

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TOURISM STATEMENT OF STRATEGY AND WORK
PROGRAMME
2017 - 2022



FOREWORD

Following the approval and agreement of the elected members, at their December 2016 monthly meeting, Kilkenny County Council initiated a process of developing and adopting a **Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme** which will underpin the Councils' support for the tourism industry in Kilkenny over the next five years. The strategy sets out a vision, goals, objectives, and aligns with national tourism policy, national initiatives, regional objectives and the objectives of the Council's adopted Local Economic Community Plan. It is intended that the Strategy and Work Programme will support the delivery of the objectives of the LECP, support Kilkenny Tourism, and support local community tourism initiatives.

Kilkenny has a well developed Tourism industry, with a range of attractions and activities to suit the holiday/visitor market. Kilkenny has earned a positive reputation over the years as a place where heritage is valued, and where high standards obtain. Recent, Council supported developments at Castlecomer Discovery Park, have shown the way in designing activities which attract visitors, whilst making best use of local assets, valuing heritage, and making far sighted investment decisions.

The extent to which we can improve our tourism performance will depend on a number of factors, both internal (e.g. Government Policy) and external, (e.g. Brexit). This Statement of Strategy and Work Programme sets out the policy context, and seeks to address the areas where Kilkenny County Council should best deploy its resources to meet the challenges and support the local tourism industry. The best way to understand those challenges, and their potential effect, is to identify accurate timely data from within the industry and this strategy includes the formation of a research group under Destination Kilkenny to address this issue.

Fáilte Ireland's brand proposition Ireland's Ancient East is a potential game changer for Kilkenny. We are, and will continue to be, a "hero site" within IAE, and we intend to embrace the opportunities presented by a major marketing and branding campaign for IAE which is entirely consistent with Kilkenny's history and heritage.

In our consultations for this plan a number of recurring themes emerged, and these themes in turn inform our actions over the plan period 2017 – 2022. One of the dominant themes which arose was a perceived imbalance between the City and County, weighted in favour of the city, and the desire that the County area would share in the economic benefits from the visitors to Kilkenny. To address this issue and explore the possibilities we are proposing sub county hubs or destinations, geographically clustered or themed. This approach is designed to offer local communities a forum in which they can develop their own assets, with guidance and support from Kilkenny County Council. Our ultimate aim is to develop a "**One Kilkenny**" strategy which will be beneficial to all with an understanding of the interdependence required to achieve our potential.

Signage and Way finding were also recurring themes, and our challenge is to find a balanced approach, using a blend of technology and traditional signage, to assist our visitors and attractions in easing the journey.

Whilst Kilkenny City is seen as performing well, there are many challenges ahead and if we are to consolidate and improve we need to target our resources to achieve best results. We need to identify strategic capital developments to attract funding. We need to review our direct funding of festivals and show our support for those festivals which have the capacity to sustain our tourism industry. Festivals and events are an inherent and significant part of Kilkenny's ability to attract visitors year after year. A move to multi annual funding of major festivals seems both desirable and inevitable, but will require some challenging decisions. And of course we need to support Kilkenny Tourism Ltd., and Destination Kilkenny. These groups are working hard at a strategic level, and Kilkenny County Council acknowledges the dedication of the teams involved.

We have also developed relationships in neighbouring counties, with whom we will be collaborating on marketing and cross selling. We are working closely with Kilkenny Leader Partnership (KLP), and with state agencies: O.P.W., Coillte, and Waterways Ireland. And of course we continue our fruitful relationship with Kilkenny Civic Trust, Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

We believe that the next five years will be an exciting time for tourism in Kilkenny, we will guard against complacency and we will ensure that Kilkenny County Council is at the forefront in supporting a vibrant industry capable of delivering strong economic dividends for Kilkenny.

Cllr. Matt Doran, Cathaoirleach

Colette Byrne, Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION:

From ancient times, a succession of influential leaders recognised Kilkenny's strategic location within Ireland and left behind tangible evidence of their wealth and power in its buildings and monuments. Time and again, Kilkenny's strategic location placed it at the centre of national trends and events – as monastic town, royal seat, Anglo-Norman stronghold, Cromwellian target – that shaped the course of Irish history.

Kilkenny's history, heritage, and landscape have provided a valuable tourism asset, which has the potential to sustain a significant element of our local economy. Tourism is currently a major revenue generator for County Kilkenny, estimated by Fáilte Ireland, at approximately €76m, in 2015. Kilkenny is marketed as a heritage destination and has a large number of visitor attractions associated with heritage, both built and natural. There is also potential to build on the contribution of the County's natural and built heritage to the economic development of Kilkenny.

