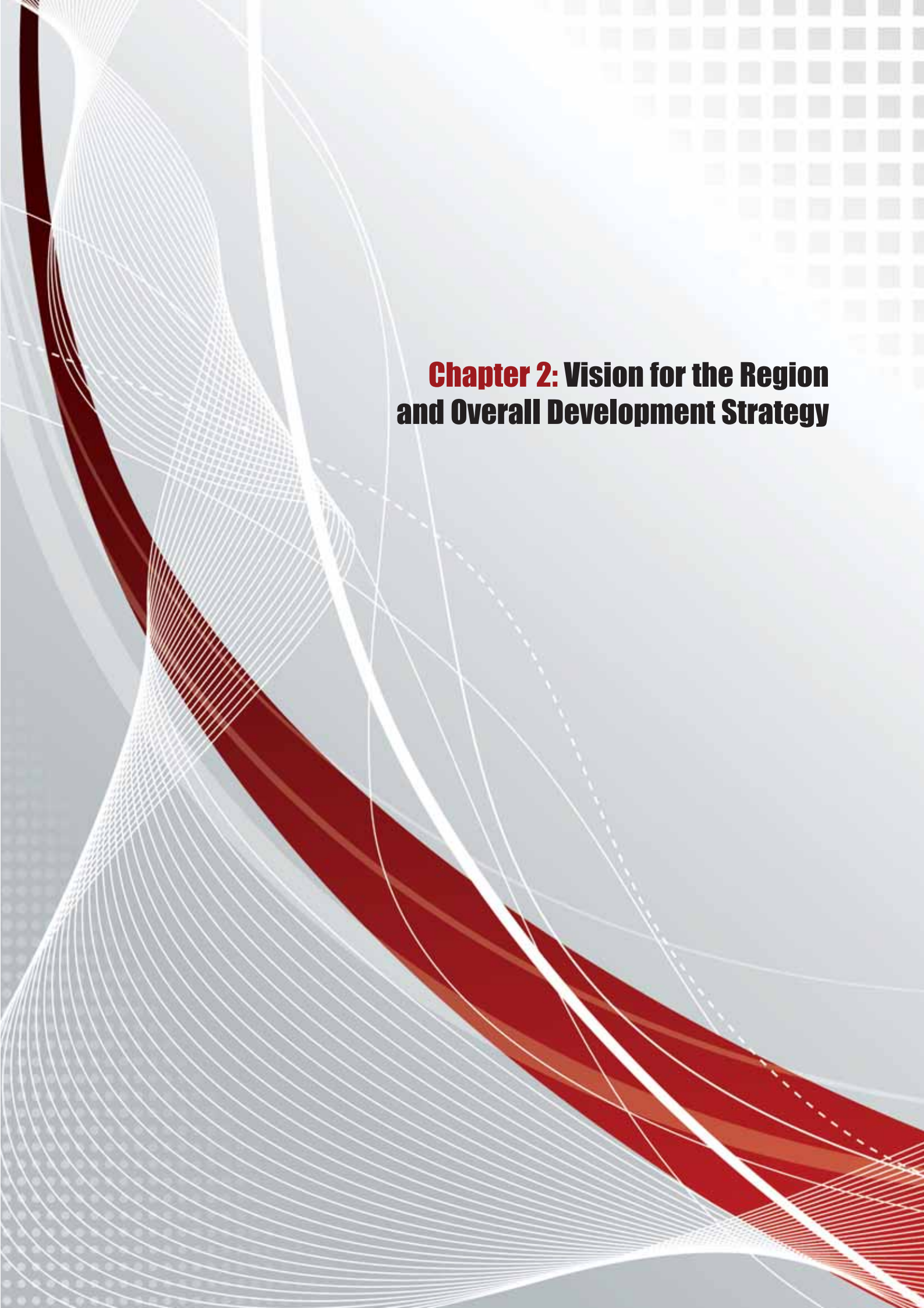
1.5.4. The Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA), also known as Appropriate Assessment, is a requirement under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The directive indicates the need for plans and projects to be subject to Habitats Directive Assessment if the plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site, but is likely to have a significant effect either individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a site. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government had published guidelines “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland” which provides guidance for Planning Authorities.

1.5.5. The RPGs are strategic by nature, and give broad guidance in relation to a range of issues, including infrastructure investment. The detailing of the strategic objectives is implemented through the County and City Development Plans, Local Area Plans and at project level. Due to the regional scale of the projects identified within this document, many of which have yet to undergo detailed route/site selection and options, Habitats Directive Assessment is required to take place at each stage of the development process ranging from County Development Plans to Local Area Plans and at the individual plan or project level, to ensure that there is no negative impact on the integrity (defined by the structure and function and conservation objectives) of the Natura 2000 site and that the requirements of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC are fully satisfied. The endorsement of individual projects within these guidelines is subject to their EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and HDA / AA (Appropriate Assessment), where relevant.

1.5.6. The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance/protection, mitigation and compensatory measures and this method should be adopted in the development of all individual plans and projects and at each stage in the development process. Each individual plan or projects should therefore seek to achieve the following:

- Avoid any negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan/project making, and designing the plan/project in order to avoid such impacts.
- Mitigation measures should be applied, during the appropriate assessment process to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the sites. If the proposal is still likely to result in adverse effects, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it is rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect.

1.5.7. Due to the regional scale of investment and the impact of development and delivery of the settlement and economic strategies, it is critical to the protection of the Natura 2000 sites that development takes place in tandem with the provision of appropriate services – be it transport, or water services. Development, in the absence of investment in infrastructure will have negative consequences on the environment. Accordingly and in line with sustainable development policy promoted by the RPGs, it is therefore important that Development and Local Area Plans provide for the provision of critical infrastructure, in a sustainable manner, in support of targeted economic and population growth so as to allow sustainable development to take place.



Chapter 2: Vision for the Region and Overall Development Strategy



Chapter 2: Vision for the Region and Overall Development Strategy

2.1 Regional Vision Statement

2.1.1. The scale and diversity of the South West Region requires a strategy to match the individual potentials of the main areas which make up the region. The strategy which is set out in this document covers the period up to 2022 but its vision and core goals are intended to endure beyond that date and should inform other strategies and plans for the region into the future.

Regional Planning Guidelines: RV-01 Regional Vision Statement

The broad vision for the south west region is to maintain and develop a sustainable and competitive economy, optimise the quality of life of its residents and visitors, protect and enhance its unique environment, culture and heritage.

By 2022, the South West Region will be realising its economic potential and providing a high quality of life for its people by meeting their employment and housing, educational and social needs in sustainable communities. At the same time it will reduce its impact on climate change and the environment, including savings in energy and water use and by strengthening the environmental quality of the Region.

2.1.2. The following key principles underpin this vision statement for the region:-

- Prioritise sustainable economic growth and increased competitiveness within the Gateway and Hubs and encourage balanced growth in the key settlements of the rural areas.
- Promote, market and develop the region as an attractive area to live and work with an excellent quality of life and strong sense of place.
- Promote security of energy supply and develop renewable energy in the region in a sustainable manner
- Deliver an integrated and cost effective transportation and infrastructure system (including Broadband) throughout the region in a sustainable

manner

- Protect and enhance the natural landscape and heritage assets of the region and
- Promote sustainable urban and rural tourism

2.2 Overall Development Strategy

2.2.1. To give effect to this vision and in order to prepare an overall development strategy, it is necessary to identify specific planning areas that can assist in the formulation of strategic guidelines for the future development in the region. Within these planning areas, there are a number of strategic growth corridors that provide connectivity and linkages. The key corridors are:-

- Atlantic Corridor – from Waterford through Cork Gateway. Mallow Hub to Limerick
- Inter-regional corridors –
 - o along the M 8 national road from Cork Gateway to Mitchelstown via Fermoy
 - o along the N21/N69 national road from Tralee to Limerick
- Intra-regional corridors – main national roads linking main towns of regional importance throughout Cork and Kerry.

2.2.2. These are illustrated in the Spatial Development Strategy. This provides the framework for the policies and objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines as contained in Chapters 3-6.

2.2.3. The specific areas that have been identified are divided into four functional areas, namely:

- Greater Cork Area (including Cork Gateway and Mallow Hub)
- Tralee/Killarney Linked Hub
- Northern Area
- Western Area

Greater Cork Area

2.2.4. Greater Cork, which comprises the Cork Gateway, and includes the Mallow Hub and a number of other towns known as the Ring towns (Fermoy, Youghal, Bandon,



Kinsale, Macroom), is the principal economic driver of the overall region. The strategic aim of this planning area is to encourage the growth of population and employment in the Cork Gateway in order to create the necessary critical mass for the Gateway so that it can compete more effectively for investment and growth. Cork City at the heart of the Gateway provides a focus for Gateway growth and advance investment in high quality public transport and other infrastructures and services is a prerequisite to facilitating this planned growth.

In order to achieve the vision for the region, the following actions will be necessary in the Greater Cork Area:

- Realignment and reinforcement of spatial planning and land use policies;
- Plan for an increase in the population and employment of the Cork Gateway.
- Refocusing of economic and investment strategy;
- Front-loading of infrastructure and implementation of integrated transport strategy;
- Priority infrastructure investments for the Cork Docklands.

A number of key infrastructural projects are important to the development of the Cork Gateway. These projects are endorsed by the RPGs subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment (where relevant) of individual projects - Note: Not in order of priority

- Cork Docklands Road and Bridge infrastructure
- The remaining stages of the Cork Suburban Rail Network
- The Atlantic Corridor linking Waterford- Cork - Limerick –Galway including
- The Cork Northern Ring Route
- M20 Cork-Mallow-Limerick
- Upgrading of N25 Cork-Waterford
- The N28 servicing the major industrial developments at Ringaskiddy,
- The N22 which is the regional internal and strategic economic corridor connecting the Tralee/ Killarney linked Hub with the Cork Gateway, and
- The N21 linking the Tralee/Killarney Hub to the Limerick Gateway; and
- The N25 flyovers within Cork City.



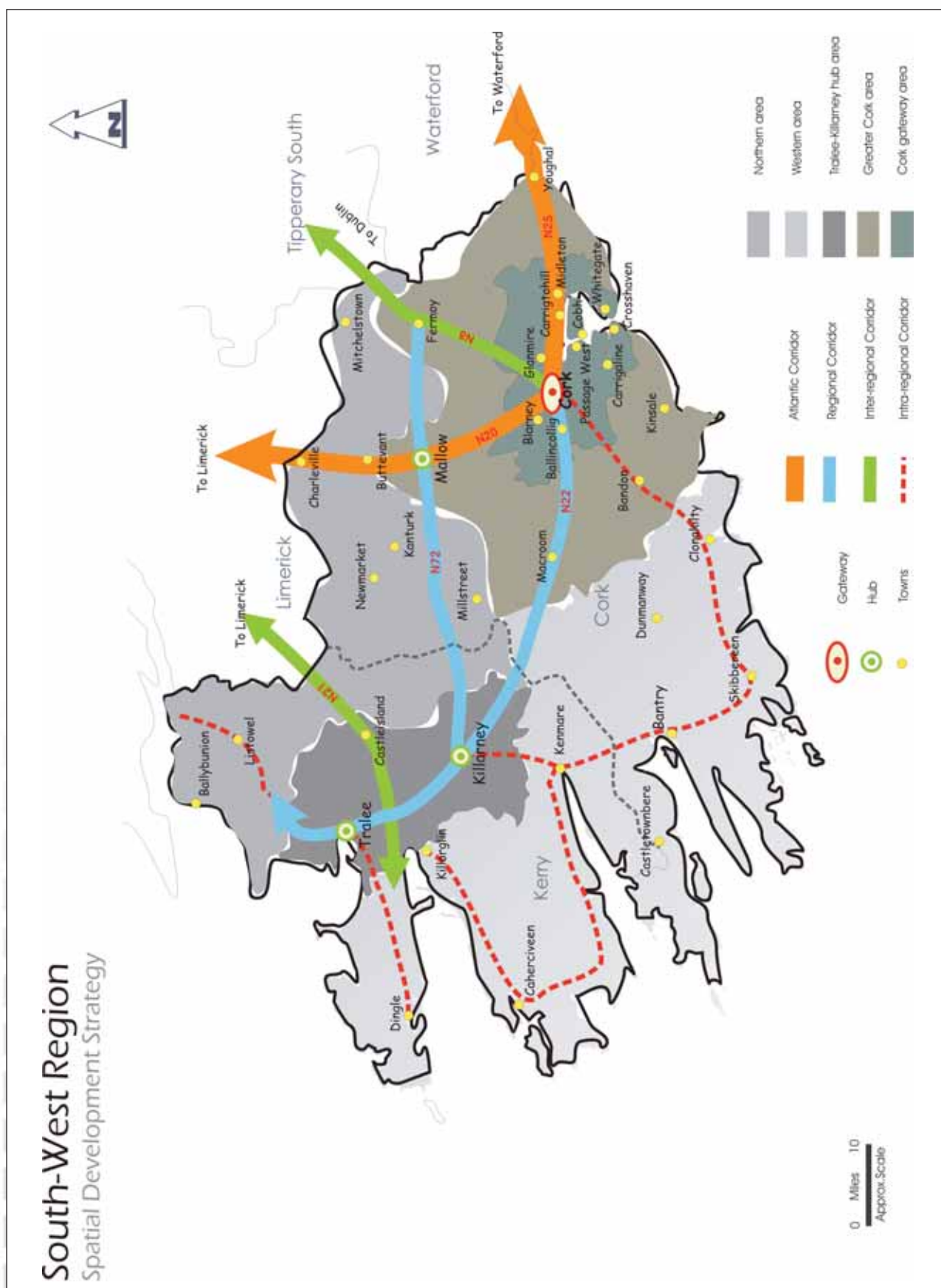


Figure 5: Spatial Development Strategy for South West Region



Tralee Killarney Linked Hub

2.2.6 The Tralee-Killarney Hub Towns are envisaged to be the focussed engines of growth in County Kerry. The aim is to position the hub towns as sufficiently sized urban zones to attract additional employment and population, which will increase their competitiveness and attractiveness as national and regional investment locations.

2.2.7 In order to achieve the vision of the region, the following actions are required for the Tralee Killarney Linked Hub area:

- Realignment and reinforcement of spatial planning and land use policies specific to the linked hub area;
- Focus population growth into Tralee and Killarney Towns.
- Establish strong linkages between Tralee and Killarney
- Focus of economic and investment strategy on employment creation;
- Front-loading of infrastructure and implementation of an integrated transport strategy for the area and linking it with the Cork and Limerick Gateways and Atlantic Corridor;

Northern and Western Areas

2.2.8 The Northern and Western Areas are predominantly attractive rural areas of high amenity and cultural value, with many attractive towns and villages, together with strategic assets. The aim of these planning areas, generally, is to maintain the quality of life in the Northern and Western Areas, by encouraging a balance in growth between rural and urban areas. In order to encourage economic growth in these planning areas it will be necessary to focus on promoting entrepreneurial development throughout the area. Population growth in these areas will be predominantly employment led.

2.2.9 The Northern Area could be further subdivided into three sub areas:

- North Kerry comprises a lowland coastal area focussed on the towns of Ballybunion and Listowel whilst also looking to Tralee and Killarney.
- Mid North Cork is a mainly upland area interspersed with small towns and villages.
- North East Cork is an area with a strong agricultural base focusing on food production and contains strong market towns with good links to the gateways and beyond.

2.2.10 The main focus for the Northern Area specifically is to:-

- Raise the productive potential of the local economies, particularly indigenous industries and services which utilise the strengths of the area in a sustainable manner.
- Optimise spatial development patterns as an essential requirement for infrastructural development.
- Provide improvements in local infrastructure and communications in a sustainable manner.

2.2.11 The Western Area comprises a number of distinctive characteristics which allow it to be identified as a cohesive sub area. It comprises a substantial rural area west of Bandon/Macroom and all of the main peninsulas (Dingle, Iveragh, Beara, Mizen, Sheeps Head) The Western Area has a distinctive natural beauty with a strong tourist base with significant potential for diversification in the rural economy. Because of the peninsular topographical make up of the planning area, it is relatively peripheral to both the Hubs and the Gateway as well as being far removed from the Atlantic Corridor. With the decline in the traditional employment sectors of agriculture and fisheries, and also the low density and dispersed nature of the population, the potential for employment opportunities are more limited than in the other planning areas.

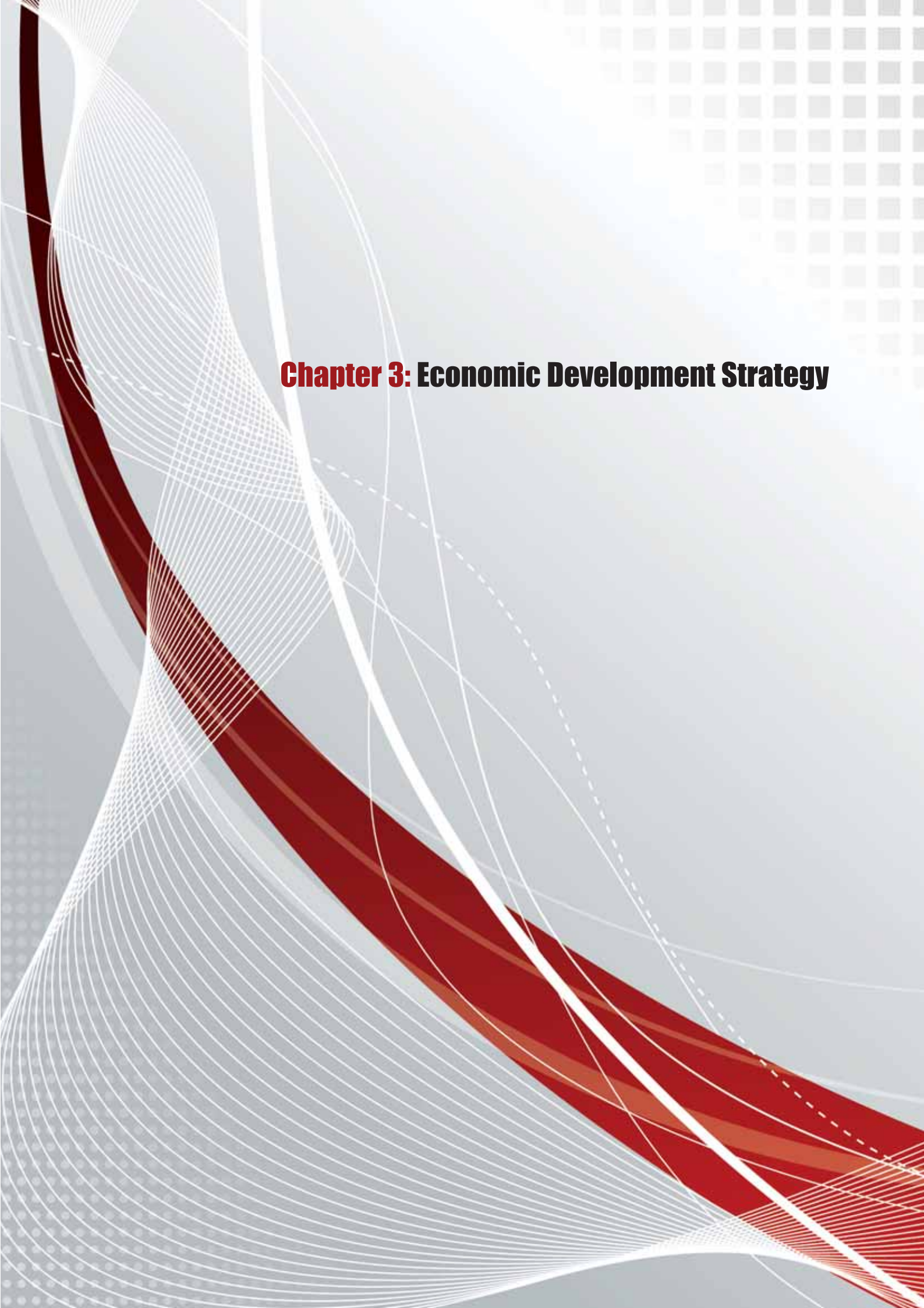
2.2.12 This planning area includes Gaeltacht and Island communities, which exhibit unique characteristics that need protection, whilst at the same time as requiring specific policies for their further sustainable development.



2.2.13 Actions needed to address these problems are multi-faceted involving a wide range of economic stakeholders and agencies. Measures need to be implemented, however, to facilitate these agencies in addressing the difficulties being experienced. Primarily, the impacts of peripherality need to be reduced through:

- Implementing in a sustainable manner strong spatial and land use and transportation strategies which would aim to maintain population in the rural and peripheral areas strengthen the towns and protect and promote the existing economic base throughout the West Kerry / West Cork Area, whilst encouraging sustainable diversification of the local economy.
- Improving access to broadband and education facilities.
- Improvements to public transport and infrastructure.



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Chapter 3: Economic Development Strategy



Chapter 3: Economic Development Strategy

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1. The Regional Economic Strategy for the South West is assisted by the work by Forfás on the Regional Competitiveness Agenda and from other economic inputs from ESRI and other government and regional bodies. The strategy is based on regional action to mobilise the various factors of regional competitiveness. The unique qualities of Cork and Kerry provide the potential to offer a very distinct range of regional attraction factors, combining quality of life elements with a diversified base of high technology industries, urban and rural enterprise.

3.1.2. Forfás has identified the South West as a strongly performing region across a number of indicators. It has a diverse enterprise base encompassing what might be regarded as the more traditional sectors, as well as high value added manufacturing and internationally trading services activities. It offers an attractive quality of life, combining the benefits of a vibrant metropolitan area, with ease of access to rural, mountain and coastal locations. It has a strong educational and research basis from which to enhance its innovative capacity, supported by increased investment both within HEIs (Higher Education Institutes) and companies in R&D and innovation, proactive industry networks and demonstrated impacts of strong collaborative efforts.

Regional Economic Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

3.1.3. The South West has the highest Gross Value Added (GVA) per worker in the State in 2005 and has experienced higher than national average growth rates over the period 1998-2007. There are marked differences however between the counties of Cork and Kerry, with disposable income levels in Cork at 99% of the national average compared with Kerry at 86%. The reason for this is the significant presence of the high value pharma-chem sector, primarily located in the Cork Gateway.

3.1.4. The region experienced significant growth in public sector, construction and retail/wholesale that was

evident across the country over the period from 1998-2007. During the same period, there has been significant growth in employment in internationally traded services, specifically in ICT related services, financial and other business services, demonstrating the attractiveness of the Cork Gateway to these activities.

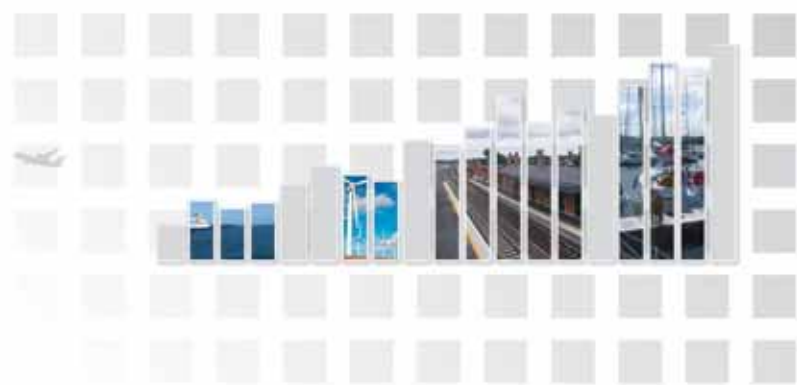
3.1.5. The region is unique in that it is the only region where the value of output from industry (manufacturing) exceeds that of services (both traded and non traded). It has a diverse industry base and well developed geographic clustering of export oriented companies in the Food, Pharmaceuticals and ICT sectors in particular, and to a lesser extent Medical Devices and Engineering.

3.1.6. The region has a well developed retail component, with the Cork Gateway and the hub towns of Mallow, Killarney and Tralee being the main focus for growth in retail development. All three local authorities have developed retail strategies with the Cork City and County Retail Strategy being developed on a joint basis between the two local authorities.

3.1.7. The South West region is the leading regional tourism destination, with scenic areas and attractive towns which are internationally renowned. The region, on an annual basis, generates 1.3 billion euro in tourism revenues and welcomes in excess of 3.6 million visitors each year. There are many opportunities for further sustainable tourism product developments to take place. As an example, the region has a long and very attractive coastline, with potential for the development of marine related leisure facilities in a sustainable manner, such as marinas and other related facilities in many of the small ports and harbours.

3.1.8. Some of the region's natural assets are vulnerable to over-development highlighting the need for all developments to take place in a fully sustainable manner.

3.1.9. From the perspective of accessibility, the region benefits from its international airport at Cork, (which has recently opened its new terminal capable of handling up to



5 million passengers per annum) and has direct connections to major European airports. The region also has Kerry County Airport at Farranfore, as well as being close to Shannon International Airport for connections to USA. An important consideration for the further economic development of the region is the need for direct transatlantic air services between Cork and the USA and other long haul destinations such as Asia. It will be important that facilities and resources at Cork Airport are protected to ensure that this requirement is achieved.

3.1.10. The region is served with good port and shipping facilities with passenger ferry services to France and the UK. The Port of Cork is a key element of the regional economy and offers a wide range of shipping services to worldwide destinations. There is an immediate requirement to identify an appropriate location or locations for enhanced port facilities within Cork Harbour to accommodate increasing traffic and to help secure the redevelopment of the City Docklands. A number of smaller ports such as Fenit and Kinsale also provide cargo handling in the region.

3.1.11. One of the region's core strengths is its very strong educational framework. University College Cork, The Cork Institute of Technology and the Institute of Technology Tralee have all demonstrated strong performances in producing quality graduates across a wide range of disciplines and in attracting research funding. The research institutes are primarily focused on areas relevant to existing high tech productive industries in the region, including pharma-chem, bio-med, ICT/electronics, life-sciences, food and the environment. Business expenditure in R&D performs in line with other regions with large urban centres outside of Dublin. However, given the large base of high value industries in the South West, there should be significant potential to achieve a higher R&D and innovation performance at firm level, specifically within the Tyndall National Institute at UCC and the Rubicon Centre at CIT. The development of a Regional Innovation Cluster, the continued strengthening of the Kerry Technology Park and the development of a new Regional Science Park in the Cork Gateway and the

achievement of 3rd/4th level educational /research Hub in the Docklands and the continued investment in 3rd and 4th level research in the region and its transfer to the productive sector are among the strategic initiatives being taken to increase levels of knowledge transfer between the research and production sectors of the regional economy.

