



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

3ú Uirlár ó Thuaidh | Ionad Cathartha | An tSráid Mhór | Baile Munna | Baile Átha Cliath 9
3rd Floor North | Ballymun Civic Centre | Main Street | Ballymun | Dublin 9



Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
Ballymun Civic Centre
Main Street
Ballymun
Dublin 9

01/03/2019

Director,
Southern Regional Assembly
Assembly House,
O'Connell Street,
Waterford,
Co. Waterford.

Re: Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Regional Assembly

Further to your correspondence, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) sets out below its observations on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA). These observations were prepared by the executive and approved by the members of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly on March 1st 2019.

EMRA welcomes the Draft RSES for the SRA and considers that it sets out a strategic vision for the development of the region to 2031 and beyond providing for strategic outcomes and policy objectives that are consistent with national planning policy as expressed in Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework.

Co-ordination between the Assemblies and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has ensured a consistent approach to the structure and layout of the regional strategies to ensure the delivery of a plan-led spatial planning system where regional plans are aligned to benefit the economy, environment and to provide for an improved quality of life.

Both strategies promote global and **inter-regional connectivity** as part of an integrated land use and transport strategy, to protect and enhance national assets and the strategic TEN-T national port, rail and road network and to promote enhanced inter-regional connectivity with a focus on the development of a strategic 'corridor' approach including;

- To support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and strengthen economic links with the South East extending to Rosslare Europort, which is an important economic and transport link, particularly in the post Brexit scenario. The Eastern Corridor has potential to complement the Atlantic Economic Corridor on the west coast. The RSES supports a feasibility study for high speed rail between Dublin and Belfast and enhanced rail services on the south-eastern line to include the extension of DART services to Drogheda.
- The Dublin to Cork rail corridor is part of the EU TEN-T core network, which aims to protect and enhance strategic international connections between Belfast, Dublin and Cork. The RSES supports a feasibility study for the provision of high-speed rail links between Dublin and Limerick/Junction Cork with enhanced commuter rail services to the Dublin hinterlands.

Both strategies promote **enhanced cross boundary co-ordination** between Local Authorities and the relevant agencies and stakeholders, setting out priorities at a regional level to allow for greater cohesion and alignment of policy making between future investment and spatial planning. The RSES seeks to build on shared regional assets to support the growth of designated settlements and the sustainable development of our towns, villages and rural areas. Areas where complementarities exist include;

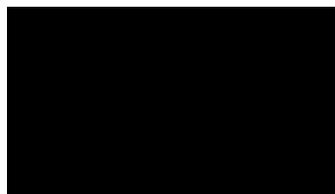
- Strengthening role of Carlow/Graiguecullen as a Key Town, with a boundary shared between both regions. RPO 4.49 of the EMRA Draft RSES complements RPO 19 in the SRA Draft RSES to support a Joint Urban Area Plan to be prepared between Carlow and Laois County Councils.
- Building on shared assets to support economic development based on smart specialization, clustering and orderly growth, with a focus on skills development and placemaking to attract investment. There is potential to strengthen economic interaction and connectivity between the regions and to develop networks of Smart Cities and Smart towns building on links to local Universities and Research centres, including new multi-campus Technological Universities.
- Supporting rural development, building on the roll out of the National Broadband Plan, support for investment in rural transport and through the promotion of cross boundary tourism initiatives and the development of greenways including the Barrow Blueway connecting Carlow- Graiguecullen on the boundary with Southern Region and extending south to Waterford.
- Promoting accelerated action on climate change, having regard also to the shared boundaries of the Eastern and Midland Climate Action Regional Offices and the potential for development of shared renewable energy assets, the identification of Strategic Energy Zones and the development of a regional landscape strategy. Ongoing collaboration is also welcomed to

ensure the resilience of critical infrastructure by way of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change challenges and to ensure the protection and enhancement of shared natural assets.

The Regional Assembly is committed to the further development of an evidence led asset base approach in collaboration with local authorities and regional stakeholders as part of the implementation of RSES. The Assembly welcomes ongoing co-ordination with the Southern Region in the **monitoring and implementation** stages, including development of Key Regional Indicators to ensure a consistent approach to monitor progress in implementation of RSES.

The Assembly welcomes further opportunities to engage with the Southern Regional Assembly in this regard.

Regards,



[Redacted name]

Director
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

March 1st, 2019.