Natural heritage is a significant asset for the county and offers a variety of free amenities (walking, cycling etc.), which bring many benefits to society and to the economy. A high quality, natural environment supports the economy by attracting employers, visitors and inward investment. Green infrastructure is an asset that can have a particularly high tourism amenity value.

There are almost 350 food and accommodation businesses in County Kilkenny, accounting for approximately one in six (16.7%) of the total number employed by all businesses. There are a number of well-established festivals which enhance the tourism offering, including the *Cat Laughs Comedy Festival*; *Kilkenomics*, which brings together some of the world's leading economists and financial commentators with comedians; *Kilkenny Arts Festival*, which features the best of visual art, street performance and classical music; and the *Savour Kilkenny Food Festival* which showcases the produce of local food producers, and our new Christmas festival, *Yulefest Kilkenny*.

There is a potential to gain further leverage from the creative arts in County Kilkenny. The county has a tradition in the creative arts, cinema, media and design. Kilkenny is home to the national headquarters of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, which is a perfect fit for Kilkenny. It also offers opportunity, perhaps untapped to date, for significant national level campaigns to promote Kilkenny's design and craft industry. The National Craft Gallery, at the Castleyard, houses international standard collections, and we intend to join forces with D.C.C.o.I. in developing a significant "summit" type event in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland.

Tourism is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors and has significant potential to play a further role in Ireland's economic renewal. In 2015, tourism was responsible for overseas earnings of €4.2 billion (excluding carrier receipts – airfares and ferry costs).

Combining the data from the domestic market and international visitors, total tourism revenue for the economy in 2015 was around €7.06 billion. The tourism sector supports 143,500 jobs in the accommodation and food sector alone, and overall employment in tourism is estimated to be in the region of 205,000. Tourism also shapes Ireland's image and attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest.

Kilkenny continues to set the standard for heritage tourism in Ireland, and has long promoted high standards of public realm presentation. Investment in the public realm pays dividends, and recent Tidy Towns awards are a direct result of high public realm presentation standards. In addition to public infrastructure, Kilkenny has seen significant private investment: the Smithwick's Experience, with 48,000 visitors in 2015, along the Medieval Mile; venues such as The Hub at Cillin Hill, with 100,000 visitors attending over 30 events in 2015; developments at Gowran Park Racecourse, with almost 87,000 visitors in 2015 are all indications of the optimistic view of Kilkenny which results in real investment – and return - in tourism infrastructure. It should be noted that all of these venues recorded significant increased numbers for 2016.

Kilkenny Civic Trust has recently expanded its role and involvement in the presentation and management of Heritage assets in Kilkenny. The Trust's management of the new Medieval Mile Museum is evidence of the fruitful synergies which can be achieved and there is potential for further collaboration in the future. The Trust is now well positioned, with professional expertise, to become a significant player in the development of heritage tourism in Kilkenny.

Kilkenny County Council has now developed a **Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme** for the period 2017 to 2022, to drive a sustainable tourism industry in Kilkenny for the next 5 years.

Key messages

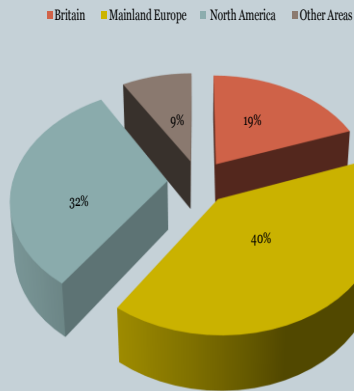
Tourism is a critical economic driver in Kilkenny, playing a key role in job creation; supporting the rural economy; supporting small community businesses; showcasing local cultural heritage values; valuing the integrity of our biodiversity; and, enhancing community resilience and celebrating local pride in place.

Success, however, can only be achieved if we believe that **tourism is everyone's business, and understand the critical importance of tourism business.**

Overseas Visitors 2015 to Kilkenny

County	Total	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas
Kilkenny	267,000	52,000	107,000	85,000	23,000

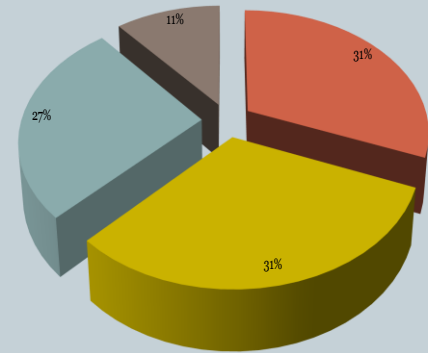
Chart Title



Overseas tourist revenue (€m) in 2015

Overseas tourist revenue	Total	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas
Kilkenny	45	14	14	12	5