3.1.12. Major Transport 21 initiatives underway will improve the inter and intra-regional connectivity of the region. Elements remaining to be addressed are the upgrading of the N22 linking the Tralee/Killarney Linked Hub to the Cork Gateway; the improvement of the M20 Cork to Limerick, the N25 Cork to Waterford (specific to the Atlantic Corridor), the N28 to Ringaskiddy, the N21 Tralee to Limerick. In addition, the upgrading of the National Secondary road network is critical in reducing the peripherality within the region and maximising access throughout the region. In view of the strategic importance of the Atlantic Gateway Initiative, it is recommended that in the longer term, the Atlantic Corridor inter Gateway road network should be to motorway standard.

3.1.13. The Western Rail Corridor, linking Limerick to Galway is an important aspect of the future Irish public transportation strategy. Cork, Mallow and the Tralee/Killarney hub can achieve enhanced rail connectivity with the West of Ireland through the reconstruction of a short length of rail between Charleville and Patrickswell which would also connect by rail the two largest Gateways outside of Dublin. The present position would in the interim be improved through a direct service via Limerick junction. The future direct railway link between Cork, Mallow and Limerick is considered as a future strategic development priority which should be investigated and appropriately protected in local authority development plans.

3.1.14. Broadband services are distributed throughout the region, but as with all regions, the quality and cost of broadband services remain an issue. Broadband quality of service continues to be a serious concern in rural areas, with strong reservations on the potential of mobile



broadband to support economic development in such areas. Local Authority development plan policies needs to generally support the provision of ducting to facilitate broadband rollout and the erection of mobile telephony infrastructures in rural areas of the region, in a sustainable manner, to improve the delivery standards of mobile telephony and broadband services.

3.1.15. Kerry and Cork have a wide range of strong natural, cultural and recreational amenities. International research shows that quality of life factors have become increasingly important in attracting (and retaining) what is now regarded as a mobile workforce. The region benefits from a balance between its urban gateway in Cork, and an outstanding and distinctive natural landscape, and attractive towns and villages which offer a range of attractions. Not only are such attractions of value for drawing global talent for enterprise, but they are also significant assets for the tourism sector.

3.1.16. The economic influence of the Cork Gateway reaches the entire region as shown in figure 7. Similarly, the economic growth of the Kerry Linked Hub (Tralee/Killarney) will have positive effects on economic wellbeing and employment throughout County Kerry and the north-western part of County Cork. The Mallow Hub, being in close proximity to the Cork Gateway, has an obvious overlap with the area of influence with the Gateway and it also plays an important economic role throughout North Cork.

3.1.17. The key focus for the region's future development is to take the actions necessary to enhance and build the South West as a national leader in terms of the Smart Economy, building on its innovative capabilities across all sectors and activities and in both private, public and community sectors through:

- Local leadership in terms of facilitating enterprise development through enhanced networking, clustering and innovation activities.

- Developing critical mass of population and employment and good connectivity is essential to attract international investment and to compete effectively in a national and international marketplace.
- Building a spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurship in the gateway, hubs, main towns, villages and rural areas which will promote new employment opportunities and protect existing jobs.

3.2 Realising sectoral growth Industry and International Services.

3.2.1. The South West is well established as a leading Irish and European Region within the Knowledge based or Smart Economy. The Forfás Regional Competitiveness Agenda has identified that the region has strong potential for further development of the Life Sciences Sector, which includes strong regional sectors such as pharma, bio-medical devices and functional foods; tourism; ICTs (hardware and services); internationally traded service; maritime and energy/green technologies.

3.2.2. There are also significant technology based opportunities for the region to embrace in the ICTs sector, which has been at the foundation of regional growth and advances in technology and there is an opportunity for the region to embrace these innovations and to harness the potential for further development of the ICT and enterprise sector.

3.2.3. Increasingly within the region the potential exists to grow new industrial applications and products based on converging technologies such as the mix of ICT's and Biotech applications.

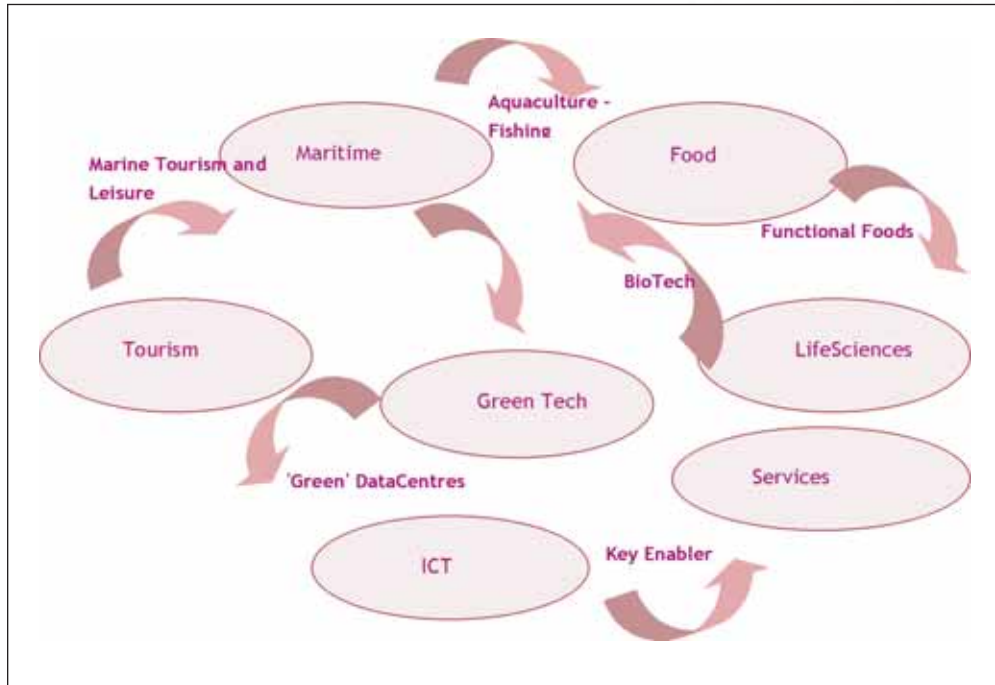


Figure 6: Forfás 2009 Regional Competitiveness Agenda.

3.2.4. The region has a large amount of third and fourth level graduates which complement the bio-medical and pharma-chem industry in the Cork Gateway. There is also a high proportion of research and development expenditure (in HEIs) in the region, which provides an opportunity for the development of a Regional Science Park. The location of this project in the gateway will benefit existing and future research and development projects in the public and private sectors.

3.2.5. Previous research in the economy of the Greater Cork area, carried out by Indecon, in preparation of the CASP Update in 2008, has shown that almost half of the future jobs needed in the economy will be in the international traded services. This shift from a predominance in employment in resource based

production and manufacturing to higher density office based employment results in changes to the requirements for employment land from large scale stand alone industrial sites to well serviced land in close proximity to centres of population in appropriate locations in the gateway and hub towns. Certain Brownfield sites such as Cork Docklands in the Gateway are particularly suitable for this growing business activity. When they are developed, these business locations must be supported by adequate services such as transport network, energy, telecoms (broadband) and associated activities that would attract users

3.2.6. Based on its high quality of life and developing sense of place, the region is also a very attractive setting for the development of traditional non technological enterprises in quality foodstuffs, crafts, arts and other sectors which can support sustainable employment in areas outside of the main centres of population.

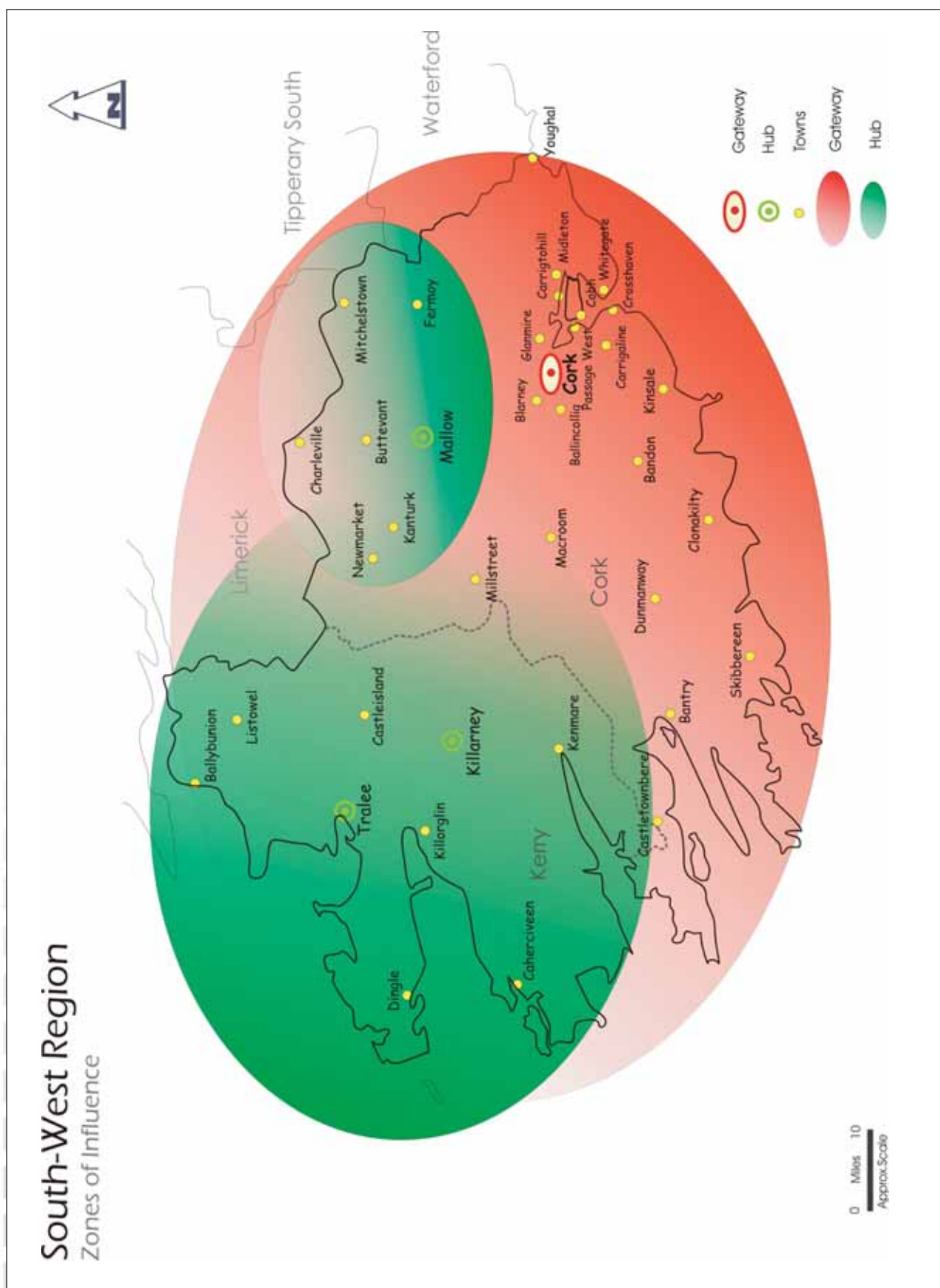
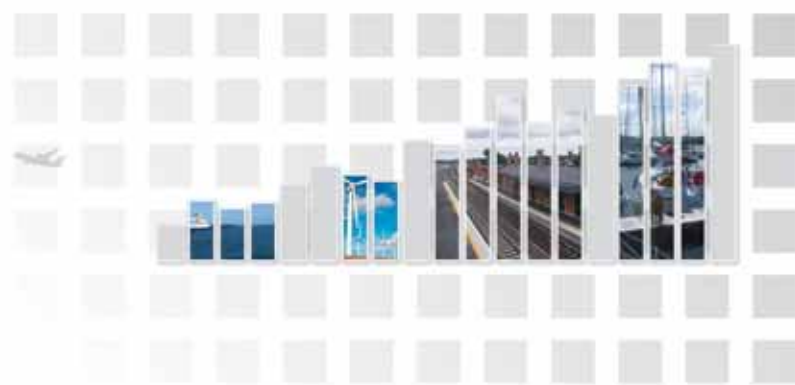


Figure 7: Zones of Influence of Gateway and Hubs in the region



Regional Planning Guidelines: RES-01 Production and Knowledge

It is an objective to promote sustainable growth of indigenous and multi national companies in the economic sectors where the region enjoys competitive advantage and in particular:-

- Knowledge based industry, research and development, with a strong focus on indigenous company growth, supported by the sustainable development of a Regional Science Park in the Gateway.
- Strategic sites at appropriate locations for large scale developments related to the pharmaceutical, bio-medical, IT and food sciences sectors.
- Internationally traded services located in high quality sustainable locations, strongly focused on the Gateway and Hub towns, in brown field locations where practicable and within easy access to public transport and support services.

In order to safeguard the expansion of existing productive industries in the region, it is necessary for local authorities to:

- Ensure adequacy of suitable land for expansion.
- Identify optimum sustainable locations for large scale production.
- Where appropriate, facilitate the sustainable generation of renewable energy at source in strategic industrial areas.
- Encourage the relocation of existing Seveso sites in the Cork Docklands area to facilitate future development of the docklands, in a sustainable manner.
- Ensure that travel and transport needs are catered for in a sustainable manner.

Office Based Services

3.2.7. Office based services are significant employers and wealth generators within the South West. They compliment the others sectors and make a significant contribution to quality of life in the region. Education, health and other

public services are fundamental to the well being of the region.

3.2.8. The Gateway and hub towns have traditionally been locations for professional services and it is envisaged that these will grow in line with the regional economy. Other locations throughout the region also provide opportunities for the growth of professional services and broadband availability will assist in this regard.

3.2.9. Education and health facilities will need to be examined and augmented by the relevant development agencies where necessary in line with anticipated population and employment growth, in areas such as the Gateway and Hubs to ensure that the necessary levels of provision are in place in a timely manner.

Retail

3.2.10. Cork City Centre is the primary comparison shopping centre of the region and forms the central core of any future retail strategy. Both Mallow and Tralee/Killarney have a significant retail base, including both convenience and comparison goods. The provision of additional comparison shopping should be located in the existing city centre and town centres of the Cork Gateway and Hub Towns while the other main settlements should provide appropriate retail facilities for the supporting population in line with the requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines. While considerable comparison retail regeneration of Cork City Centre is taking place, Mallow. Tralee and Killarney town centres require significant retail upgrading.

Regional Planning Guidelines: RES-02 Services

It is an objective to encourage sustainable economic growth based on the expansion of office based services, in line with regional population and employment needs and focussed on local, national and international opportunities.



It is an objective to have a range of educational, healthcare and other public services provided in a timely and sustainable manner commensurate with the regional need. An important element of this will be to promote the sustainable expansion of 3rd and 4th level education and research within the region; and particularly to promote the further development of existing and new research institutions.

It is an objective to encourage sustainable retail development in the region to be principally focused on the city and towns centres of the Cork Gateway and Hub Towns and where necessary provide support services to the populations in the main towns in line with the Retail

facilities to attract yachting, anglers, and other visitors to prolong their visits to the region. Local authorities in the region should cooperate in the development of a coordinated strategy involving all stakeholders for the development of sustainable quality marine tourism in the south west.

3.2.15. It is important that a coordinated approach is taken to the development of tourism in the region and in particular there is a need to improve public transport access, related facilities and the level of service to tourism locations in a sustainable manner.

3.2.16. Recreation and tourism can cause increased disturbance to habitats and species that are important for biodiversity. A particular threat would be the introduction and spread of invasive species. Tourism and recreation projects, strategies and activities should ensure that the ecological integrity of the region's natural environment is maintained and where possible enhanced. Planning for tourism developments and associated transport access needs to take account of this, particularly in the case of internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance (Natura 2000).

Tourism in the South West

3.2.11. Fáilte Ireland South West has outlined its priorities and goals for the region's tourism around four themes:

- o nature-based activities from walking to adventure;
- o Cork city as a major urban tourism destination;
- o maritime heritage & coastal holiday experiences and
- o rural culture and country pursuits.

3.2.12. The region has a number of valuable natural and cultural assets that support the tourism industry. It also benefits from its reputation for quality food, with global brand names and a range of high quality hotels and restaurants.

3.2.13. It has a wide range of excellent locations and facilities for walking, hill walking, cycling, golf and other activity pursuits.

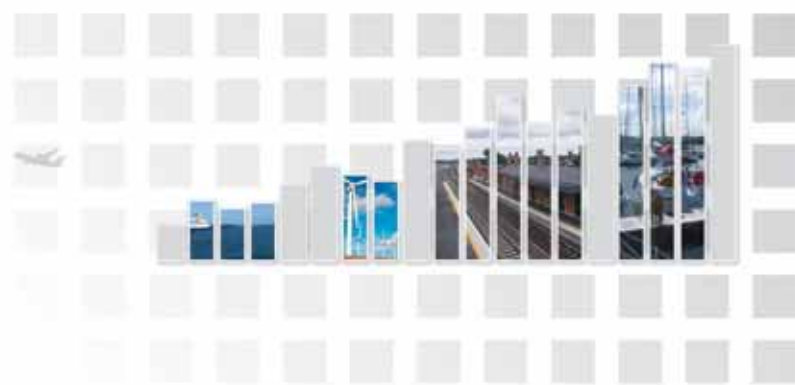
3.2.14. Marine tourism and leisure activities present a significant opportunity to build the level of visitor product in the region. The South West has a very attractive marine environment with many small ports and harbours around the coastline, supported by attractive towns and villages in the coastal areas. There is potential for the sustainable development of additional marinas, pontoons and other

Regional Planning Guidelines:

RES-03 Tourism

It is an objective to protect existing tourism assets in the region and develop additional sustainable facilities for activity holidays, urban and rural tourism.

It is an objective to secure an integrated sustainable strategy for the development of the region's marine and coastal assets where the sustainable development of tourism and other marine activities are promoted.



Resource based production – agriculture, marine, forestry, minerals

3.2.17. Agriculture in the South West continues to be a very important aspect of the regional economy for many people. Food produce from the South West is acclaimed internationally and the region has a very large internationally known food production sector. While the relative importance of agriculture to the regional economy has changed in terms of employment and value, the region has many areas of high quality productive capacity which have the potential to contribute to growth in the development of new food products with international demand resulting in the creation of new employment opportunities within the region.

3.2.18. The South West seaboard is an important resource for commercial fishing, aquaculture and associated sea food processing. The European Integrated Maritime Policy will create new economic development opportunities for this region. Revisions to the European Common Fisheries Policy will have to be addressed if the fishing industry is to remain competitive and offer a livelihood to many coastal families.

3.2.19. Overall the maritime environment offers a new range of exciting possibilities for sustainable economic activity and growth in the region. Maritime opportunities arise in areas of :

- Sea food fisheries and aquaculture development to final product level.
- Marine research and development- with a strong focus on the strategic initiative of the National Maritime College of Ireland, based in the Cork Gateway, relating to the MERC -1 (Maritime Energy Research Cluster Ireland) which will be a world class centre concentrating on a wide range of new opportunities in sustainable marine related energy research

3.2.20. The forestry sector comprises mainly small and medium sized privately owned farm based enterprises that provide a potentially viable area for diversification. The National Forest Inventory quantifies the productive forest

area for the South West region as covering 112,190ha or 9.25% of the total area of the region. County Kerry has in excess of 40,000 hectares of forestry plantations while County Cork has a plantation area in excess of 70,000 hectares.

3.2.21. The cycle of planting over the past fifteen or so years demonstrates that many private forestry plantations will be at or approaching maturity during the next decade. The Regional Bio-energy Plan for the South West shows that enhanced management of this resource is required if commercial returns are to be maximised from final felling. Additionally planning requires to be put in place for the harvesting and replacement of the forestry resource in the region in a timely and sustainable manner.

3.2.22. The mineral resources of the region, especially aggregates, contribute largely to the economy and operational aspects of the construction industry (buildings and infrastructure). Where appropriate, local authorities should identify and protect important strategic mineral reserves in their development plans,

3.2.23. In relation to all natural resources there is a need to protect the sustainability of these assets against inappropriate development in order to maintain the region's high quality agricultural land and sea and fresh water resources, including biodiversity.

Regional Planning Guidelines: RES-04 Regional Economic Strategy

It is an objective to encourage the protection and sustainable further development of the primary resource based sectors through:

- Protecting the quality of the productive environment (water, land and air) for the production of high quality food and high value food processing industries in the region.
- Promoting the further development of food products to the level of high quality final shelf products.
- Recognising the importance and future potential of commercial fishing and aquaculture (sea and



freshwater) industry to the region and to support the future sustainable development of all aspects of this industry.

- Supporting sustainable forestry development in the region.
- Identifying and safeguarding strategic mineral resources in the region where appropriate.
- Supporting initiatives which address the security and quality of food including the promotion of a local food culture in the Region, including appropriately located farmers markets

Rural Economy and Diversification

3.2.24. The traditional mainstays of rural employment have been in decline for some time. Mechanisation and technological advances have contributed significantly to this decline. There is a need for new initiatives which will support rural diversification, innovation and enterprise development:

- Facilitate innovative approaches to identify new products and markets to increase rural employment (in the existing sectors).
- New sustainable tourism initiatives in appropriate locations.

Regional Planning Guidelines: RES-05 Rural Diversification

It is an objective to promote rural diversification through building local rural capacity by upskilling and making appropriate provision in development and local plans to foster local entrepreneurial activity and encouraging innovative and sustainable economic activity.

3.3 Future employment growth and locations for economic growth.

3.3.1. In 2006, there were 261,883 employees in the region but only 240,404 jobs. The net out-migration of employees to jobs elsewhere (over 21,000) is mainly due to the close proximity of Limerick to Kerry and the economic pull factor of Dublin. In Cork City and County, most of the jobs are located in the Cork Gateway (64%)

with over half the jobs in County Kerry located in the Tralee/Killarney Hub Towns. The distribution of the jobs is shown in Figure 7.

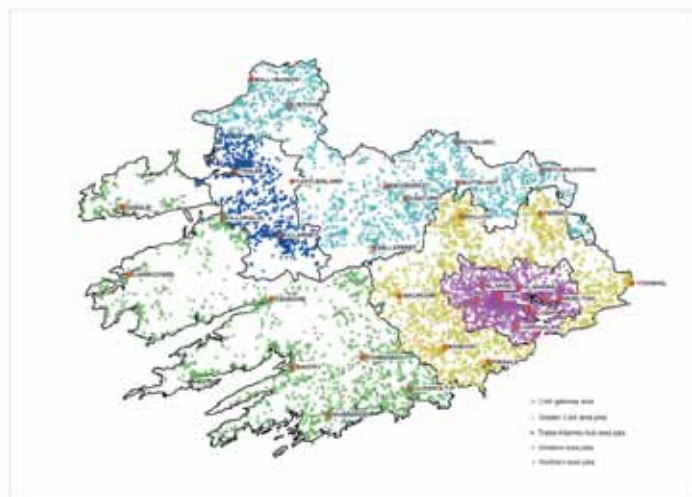


Figure 8: Distribution of Jobs in 2006 by Planning Area

3.3.2. In order to forecast the likely demand for employment in the future, calculations were made on the 2006 population census and the population targets for 2016 and 2022 provided by the DEHLG. These calculations used the similar proportions of employee/population ratio and population/jobs ratio to forecast future jobs.

3.3.3. Following the changes that have taken place in the economy since 2008, it is difficult to forecast future migration rates and unemployment rates. However, using the same ratios of growth, employee/population ratio and unemployment ratio between 2006 and 2022, it is estimated that 50,000 to 60,000 net new jobs would have to be created to sustain the anticipated target population in 2022. Based on population growth targets, it is also anticipated that many of these additional jobs would be located in the Gateway and Hub towns. Previous research on the regional economy by Forfás has indicated that almost half of these additional jobs would be within the international traded services and enterprise sectors.



Strategic employment locations

3.3.4. If the region is to compete internationally and provide for employment growth as anticipated, strategic employment locations will need to be identified within the Gateway and Hubs and local authorities will need to ensure that sufficient land exists for the various types of employment envisaged in the region. Specifically, strategic land reserves need to be provided for both existing and new large scale stand alone industries as well land reserves for the growing international traded services sector (office based industry). Whilst office based industry has a higher density than the large scale stand alone sites, it requires strategic locations in centres of population, in close proximity to public transport corridors, so that investors have a range of locations to choose from. Brownfield sites, if available, particularly offer an excellent location choice in such areas and can act as a catalyst for urban renewal for their wider areas.

3.3.5. Local authorities will need to determine the land requirements for employment purposes in their respective Development Plans and Local Area Plans. Key to this will be that local authorities provide a choice of location for various business types, in line with the population and settlement strategy objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines.

3.3.6. In order to agree on a clear employment development strategy in the Gateway and Hubs, the local authorities, in close collaboration with associated development agencies, should identify strategic land reserves for the future sustainable development of the region.

3.3.7. An important tenet of future sustainable planning policies should be for employment and residential areas to be located in close proximity to each other, connected by a sustainable transportation network. This should result in more sustainable levels of commuting in the longer term.

3.3.8. Priority settlements for business and enterprise development are as follows:

Cork Gateway

3.3.9. Cork Gateway plays an important role as the principal economic driver within the South West. It also plays a strong role within the context of the Atlantic Gateways initiative which envisages critical mass being enabled through greater mobility and access between the cities of Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Galway.

3.3.10. Cork Gateway, with a population and productive output greater than that of the other three cities combined, plays a critical role within the context of this initiative. It is important that development planning and strategy capitalises on the strength of the Cork- Limerick connection (incorporating the Mallow hub), with benefits flowing to adjacent areas such as the Tralee/Killarney linked hub.

3.3.11. In order to create critical mass, as outlined in the Atlantic Gateways project, there is a need to reinforce strategic locations for large scale, foreign direct investment and indigenous sites (stand alone), as well as locations for smaller scale industrial and enterprise development (office based), in centres of population growth to ensure a range of choice is available for investors. Cork Docklands and other strategic sites identified in Development Plans (such as Ringaskiddy, Carrigtwohill, Kilbarry etc) within the Gateway are potential locations for this development.

3.3.12. Cork Harbour and Cork Docklands represent significant assets within the Gateway and offer huge potential for sustainable economic development, population growth, recreation and tourism. Critical to the success of the Cork Gateway and the Cork Docklands in particular is the relocation of the Port of Cork facilities and the industrial uses (Seveso sites) which occupy this area at present. Cork Harbour is of both national and regional significance as it contains the regional significant pharmaceutical industries at Ringaskiddy and the national significant oil terminal at Whitegate,

3.3.13. Front loading of infrastructure development in the Gateway is essential if economic development is to be achieved.



Hub Towns

3.3.14. There is good potential within the region to create competitive environments, which can attract new company start-ups in hub towns. The Hubs will have increasing levels of population and services making them more attractive locations in which to invest. Tralee/Killarney and Mallow are the alternative main locations for investment in employment and there needs to be sufficient serviced land located in close proximity to transport corridors and centres of population for the future development of these towns. Front loading of infrastructure development in the Hub towns is essential if this objective is to be achieved.

3.3.15. The development of the hubs and their interaction with their immediate hinterlands is key to the wider region's development and in particular the economic sustainability of their catchments.

Other Main Towns and Rural Areas

3.3.16. The towns and rural areas of the region support a certain level of enterprise and employment in manufacturing, services and retail activities. This is envisaged to continue with the consolidation and small scale growth of the main towns and rural areas in line with the overall objectives for economic growth in the region. Priorities for growth in such areas will be defined by the relevant city and county development plans.

Other Strategic locations for industry

3.3.17. Both Cork Harbour in County Cork and the Tarbert/Ballylongford landbank in County Kerry are identified as strategic development locations, based on the unique resource of deep water facilities in both locations.

3.3.18. Industrial development land on the Shannon Estuary near Tarbert/Ballylongford constitutes one of the premier deepwater locations in the country. This makes it an area of significant potential for future development and

an asset for the region. Aside from the deepwater asset, it is anticipated that proposed LNG plant will be a significant regional project which will act as a catalyst for additional industrial development at this location in the future. With the extension of the natural gas network and the existing electricity distribution infrastructure in place it is intended to develop the area in a sustainable manner as a power generation centre for the region.

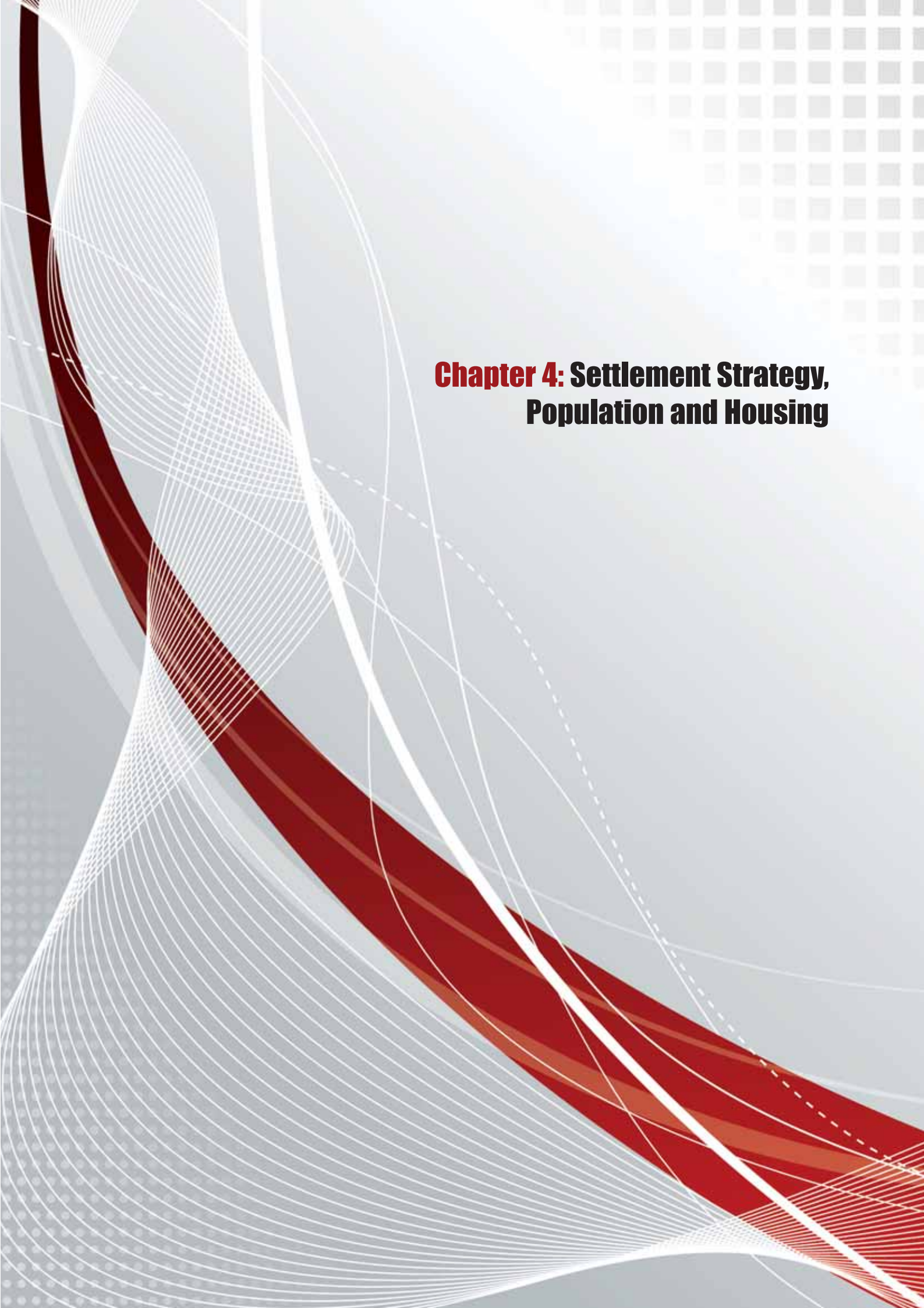
3.3.19. As part of the environmental assessment process for any significant industrial development at these coastal locations, Habitats Directive Assessments should be carried out. Issues to be considered include: the potential impacts of introduced species, habitat loss / fragmentation, disturbance to wildlife and alterations to hydrological flow regimes, water and air quality

Regional Planning Guidelines: RES-06 Regional Economic Strategy Strategic employment locations

In line with the National Spatial Strategy, it is an objective to provide a choice of sustainable employment locations sufficient to cater for the envisaged population and employment growth in the region. This requirement must be focused primarily on the Gateway and Hub Towns to ensure that the population lives in proximity to employment locations and reduces unsustainable commuting.

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of strategic locations in Cork Harbour and Cork Docklands and promote the sustainable development of the Tarbert Ballylongford landbank as a centre for energy generation and industrial development, capitalising on its infrastructure, access and location.

In close collaboration with development agencies, local authorities should identify strategic land reserves in the Gateway and Hub towns so as to provide for the future sustainable economic development of the region.

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Chapter 4: Settlement Strategy, Population and Housing



Chapter 4: Settlement Strategy, Population and Housing

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1. One of principal aims of the Guidelines is to set out a settlement strategy to guide future development in the region within the context of the National Spatial Strategy. This chapter sets out the strategy for the development of the settlements in the region until 2022, thus informing investment priorities for infrastructure, transport and communications. This is to ensure that available funding is invested in a focussed manner to be of greatest benefit to the region as a whole, whilst providing value for money and fostering increasing competitiveness.

4.1.2. Over the past 10 years, development around the main Cork Gateway and to a lesser degree the Tralee/Killarney Hub has experienced a “doughnut effect”, whereby higher population growth has occurred in villages and rural areas instead of within the main urban areas. This clearly unsustainable pattern of development has resulted in higher commuting patterns and greater demands on infrastructure development and the need for other services outside of main urban areas.

4.1.3. The core settlement strategy will be to create the conditions for higher levels of growth in the region in a sustainable manner. This is to be achieved by focussing population and employment development, as a priority on the Cork Gateway and Hub towns of Tralee/Killarney and Mallow. The strategy will seek to ensure that future growth is planned in a way that allows the people of the region to form more sustainable relationships between their homes, workplaces and other concentrations of regularly used services and facilities, and their means of travel between them.

4.1.4. In order to protect the potential for the future sustainable expansion of these urban areas, the rural areas surrounding these urban centres need to be protected from inappropriate development. In line with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, a policy for the control of urban generated housing should be applied to the areas where such pressure is greatest, i.e. throughout the Greater Cork Area and the Hub Town Areas as well as around the main towns of the region.

4.1.5. The population targets proposed in these guidelines require the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure particularly for water and wastewater. If this infrastructure cannot be provided there are a number of increased risks including:

- Risks to human health and safety particularly drinking water and bathing water quality.
- Impacts on biodiversity, including impacts on designated Natura 2000 sites.

4.1.6. It is important that Development and Local Area Plans ensure that critical infrastructure is provided to allow sustainable development to take place.

4.2 Population and Housing

Population Targets

4.2.1. In October 2009 the DEHLG produced revised population targets for the regions. This document also includes population targets for the Gateway and Hubs for the years 2016 and 2022. These targets indicate the minimum population numbers for these locations to be used in determining future development land requirements for the region, setting the context for city and county development plans and local area plans.



Table 4.1: Population Targets 2006-2022

Region	2008	2010	2016	2022
Border	492,500	511,000	552,700	595,000
Dublin	1,217,800	1,256,900	1,361,200	1,464,200
Mid-east	514,500	540,000	594,600	639,700
Midland	266,800	275,600	297,300	317,100
Mid-west	371,900	383,800	427,200	462,300
South-east	487,800	507,900	542,200	580,500
South-west	644,600	667,500	737,100	795,000
West	426,100	442,200	484,700	521,400
State	4,422,000	4,584,900	4,997,000	5,375,200

Source: DEHLG 2009

4.2.2. The revised targets provided by the DEHLG reflect a significant growth of 127,500 persons in the south west between 2010-2022, the second highest level of growth in the state. The regional population targets were apportioned by the regional authority by agreement with the three local authorities. The figures are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Population targets for County Cork and Kerry 2006-2022

	2006	2010	2016	2022	2010-2022
Cork City	119,418	127,710	134,710	150,000	22,290
Cork County	361,877	389,943	436,920	470,622	80,679
Kerry County	139,835	149,847	165,470	174,378	24,531
SW Region	621,130	667,500	737,100	795,000	127,500

4.2.3. The target populations for the growth of the Gateway and Hub towns in the region have also been given by the Department and are shown on Table 4.3. Gateways and Hubs are the priority growth areas within the NSS policy framework and thus, in principle, should be growing at faster rates than the regions in which they are located. As Gateways are the prime focus for growth, government guidance places the growth of the gateway at 1.5 times the overall regional rate from 2016 to 2022.



Table 4.3: Target population for Cork Gateway, Hubs and Planning Areas

Area	2006	2010	2016	2022	Growth 2010-22	Total
Cork Gateway*	272,645	296,600	336,600	381,500	84,900	
Mallow Hub	10,241	12,400	16,500	22,000	9,600	
Ring Towns and Rural Area**	104,951	107,895	110,698	113,500	5,605	
Greater Cork Area						
(incl. Mallow)	377,596	404,495	447,298	495,000	90,505	90,505
Tralee-Killarney Hub	37,347	39,700	44,700	49,400	9,700	
Kerry Linked Hub						
(incl. rural areas)	72,241	77,873	87,681	96,900	19,027	19,027
Northern Area	81,848	88,210	96,546	96,790	8,580	8,580
Western Area	89,445	96,922	105,575	106,310	9,388	9,388
SW Total	621,130	667,500	737,100	795,000	127,500	127,500

*(Cork City will have 134 710 by 2016 and 150 000 by 2022)

**The CASP Ring Area includes the Mallow Hub

4.2.4. From the above table, it is anticipated that there will be new growth of 127,500 persons in the region between 2010 and 2022, of which almost 85,000 will be located in the Gateway and 19,300 will be located in the Hub Towns, constituting approximately 82% of the population growth by 2022. Within the overall strategy of the Guidelines, the population target of 795,000 in 2022 may be exceeded depending on levels of economic growth. Population targets in current City and County Development Plans are generally consistent with these figures. The 2016 Review of the Regional Planning Guidelines will provide updated targets for the local authorities for 2022 and in this regard the 2011 census will also inform the position. Updated guidance from the DEHLG in relation to reviewed national population targets for 2022, following the 2011 and 2016 census will at the appropriate junctures, also better inform the population targets.

4.2.5. In order to re-balance the future development in the region and concentrate development in the urban areas of the Gateway and Hubs, new growth in the region will have to be allocated according to the overall regional development strategy.

Households and Housing Requirements

4.2.6. In order to give local authorities guidance in the preparation of their development plans and local area plans, it is possible to determine the quantum of housing required in the future (2016 and 2022), based on the population targets. The table below takes the population targets and translates them into households and housing units. The housing estimates are absolute figures without provision for headroom which must be provided by the relevant local authorities when preparing their county development plans and local area plans.



Table 4.4: Regional Household forecasts for 2022 – August 2009

Area	2006	2010	2016	2022
Cork Gateway	97,027	111,086	133,043	158,299
Mallow Hub	3,644	4,644	6,522	9,129
Ring Towns and Rural Area**	37,349	40,410	43,754	47,095
Greater Cork Area	134,376	151,496	176,798	205,394
Tralee-Killarney Hub	13,291	14,869	17,668	20,498
Kerry Linked Hub	25,709	29,166	34,657	40,207
Northern Area	29,127	33,037	38,160	40,162
Western Area	31,831	36,300	41,729	44,112
SW Total	221,043	250,000	291,344	329,876

4.2.7. The regional household calculations are based on the population targets divided by average household formation rates that are similar to the national averages in 2006. (2.81 in 2006, 2.67 in 2010, 2.53 in 2016 and 2.41 in 2022).

4.2.8. Housing units required in the region for the period 2016 and 2022 are shown on Table 4.5. The calculation of housing units required is based on the level of vacancy and frictional losses in the market. The downturn in the economy and the re-adjustment of the housing market will result in a lower housing unit/household conversion rate. Previously, the conversion rate was 1.3 (based on high levels of second homes and investor housing in the housing boom period). This figure has been adjusted to 1.15 as a result of the downturn in the housing market.

Table 4.5: Regional Housing Units required in 2016 and 2022

Area	2006	2010	2016	2022	2010- 22
Cork Gateway	111,581	127,749	153,000	182,044	54,295
Mallow Hub	4,191	5,341	7,500	10,498	5,157
Ring Towns and Rural Area**	42,951	46,472	50,317	54,160	7,688
Greater Cork Area	154,532	174,221	203,317	236,203	61,983
Tralee-Killarney Hub	15,284	17,099	20,318	23,573	6,473
Kerry Linked Hub	29,565	33,541	39,855	46,239	12,698
Northern Area	33,497	37,993	43,885	46,186	8,193
Western Area	36,606	41,745	47,989	50,729	8,983
SW Total	254,199	287,500	335,045	379,357	91,857

4.2.9. As a result of the above analysis, the net housing requirement for the period 2010-2016 in the region is 47,545 and by 2022, 91,857 housing units, of which almost 66,000 (or 70%) will be located in the Cork Gateway and Hubs Towns. This will result in an average regional construction of 7,655 housing units per annum.



Land Requirements for Housing

4.2.10. In Table 4.5, it is estimated that the future demand for housing units by 2016 will be 47,545 and by 2022 will be 91,857. It seems that the housing demand generated by the target populations for the plan period (2010- 2016 and 2022), are well below the actual level of land available and the resulting housing units. Therefore, generally, land supply for housing exceeds the predicted demand in the region.

4.2.11. Based on projected population targets in 2016 and 2020, the net land requirement for housing has been estimated. The figures as targeted are highly contingent on population growth occurring at the rates envisaged. Based on the projected housing requirements between 2010, 2016 and 2022 , the net amount of hectares required has been calculated for the Gateway , Hubs and other planning areas within the region. Table 4.6. also shows these figures aggregated at a local authority level. The gross land requirement in terms of hectares required will have to be calculated by each local authority, based on applicable local densities in different areas, availability of existing brownfield sites; together with an additional allowance for headroom, to allow for choice, sequencing and other local factors. This headroom should be calculated in line with the Development Plan Guidelines of 2007.

Table 4.6: Net land requirement for Planning Area and Local Authorities

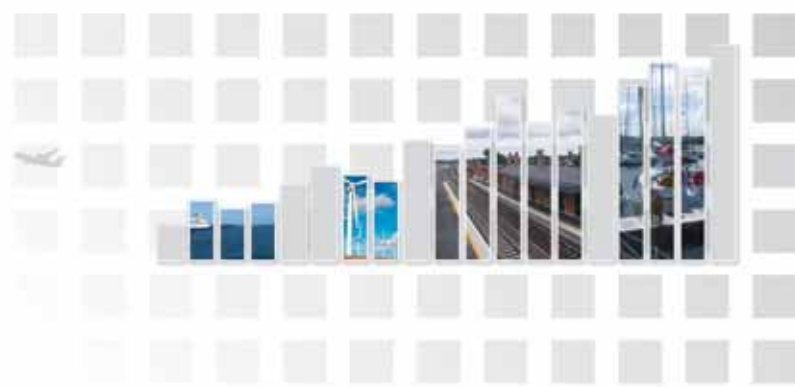
Planning Areas	Housing Units			Net Land Requirement			
	2010	2016	Diff	Ha	2022	Diff	Ha
Cork Gateway	127,749	153,000	25,251	595	182,044	54,295	1,279
Greater Cork Area*	46,472	50,317	3,846	184	54,160	7,688	372
Kerry Linked Hub	33,541	39,855	6,314	300	46,239	12,698	604
Northern Area	37,993	43,885	5,891	265	46,186	8,193	369
Western Area	41,745	47,989	6,243	281	50,729	8,983	404
SW Total	287,500	335,045	47,545	1,625	379,357	91,857	3,027

Local Authorities	2010	2016	Diff	Ha	2022	Diff	Ha
Cork City	52,377	62,730	10,353	148	74,638	22,261	318**
Cork County	170,217	196,314	26,097	962	220,358	50,141	1,802
Kerry County	64,906	76,001	11,095	515	84,361	19,455	908
SW Total	287,500	335,045	47,545	1,625	379,357	91,857	3,027

* Including Mallow Hub

**Estimated land requirements (including substantial brownfield sites in the City)

4.2.12. It is important that increases in population are located in the Gateways, Hub towns, other towns, villages and rural areas in that order of priority. The key to addressing this issue is for local authorities to actively manage the supply of land for housing in accordance with the overall strategy. Therefore local authorities should undertake periodic studies of housing land requirements, the



aim of which should be to manage the supply of land for residential development. Arising from the studies, local authorities should:-

- Examine existing lands zoned for development in the development and local areas plans and if these zoned lands are not consistent with the population and housing targets, or are surplus to requirements, the local authorities should take steps to introduce phasing programmes based on the targets and the availability of adequate infrastructure or change the landuse category to one that is more suited to future requirements and if the previous two options are not available to de-zone any land not required. Densities should be in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines
- All local authorities should consider the provision of adequate zoned land in excess of the targets for each of their settlements (headroom). Generally, the quantum of headroom will depend on the circumstances of the settlement and the availability of infrastructure services and other issues.
- It is important for local authorities to introduce phasing for the release of development land in each settlement so that development can proceed on an orderly and sequential manner.
- The amount and adequacy of zoned land should be reviewed by each local authority on a regular basis

4.2.13. When preparing land zoning strategies, local authorities should, in the first instance, seek to avoid significant adverse impacts on the ecological integrity of Natura 2000 sites and other designated areas. In addition to these designated areas, due regard should also be given to other ecologically sensitive areas which are located in close proximity to the Region's Gateway and Hub Settlements, including the intertidal areas of Cork Harbour, the Blackwater catchment upstream of Mallow Town, the intertidal and coastal areas of Tralee Bay and Killarney National Park and its environs.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Settlement Strategy RSS-01 Land Zoning

It is an objective that the relevant local authorities undertake periodic studies of all zoned land available for residential development. These studies should identify areas where shortfalls of zoned land exist and specific areas where over-zoning has taken place, having regard to the need for proper planning and sustainable development. The assessment needs to be realistic in terms of the necessity for priority investment in infrastructure and management of land supply.

Following the study, each local authority in the review of Development Plans and Local Area Plans is required to ensure that land zoning provision is in line with projected requirements in Table 4.5 and the criteria outlined in 4.2.12. and 4.2.13.

This overall approach needs to be supported by sustainable provision of services and infrastructure particularly in the Gateways and Hubs so that their potential can be realised.

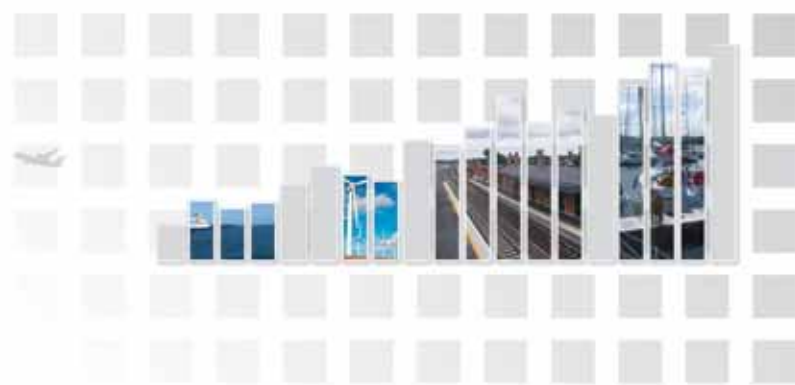
4.3 The Core Settlement Strategy

4.3.1. Having regard to the population and housing targets outlined above a core settlement strategy for the South West Region has been set out in which priority is given to growth in the Gateway and Hubs. This core strategy will reverse the past and current patterns of growth and development that have hitherto resulted in an imbalance of development between urban and rural areas particularly in the CASP Ring area. This is causing higher infrastructure costs, increased travel to work and a consequential risks to the bio-diversity in the region.

4.3.2. Within this core strategy, growth would primarily be focused on the development of the Cork Gateway and two Hubs of Mallow and Tralee/Killarney. It will be characterised by a sharp upturn in the population of Cork



Figure 9: Spatial Settlement Strategy for the South West



City, with a moderation of the rate of growth in the southern suburbs and an acceleration of the rate of population growth in the northern suburbs of Cork City. It will also mean a moderation of the rate of population growth in villages and rural areas so as to achieve a more balanced rate of growth between urban and rural areas around the Gateway and Hub towns and higher rates of population growth in those towns served by sustainable transport. In Mallow Hub town, there would be continued growth of population in line with the higher level of economic growth, thereby reducing the need of the residents to commute to Cork City.

4.3.3. This settlement strategy is guided by an overall development strategy, as outlined in Chapter 2, which divides the region into four distinct planning areas;

- Greater Cork Area (including Cork Gateway),
- Tralee Killarney Linked Hub,
- Northern Area and
- Western Area.

4.3.4. Within the settlement strategy the Cork Gateway and the two Hubs are recognised as the principal drivers of development, directly or indirectly employing a significant number of the population, and containing most of the regions key employers. The Gateway and Hubs are the focus for entertainment, recreation, shopping and leisure facilities, as well as the focus of transportation linkages.

4.3.5. The Spatial Settlement Strategy is shown on the attached diagram. In the remainder of the region (Northern and Western Areas), there will be a more balanced approach to development in order to maintain vibrant rural communities, with an equal level of urban and rural growth. In other towns of the region outside of the Gateway and Hubs, there will be moderate population growth in line with local employment opportunities. This strategy assumes large scale infrastructure provision as well as major re-development of brownfield and other sustainable locations in the Gateway and Hubs, in the short to medium term.

4.3.6. The development of these locations in the Gateway and Hubs would generate significant advantages to creating a critical mass of population to compete with other regions and internationally. If there is no large scale investment in the provision of infrastructure (bridges, water services and rapid transit transport in the Gateway and Hubs), the likely alternative scenario is a more moderate population growth in established urban areas. This option will be characterised by expansion of the existing footprints of main towns, extending existing infrastructure and local employment areas.

4.3.7. The principal aim of this settlement strategy is to build on those strengths of the Gateway and Hubs through increasing their population and employment levels. As a result, there will be an economic benefit for all areas and will also enable all areas to share in the region's prosperity, whilst protecting and enhancing the regions environmental assets. The focus of new housing development should take place in the Gateways and Hubs in line with the population targets for 2022. These targets represent the minimum population numbers which it is desirable to plan for and if possible exceed.

4.3.8. In order to strengthen the urban structure of the towns and to ensure delivery of population growth in line with the growth strategy, further development in the rural areas needs to be balanced in line with Table 4.4. In this regard a strong green belt policy is required for the rural area in the Greater Cork Area.

4.3.9. In preparing development or local area plans, local authorities should comply with the provisions of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. In order to protect designated international sites of nature conservation importance, screening for Habitats Directive Assessments should be carried out at an early stage in consultation with the NPWS, when formulating land zoning strategies and other objectives for settlements. The settlement hierarchy and growth policies are shown in the Table 4.7 below.



Table 4.7: Regional Settlement Strategy

Hierarchy	Description and levels of growth
Cork Gateway including Metropolitan towns	Part of Greater Cork area – principal economic driver of the region with strong population and employment growth together with priority investment in infrastructure in Cork City and Docklands, and Metropolitan towns.
Hub Towns	Complementary role to the Gateway as an alternative location for investment and choice in the region and a key economic driver to its immediate hinterland - strong population and employment growth in the urban area in line with priority investment in infrastructure.
Cork Ring Towns (excluding Mallow)	Part of Greater Cork area – sustainable employment led growth in population and employment.
North and West Area main towns	Strengthening of settlements and stimulating sustainable growth in indigenous economic development.
Key villages and smaller settlements	Appropriate levels of sustainable growth.

The Cork Gateway

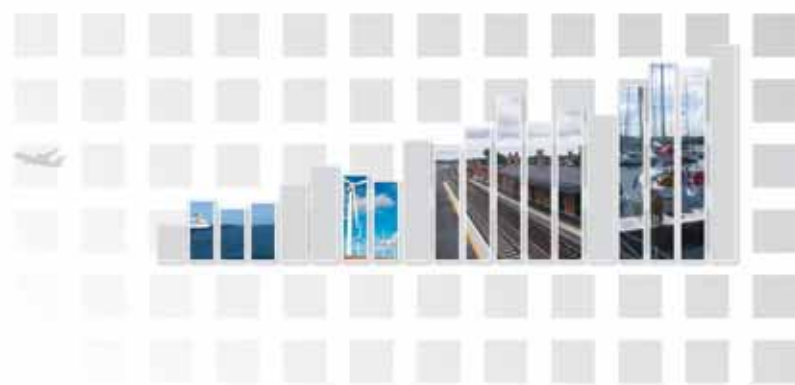
4.3.10. The priority for population growth in the region will be in the Gateway. The primary focus in Cork City will be on brownfield sites such as Docklands and Blackpool as well as suburban areas such as Ballyvolane and Mahon. Infrastructure investment must be prioritised in these areas to allow capacity for the planned increases in population. Transportation initiatives in the docklands are of utmost importance in particular the high capacity, public transport networks, along with the development of the Docklands Bridges – Eastern Gateway bridge, Bridge at Mill Road, Water Street and local road initiatives. Development in these priority areas of the City should be accompanied by appropriate higher development densities to sustain the investment in high quality public transport and infrastructure.