Britain Mainland Europe North America Other Areas



Understanding our visitor profile

Our Ambition:

- Kilkenny offers international visitors an exceptional immersive experience consistent with the objectives of Fáilte Ireland's signature proposition: Ireland's Ancient East; where heritage is valued, where design, craft and creativity flourish and a place where culture and sporting achievement is celebrated;
- Kilkenny can provide international visitors with an alternative destination to complement Dublin, with the capacity to offer a visit of scale in an accessible location less than 90 minutes from arrival at Dublin airport - Kilkenny's transport links with Dublin have been transformed by the M9 Motorway.
- Kilkenny's tourism development strategy is based upon careful management, conservation and coherent presentation of our rich built and natural assets, ensuring that visitors are presented with a destination which encourages

engagement with the fabric of Kilkenny, and discover its significance in Ireland's history and heritage;

- As a tourism destination, Kilkenny has an outstanding track record of success. Both the volume and the value of tourism have increased dramatically, the result of local and national investment, underpinned by key long term policy decisions, acknowledging the critical importance of tourism to Kilkenny's economy;
- Kilkenny has gained a reputation for its international calendar of festivals and events, built up with the support of Kilkenny County Council, and our tourism development proposals are planned so that the County becomes a stage upon which the festivals can be presented, with a premium being placed on designed outdoor performance spaces;
- Kilkenny is now recognised as an international destination, and our tourism sector has proven capacity to deliver significant growth in international visitor numbers and income and a substantial increase in tourism related employment, in accordance with the Government Tourism Strategy: "*People Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025*";
- Strategic alliances between Kilkenny County Council, Fáilte Ireland, O.P.W., Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Tourism Ltd., Kilkenny Civic Trust, and Destination Kilkenny, have enabled a collaborative vision and successful approach to the development of Kilkenny's tourism product. We will continue to build on these4 relationships and develop strategic partnerships with State bodies.

NATIONAL POLICY

Role of Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Tourism Division), Tourism Agencies and Others

The mission statement of DTTAS is *“to shape the safe and sustainable development of transport, tourism, and sport, to support economic growth and social progress”*.

The Department's Tourism Division sets national tourism policy, providing the strategic direction required to support the growth of a competitive and sustainable tourism industry, through the development, implementation and influencing of a range of policy actions and programmes by the Department, its Agencies and other Government Departments, in consultation with industry partners. The tourism agencies, operating under the aegis of the Department, have been established to deal with the administration of that policy.

Fáilte Ireland was established under the National Tourism Development Authority Act 2003, following the amalgamation of Bord Fáilte Éireann and CERT, to encourage, promote and support tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy principal functions are the development of quality tourism product, domestic tourism marketing, tourism standards, enterprise support, capability building and human resource development for the tourism industry.

Tourism Ireland was formally incorporated on 11 December 2000 following the designation of tourism as an area for cooperation under the Good Friday Agreement (1998), to carry out the overseas promotion of tourism to the island of Ireland. Tourism Ireland is accountable to the North South Ministerial Council, with funding being provided by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland.

Tourism Ireland's primary remit is to promote the island of Ireland as a tourist destination in overseas markets. There is a wide range of other bodies, some with direct roles in developing tourism facilities and some whose role, while not specifically focused on tourism, is critical to the quality of the tourist experience in Ireland. These include:

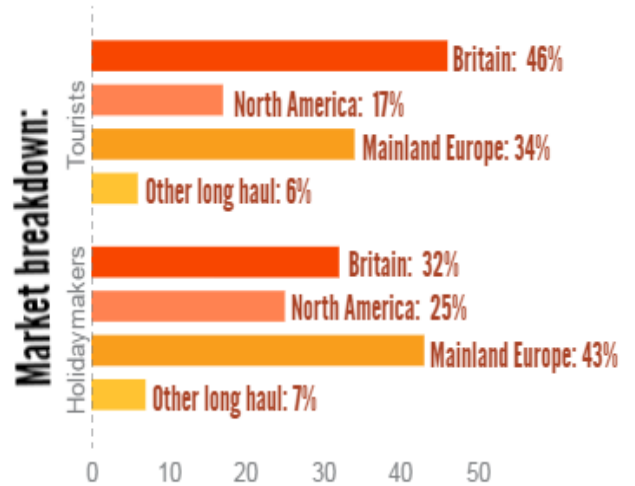
- National and local bodies
- National and local heritage organisations, which are responsible for key attractions;
- Locally-based tourism groups and LEADER companies,
- Public and private transport operators – from airlines to local bus operators.