4.3.11. Important to the development of population growth within the Docklands is the relocation of the Port of Cork and associated Seveso sites. It is acknowledged that this is a complex issue but remains one which must be resolved in the short term. The local authorities should work with the port authorities and the relevant industries to develop a strategy for sustainable relocation of those facilities.

4.3.12. Cork City Centre has benefited from considerable investment in urban regeneration (both infrastructure and new buildings) and this economic development together with the environmental upgrade of Cork City Centre will assist in its promotion as the primary location for retail, services and cultural events in the region.

4.3.13. Planned growth in metropolitan towns is intended to complement growth in the City so that the Gateway can offer a broad choice of locations for sustainable future development. Whilst significant investment is required in hard infrastructure in some locations, additional investment is also required in soft infrastructure to make them more attractive places to live and work for future generations.

4.3.14. The main gateway locations (outside Cork City) for future population growth, will be in the metropolitan towns. These comprise the settlements along the suburban rail corridors including Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Monard, Blarney, and Cobh. Additional growth will also be directed to Ballincollig aligned to the development of a high quality public transportation corridor linking Ballincollig with Mahon and the city centre as proposed in the CASP Update 2008. In this regard infrastructural priority must be given to the metropolitan towns to cater



for the additional population into the future to position those towns for the economic upturn. The local authorities should ensure that sustainable urban development takes place along these corridors with the appropriate higher densities.

4.3.15. Development of an integrated sustainable transportation strategy within Metropolitan Cork (Cork Area Transit System – CATS) is vitally important in terms of developing an integrated and coordinated strategy stitching the whole settlement strategy together and moving towards achieving modal shift targets (see Chapter 5 for more detailed guidance on modal shift targets). Planned development includes completion of the Cork suburban rail network and rollout of rapid transit systems, bus corridors, integrated ticketing and upgrading of the public bus system. Equally important will be developing a strategy for development of sustainable walking and cycling facilities for the Gateway area.

Regional Planning Guidelines:

Regional Settlement Strategy

RSS-02 Cork Gateway

It is an objective to promote the sustainable development of the Cork Gateway as the economic driver of the region through targeted investment in infrastructure, sustainable and efficient transport modes and services, with a strong emphasis on achieving choice in location and modal shift targets, along with strengthening controls on urban generated housing in the surrounding rural area.

Hub Towns

4.3.16. The Hub towns act as strategic locations in a complimentary role to the Gateways. It is envisaged that their growth will support overall development in their hinterland areas, by linking the capacity of the Gateways to the wider region. The aim is to build critical mass of employment and population in the Hub Towns, positioning them as sufficiently sized urban zones with the capability to attract and retain additional employment and population, thereby increasing their competitiveness and attractiveness as national investment locations.

Mallow Hub Town

4.3.17. Mallow is in a pivotal position on the Atlantic Corridor, midway between two national gateways (Cork and Limerick), is on the main Dublin railway line with direct rail links to the Tralee Killarney Hub and potential for direct rail links to Limerick. The NSS states that as a hub Mallow “will perform an important role within the national structure at the regional and county level. Improvements in regional accessibility through roads, advanced communications, infrastructure and public transport links are key supporting factors. Other critical factors are enhanced physical qualities, townscape and improved local services.”

4.3.18. The target population for Mallow for 2022 is 22,000 which is in effect a doubling of the current population. As well as supporting the development of the Gateway, Mallow also has a role to play in energising the smaller towns and rural areas which lies within its sphere of influence. If these targets are to be achieved, the focus must be on delivering the required services and infrastructure to facilitate this growth within a relatively short timeframe.

4.3.19. The following actions should be undertaken if Mallow is to succeed in achieving its target population and become a sustainable location of choice.

- The local authority must identify and address any shortfalls in the supply of available serviced/serviceable development land, in a sustainable manner.
- The town must expand its employment base in order to provide sustainable employment.
- All development agencies need to adopt a much tighter focus in the Mallow Hub in order to drive employment led growth.
- A strategic transport plan, consistent with the principles of Smarter Travel with particular emphasis on sustainable transport modes should be developed in the short term.
- The advance provision of infrastructure is essential in Mallow to allow for projected population increases and economic development.



- The existing controls on urban generated housing around the town should be maintained in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas, the landscape and ensure a strong urban edge.
- Substantial improvements to the physical environment and urban fabric are required.
- In preparing or reviewing development and local area plans there will need to be an assessment of their potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites.
- Improve the rail link between Mallow and Limerick by introducing direct trains and consider the potential of the feasibility of re-opening the Patrickswell rail line.

Regional Planning Guidelines:

Regional Settlement Strategy

RSS-03 Mallow Hub Town

It is an objective to recognise the strategic position of the Mallow Hub in the Atlantic Gateway, to prioritise the Hub as a location for new residential development with commensurate economic growth in order to achieve the targets for 2022 in a sustainable manner. It is also an objective to ensure the provision of the requisite hard and soft infrastructure, townscape improvements and to promote Mallow as an attractive location for investment and as a place to live, whilst carefully managing residential development in the surrounding rural area and protecting biodiversity.

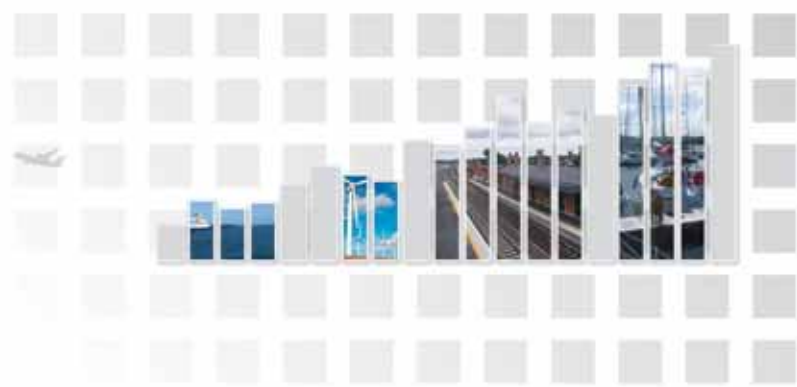
The Tralee Killarney Linked Hub

4.3.20. The Tralee/Killarney Linked Hub is equidistant between two national Gateways, Cork and Limerick and together with Mallow, form a strong urban network within the South West. The NSS sees the role of Tralee and Killarney towns, as strategic locations whose growth will support the revitalisation of areas in the South West, capitalising on the combined capacities of both towns, such as those in third-level education, developing links between industry and centres of learning, surface and air transport links and key natural resources such as scenic landscape.

4.3.21. The population of the Tralee Killarney Hub towns is envisaged to grow to 49,400 by 2022. In order to achieve this target the Hub towns must attract population and employment.

4.3.22. The following actions should be undertaken if Tralee- Killarney Hub is to succeed in achieving its target population and become a sustainable location of choice.

- The local authority must identify and address any shortfalls in the supply of available serviced/serviceable development land in a sustainable manner.
- The Linked Hub must expand its employment base in creative industries, tourism and the knowledge based economy and identify further potential in employment, taking into account its proximity to a varied range of amenities.
- All State Development Agencies need a much tighter focus in the Tralee/Killarney Hub towns in order to drive employment led growth.
- An integrated transport strategy linking the towns in the Hub and with the wider region is required, to include in particular quality public transport linkages, an improved road network, and stronger connections to Farranfore Airport.
- The Linked Hub should be marketed as a quality viable location in which to live and work with an attractive urban setting and a high quality environment.
- Strong controls on urban generated housing in rural areas under urban pressure around the towns are required in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas, the landscape and ensure a strong urban edge.
- In preparing or reviewing development and local area plans there will need to be an assessment of their potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites.



Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Settlement Strategy RSS-04 The Tralee-Killarney Linked Hub

It is an objective to recognise the central role of the Tralee Killarney Linked Hub, to strengthen the local linkages between the two towns, capitalise on their identified capacities and to concentrate population and economic growth in the Hub in a sustainable manner, whilst carefully managing residential development outside of the towns. In order to sustain growth and underpin its role, further investment is required in sustainable transport, infrastructure, services and public realm, building on the reputation of the towns as attractive and unique locations for investment and as places to live. Strong controls on urban generated housing in rural areas that are under urban pressure around the towns is required in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas of the landscape and ensure a strong urban edge.

Ring Towns in Greater Cork Area

4.3.23. The population of the Ring Area as a whole grew very rapidly in the last decade resulting in unsustainable levels of commuting and impacting on the growth of the Gateway. In particular there was an imbalance of development in favour of the villages and rural areas. In order to redress this imbalance there is a need to strengthen the population and employment base of the towns, while moderating growth in rural areas.

4.3.24. The local authorities must focus on producing development strategies and policies which will complement the towns existing strengths and allowing appropriate levels of development in line with population targets for each town. Sustainable diversification and local innovation will be key to consolidating the towns.

4.3.25. A review of the need for universal controls on urban generated rural housing is necessary across the whole of Greater Cork area to help achieve the objective of establishing and consolidating a strong urban network of towns and protecting the surrounding rural areas from inappropriate and unsustainable development.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Settlement Strategy RSS-05 Ring Towns in Greater Cork Area

It is an objective to ensure that any future population growth in the Greater Cork Area (outside of the Gateway and Mallow Hub Town) is focussed within the ring towns in a sustainable manner and is in line with the overall settlement strategy.

It is also an objective to facilitate increased sustainable economic development in the ring towns to create greater employment opportunities for the population of those towns thereby reducing the need to travel to work.

Settlements in the Northern Area

4.3.26. The settlements in the Northern Area comprise a diverse mix of towns and villages ranging from Mitchelstown in the east to Ballybunion in the west. The strategy for the Northern Area is to improve and strengthen its urban fabric, to concentrate economic and population growth on the towns and to strengthen the main towns as local service centres for the surrounding areas. Any growth in population in the area must be distributed in a manner so that there is a balance between the town and villages/rural areas.

4.3.27. The local authorities must focus on producing sustainable development strategies and policies which will complement the towns existing strengths and allowing appropriate levels of development in line with population targets for each town. Sustainable diversification and local innovation will be key to developing the towns.

4.3.28. Attention also needs to be given to accessibility issues in particular rural public transport and broadband rollout at sufficient speed (and competitively priced) to facilitate economic development and support business activity also needs to be fully developed in these towns.

4.3.29. The provision of controls on urban generated rural housing in areas with pressure from urban generated housing, particularly around the towns, would help achieve



the objective of establishing and consolidating a strong urban network of towns across the Northern Area thus protecting the surrounding rural areas from inappropriate and unsustainable development.

4.3.30. The settlements in this area have strong cultural and economic identities, from Listowel and Duagh, Ballydesmond and Rockchapel to Newmarket, Charleville and Mitchelstown. The development of cultural and social linkages between the towns along with their hinterland areas offers the potential for an alternative tourism product with a very broad range of activities from coastal based services to the west to sustainable nature and agri-tourism type facilities stretching inland to the east.

4.3.31. Within the Northern Area of the Region the strong cultural traditions of the Sliabh Luachra are of particular note and include music, poetry, dance and story telling.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Settlement Strategy RSS-06 Settlements in Northern Area

It is an objective that these towns act as vibrant centres for employment and services within their catchment areas. The urban fabric of the settlements will need to be strengthened and greater links forged with their surrounding hinterlands. Any population growth will be distributed in a manner so that there is a balance between the town and villages/rural areas. Controls should be introduced for rural areas under pressure from urban generated housing.

It will also be an objective to promote and develop areas of cultural heritage including the Sliabh Luachra traditions in tandem with policies which will encourage sustainable economic development in order to ensure vibrant communities.

Settlements in the Western Area

4.3.32. The West Area is characterised by the peninsulas and scenic rural areas interspersed with attractive towns, villages and island communities. A higher quality of life and access to recreational facilities are seen as significant advantages to locating within these areas. The towns and villages are small and dispersed across the area and each serves its own hinterland in terms of economic and social function. Some of the towns such as An Daingean, Clonakilty, Kenmare and Bantry have very strong enterprise/tourist functions, while others such as Dunmanway and Killorglin serve more traditional market/service functions.

4.3.33. Future population growth must be balanced between the towns and rural area with a focus on strengthening the established functions of the towns while exploring ways of diversifying the local economies. Attention also needs to be given to accessibility issues, in particular rural public transport. Competitively priced broadband rollout at sufficient speeds needs to be fully developed in these towns to facilitate economic development and support business activity.

4.3.34. Policies for the towns and villages should provide sustainable opportunities for local employment, supporting the needs of agriculture, local services and tourism, improving public transport access to higher order settlements as well as providing a range of housing to meet local needs.

4.3.35. The implementation of controls on urban generated rural housing in areas under pressure, particularly around the main towns will help to protect the surrounding rural areas from inappropriate and unsustainable development whilst preserving their setting and assisting with urban regeneration.

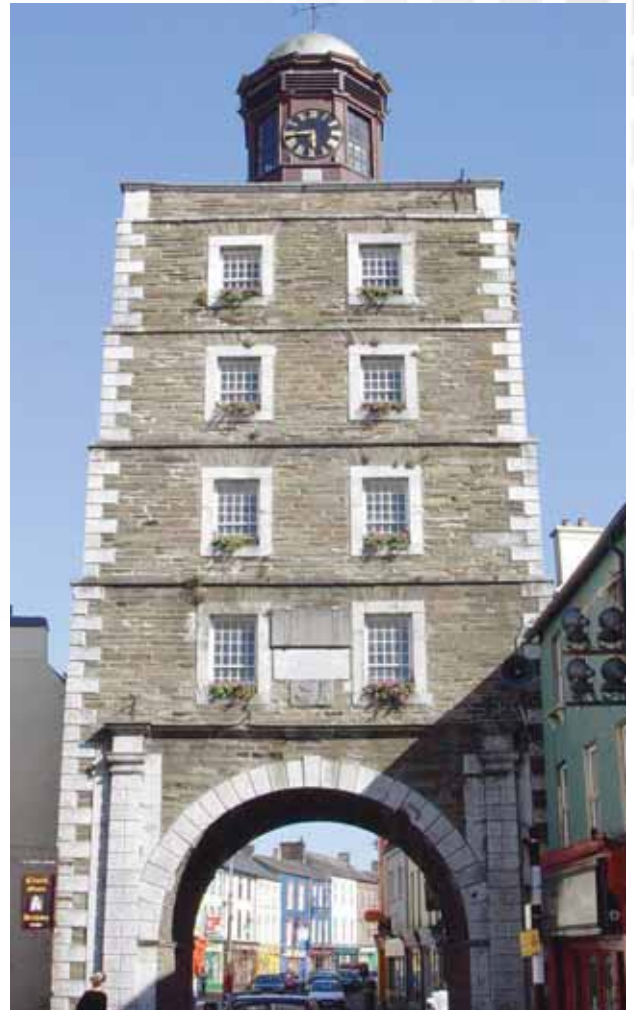


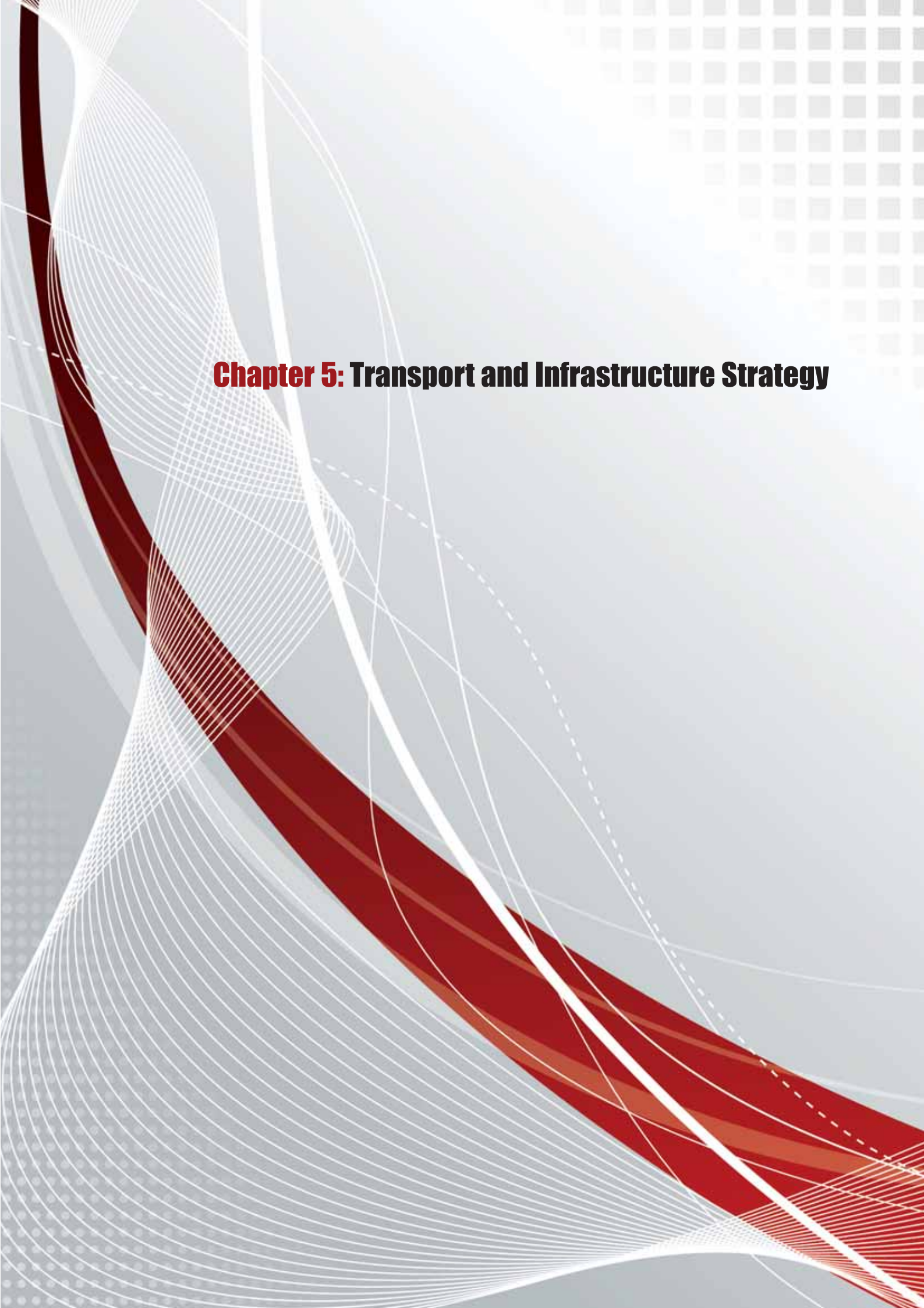
4.3.36. The local authorities should prepare policy documents for the Gaeltacht and Island areas in their jurisdiction which would seek to enhance their unique cultural identity and secure the sustainability of their communities into the future. Planning policies should support the retention of population and services in the island and Gaeltacht areas in a sustainable manner

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Settlement Strategy RSS-07 Settlements in the Western Area

It is an objective to strengthen the economic and tourism roles of the towns and villages and forge greater links to their surrounding hinterlands and to peripheral areas and improve accessibility to peripheral areas in a sustainable manner. In rural areas which are suffering from population decline, specific strategies need to be developed to facilitate sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Such rural diversification should be located in areas which will avoid significant environmental effects. Any population growth will be distributed in a manner so that there is a balance between the town and villages/rural areas. Controls should be introduced for rural areas under pressure from urban generated housing.

It will also be an objective to promote and develop the Gaeltacht and Island areas as centres of linguistic and cultural heritage in tandem with policies which will encourage sustainable economic development in order to ensure vibrant communities.



The background features a light gray gradient with a grid of small squares in the upper right corner. A series of thin, white, wavy lines flow from the top left towards the bottom right. A thick, dark red, wavy line follows a similar path, positioned slightly below the white lines. The overall design is modern and dynamic.

Chapter 5: Transport and Infrastructure Strategy



Chapter 5: Transport and Infrastructure Strategy

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. The timely provision of public transportation and infrastructure is the foundation on which the region will grow and develop. In line with the settlement strategy, the necessary sustainable transportation options and infrastructures will need to be put in place to support growing levels of population and economic activities. All areas of the region require capital investment in public transport, roads, waste water treatment and water supply schemes. The development of the Knowledge Based / Smart Economy demands good broadband services to all urban areas and many rural areas including rural communities and the islands.

5.1.2. The region's ports and airports are critical to the future economic development of the South West, while the development of a sustainable energy supply represents a common challenge to be faced in all regions, the South West may have potential competitive advantage in the development of sustainable and renewable energy resources.

5.1.3. The management of land use and policies of Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Development Management decisions shall implement the requirements of SI 684 of 2007 in ensuring that the scale of development is managed to achieve compliance with the waste water discharge licences of waste water treatment facilities.

5.1.4. All projects identified in the RPGs and future plans that set the framework for or influence development decisions or programme the undertaking, timing or phasing of development, should undertake a Habitats Directive Assessment in accordance with best practice and guidance of their impact on Natura 2000 sites as part of the planning and decision making process and in considering the most suitable locations or scale for provision of the project ensure avoidance of negative impact.

5.2 Transport

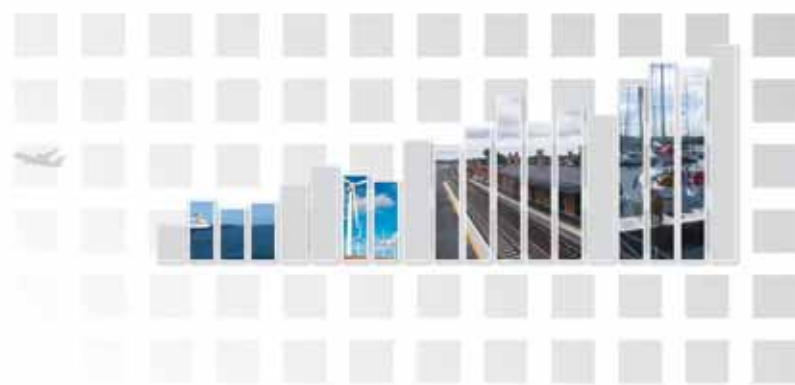
5.2.1. In considering transport, the main aim is to encourage improvements of inter and intra regional cohesiveness, improving connections within the South West and into the other Irish regions. The regional transport modal split needs improvements in line with the national targets and moderated to local conditions. An increased emphasis needs to be placed on developing more public transport, walking and cycling facilities to reduce dependency on car use.

5.2.2. In recent years the patterns of travel and transport have become ever more unsustainable with a doubling of energy use in transport between 1996 and 2006, reduced levels of walking and cycling and an increase in private car use resulting in increasing emissions, lower air quality in built up areas, longer commuting times and increasing congestion on our roads. Without a fundamental shift in modes of travel this pattern of use will continue with consequent negative impacts in terms of emissions, safety and travel times as well as economic costs. These issues clearly indicate a need to make a change in the culture of how we travel.

5.2.3. The recent Department of Transport publication Smarter Travel sets out the national priorities in this regard with an ambition to achieve a shift from 66% to 45% in work related car modal share by 2020. This is seen as being achieved through:

- sustainable compact growth of population and employment;
- alternatives to car such as walking, cycling and car sharing initiatives ;
- public transport to rise to 55% of total commuter journeys.

5.2.4. Smarter Travel complements and follows on from Transport 21 which outlines the government vision for transport for the timeframe of these guidelines. Achieving these targets will require integrated actions in terms of spatial and employment planning and mobility and freight management, all of which will be supported by fiscal



measures. Partnership between the stakeholders in delivering this strategy is identified as being crucial, with the participation of central and local government, employers, commuters and transport providers.

5.2.5. Essentially the South West does not have a highly developed public transport infrastructure and therefore the region is starting from a relatively low base. However, substantial investment has taken place in recent years in the region's public transport infrastructure including updating of the bus fleet and in the Cork Commuter Rail System. Achieving sustainable transport, even in the larger urban areas, will require a suite of actions that will have complementary impacts in terms of travel demand and emissions. There are essentially four overarching actions that can be taken to achieve these targets in the urban areas:-

- Planning policies which will result in and encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment and the use of pricing mechanisms or fiscal and other measures to encourage behavioural change
- Actions aimed at ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking,
- Actions aimed at improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, increased use of biofuels, energy efficient driving, alternative technologies and electric car initiatives,
- Actions aimed at strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets.

5.2.6. It is important to underline that the targets and actions are relevant to both urban and rural living, but the dispersed nature of the region will make it very difficult to achieve a shift on the level as envisaged in the national targets for rural areas. A more realistic target for rural areas including the smaller towns of the region would be perhaps a 20% change in modal shift to non car use, complemented by enhanced facilities for walking and cycling over short journeys. Public transport in rural areas

can be improved by the greater integration of existing operations such as school bus services and other rural transport services and initiatives.

5.2.7. The Cork Gateway, the Hub Towns and other urban areas present the main opportunity to develop more sustainable transport modes in line with national targets and the RPG suggests a target of 55% of journeys by sustainable means by 2022. Local journeys such as school runs, shopping and leisure trips have a strong potential to be undertaken by foot, bicycle or public transport.

5.2.8. Outside the Gateway, in other smaller urban areas, due to scale and their dispersed nature, the opportunities for improving the sustainability of movements mainly arises within the individual towns rather than between towns. Enhanced walking and cycling facilities need to be provided to encourage local journeys.

5.2.9. Local Authorities, in preparing Development and Local Area Plans, need to focus on alternative safe and sustainable transport modes and deliver local transportation strategies to reduce the need for car usage in these areas. The RPGs support the CASP approach to the development of integrated parking policies in the area.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS -01 Transport

It is an objective to encourage a 55% level of non car based transport within the Cork Gateway, Hubs and other main towns and a 20% level of non car based travel for journeys within rural areas of the region.

Local Authorities should address integrated transport strategies and systems as part of Development Plan and Local Area Plan preparation- including Sustainable Freight Strategies and Local Traffic and Transport Plans, examining and promoting sustainable transport options.



5.3 Public Transport

5.3.1. Integrated public transport provision is critical to the overall transportation strategy. The aim of this transport strategy is to achieve comprehensive public transport services in and between the gateway and hubs, with improvements in services to other areas of the region resulting in a reduction in car use. Given the challenge of carbon reduction, coupled with declining oil reserves, it is important, particularly in the Gateway, that a highly developed public transportation network is provided.

5.3.2. Planning policies should therefore encourage good public transport services both within the Cork Gateway and between the urban areas of the region. This ties in with the overall strategy of developing the potential of the gateway, with a concentration of development (both residential and employment) along existing public transport routes or in close proximity to new routes, and along the rail corridor in the Metropolitan area and the proposed BRT corridor.

5.3.3. The first part of the Cork suburban rail network was commissioned in July 2009 between Cork and Midleton including the new stations at Midleton and Carrigtwohill, which complement the existing rail line and stations on the Cobh and Mallow suburban rail line. This new rail line is a major step in providing integrated public transport services to centres of high population growth. Further work on improving the line and stations at Kilbarry, Monard and Blarney on the northern line and Dunkettle in the eastern line, together with other possible stations, will assist in improved accessibility to the service. The reorientation of Kent Station to facilitate ease of access and connections to other modes of sustainable transport is an important objective. It is also considered that protection should be given to the existing railway line to Youghal as potential exists to re-open this in the future.

5.3.4. Greater integration and frequency of public transport services in Tralee/Killarney hub is also required. Consideration should be given to the preparation of a public transport study for the linked hub.

5.3.5. Mainline rail journey times on the Cork-Dublin line need to improve to compete with private cars. Frequency and journey times on the Tralee-Dublin line require improvement.

5.3.6. Rail connectivity between the Gateways along the Western Rail Corridor needs to be promoted and advanced in order to strengthen the Atlantic Corridor. A direct link from Cork to Limerick via Patrickswell is essential to this concept.

5.3.7. In addition, the draft Cork Area Transit Study 2009 (CATS) has developed an initial strategy for the improvement of the public transport network in Cork City and metropolitan towns to support a more concentrated and sustainable pattern of development. The study identifies the public transport requirements of Metropolitan Cork in order to achieve its objectives. It recognises that current public transport networks and travel patterns are unsustainable and that major changes are required if public transport is to adequately serve future development in the area.

5.3.8. The draft document also made a number of recommendations including development of an east-west Rapid Transit Corridor through the Metropolitan Area from Mahon in the east to Ballincollig in the west, and enhancing and reconfiguring the bus network. Supporting integrative and travel demand management measures are also recommended.

5.3.9. Water based public transport services, particularly within Cork Harbour, may provide a viable alternative to private car transport. One of the objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to support the provision of water-based public transport services serving the Cork Gateway in a sustainable manner, while recognising the need to consider the impacts of any such services on species/habitats of conservation interest and other users of the waterways.



Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS -02 Public Transport

It is an objective to ensure that the development of public transport infrastructure in the Cork Gateway and Mallow Hub will rest on the successful implementation of the following priority actions:

- Promotion of the principles of the draft Cork Area Transit Study.
- Phased implementation of the BRT corridor along the east west spine as outlined in CATS for areas of Metropolitan Cork
- Reconfiguration of existing bus routes and the further development of priority bus corridors in Metropolitan Cork.
- Implementation of additional park and ride facilities at appropriate locations
- Implementation of supporting measures, such as integrated ticketing, and real time passenger information systems
- Further development of the Metropolitan Suburban Rail Network, including opening of new stations at appropriate locations, improvements to timetabling, rolling stock and integration with other modes of public transport.
- Protection of the rail line from Midleton to Youghal.
- Consolidation of population and employment growth in existing built up areas which best facilitates travel by sustainable modes.

In the rural areas of the region, it is an objective to encourage sustainable transport options throughout the region by:

- Promote the sustainable development of mainline railway connections along the western rail corridor in order to underpin the sustainability of the Atlantic Gateways.
- Development of integrated rural public transport promoting improved modal interchanges (linking rural to interurban, park'n'ride)
- Rural public transport initiatives
- Improvements to the inter-urban bus connections

5.4 Cycling /Walking

5.4.1. Compared with other modes of transport walking and cycling have the lowest environmental impact, are most beneficial to health and wellbeing and are financially beneficial to the individual relative to private car ownership. Outside the Gateway, these modes have the potential to make the biggest impact. Smarter Travel has outlined an integrated range of measures to encourage increased levels of walking and cycling with an aim of 450,000 people walking and cycling to work/education each day in 2020, up from 240,000 in 2006 nationally. If this proposed increase is to be achieved in the south west region then a number of broad interrelated factors come into play.

5.4.2. There has to be greater integration and planning between where people work and live, shop and recreate. Walking and cycling policies can only succeed where safe access on foot and bicycle to and from commonly used centres can be provided. Fundamental to achieving a modal shift to walking and cycling is to make the journey safer and more convenient to the user. The region will need to ensure that objectives and actions are put in place to achieve safety in the provision of improved access to cycle paths and pedestrian walkways which are integrated with the public transport network.

5.4.3. A National Cycle Policy Framework has been produced that will address the creation of traffic-free urban centres to facilitate cycling and investment in a national cycle network that deal with both rural leisure cycling and urban networks with the latter given priority.

5.4.4. There are plans to establish a Walking Framework under the Smarter Travel Plan. This will encourage a culture of urban walking, ensuring that urban walking networks are strengthened by the improvement to the public realm including safe pedestrian routes, serving education and employment areas and minimising areas of traffic conflict for pedestrians, widening and resurfacing footpaths and rationalisation of signage to public buildings.



5.4.5. Proposed walking and cycling routes in the vicinity of nature conservation sites should be located and designed in such a manner so as to avoid undue disturbance/harm to species or habitats of conservation interest.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS-03 Cycling and Walking

It is an objective to encourage the development of strategies for walking and cycling that promote the goals and aspirations of Smarter Travel and the National Cycle Policy Framework. Specifically, the region's local authorities should prepare plans for improvement to the cycling and walking networks in urban areas, linking areas of population growth and employment, in a sustainable manner.

Development Plans and Local Area Plans should examine the possibility of retro fitting of adequate walking and cycling facilities and planning for all new areas should include the provision of such facilities in a sustainable manner.

In other urban parts of the region outside of the Gateway and Hubs, where intra-urban bus services are not available, it is an objective to promote the sustainable use of cycling and walking between town centres, employment and residential areas.

Roads

5.4.6. The National Roads Authority (NRA) on the instructions of Government has placed its strategic focus on the major inter-urban routes, specifically motorways linking Dublin with the cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford and to Belfast. Indicatively, the priority post 2010 will address the inter-urban routes linking these cities and building a critical mass of population and workforce through improved roads to a motorway standard.

5.4.7. For the South West this policy will have a major impact in terms of the successful completion of the motorway connection from Cork to Dublin, Waterford and Limerick, resulting in improved journey times, safety and comfort. Further development of national routes within the region is critical if the South West is to compete effectively with other regions for economic growth.

5.4.8. An important element of these new inter-urban routes will be the improvement in access to the Gateway and Hubs to the motorways, such as linking the M8 to Cork City, linking the Mallow hub to the M20; and linking Tralee and Killarney to the Gateways via the N21 and N22. Planned routes such as the Northern Ring Road (M20) interconnecting the M20 with the N22 and M8 should have good access to strategic employment zones.

5.4.9. It is important to protect the capacity of the national road network. The Jack Lynch tunnel is particularly important as a strategic regional asset. Consideration should be given to the role of the tunnel and associated interchanges and how the economic benefits of these assets can be maximised.

5.4.10. Due to road pressures caused by existing developments, until such time as substantial integrated public transport services linking the population and employment areas within the gateway and hubs are provided, these new inter-urban routes will have to support commuter movements. Local authority planning policies should strive to mitigate this as much as possible to protect the National Road Infrastructure for more strategic use.

5.4.11. In terms of strategic road investments in the region, the following are of significance.



Table 5.1 National and Regional Roads

Inter-regional	
M8	Linking Cork-Dublin Gateways including upgrading of the Dunkettle Interchange.
M20	Atlantic Corridor linking Cork and Limerick Gateways – via Mallow hub – including Cork North Ring Route
N25	Atlantic Corridor linking Cork and Waterford Gateways including flyovers within the Cork gateway
N21/N22/N23	Linking Tralee-Killarney linked hub with Limerick Gateway including Tralee bypass
Intra- regional	
N22	Linking Cork Gateway with Tralee/-Killarney linked hub
N72-N73	Linking Tralee-Killarney Hub to Mallow Hub and the Atlantic Corridor and the M8
N71	Linking Cork Gateway with the Western Area
Other Strategic Roads	
N28	Cork Gateway to Ringaskiddy employment area
N27	Cork City to Airport Cork Docklands Roads and Infrastructure
N70	Ring of Kerry strategic tourist route
R 630	Linking N25 at Midleton to Whitegate Energy Area
N86	Linking Dingle peninsula with Tralee –Killarney hub
N69, N21, N67	Linking the Tralee/Killarney Linked Hub with the Tarbert / Ballylongford deepwater port and landbank and Limerick through the Tarbert ferry
R558	Linking Fenit Port with the Tralee-Killarney Hub
R624	Linking Cobh with M25
R561/563	Killarney - Annascaul linking to the Dingle Peninsula
Other projects	
	Tralee Eastern By pass
	Midleton Relief Road.
	Macroom By-pass

5.4.12. All road projects promoted in the RPGs should implement the guidelines relevant to the control of non-native invasive plant species that are contained within the NRA (2008) document “Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads’. Roads can facilitate the introduction and spread of non native invasive plant species which may harm biodiversity. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) should also be incorporated, where appropriate.



Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS-04 Road Network

It is an objective to encourage the sustainable development of the strategic Motorway/National Primary, National Secondary as well as the regional road infrastructure both within the region and connecting with other regions.

5.5 Ports and Airports

Cork International Airport

5.5.1. Cork International Airport comprises a site of approximately 248 hectares, located 5km south of Cork City centre within the Metropolitan Green Belt that surrounds the City and its suburbs. To the east of the airport, the N27/ R600 is currently the sole access route to the airport. The passenger terminal building, completed in 2006 is designed to cater for over 5 million passengers per annum.

5.5.2. Cork Airport is the second largest airport in the State and is a vital element of transport infrastructure providing both national and international access and connectivity essential to the future development and prosperity of Cork City, County and the South West Region. In recognition of the pivotal role of the Airport as a driver for socio-economic development, and the need to protect the operational capacity and land use requirements of the Airport in the long term, Cork County Council is undertaking the preparation of a Special Local Area Plan for the Airport (SLAP). There are a complex range of issues to be addressed in the Special Local Area Plan including, the need to protect sufficient lands for future aviation and operational needs, the possible extension of the main runway to allow for long haul services, impact on public safety areas, impact on residential amenity, impact on Natura 2000 sites and a strategy for future transport links/ improvements.

5.5.3. Adequate and efficient road and public transport access are essential for the growth and expansion of an airport. A secondary access road serving the Airport has surfaced as a key issue. Steps will need to be taken to identify the preferred route option for this secondary access.

Kerry County International Airport (Farranfore).

5.5.4. Kerry Airport is located at Farranfore, which is strategically located between Tralee and Killarney in the Linked Hub area. The airport has expanded its activities significantly as a commercial airport in recent years leading to a need for expansion of the terminal building, airside facilities and a runway extension.

5.5.5. The Airport is located adjacent to the national roads (N22 and N23), the railway line from Mallow to Tralee and to the village of Farranfore. There is a need for better public transport links to the village and to the Linked Hub towns. The airport is of critical importance to the ongoing development of the Hub and its upgrading and expansion needs to be prioritised in order to ensure that the potential of the Hub as an attractive location for settlement, leisure and business is realised.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS-05 Airports

It is an objective to protect the land and infrastructure necessary for the sustainable development of future long term aviation uses in line with growth at Cork International Airport and to endorse the requirements of the Public Safety Zones identified by the Airport Authority for Cork.

It is an objective to upgrade and expand Kerry County International Airport in a sustainable manner as a crucial element of the infrastructure necessary to drive the development of the Tralee/Killarney Linked Hub as a location for business, settlement and leisure and to protect the associated flight path areas of the airport.



Major Ports and Harbours

Cork Harbour

5.5.6. Cork Harbour as the largest port in Ireland outside of Dublin contributes greatly to the overall economic wellbeing of the South West Region, particularly in the manufacturing, commercial, industrial and tourism sectors. The port's activities are located in several areas of the harbour, including traditional open wharves within the city and container facilities at Tivoli and a modern deep-water facility with freight and passenger 'Ro-Ro' facilities at Ringaskiddy.

5.5.7. There are a number of specialised facilities for oil and petroleum at Whitegate, general cargo at Passage West and a specialised facility constructed to serve the former IFI plant at Marino Point (disused). In addition, there are important tourist related facilities for passenger liners and cruise ships at Cobh.

5.5.8. It is important to the development of the region's economy that the Port of Cork can increase its tonnage in line with the future economic growth of the region and its own strategic development plan (currently under review) will guide this approach.

5.5.9. Integral to both the expansion of the Port of Cork and the planned redevelopment of the City Docklands is the relocation of port activities and related uses from the City Docklands and Tivoli to new sustainable locations in the harbour. In the recent past, there have been conflicting views on the provision of transport infrastructure to serve the new port facilities particularly with regard to road capacity issues and the future role of rail freight.

5.5.10. Recent studies undertaken by the Port of Cork regarding the potential of rail/road services for port activities have indicated that, with the exception of a limited need for niche cargos in appropriate locations, the existing rail network from Cork Harbour does not adequately support the collection/distribution of freight to/and from the port. The predominant existing and likely future mode of freight transport for port activities is by road. Local Authorities, through their development and

local plans, should give priority to identifying appropriate locations for port activities that are well served by the road network.

5.5.11. The Cork Harbour area also supports species and habitats of international conservation importance within Natura 2000 site designations. In the first instance it will be important that there are no significant adverse impacts on these Natura 2000 sites arising from future development in the Harbour Area. Wider environmental aspects will also require consideration within the context of Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening/ Environmental Impact Assessment.

Other Ports and Harbours in the region

5.5.12. The Department of Transport has identified six major ports and harbours in the region for particular attention: Fenit, An Daingean, Kinsale, Bantry, Youghal and Baltimore.

5.5.13. The improvement and maintenance of smaller ports, harbours and slips is important to the local economies of these coastal areas. There are many such facilities located along the length of the regions coastline and these are important in terms of supporting economic activities. In this regard, potential exists for the development of liner based employment in Bantry Bay.

5.5.14. The maintenance and ongoing development of Fenit Port and its access roads is a critical element of the Tralee/Killarney Hub infrastructure providing an additional transportation linkage and facilitating existing industry in the area. In addition, it is the maritime leisure and activity base of the Linked Hub. These roles must be protected and sustainably developed to ensure the role of the Hub towns expand to reach their potential.

5.5.15. It is important to recognise the role of ferries in meeting the transport needs of the region, in particular the Tarbert – Killimer ferry between Kerry and Clare/Limerick and the ferries for the inhabitants of the region's Islands communities. These services need to be maintained and supported so that the transport needs of the region and the island communities can be met.



Development Plan Objectives:

Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy

RTS-06 Ports and Harbours

It is an objective to support the sustainable expansion of the Port of Cork in line with the targeted economic growth of the region. As part of the programme of growth, it will be important for the Port of Cork to relocate its activities from the Cork City Docklands to suitable sustainable locations within Cork Harbour. Once the Port of Cork has resolved the issues of transport facilities to serve the port in the future, the local authorities will examine the potential of the possible locations and where appropriate protect the most suitable for future port development in their development and local area plans.

It is an objective generally to support the sustainable development of ports and harbours as potential economic generators for the region and support the maintenance of other facilities such as slipways and to protect them from inappropriate uses.

measures so as to reduce the need to abstract water and to conserve treated water. Initiatives with measures and policies to encourage the sustainable harvesting of rain water should be supported'

5.6.3. In the development/provision of waste water treatment facilities, polices shall implement the requirements of The Waste Water discharge (Authorisation) Regulations SI 684 of 2007 in ensuring that the scale of development is managed to achieve compliance with the waste water discharge licenses of waste water treatment facilities. Development Plans shall promote the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs), silt traps, and grease / hydrocarbon interceptors, where appropriate, so as to ensure that water quality is maintained or improved

Cork Gateway

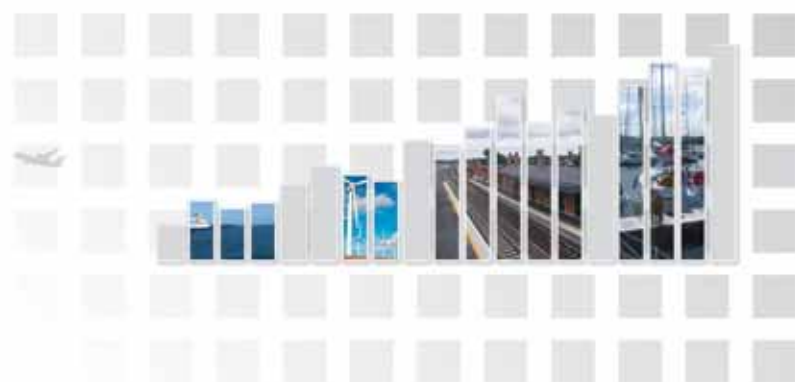
5.6.4. The water supply to the Cork Gateway is primarily obtained through the Inniscarra Dam upstream of Cork City, which has the potential to cater for the anticipated population and economic growth by 2022. A secondary source of supply is also from the Lee Road Waterworks close to the City. However, in order to ensure the future sustainable use of this water source, there is a need to protect the catchment areas upstream of Inniscarra Dam and to appropriately assess the environmental effects of significant increases from current abstraction rates. As part of this screening for Habitats Directive Assessment should be carried out in consultation with the NPWS. In the case of Cork City, the strategic requirement is to deliver sufficient levels of water supply to the Docklands to cater for the planned growth and development.

5.6.5. The Cork Strategic Water Study was commissioned to consider the water supply needs of the South Cork area over the next 25 years. It identifies the need for priority investment in augmenting water supplies to many of the metropolitan towns. In particular, it indicated that there is a need for a new scheme(s) to supply sustainable water to Midleton and Monard and also serving any new growth in the northern environs of Cork City.

5.6 Water and Waste Water Treatment Services

5.6.1. The provision of adequate sustainable water supplies and sustainable waste water collection and treatment is a prerequisite for the RPG settlement strategy. Adequate volumes of high quality drinking and process water and subsequent waste water treatment need to be made available in a sustainable manner in advance of developments taking place. It is important that measures are put in place to ensure that adequate wastewater facilities are available for the anticipated population growth in the region.

5.6.2. In line with the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government's Water Services Investment Programme and the Assessment of Needs relating to the provision of water supplies, a range of water supply augmentation schemes and waste water treatment facilities need to be provided in areas across the region. As part of this, local authorities should promote water demand management and water conservation



5.6.6. With regard to wastewater, the most significant achievement over the past 10 years has been the construction of the Carrigrennan wastewater treatment works on Little Island to deal with effluent in the Cork City and Lee catchments. Favourable consideration should be given to the extension of the facility to cater for the proposed new town of Monard. It is currently hydraulically overloaded and needs to be modified to increase the amount of storm-water intake. It will also need an extension to cater for the proposed new town of Monard.

5.6.7. The Cork Lower Harbour Sewerage Scheme has been identified as a key requirement in terms of the growth of the Gateway in areas of the harbour. In particular, the metropolitan towns of Carrigaline, Ringaskiddy, Cobh, Passage West and Monkstown will benefit from this new treatment works.

5.6.8. There is a need for modular extensions to the existing treatment works at many locations, primarily including Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Blarney and Ballincollig.

Hub Towns

5.6.9. The Mallow Hub requires upgrading of both water supply services and waste water treatment. These services are required in advance of any further significant growth taking place in the hub.

5.6.10. The Kerry Strategic Water Study has identified three priority water supply schemes (Scart reservoir, Central Region treatment, North Ardferf Source Protection). It is important to protect these water sources and the Water Study has indicated support for exclusion zones around the water sources at Lough Guitane. Other priority Water Services Projects in Kerry include:-

- Ardferf Wastewater (WWTP) upgrade,
- Ballylongford WWTP upgrade,
- Central Regional Water Supply Scheme (Scart Reservoir and Water Treatment Plant (WTP)),
- Fenit WWTP upgrade,
- Kenmare WWTP upgrade and WTP,
- Tarbert WWTP upgrade, Waterville WTP and WWTP,

- Water Conservation Stage 3 Works and
- Castlemaine, Glenbeigh and Killcummin Sewage Schemes.

5.6.11. Two major priority sewerage schemes have been identified, Killarney Main Drainage and Castleisland SS Stage 2. Both Tralee and Killarney Towns require main drainage schemes to be completed in advance of any further significant development of the Linked Hub.

Development Plan Objectives:

Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy

RTS-07 Water and Waste Water Treatment Services

It is an objective to ensure that the provision of sustainable water services in the region is focussed on the delivery of quality supplies in sufficient, sustainable volumes to the Gateway and Hubs as a priority. The required waste water treatment facilities must also be provided in a sustainable manner. Specific city and county priorities, including dealing with current supply, treatment and distribution deficits, will need to be identified and prioritised by the local authorities and provided in advance of significant development taking place.

Wastewater discharges will need to comply with the relevant provisions of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations SI No. 684 of 2007. These proposals should be subject to detailed environmental and habitats directive assessments where appropriate.

Waste Management

5.6.12. Under the Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2002, each local authority is required to make a Waste Management Plan (WMP) the objectives of which is to :-

- Prevent or minimise the production and harmful nature of waste;
- Encourage and support the recovery of waste;
- Ensure that such waste as cannot be prevented or recovered is safely disposed of, and
- Address the need to give effect to the polluter pays principle, in relation to waste disposal.



5.6.13. Currently there are three waste management plans covering the South West region. Kerry is included in the Kerry, Limerick, Clare Waste Management Plan which covers the period from 2006-11. Cork City Council and Cork County Council carried out a joint Waste Management Strategy for Cork in 1995. Following on from this, they then developed their own waste management plans which cover the period from 2004-09. The preparation of new Cork City and County Waste Management Plans is expected to begin in 2010 following clarification of key issues and expected changes in Government policy following consideration of the International Review on Waste Management.

5.6.14. As the regional WMP's are within different regional boundaries from the South West, it is considered more appropriate that the policies and objectives of these WMP's are dealt with at this level.

5.6.15. Significant inroads have been made in switching from the predominantly landfill based waste disposal system to integrated waste management programmes. The plans address all areas of waste management including collection, treatment, recovery and final disposal. However, none of the plans currently deal with thermal treatment of domestic waste.

5.6.16. Significant improvements and developments in waste management since the adoption of these plans have included the provision of engineered landfill sites, enhanced facilities for recycling and waste recovery and overall supporting policies to minimise waste.

5.6.17. An important issue relating to waste management is the need for a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) or Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) to be developed, at an early date, in a sustainable location within the Cork Gateway, with good transportation links.

5.6.18. The EPA has prepared a National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (2008-2012) which requires local authorities to:

- reduce the generation of hazardous waste by industry and society generally.
- minimise unreported hazardous waste with a view to reducing the environmental impact of this unregulated waste stream.
- strive for increased self-sufficiency in the management of hazardous waste and to reduce hazardous waste export.
- minimise the environmental, social and economic impacts of hazardous waste generation and management.

5.6.19. One of the more significant parts of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan is that the issue of contaminated soils should be addressed in City, County and Local Area Development Plans, where these plans include the redevelopment of docklands or other brownfield sites.

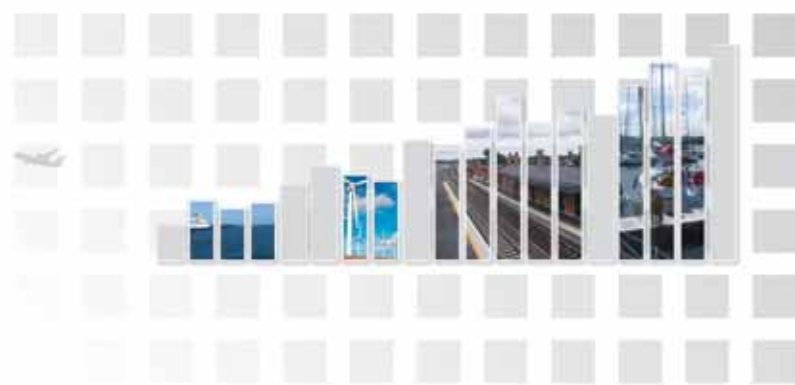
5.6.20. Hazardous waste management in the region needs to be addressed from the perspective of the most environmentally sustainable approach and in line with best international practice.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS-08 Waste Management

It is an objective to encourage the delivery of an effective and efficient waste management service in line with the Waste Management Acts and promote local authorities to review their respective Waste Management Plans (WMP's) during the lifetime of the guidelines.

The RPG supports the incorporation of the recommendation and policies of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008-12 and encourages the early provision of a Materials Recovery Facility, or Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT), in a sustainable location within the Cork Gateway

In relation to Kerry, considering the peripherality of the County, the need to promote economic development and



the need to maintain a competitive waste management environment, the development of additional materials recovery facilities at sustainable locations is desirable.

Energy Supply and Renewable Energy

Energy Supply

5.6.21. The world's energy industry is changing significantly to counter the declining stocks of fossil fuels and to limit the production of harmful greenhouse gasses. Like many other regions throughout Ireland and the rest of Europe, the South West Region must respond to these challenges to ensure that it is more sustainable in the production and use of energy as we continue to grow and develop in the 21st century. Energy supplies are provided in the region from a number of key sources:

- Gas Network: the Kinsale gas field off the coast of County Cork and associated pipeline network to industry and the centres of population in the Cork Gateway, Mallow Hub and other main Cork towns.
- Electricity Generation and Transmission Network/Grid: through major thermal electricity generating stations at Tarbert, County Kerry; Aghada/Whitegate, County Cork and Cork City Docklands. There also is a hydro-electric generator at Inniscarra Dam.
- Sustainable renewable resources There is a growing network of wind powered electricity generators in both Cork and Kerry and significant potential exists for additional electricity generation by sustainable wind, wave and tidal energy sources.

5.6.22. The gas network is presently confined to areas of Cork City and County with a total of 21 towns being serviced. Construction of a new pipeline from the Midleton compressor station to Aghada with a spur-pipeline to Whitegate, which will supply gas to the Aghada and Whitegate CCGTs, and to the Conoco Philips oil refinery in Whitegate. No towns are currently serviced with natural gas in County Kerry. However plans do exist for the

construction of a large LNG plant at Tarbert in North Kerry and this, should it proceed, may be a catalyst in the development of a gas network in the area

5.6.23. A White Paper sets out the Government's Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 to deliver a sustainable energy future for Ireland. The document emphasises the fact that security of energy supply is crucial for the economy and society and that the country needs robust electricity networks and electricity generating capacity to ensure consistent supply to consumers and all sectors of the economy.

5.6.24. Underpinning this strategy, forecasts for demand in 2025 are based on the ESRI's long term forecast of moderate growth in economic activity. This will entail significant expenditure on the transmission network in the South West Region. This national grid development, which is supported by the Regional Planning Guidelines, will include the upgrading of transmission network and new transmission developments and strengthening of the Cork network to allow power to be exported from the two gas fired generators in East Cork. All the above projects should be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and should seek to ensure proper management of sensitive landscapes and protection of Natura 2000 sites

5.6.25. Future regional electricity demands may not be necessarily supplied from within the region and could be even imported from abroad. This will require improvements to be made to the national electricity grid and Eirgrid, which is the Transmission System Operator (TSO), has put in place a strategy until 2025 (Grid 25) which is intended to future proof the nation's electricity transmission infrastructure. The electricity transmission network forms that backbone of our power supply and it is critical that it is developed in a sustainable manner to ensure that the region has the necessary infrastructure to attract business and accommodate economic growth and the future development of our local economy. Eirgrid's role is to ensure that there is adequate network capacity to carry power from new generation stations and to ensure a



reliable supply to meet growing demand for electricity. In order to facilitate the development of the transmission grid, local authorities must consider the development of the grid in all development proposals to ensure that the grid is not compromised in any way by the proposals.

5.6.26. It is envisaged that an east-west electricity inter-connector to Britain will be developed as part of the Grid 25 strategy. Further potential exists for a second interconnection from the south coast to France or Britain opening up markets for electricity. These inter-connectors could play a significant role in internationalising the Irish energy market and in building an international market place for renewable generation in the South West, by providing a means to export excess generation.

5.6.27. Local authorities should broadly promote and support a sustainable approach to energy demand management and conservation practices.

Renewable Energy

5.6.28. The region has a key role to play in the attainment of the national renewable energy target of 40% supplied via renewable by 2020. The Regional Bioenergy Plan 2009-2020, published by the South West Regional Authority, supports the development of bioenergy resources as a means of displacing or substituting fossil fuel in transport and heating operations. The plan also supports the designation of the Whitegate area of County Cork as a National Bioenergy Energy Development Zone. Its recommendations include the use of biomass in local heating schemes and the involvement of local authorities in such schemes. It also underlines the potential for the use of more sustainable fuel sources in commercial space heating.

5.6.29. The south west has considerable potential for the generation of electricity from sustainable renewable resources such as wind and wave. A number of challenges however exist in that many of these sources of renewable energy are not served by existing electricity transmission routes and therefore significant reinforcement of the

electricity grid in a sustainable manner will therefore be required to cater for the new power flows from renewable generation.

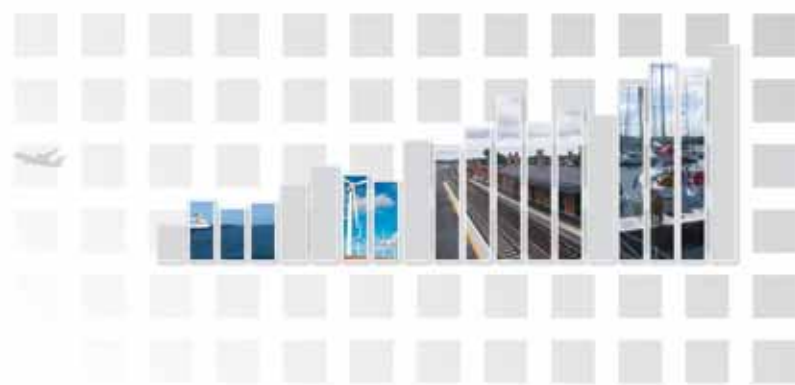
5.6.30. Demand for electricity in the region is expected to rise by 60% by 2025. Wave and wind technologies together with bioenergy resources are expected to play a significant part in meeting additional demand with excess renewably generated power being exported through an enhanced transmission grid to other regions within the state.

5.6.31. Cork City Council in association with UCC has been investigating the potential of an aquifer underlying the Docklands area. This aquifer could be used as a source of geothermal heating and potable water subject to satisfactory results from investigations. Other initiatives such as pumped water storage may also be considered in the region.

5.6.32. Within the region, the Regional Planning Guidelines support the sustainable development of renewable energy generation subject to the sustainable development of local areas and the protection of areas of high scenic amenity. Possible effects on Natura 2000 Sites, including effects on water supply and hydrology, wildlife disturbance, habitat loss and species mortality associated with collisions should be an essential consideration when planning for renewables and these should be considered at the local or project-level stage.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RTS-09 Energy and Renewable Energy

It is an objective to facilitate the sustainable development of additional electricity generation capacity throughout the region and to support the sustainable expansion of the network. National grid expansion is important in terms of ensuring adequacy of regional connectivity as well as facilitating the development and connectivity of sustainable renewable energy resources.



It is an objective to ensure that future strategies and plans for the promotion of renewable energy development and associated infrastructure development in the Region will promote the development of renewable energy resources in a sustainable manner. In particular, development of wind farms shall be subject to:

- the Wind Energy Planning Guidelines
- consistency with proper planning and sustainable development
- criteria such as design and landscape planning, natural heritage, environmental and amenity considerations,

It is an objective of the guidelines to promote the sustainable provision of renewable energy from tidal, wave and pumped storage developments together with bio-energy resources, as critical elements of the long-term secure energy supply throughout the region.

Telecommunications

5.6.33. Excellent communications are a basic prerequisite for a competitive economy. The rollout of broadband has been fragmented, being mainly developed in the larger urban areas of the region, while many rural areas still have no adequate coverage.

5.6.34. In Gateways and Hubs, significant improvement to the fibre network infrastructure has been made with the introduction of the Municipal Area Networks (MAN's) as well as fibre networks by several providers. In the context of next generation networks, it is important that these fibre networks are expanded (fibre to the door) particularly to large urban areas and business parks in order to promote the concept of evolving the smart economy

5.6.35. Within the South West, the cost of broadband connectivity with the transfer of large amounts of data is a continuing issue and places the region at an economic disadvantage. It is crucial that broadband and data transfer costs in the South West are on par with costs in the Dublin region. Adequate backhaul speeds need to be developed as a matter of urgency.

5.6.36. The Regional Planning Guidelines supports the need for an Internal Tier 1 connection to the Cork Gateway. This would have many benefits among which are the potential entrance of new carriers into the Irish market, the potential to link the Atlantic Gateways of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway via the Chorus, or similar network; and the creation of a direct link from Ireland to continental Europe bypassing the UK and the London Data centres. A business plan should be prepared to progress this project supported by the local authorities and other interested stakeholders.

5.6.37. A study entitled "New Tier 1 International Fibre Connectivity to Cork" undertaken in 2008, by the Cork City Council, identified a number of options, the preferred one being a connection to the VSNL Western submarine cable which has a branching unit and tail pointing towards County Cork, located approximately 80 kms. off the Cork coastline. Other options included terrestrial connections from Cork overland to the Global Crossing or BT networks from the UK at Wexford.

5.6.38. The nature of the internationally traded services sector is such that high quality, competitively priced broadband infrastructures, and data centre capacity, are critical to attracting investment into the region in the future. Not only are such infrastructures important from an FDI perspective, but are also vital for indigenous companies.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Regional Transport and Infrastructure Strategy RI -03 Telecommunications

It is an objective to support the development of adequately sized broadband services throughout the region in a sustainable manner. The RPG supports the sustainable development of an International Tier I connection to the Cork Gateway.

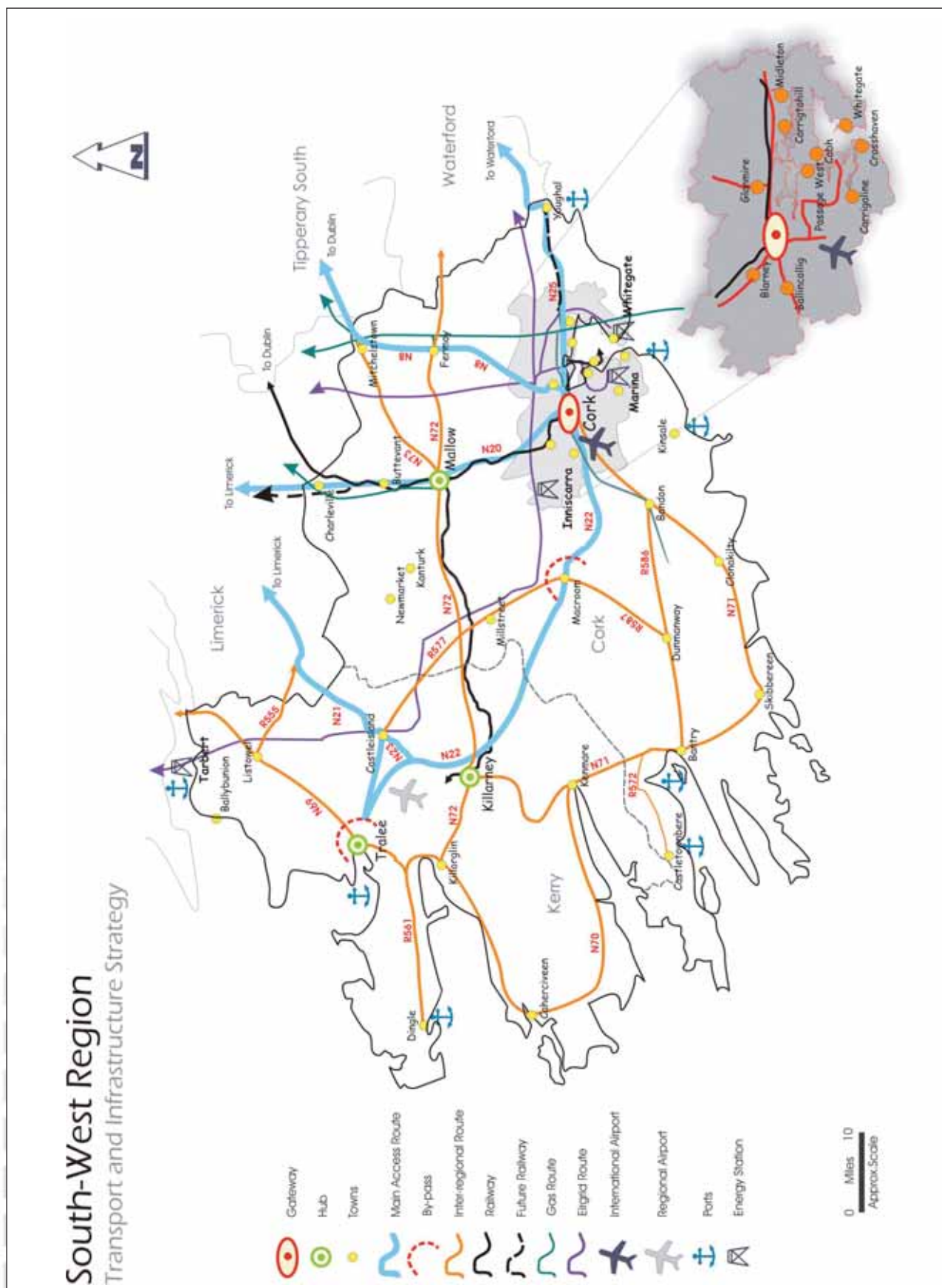
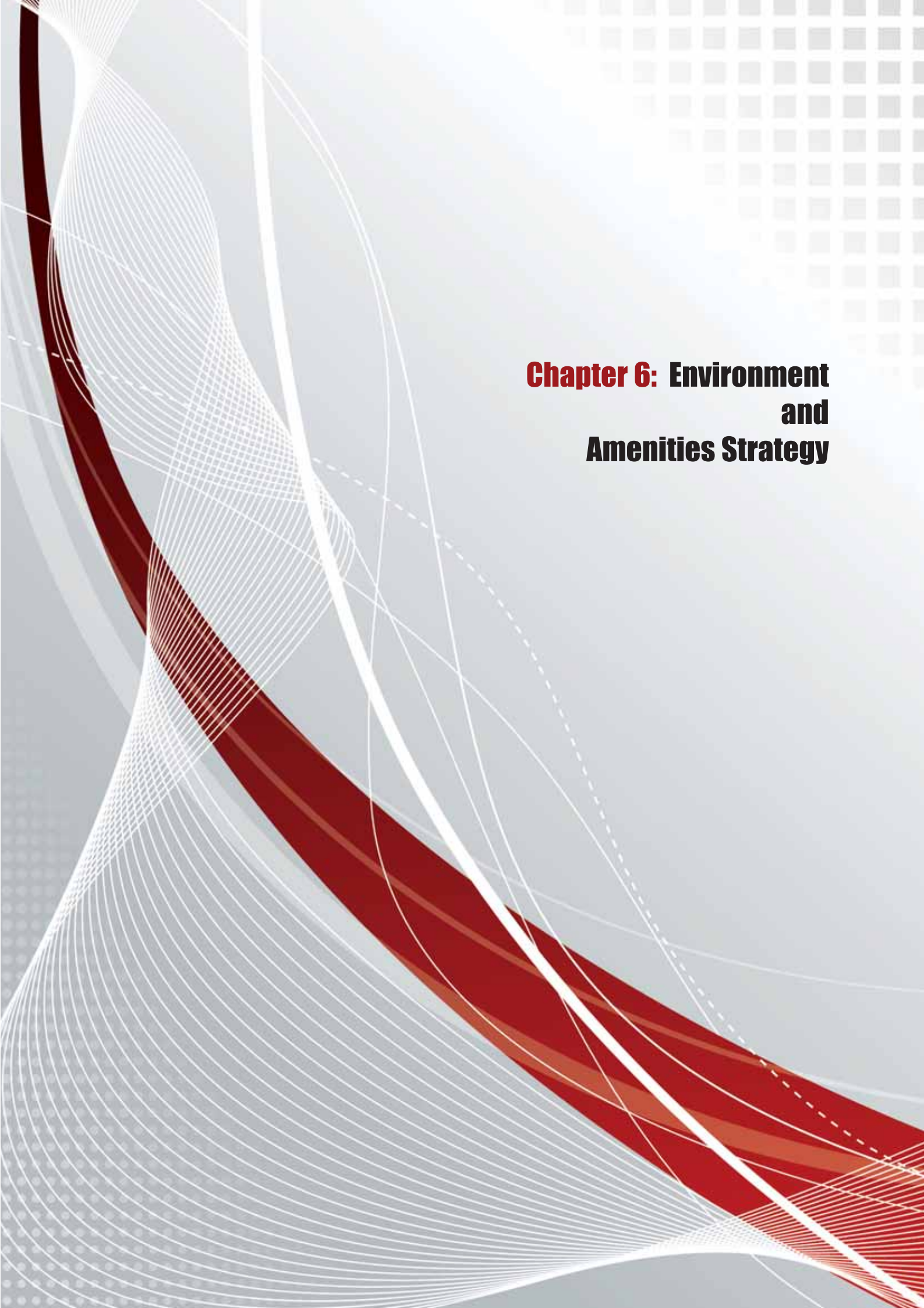


Figure 10: Spatial Transport Infrastructure Strategy for South West Region

The background features a light gray gradient. A prominent, thick, dark red wavy line curves from the top left towards the bottom right. Overlaid on this are several white grid patterns: a large, faint one in the upper right and a smaller, denser one in the lower left. Thin white curved lines and dashed lines also sweep across the page.

Chapter 6: Environment and Amenities Strategy



Chapter 6: Environment and Amenities Strategy

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1. This chapter examines the landscape, environment and heritage of the South West region, its characteristics, assets, issues and opportunities. The landscape of a region is hugely significant and in the case of the South West, it is recognised that the landscape, both built and natural is one of the most valuable in the country. A quality environment plays an increasingly critical role in social and economic development, as well as in the tourist and leisure industries. The South West has a high level of biodiversity and generally quite good water quality. It is rich in archeological features which have great importance both in terms of their cultural significance and as tourist attractions. These assets must be managed carefully and the strongest safeguards should be put in place for the most significant landscapes, coastlines, habitats and built heritage under the requirements of National and International Nature Conservation Legislation.

6.1.2. Key to achieving a quality environment and good quality of life, as well as enhancing the region's attractiveness, is the promotion of policies that seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all the residents of the region. In this regard, policies encompassing urban regeneration, open space provision and access to housing, employment, education and health facilities all have significant roles to play.

6.1.3. The threats to these assets come from economic development, urban sprawl, waste water discharge and emissions. The Regional Planning Guidelines must set out a framework to protect, conserve and enhance the regions environmental and social assets in a way which will enable it to develop socially, sustainably and economically.

6.2 Landscape

6.2.1. The South West of Ireland is justifiably well known for its diverse and rich landscape which ranges from spectacular mountain scenery to unique coastal locations, as well as major river valleys and high quality farmland. Landscapes comprise the visible features of the region

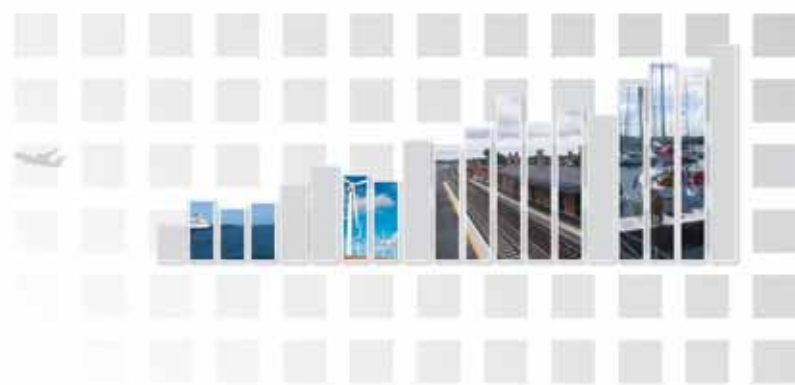
which include landforms, living elements of flora and fauna, abstract elements like lighting and weather and human elements such as human activity and the built environment.

6.2.2. There is national guidance from the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government on Landscape and Landscape Character Assessments and the Planning Acts require Development Plans to include objectives for the preservation of landscape, views and prospects and the amenity of places and features of beauty. They also provide for Landscape Conservation Areas and Areas of Special Amenity. The three city and county development plans in the region deal with landscape in very different ways leading to difficulties in setting common targets or goals for the landscape of the region as a whole.

6.2.3. In the Cork County Development Plan, Landscape Character Assessment was used as a tool to identify and categorise various elements in the landscape. Four subcategories of sensitivity were identified ranging from low sensitivity to very high. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the landscapes ability to accommodate change or intervention without undergoing unacceptable impacts on its character and values. The relative importance of the landscapes was categorised as local, county or national. The plan also includes specific objectives in relation to the landscape strategy and to protection of scenic landscape and scenic routes.

6.2.4. The Kerry County Development Plan recognises the intrinsic value of landscape both as a tourism and recreational asset and as an economic asset which must be protected. The Plan outlines an objective to protect identified landscape areas of prime and secondary special amenity, as they have little capacity to accommodate development. Special objectives are also included in the Plan for the preservation of views and prospects.

6.2.5. Cork City Council commissioned a Landscape Study in 2008 which informed the landscape protection policies. This study provides detailed analysis of the city



landscape using Landscape Character Assessment. The data was also used in setting objectives for the preservation of views and prospects as well as conserving areas of high landscape value.

6.2.6. The European Landscape Convention came into force in Ireland in 2004. This requires member states to recognise landscapes in law, to establish and implement landscape policies, to establish policies for the participation of the public in the definition and implementation of policies and to integrate landscape policies with regional and town planning policies. In October 2007 the DEHLG announced its intention to publish a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland.

6.2.7. Within the South West region Landscape Character Assessment offers the potential to establish a coherent strategy for integrating landscape and land use and transportation policies as well as economic, energy policies etc.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-01 Regional Landscape Strategy

It is an objective to support a common approach to ensure consistency in Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) for all areas of the region which will help identify landscape capacity, landscape value and which will promote the protection, planning and sustainable management of all landscapes in the region. This approach should include consultation with adjoining Local Authorities.

The Coastline

6.2.8. The South West region has an extensive coastline (over 2000 km) with a diverse range of landscape areas. The Regional Planning Guidelines promote the inclusion of policies in all local authority development plans relating to the sustainable development and conservation of these areas. Issues such as potential rise in sea level, coastal erosion, protection of biodiversity, flooding and

development needs to be addressed in an integrated manner.

6.2.9. Local Authorities should translate these policies into an integrated strategy for their coastline that recognises:

- The need for environmental protection and enhancement including the need to protect nature conservation sites of international importance
- The economic and social role of the region's ports, seaside towns and coastal areas important to tourism, recreation and amenity
- Predicted sea level rise and the adaptation challenge this presents to coastal communities and decision makers

6.2.10. Local planning authorities and other agencies should seek, through their plans and management strategies to address:

- The regeneration of coastal towns and communities, reinforcing their local economic and social roles and importance to the wider region; and
- The conservation of the coastal environment and coastal waters, including the natural character, historic environment and tranquillity of undeveloped areas, particularly in the areas of coastline and estuary designated as sites of European or international importance for nature conservation.
- The overall maritime area provides new opportunities for economic development, which includes:-
 - the potential for the sustainable development of new off-shore resources in terms of renewable energies and other seabed based opportunities.
 - the area of Maritime Spatial Planning is currently being progressed by the European Commission and can be addressed in an integrated manner by extending the Guidelines into the Maritime Spatial Planning Zone.



Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-02 Regional Coastline

It is an objective to promote integrated coastal management strategies for the region's coastline that will involve the key stakeholders and which will :-

- examine the impact of sea level rise
- examine the potential of off-shore renewables
- identify potential social and economic development
- recognise the environmental sensitivity of the coastal areas, including Natura 2000 sites, seascapes and landscapes.
- promote coordinated land and maritime zone spatial planning.

6.3 Natural Heritage – Ecological Integrity

Overview of the region's habitats and species

6.3.1. There are a number of EU and national designations governing the regions habitats and species. The European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) Directives, the Natural Habitats Regulations (1997) and the Wildlife Acts (1976 and 2000) provide the framework for the protection of our natural heritage. In addition, there are a number of international conventions and agreements relating to our heritage, which Ireland has ratified. The Conservation of species and habitats in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives is considered to be an important component of a sustainable strategy. In order to safeguard the interests of species and habitats protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives, Local Authorities should promote implementation of the DEHLG (2009) Guidance, and any subsequent updates, on 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'

6.3.2. In 2002, the first National Heritage Plan and National Biodiversity Plans were produced by the Government. These policy documents addressed the protection and management of national heritage over a

five year period. The documents are underpinned by the core principle that heritage belongs to all of the people and that the people all share a responsibility to protect it.

6.3.3. The responsibility of local authorities in relation to the care and protection of heritage is identified in both the National Heritage Plan and the National Biodiversity Plan. Key actions in these plans include the requirement on Local Authorities to prepare and implement Local Heritage and Local Biodiversity Action Plans in partnership with the main stakeholders in the area.

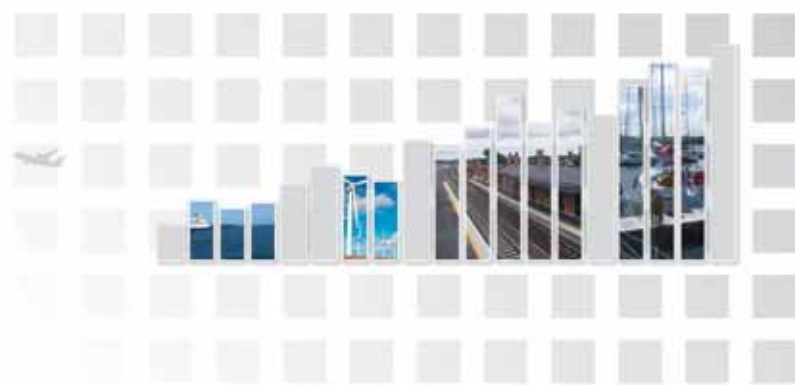
6.3.4. There are four main designations affecting habitats and species:

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Natural Heritage Area (NHA)
- National Parks

6.3.5. Cork County Biodiversity Plan was produced in 2008. Its aim is to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to ensure that every person in the county has the chance to appreciate and understand its importance. The plan sets out a number of actions and objectives for the protection of biodiversity in the county and lists the relevant legislation. Kerry County Council produced their second Heritage and Biodiversity Plan in 2008. The plan covers the period to 2012 and outlines a series of policies aims and actions to deal with education, access, research and management of the county heritage assets.

6.3.6. Cork City Council produced a Biodiversity Action Plan for 2009-2014. It includes an overview of Cork City's biodiversity and a range of actions to protect, enhance and promote awareness of the City's biodiversity. Its aim is to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of Cork City's biodiversity amongst the people of the city and to identify, understand and conserve the biodiversity of the city for future generations

6.3.7. The DEHLG document The Economic and Social Aspects of Biodiversity – Benefits and Costs of Biodiversity in Ireland made significant progress in identifying



overall biodiversity patterns across the country and a map was produced indicating biodiversity index value. Not only is it important to protect these areas but it is also vital to establish corridors between such areas. In regional terms, the high levels of biodiversity in the south west place responsibility for conservation and enhancement of those areas on the regional and local authorities.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-03 Management of Natural Heritage

Local authorities are required to carry out 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 make a determination if a Habitats Directive Assessment is necessary, of the potential impacts of the project or plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 / European Site.

It is an objective for local authorities to carry out, monitor and review biodiversity plans throughout the region. Planning authorities should set policies in their development 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.

It is an objective for local authorities to work with all stakeholders in order 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.

Development Plans should

- (a) include objectives for the maintenance of the conservation value of European sites within the territory of and affected by, the plan, and
- (b) state that all projects likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000/European sites will be subject to Habitats Directive assessment, and projects will only be approved if they comply with the Habitats Directive

6.4 Environmental Quality

Soils and Geology

6.4.1. In order to help protect the soil resource of the regions, consideration should be given to supporting soil conservation to ensure the continuing viability of agriculture and forestry in the region and would also have wider environmental benefits, e.g. water quality, water attenuation, biodiversity. This would enable identification of threats, issues and opportunities relating not only to agriculture but also water systems, biodiversity and the rural economy. Local authorities should aim to actively protect high quality soils as a valuable resource.

Air Quality

6.4.2. Cork City Council monitors various air quality parameters at a number of stations in the City. Air quality in general has been improving and each parameter measured has been in accordance with EU Requirements. Further monitoring and mitigation actions may be necessary in the future in certain areas where population concentration and economic development occurs.

Environmental Noise

6.4.3. Noise can have a significant impact on the quality of life and the environment in which individuals and communities live. There are regulations covering the preparation of Noise Plans for airports and roads on foot of European Noise Directive. The Regional Planning



Guidelines supports the preparation of these plans by the local authorities. A noise action plan has been prepared for Cork City which seeks to monitor and mitigate the impacts of noise on areas close to national and certain heavily trafficked non-national roads within the city. The recommendations of the Noise Action Plan will be taken into account when assessing proposals for new development to avoid/reduce the impacts of traffic noise.

Water Quality

River Basin Management

6.4.4. The European Union Water Framework Directive was adopted in 2000 and requires all member states to manage their waters. Member states must ensure that their waters achieve at least good status by 2015 and that their status does not deteriorate. The directive requires the preparation of a management plan for all of the waters in a given area, referred to as a River Basin District (RBD). In Ireland there are a total of eight RBDs. There are three RBDs within the South West Regional Area, The South Western River Basin District (RBD) and the Shannon River Basin District (RBD)) and the South East RBD. As noted in REAS-04, it is an objective to achieve regional water quality targets by implementing the River Basin Management Plans and ensure that development undertaken or permitted by local authorities ; other public agencies or private operators ,shall not contravene the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) regulations 2009 SI 272 of 2009 and the European Communities Environmental Objectives) Groundwaters) regulations 2010, SI 9 of 2010.

6.4.5. The South Western RBD encompasses most of the counties of Cork and Kerry but also takes in parts of Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. Part of North Kerry and North Cork is located within the Shannon District which also encompasses another 18 counties in the Republic and stretches partially into Northern Ireland.

6.4.6. A draft management plan has been prepared for

each district. A structured approach was taken to examine the status of surface and ground water and identified the main pressures impacting on those waters. The status of the waters is categorised separately for surface water and ground water. Surface waters are classified as high, good, moderate poor or bad while ground waters are classified as good or poor.

6.4.7. Special note is taken of protected areas, particularly drinking water sources, shellfish waters, Natura 2000 sites and freshwater pearl mussels habitats. Additional measures may be required in these areas in order for them to achieve good or high status. Shellfish Waters Pollution Reduction Programmes and associated Action Measures and Fresh Water Pearl Mussel Sub Basin Management Plans and associated Programmes of Measures should be referred to in this regard.

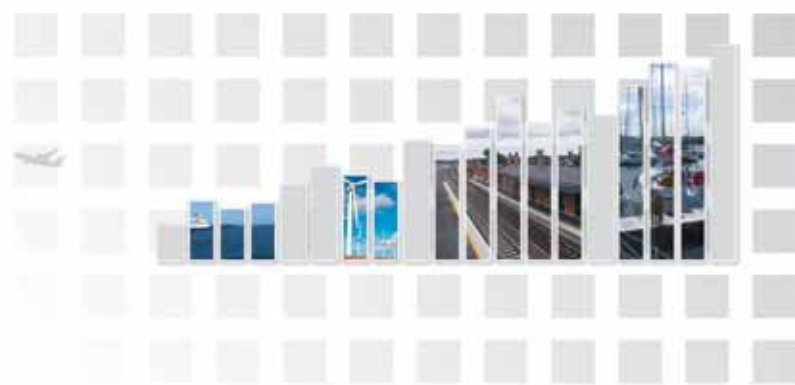
6.4.8. The objectives of the Directive were to ensure that water meets the standards, maintain high status of waters where it exists and preventing any deterioration of water and to achieve good status on all waters by 2015.

6.4.9. Key pressures on the RBD's include wastewater and industrial charges, landfill, quarries, mines and contaminated Land, agriculture, wastewater from un-sewered properties, forestry usage and discharge of dangerous substances, physical modifications., abstractions, local and future issues, e.g. climate change, aquaculture and invasive alien species.

6.4.10. The Management Plans set out four core objectives to be achieved by 2015:

- Achieve protected area objectives.
- Prevent deterioration
- Restore good status
- Reduce chemical pollution

6.4.11. The plans found that Irelands most recent water quality surveys have detected early signs of improvement in water quality resulting from the basic measures being implemented, in particular capital investment and improved working practices.



6.4.12. Measures to improve the status of the waters were divided into three groupings:-

- The implementation of 11 key directives specified under the Water Framework Directive and already transposed into domestic legislation (Bathing Water Directive, Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Drinking Water Directive as amended, Major Accidents (Seveso) Directive, Environmental Impact Assessment Directive Sewage Sludge Directive, Urban Waste-water Treatment Directive, Plant Protection Products Directive, Nitrates Directive, Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive).
- The implementation of other stipulated measures required by the Water Framework Directive; and
- The use of additional or supplementary measures.

6.4.13. The Plans outline action plans which set out the basic measures plus the most cost effective supplementary measures. Basic measures required by the Directive include:

- Principle of cost recovery for water use
- Source Protection Zone control
- Controls on abstractions
- Controls on point and diffuse discharges
- Controls on discharges to groundwater
- Controls to deal with priority substances
- Controls on physical modifications

Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-04 Environmental Quality

It is an objective to promote soil conservation within the region in order to ensure the protection of the soil resource

It is an objective to encourage further provision of noise and air quality monitoring infrastructure in areas containing large commercial and industrial developments and in areas of high population throughout the region.

It is an objective to achieve regional water quality targets by implementing the River Basin Management Plans and ensure that development undertaken or permitted by local

authorities; other public agencies or private operators, shall not contravene the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 SI 272 of 2009 and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwaters) Regulations 2010, SI 9 of 2010.

Local Authorities should promote the protection of Protected Areas as outlined in Annex (IV) of the Water Framework Directive and the application of relevant Government Guidance in this area.

Local Authorities should promote the implementation of the EPA (2009) Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses and any subsequent updates.

6.5 Flood Risk Management

6.5.1. Flooding is a natural process that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations and plays a role in shaping the natural environment. Flooding from the sea and from rivers is probably best known; but prolonged and intense rainfall can also cause sewer flooding, overland flow and flooding from groundwater.

6.5.2. When it impacts on human activities, it can threaten people, property and the environment. Also of relevance is consideration of the consequences of climate change which is impacting on important matters such as sea levels, the nature and pattern of rainfall events and weather patterns generally. Whilst the exact impacts of future change are not known, it is widely agreed that climate change will result in higher risk of flooding both inland and at coastal locations.

6.5.3. It is important therefore that this issue is addressed within the Guidelines, as decisions on the direction of future growth within the South West region can impact on flood risk and vice versa. Also, it is important that the Guidelines highlight the need for developing policy and actions, and encourage co-operation across Councils and regions as the impact of flood and water movement in



many places crosses Local Authority and Regional boundaries.

6.5.4. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Office of Public Works (OPW) published Planning Guidelines 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management', in November 2009. The Guidelines recommend a clear and transparent assessment of flood risk at all stages in the planning process and set out that regional flood risk appraisal and management policy recommendations are necessary to set a policy framework for development and local area plans at the local level.

6.5.5. Flood Risk Appraisal at the regional level needs to identify risk and explain how to deal with it. An appraisal has been carried out on the RPG and this is contained in the accompanying Environmental Report.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-05 Flood Risk Management

Consideration must be given to future appropriate land use policies in accordance with the requirements of the DEHLG Planning Guidelines The Planning System and Flood Risk Management. Strategic and local flood risk assessments and plans should be prepared where appropriate.

It is an objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines to promote the completion by the local authorities in the region of CFRAM Studies covering the South West by 2016, including a review of long term flood risk management options.

It is an objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines to ensure that significant developments in upland areas, such as wind farm developments, roadway construction, peatland drainage and forestry proposals, provide sufficient storm water attenuation so as to avoid the occurrence of river erosion or flooding downstream.

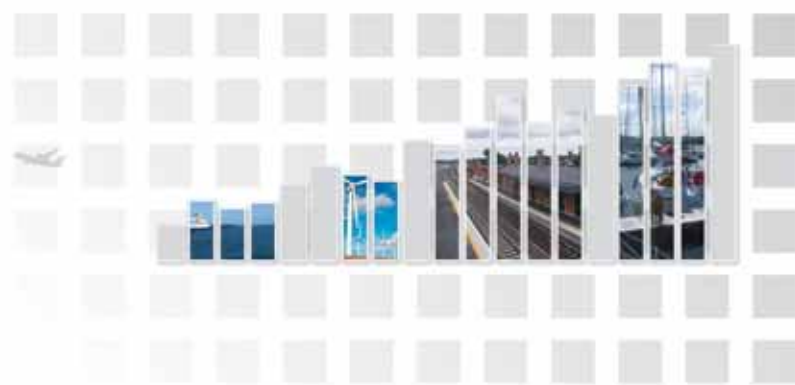
6.6 Built Heritage and Archaeology

The region possesses a strong natural and built heritage, which is very significant in terms of its positive economic value in terms of tourism generation and its societal value as a contributor to the quality of life and general attractiveness of the region. Visitor's surveys carried out by Fáilte Ireland have consistently shown that the natural heritage and scenery is a prime attraction of visitors to the South West. An important element of this heritage is its archeological component with many important and indeed major sites ranging from the ancient monastic settlement on the Skellig Islands to the rich archaeology of Cork City and important sites in east and north Cork .

6.6.1. The South West region possesses a particularly fine built heritage, including Cork City Centre and regional towns and villages. This contributes significantly to the overall quality of life and attractiveness of this region for inward investment and tourism.

6.6.2. The region is rich in a wide range of archeological monuments ranging from all periods of the past. The monuments vary greatly in form and date, starting from the Mesolithic period over 9000 years ago. These sites include megalithic tombs from the prehistoric period, Bronze Age fulachta fiadh (cooking places), Early Christian ecclesiastical settlements, churches and graveyards, medieval buildings, castles, urban archeological deposits, industrial archaeology sites and underwater sites such as wrecks. The archeological heritage of an area may include structures, constructions, groups of buildings, industrial heritage, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated both on land and under water. Recognition should also be given to the importance of archeological features at the landscape level whereby clusters of archeological material may be connected, and cumulatively form an important part of the overall area.

6.6.3. The protection and enhancement of our natural and built heritage and archaeology is therefore an important objective of the Guidelines.



Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-06 Built Heritage and Archaeology

It is an objective for the local authorities to incorporate all buildings of special architectural, historical, archeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and to identify areas with special character (including traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, landscape and setting) which could become architectural conservation areas (ACA).

Local Authorities should consider the identification of towns and villages that could benefit from design statements.

6.7 Social, Community and Cultural Infrastructure – Social Inclusion and Regeneration

Social and Community Infrastructure

6.7.1. One of the overarching aims of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to enhance quality of life for the people of the South West region. The Guidelines will encourage local authorities to implement this aim in a sustainable manner through their respective settlement and economic policies and also by recognising that a range of factors come into play in providing a quality environment in which to live. Many different things contribute to quality of life or the general wellbeing of individuals and society in the region. These range from the quality of the environment to physical and mental wellbeing, support structures of those in need, human rights and personal happiness. Many of these aspects cannot be planned, however the culture of planning in the region should recognise the importance of positive approaches to the continuing improvement of regional quality of life.

6.7.2. Greater emphasis on creating a sense of place is also something which is growing in importance in terms of the overall development of the region and is something which perhaps has not been sufficiently rehearsed in any

formal manner. The region has some very special qualities, not alone on geographic grounds but on perceptions of lifestyle, food, art, sport, music and even local accents - together with a range of other qualities which in many respects make the region a place apart. Greater attention needs to be placed on focussing on this aspect of the region and on building positively on our sense of place; and portraying this much more forcibly within the South West and externally.

6.7.3. As population grows in various settlements there is an important need to ensure that adequate levels of social and community infrastructures such as public and private housing, education, health facilities, community centres and sports and recreational facilities are provided in appropriate locations and in a timely and sustainable manner to support population growth.

6.7.4. The continued availability of key services in rural areas of the region is an important objective of future planning. The increasing centralisation of health services has the potential to create major difficulties in rural areas, where due to the demographic characteristics of the region there are relatively few towns in excess of 2,000 population. An objective of the Guidelines is therefore to ensure that rural areas, particularly the remote Northern and Western areas have adequate local levels of appropriate public transport infrastructure, healthcare and other supporting social services and facilities.

6.7.5. An important element of community is public open space and recreational facilities. These are beneficial to local communities and also act as an important aspect of the overall visitor experience. Within the South West, there are considerable gaps in the level and quality of these areas and Development Plans should address these gaps in a sustainable manner.

6.7.6. Within the Gateway, Cork City Council is preparing a Parks Strategy and Recreational Needs study and Cork County Council has completed a pilot recreation survey of the South Environs area. There is a need for a more co-ordinated approach to recreational planning in the Cork



Gateway, so that significant regional level recreational projects can be identified and developed.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-07 Social and Community Infrastructure

6.7.7. It is an objective to continuously improve the quality of life for residents of and visitors to the region and to create an increased awareness of sense of place.

6.7.8. It is an objective to ensure that social and community infrastructures in terms of housing, educational, public transport, recreational and health facilities are developed in a timely and sustainable manner to cater for increasing population levels. Special care needs to be taken to ensure that adequate levels of essential service provision continue in rural area of the region.

6.7.9. It is an objective to encourage local authorities to protect and enhance public open space and recreational facilities in a sustainable manner and recognise the importance of protection of urban wildlife corridors and sites of nature conservation importance.

Cultural Heritage (including Gaeltacht and Islands)

6.7.10. Culture consists of a number of sectors with different attributes; language, the arts, creative industries, enjoyment of the natural, historic and built environment, events and festivals, use of tourist attractions, libraries, museums, archives and galleries, industrial heritage, the diversity of the faith communities and places of worship, local cultural traditions and sport and recreation. Culture is inherently cross cutting, for example linking policies on economic growth and regeneration with those on environment, heritage and infrastructure provision. As earlier noted culture plays a very important role in defining the region.

6.7.11. Within the generality of our important cultural heritage, are the Gaeltacht or Irish language speaking

areas of the region. The Gaeltacht areas require special treatment to protect their linguistic and cultural heritage without hindering their overall development and with an appropriate response to opportunities and challenges. The challenge is to promote these areas as a focus for development and sustainability, whilst ensuring that the development which occurs supports or complements the linguistic and other important aspects of their special cultural heritage.

6.7.12. Local Authorities should prepare local area plans which will include a focus on the sustainable development and protection of the heritage and culture of the Gaeltacht.

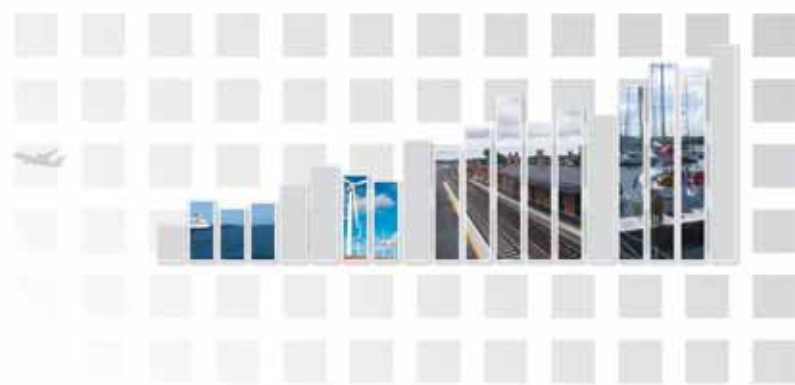
Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-08 Cultural Heritage

It is an objective during the lifetime of the Guidelines to encourage local authorities to prepare local area plans which will provide a strategic focus on the future sustainable development of Gaeltacht areas, while ensuring the protection of their linguistic and cultural heritage as an asset for the country. These plans will inform future policy for the development of the Gaeltacht areas.

Island Communities.

6.7.13. The Western area of the region has a number of important inhabited islands, such as Oileán Cléire, Sherkin, Bere, Heir Island, Dursay and Whiddy Island.

6.7.14. Island communities need particular support in their economic, social and cultural development to promote the sustainability of island living. It is worth noting that over the last twenty years many of the islands have successfully consolidated their local economies and have significantly moved into the knowledge based or smart economy. The island communities have become much more dynamic and creative in terms of the range of artistic, cultural, literary, and economic and community activities which is to be found across the islands. High



broadband connectivity at affordable and competitively priced is of particular importance to the islands as is physical access by modern safe ferries from the mainland. The potential for these islands, as pristine environments to experience sustainable growth at an appropriate scale within the smart or knowledge based economy is significant. In supporting the protection and sustainable development of the Region's islands, environmental considerations should be taken into account, including biodiversity, geodiversity, archaeology and landscape considerations.

Regional Planning Guidelines: REAS-09 Island Communities

It is an objective to support the inhabited islands in the region and to recognise the special planning and development needs of islands and island communities. In particular, improved broadband transport access and other sustainable infrastructure and services will assist in supporting the sustainable economic development of the islands for the benefit of island communities.

It is an objective to encourage the sustainable development of speciality or niche economic sectors particularly within the smart economy that might be appropriate to different islands.

Social Inclusion and Regeneration

6.7.15. One of the aims of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to promote planning policies which will foster social inclusion across the region. Local Development plans and relevant non-statutory plans should set out policies to tackle issues of economic, social and environmental deprivation in these areas with locally significant regeneration needs in line with national policy.

6.7.16. The guidelines are not the appropriate vehicle in which to identify all physical areas of deprivation in the region. It is acknowledged that much poverty, decline and isolation can exist in both urban and rural areas. Even in prosperous and economically buoyant areas there are often pockets of deprivation. Local development plans and other relevant strategies should address localised regeneration needs and other physical/social measures such as local community facilities and other supporting measures to counteract these issues.

Regional Planning Guidelines: Environment and Amenities Strategy REAS-10 Social Inclusion and Regeneration

6.7.17. It is an objective for local authorities, where appropriate in their respective development plans and local area plans, to identify areas where social deprivation occurs, both urban and rural areas and identify sustainable strategies for the regeneration of such areas.

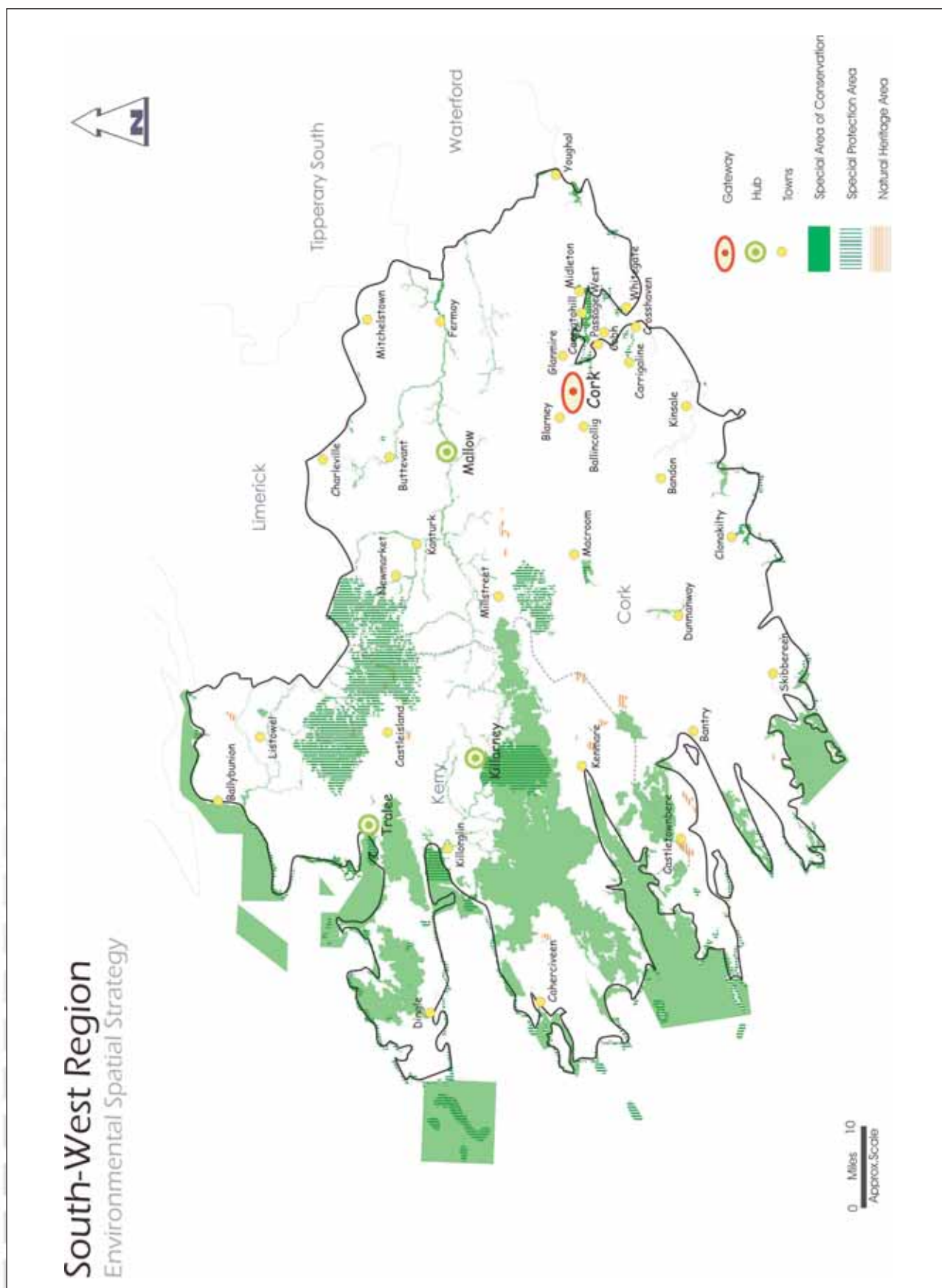
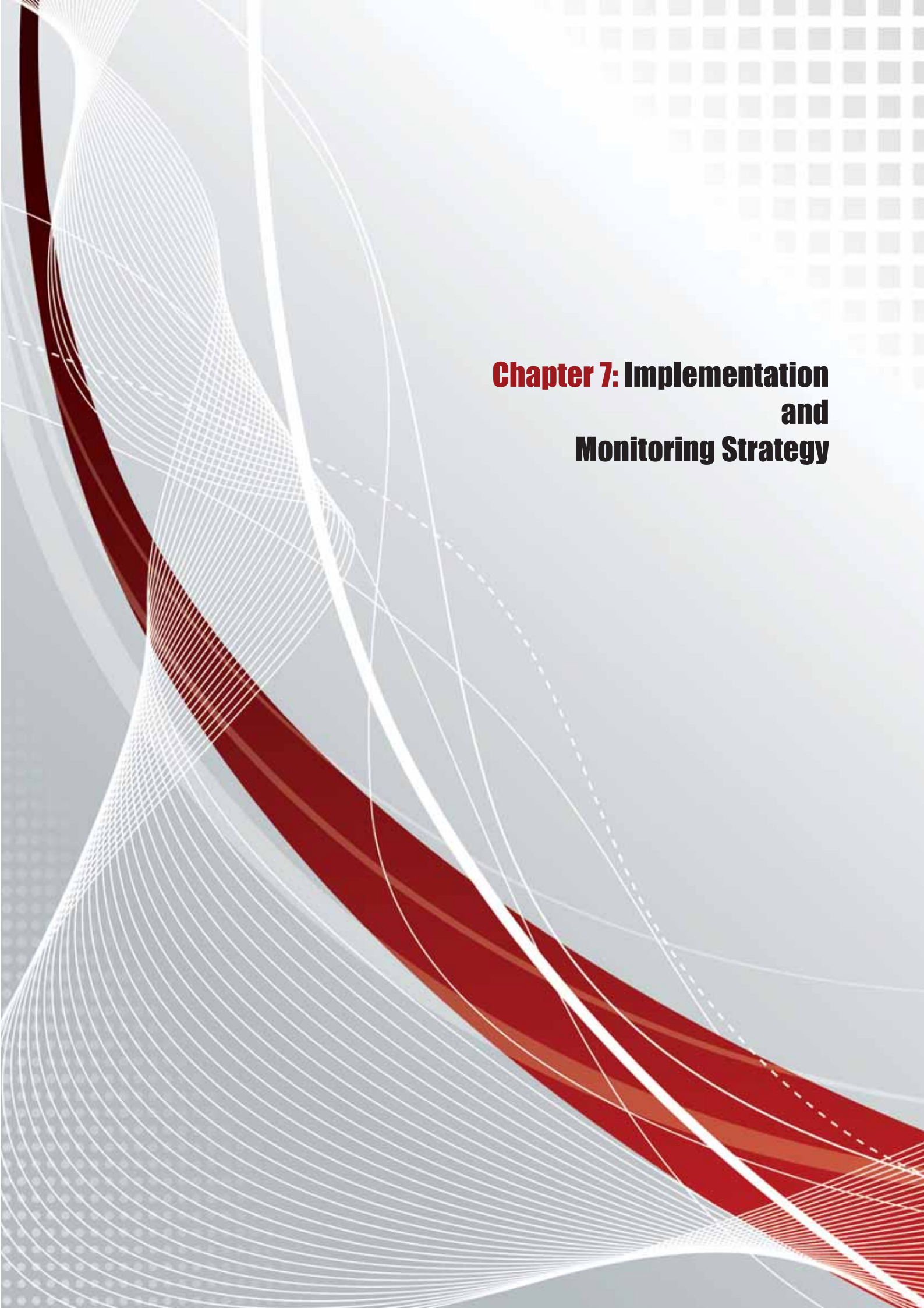


Fig 11: Environmental Spatial Strategy

The background features a light gray gradient with a grid of small squares in the upper right corner. A prominent, thick, dark red wavy line flows diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right. This red line is surrounded by numerous thin, white, wavy lines that create a sense of motion and depth. Some of these white lines form a mesh-like pattern, while others are more fluid and sweeping.

Chapter 7: Implementation and Monitoring Strategy



Chapter 7: Implementation and Monitoring Strategy

7.1 Introduction

Implementation

7.1.1. The implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines will be a key determinant of the future growth and settlement pattern of the South West Region, influencing important strategic public and private investments in infrastructure and other services. Implementation will be dependant in many instances of the required public capital investments in infrastructure mainly in advance of population growth to ensure the sustainability of the investment.

- The Local Authorities in the region have a primary role in the realisation of the Regional Planning Guidelines' goals and objectives, through the embodiment of the Regional Planning Guidelines into their respective City and County Development Plans and by ensuring that these plans are consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines.
- The Enterprise Development and Training Agencies such as IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and FAS, all have an important role to ensure that the focus on employment creation is firmly on areas of population growth, which primarily are the Cork Gateway and the Mallow Hub and Tralee and Killarney Towns, which form part of the linked Hub.
- A range of Government Departments such as the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government, The Department of Transport, The Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation, the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources and the Department of Health and Children all share important roles in the implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines by ensuring that the required State investments in infrastructure and services are in place in a manner to realise the objectives of the RPG in areas such as sanitary services, roads, public transport, energy and communications, education and health services to facilitate future demographic shape of the south west including substantial population growth.

7.1.2. The Regional Authority will lead the monitoring and implementation process through working closely with the Local Authorities, State Agencies and Government Departments on the timely realisation of the objectives as set out in the Guidelines. It will also work closely with the other seven Regional Authorities and these Departments and agencies at the national level with a view to ensuring that all Regional Planning Guidelines for the country reside high on the national investment agenda.

Monitoring

7.1.3. The monitoring and implementation process will ensure that the objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines are addressed at all levels within the region and the process will identify and prioritise actions by the key players at local, regional and national levels in the delivery of the RPG. An important element of monitoring will relate to population and settlement patterns.

7.1.4. Steering and Technical Committees exist and operate satisfactorily for the monitoring and implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines. The committees are comprised of:

- The Cathaoirleach, three Members and the Director of the Regional Authority
- the City and County Managers,
- the Senior Planning Officers in the three Local Authorities
- the CASP Coordinator
- the senior representative of the Departments of the Environment Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Transport
- IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.
- The National Transport Authority

7.1.5. The Steering and Technical Committees meet on a regular basis and monitor progress in the implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines, while addressing any failures in terms of planning, investment or other issues which may arise. One of the early tasks of the monitoring and implementation process will be to establish and agree a measurable implementation schedule with clearly identified datelines and targets, in line with the statutory requirements of the Planning Acts.



7.1.6. Monitoring and Implementation Reports will be made to the Regional Authority and reports will also be furnished to the Minister for the Environment Heritage and Local Government on a basis as required.

7.1.7. In accordance with the requirements of Section 26 (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. the Regional Planning Guidelines will be again be reviewed in 2016.

Regional Planning Guidelines: RIM-01 Implementation and Monitoring

It is an objective for the Regional Authority to monitor the implementation of the RPG through their own Technical and Steering Groups on a regular basis as well through the relevant local authorities and their development and local area plans. The Regional Authority will undertake a review of the RPG by 2016.

Table 7.1: Indicators for Future Monitoring and Reports on RPG Implementation.

Chapter	Policy/Recommendation	Indicator/Action	Data Source	Comment
Vision (2)	RV-01(realising economic potential, high quality of life etc)		Regional Authority, Forfás, EPA, Local Authorities, CSO, DEHLG, International Comparison studies	Overarching objective linked to and governing all other goals in the RPG.
Economy (3)	RES-01 (growth of companies across economic sectors, ensuring adequate suitable locations etc)	National /International benchmarking of land, labour, transport costs etc. GVA, GDP, GNP. Numbers of new jobs created, new company start ups, use of renewables, access to sustainable methods of transport.	Forfás, Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Dept of Trade and Employment, State employment agencies, Comparison studies at national and international levels.	State of the Regions and Regional Competitiveness Agenda useful as baseline information.
Economy (3)	RES-02 (Growth in market services/ retail)	National /International benchmarking of land, labour, transport costs etc. numbers of new jobs created, new company start ups, especially within Gateway and hubs as well as sustainability in terms of access and energy issues.	Forfás, Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Dept of Trade and Employment, State Employment Agencies, Retail Strategies, Comparison studies at national and international levels.	
Economy (3)	RES-03 (Tourism)	Facilitation through CDPs/LAPs, Tourism Plan for the SW.	Regional Authority, Bord Fáilte, Fáilte South West, Local Authorities.	



Economy (3)	RES-04 (primary resource based sectors)	Numbers employed in forestry agriculture fishing, aquaculture etc. Levels of new forestry plantations.	Forfás, Teagasc, IFA. Fisheries Board, Coillte.	
Economy (3)	RES-05 (Rural Diversification)	Broadband penetration, Business start up data from enterprise boards etc.	LEADER, SWRA, Enterprise Boards.	
Economy (3)	RES-06 (Strategic Locations)	Levels of strategic land reserves, implementation of strategic infrastructure, Numbers of FDI and large scale industries.	Local Authority Plans, Government Employment Agencies.	
Settlement (4)	RSS-01 (Zoned Land Study)	Zoning provision in each local authority area in accordance with table 4.5. Provision of infrastructure.	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG	
Settlement (4)	RSS-02 (Cork Gateway – key driver)	Levels of infrastructure provision, roll out of new transportation services, modal shift targets regeneration of Docklands and other older areas/ brownfield sites, reduction in numbers of one offs outside of the urban areas.	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG	Studies required prior to next round of CDPs. Policy is linked to the transport and infrastructure policies in particular in chapter 5.
Settlement (4)	RSS-03 (Mallow Hub)	Levels of infrastructure provision, roll out of new transportation services, modal shift targets regeneration of older areas/ brownfield sites, reduction in numbers of one offs outside of the urban areas.	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG	Policy is linked to the transport and infrastructure policies in particular in chapter 5. Health of pearl mussel is a priority.
Settlement (4)	RSS-04 (Tralee-Killarney Linked Hub)	Levels of infrastructure provision, roll out of new transportation services, modal shift targets regeneration of older areas/ brownfield sites, reduction in numbers of one offs outside of the urban areas	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG	Policy is linked to the transport and infrastructure policies in particular in chapter 5.



Settlement (4)	RSS-05 (Ring Towns)	Increase in local services and employment levels, reduction in commuting, modal shift targets, reduction in numbers of new housing outside of the urban areas.	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG	
Settlement (4)	RSS-06 (Northern Area)	Levels of employment, start-ups, population levels, provision of services and infrastructure.	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG. LEADER, Enterprise Boards etc.	
Settlement (4)	RSS-07 (Western Area)	Levels of employment, start-ups, population levels, provision of services and infrastructure.	Local Authority Development Plans. DEHLG. LEADER, Enterprise Boards, etc.	
Transport /Infrastructure (5)	RTS-01 (Modal Split, integrated transport strategies)	Census travel to work data, delivery of T21 programme, modal split, climate change indicators POWCAR	Local Authority Development Plans, Department of Transport, CSO, DEHLG. EPA.	
Transport /Infrastructure	RTS-02 (Public transport actions)	Census travel to work data, delivery of T21 programme, modal split, climate change indicators POWCAR	Local Authority Development Plans, Department of Transport, CSO, DEHLG. EPA.	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-03 (cycling, walking)	Levels of construction of new cycleways and walkways, retrofitting of new facilities, census travel to work data, delivery of T21 programme, modal split, climate change indicators, POWCAR	Local Authority Development Plans, Department of Transport, CSO, DEHLG. EPA.	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-04 (Road infrastructure)	Delivery of T21 infrastructure, completion of regionally important projects, detailed environmental assessments where appropriate. POWCAR	Local Authority Development Plans, Department of Transport, DEHLG..	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-05 (Airports)	Provision of new facilities, passenger/cargo numbers.	Local Authority Development Plans, Department of Transport, DEHLG.	



Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-06 (Ports, Harbours)	Passenger /cargo numbers, improvement of N28, relocation of Port of Cork and Seveso sites, construction of port at Ballylongford.	Port authorities, Local Authorities, SWRA.	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-07 (Water, waste water)	Implementation of WSIPs	Local Authorities, DEHLG.	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-08 (Waste management)	Implementation of waste management plans, provision of MRFs.	Local Authorities, DEHLG.	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RTS-09 (Energy)	Enhancement of grid capacity, provision of additional renewable resources. Energy consumption/capita	Eirgrid, DEHLG.	
Transport/ Infrastructure (5)	RI-03 (Telecommunications)	Broadband penetration.	Telecoms regulator, SWRA.	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-01 (Landscape Character)	Designation of landscape areas of high value	Local Authority Development Plans	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-02 (Regional Coastline)	Development of integrated coastal management strategies.	Local Authority Development Plans. Marine Institute.	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-03 (Natural Heritage)	Implementation/inclusion of biodiversity objectives in CDPs, carrying out of screening for H.D.A.	Local Authority Development Plans	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-04 (Environmental Quality)	Additional soil, air and water quality monitoring systems. Achievement of WFD targets.	EPA, Local Authorities, Teagasc.	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-05 (Flood Risk)	Completion of CFRAM studies.	Local authorities, DEHLG OPW.	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-06 (Built heritage, archaeology)	Identification of areas of special character, inclusion of building in the RPS. Implementation of design statements.	Local Authority Development Plans, DEHLG.	

Regional Planning Guidelines

2010 - 2022



Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-07 (Social/Community Infrastructure)	Protection and provision of community infrastructures and services in towns and villages.	Local Authority Development Plans, DEHLG.	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-08 (Cultural Heritage)	LAPs for the Gaeltacht areas	Local Authorities.	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-09 (Island communities)	Broadband penetration, provision of infrastructure/facilities.	Local Authority Development Plans, DEHLG	
Environment/ Amenities (6)	REAS-10 (Social inclusion and regeneration)	Provision of infrastructure and facilities. Quality of life reports from CSO.	Local Authority Development Plans, DEHLG	



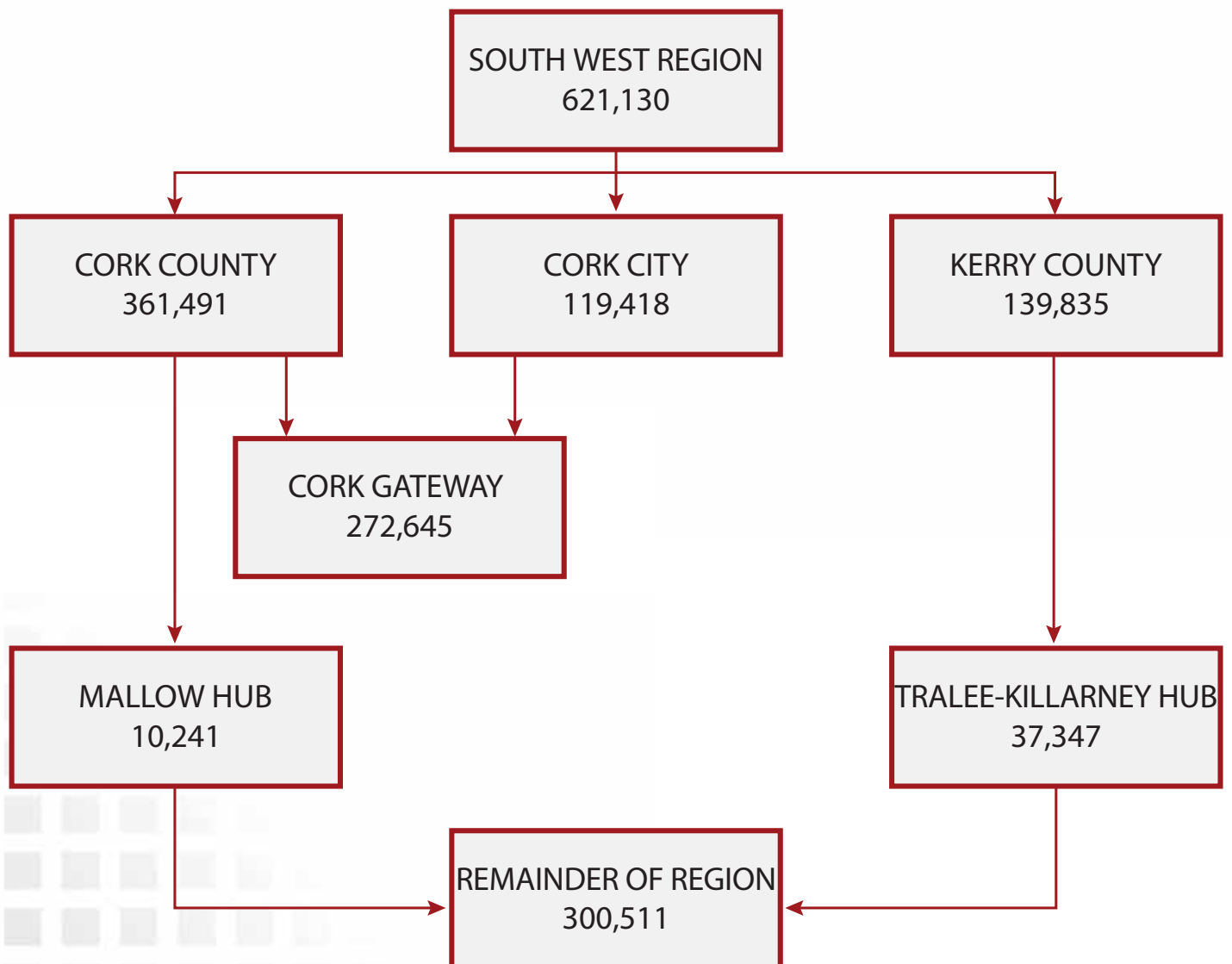
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Appendices



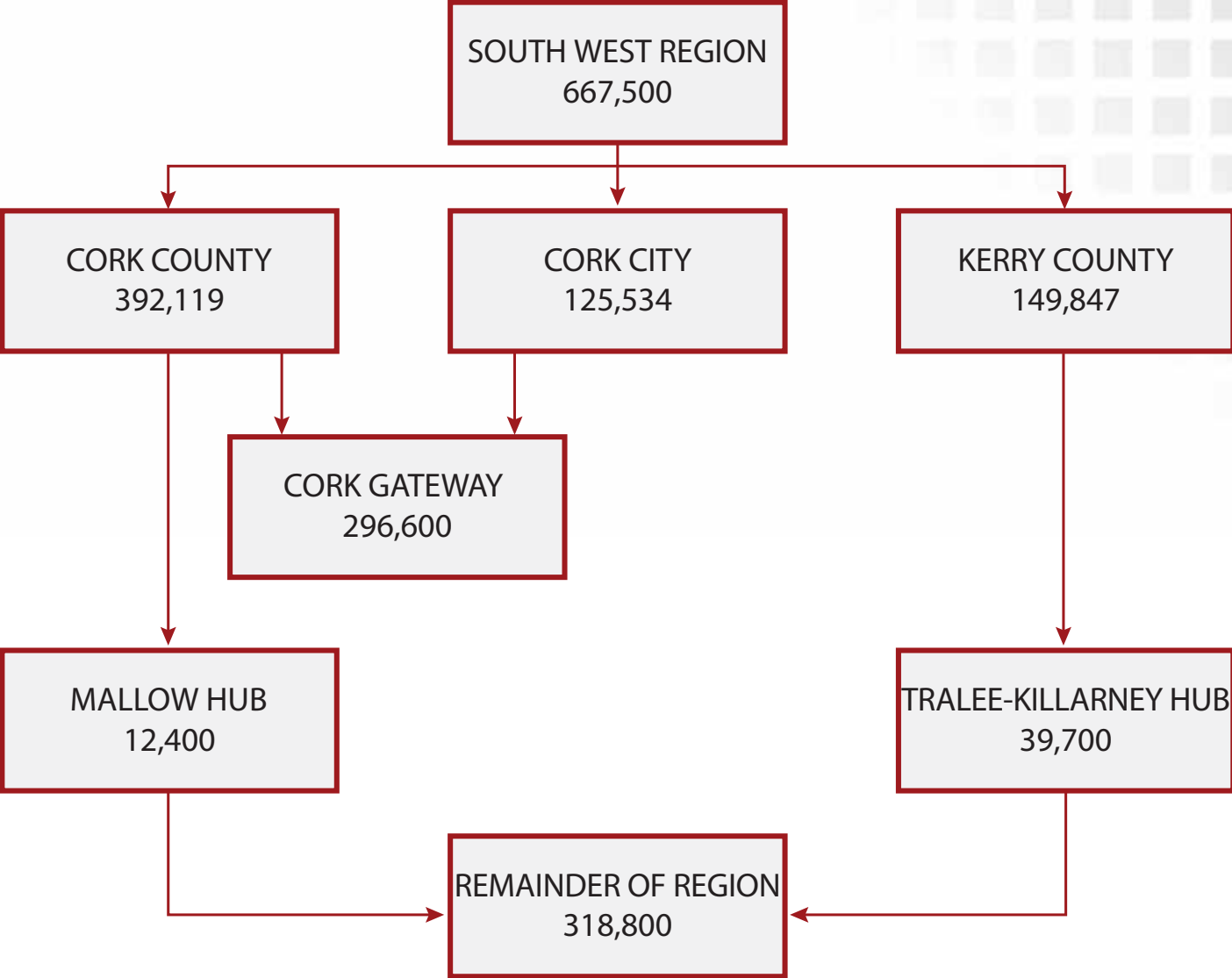
Appendix 1: Summary of Population Targets 2006-2022

2006



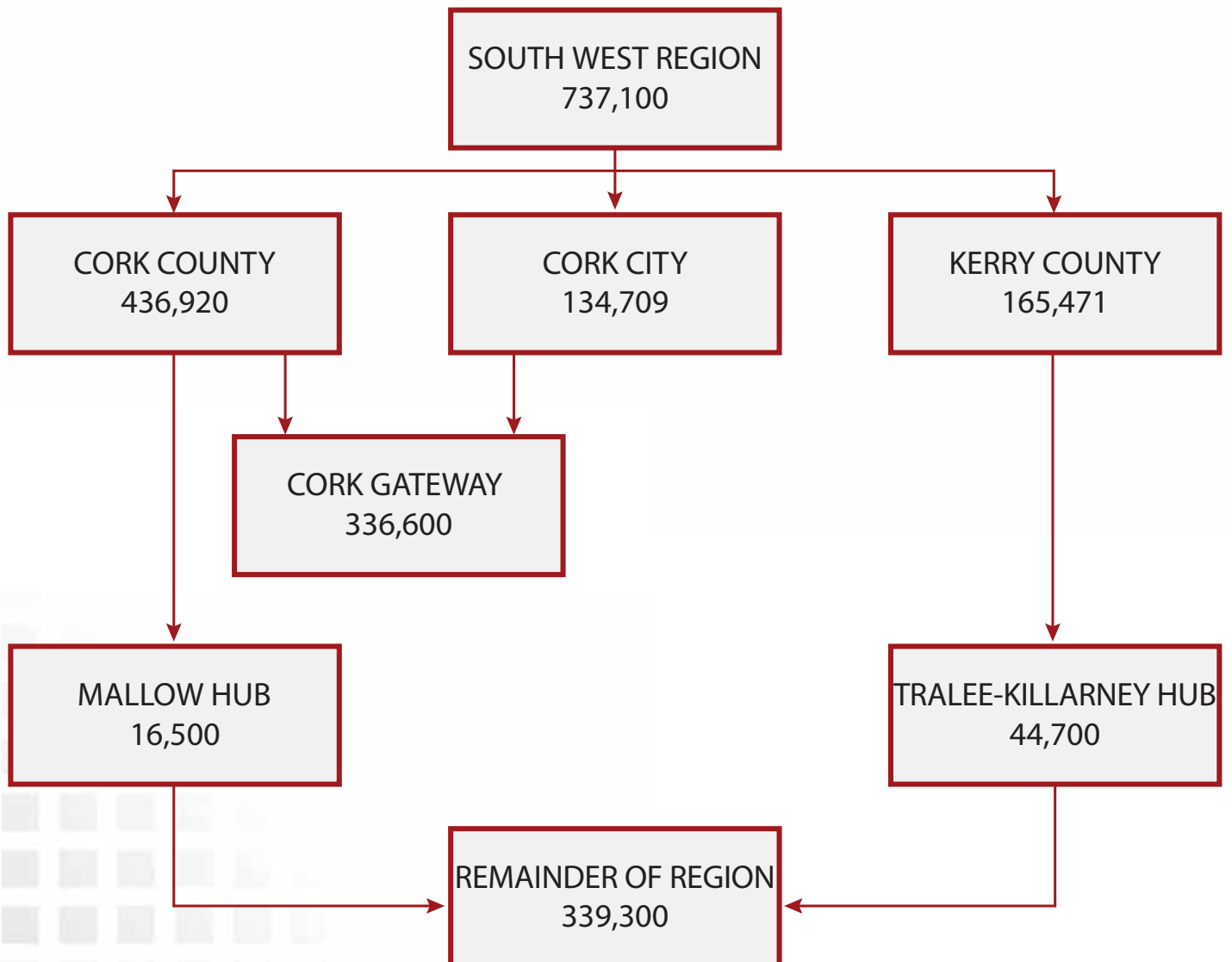


2010



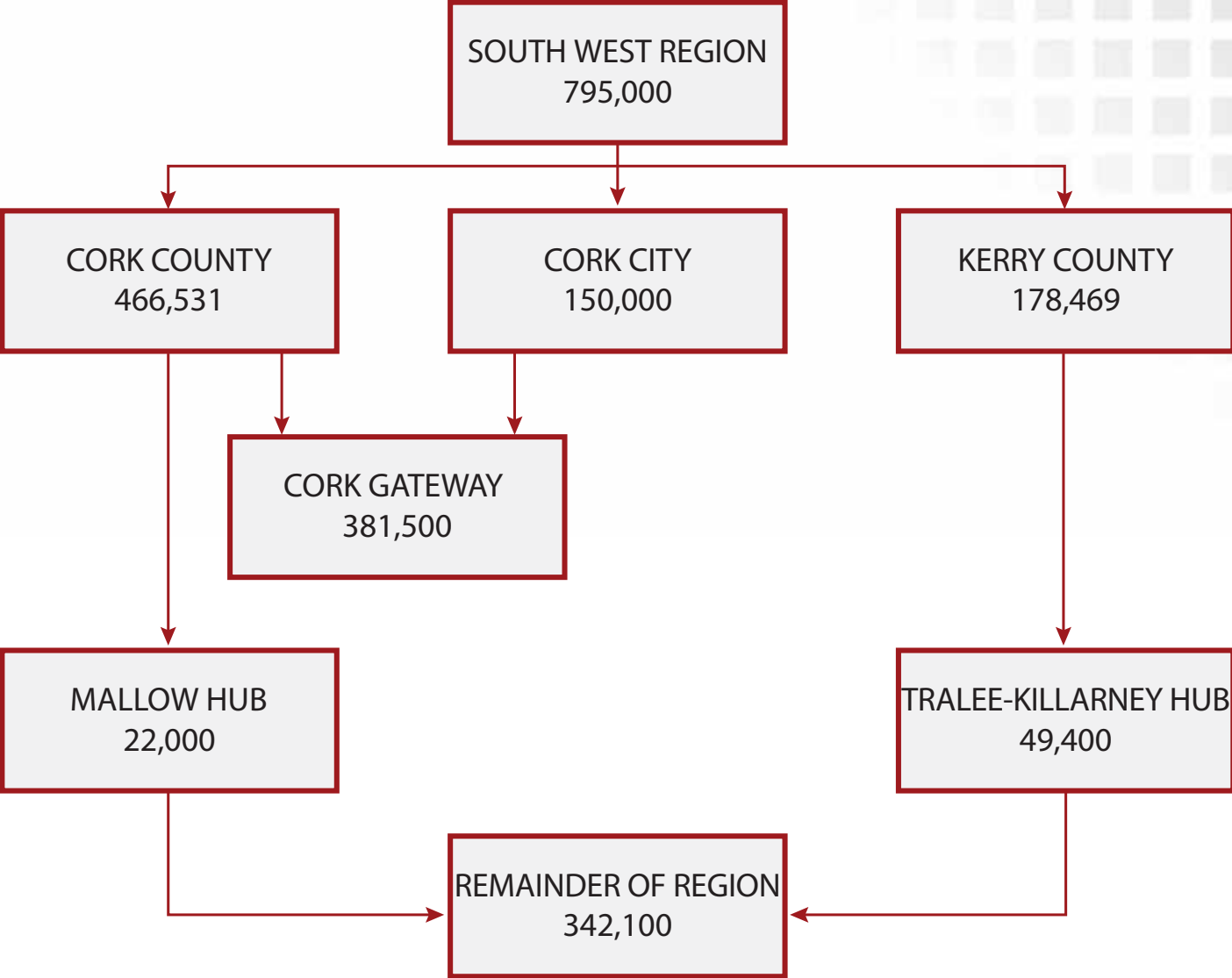


2016





2022





Appendix 2: Alternative Scenarios

In order to identify a regional strategy that could facilitate and manage the growth of the region up to a population of 795,000 persons by 2022, the RPG explored 3 Scenarios that could set the framework for the management of this growth. The three Scenarios that were considered in the RPG are as follows:-

1. Continuation of Current Trends;
2. High Urban Growth;
3. Moderate Urban Growth

Scenario 1: Continuation of Current Trends

One option for the regional settlement strategy would be a continuation of the existing development trends which is characterised by high population growth in the villages and rural areas surrounding the Cork Gateway and Tralee/Killarney Hub (doughnut effect), the high rate of growth in the suburbs surrounding Cork City and Hubs and the consequential decline population growth within Cork City and Tralee/Killarney urban areas. In this scenario, Mallow Hub and other main towns of the region will continue to increase their population base without corresponding growth in employment, resulting in high rates of commuting.

This option will also see an increase in the numbers of persons commuting to the Cork Gateway and Hubs, with increasing commuting times and distances posing significant problems for the Region through increased congestion and significant infrastructure pressures in parts of the Region. Rural communities will continue to decline and become further marginalised as the 'daytime' countryside is empty of people as commuters replace traditional rural persons who are intrinsic part of local communities.

Scenario 2: High Urban Growth

Another development option is where growth would primarily be focused on the development of the Cork Gateway and the two Hubs of Mallow and Tralee/Killarney. The main towns of CASP, Western and Northern areas will experience higher growth relative to their surrounding rural areas under this scenario. This option will be characterised by a sharp upturn in the population of Cork City, with a moderation of the rate of growth in the southern suburbs and an acceleration of the rate of population growth in the northern suburbs of Cork City. It will also mean a moderation of the rate of population growth in villages and rural areas so as to achieve a more balanced rate of growth between urban and rural areas around the Gateway and Hub towns and higher rates of population growth in those towns served by sustainable transport. In Mallow Hub town, there would be continued growth of population in line with the higher level of economic growth, thereby reducing the need of the residents to commute to Cork City. In towns, villages and rural areas of the Region outside of the Gateway and Hubs, there would be slower rates of population growth in line with local employment opportunities.

Scenario 3: Moderate Urban Growth

If there is no large scale investment in the provision of infrastructure (adequate wastewater treatment, water services and rapid transit transport in the Gateway and Hubs) the likely alternative scenario is moderate population growth in established urban areas. This option finds itself between the first two scenarios and will be characterised by a moderate growth in the population growth of Cork City, the Hubs and main towns as under this scenario these areas will not have the key infrastructure in order to reach critical mass.

The development of major Brownfield sites in the Gateway and Hubs would generate significant advantages to creating a critical mass of population to compete with other Regions and internationally. However if significant investment for Brownfield sites, e.g. the Cork Docklands, is curtailed an alternative development option would have been adopted, and scenario 3 represents this option.







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