2.9 million overseas tourists spent €1.1 billion



1.5 million overseas holidaymakers spent €0.4 billion



IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

2015 performance



3.3 million Irish resident trips generating €0.6 billion

1.2 million Irish resident holiday trips generating €0.3 billion

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025 is the Government's national tourism policy and it sets out ambitious goals for tourism in Ireland:

- ❖ By 2025, revenue from overseas visitors, excluding carrier receipts, will increase to **€5 billion in real terms** (i.e. excluding the effects of inflation).
- ❖ **Employment in the tourism sector will be 250,000 by 2025**, compared with around 200,000 at present.
- ❖ There will be **10 million visits** to Ireland annually by 2025

The policy commits to “an enhanced role for Local Authorities and recognition of the contribution of communities to tourism.”

Specifically, the policy envisages that Local Authorities will:

- Continue to act as primary developer of a range of public tourism infrastructure, including outdoor tourism infrastructure and urban and rural heritage;
- Act as a link between the State tourism agencies and communities by supporting community effort with regard to major national tourism initiatives such as the Gathering;
- Support community effort in destination development, including assisting communities to align their efforts with the tourism agencies brand architecture and consumer segmentation model;
- Provide a competitive environment for tourism enterprises through continued focus on high quality maintenance of public infrastructure frequently used by visitors;
- Contribute to capacity building in tourism nationally by co-ordinating exchange of knowledge between established and developing tourism destinations; and
- Provide a range of advice and support through the Local Enterprise Offices.

The recognition of tourism as a priority in the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) was identified as a policy priority in *People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025*. Every Local Authority has developed an LECP and they each have a strong tourism dimension. The LECPs outline each Local Authority's tourism outputs, identify tourism partners and set out specific goals, objectives and actions related to tourism. The majority of the LECPs explicitly reference *People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025*. Furthermore, many local authorities have created detailed tourism strategies which build upon their tourism plans as outlined in their LECP.

All of the LECPs are prepared by the Local Community and Development Committees (LCDC), adopted by the elected members and submitted to the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. Each local authority develops a plan that considers unique local factors through a process that includes extensive public consultation. The strength of the LCDC lies in its composition. This membership of the LCDC is critical to the delivery of the actions set out in the LECP. The Act clearly provides for a role for the local elected members and the Chief Executive of the City or County Council, the voluntary sector, community groups and agencies that are central to the delivery of public services in local areas.

Kilkenny County Council adopted a Local Economic Development Plan on 21st December 2015.

DRAFT

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

The primary objective of the South East APJ is to realise the potential to have a further 10-15 per cent at work in the South East region by 2020 so as to achieve an unemployment rate within 1 per cent of the State average. This goal will contribute to the overall ambition of creating sustainable full employment in Ireland from 2018 onwards.

The economic structure of the South East region is going through a transformation, as it builds on its strong industrial heritage to capture the opportunities for enterprises to grow in markets, by adapting to advances in new technologies and increasing skills and innovation levels. This Action Plan for Jobs for the South East seeks to take advantage of particular areas of opportunity for the region by building on the success of sectors such as tourism, agri-food and seafood, manufacturing and business services to grow competitive clusters in the areas that have real potential to grow jobs over the coming years such as in precision engineering and food nutrition, ICT, business processes and financial services, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. The overall objective for Tourism in the region can be expressed as:

Tourism: +300,000 overseas tourists and 5,000 associated jobs

Tourism related actions that will drive the jobs increases over the coming years in the South East are:

- ❖ Developing the South East as a key destination as part of **Ireland's Ancient East** experiences, with new measures to develop a skills pipeline to meet the demand of a growing sector and achieve a target to grow overseas tourism numbers by a third to 2025, with consequent direct tourism jobs growth from foreign earnings in the South East as well as spin-off employment in related sectors;
- ❖ Co-ordinating international tourism marketing across the counties in the region to promote the South-East as a destination as part of Ireland's Ancient East;
- ❖ Promoting the greater use of ICTs in the tourism and hospitality sector for service promotion, management and delivery;

There are 14 Tourism related actions contained in the SEAPJ as listed in **Appendix 3**

KILKENNY’S LOCAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY PLAN: TOURISM OBJECTIVES

Kilkenny County Council adopted a Local Economic Development Plan on 21st December 2015, with a vision statement which states:

“Kilkenny is a great place to live, work and play; offering its citizens dignity, security and the capacity to participate to their maximum potential. The Local Economic and Community Plan will create the framework conditions to ensure that this continues to be the case by:

1. supporting the enterprise economy
2. facilitating innovation and entrepreneurship
- 3. enhancing the visitor experience**
4. enhancing educational attainment and skills development,
5. developing the rural economy
6. advancing access and communications infrastructure
7. fostering leadership and capacity
8. protecting and utilising the natural, cultural and built environment
9. contributing to regional growth and international potential
10. addressing area based poverty and disadvantage
11. addressing poverty and social exclusion,
12. enhancing community facilities and participation
13. improving health and wellbeing

Goal 3: Enhance the Visitor Experience

The LECP will support the development – conforming to the provisions of the Kilkenny County and City Development Plans and Local Area Plans as appropriate - of sustainable tourism as an essential component of the local economy. This will be achieved through co-operation between Fáilte Ireland, Kilkenny County Council, Kilkenny Tourism, the LEADER Implementer and neighbouring counties in the South East Region.

The attributes for tourism in the county include our green infrastructure comprising biodiversity, parks, public realm open spaces, rivers, wetlands, woodlands, farmland and the built environment of the villages, towns and urban areas. In this context, the Kilkenny LECP is designed to ensure that sustainable tourism development should not only increase revenue for the sector, but should also deliver on conservation, environmental and social goals.

Subject to conformance with the Kilkenny County and City Development Plans and Local Area Plans, the LECP supports a sustainable increase in the volume of visitors, revenue per

visitor, their average length of stay and seasonal spread; whilst protecting the built heritage and green infrastructure that form the resources on which the industry is based.

The LECP will support the implementation of the Strategic Marketing Plan for Kilkenny Tourism, the Fáilte Ireland Ireland's Ancient East proposition, and the Destination Kilkenny Development Strategy.

Goal 3: Actions Summary

Action 3.1: Undertake an analysis of business tourism potential in County Kilkenny with reference to conferences, business and major tourism entry points (such as Rosslare Port and Waterford Regional Airport), marketing and PR and Ireland's Ancient East campaign. This action will closely link with other regionally-focused actions.

Action 3.2: Improve the visitor experience and business capability of outdoor activity providers active in tourism. Initiatives to include analysis of the potential for: linking activity hubs and amenities; protection and management of the county's Green Infrastructure and the development of the County's river assets for fishing, boating and blueway trails. This will include engaging with the Ireland's Ancient East team to identify opportunities with the highest potential.

Action 3.3: Undertake an Asset mapping exercise across the county to develop: area based specific tourism strategies. This will also include initiatives focused on delivering a quality international tourism experience around the Ireland Ancient East Brand. In particular, the potential to develop international "stand-out" products based on Kilkenny's comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage. This action will include the development of the Medieval Mile Museum as a potential 'hero site' within Ireland's Ancient East, and identifying the opportunities to leverage the themes and stories which will work best to bring Kilkenny to an international audience.

Action 3.5: Continue development of the 'Medieval Mile' and develop an action plan that links complementary visitor attractions across the county aimed at prolonging and enhancing the visitor experience. This will be a critical element of Kilkenny's offering within Ireland's Ancient East. Cross promotion of nearby attractions will be important in the success of encouraging visitors to spend more time in the region rather than using it as a transit zone.

Action 3.6: Design a county marketing and communications strategy to include activities around the design and distribution of marketing materials, cluster initiatives, historical, and heritage interpretation signs and cultural information signs. This action is aimed at increasing visitor numbers, sustaining the quality of the visitor experience and prolonging the visitor's stay in the county. This action will also include maximising the potential of digital marketing, and use of tourism apps, video promotion and social media.

Action 3.7: Develop a strategy for Festivals as an economic driver, building on the very successful range of existing festivals programmed throughout the year in Kilkenny.

A full action plan, or service delivery plan, is included in **Appendix 1**

PRODUCT / EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

This section sets out the key actions that will be implemented in Kilkenny for 2017 – 2022.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Develop Kilkenny’s visitor experiences at significant selected heritage, cultural and activity based sites within the County, for leisure and business tourism.

Kilkenny has a well developed Tourism industry, with a range of attractions and activities to suit the holiday/visitor market. Kilkenny has earned a positive reputation over the years as a place where heritage is valued, and where high standards obtain. As a tourism destination, Kilkenny has an outstanding track record of success. Both the volume and the value of tourism have increased dramatically, the result of local and national investment, underpinned by key long term policy decisions, acknowledging the critical importance of tourism to Kilkenny’s economy;

Kilkenny is now recognised as an international destination, and our tourism sector has proven capacity to deliver significant growth in international visitor numbers and income’ and a substantial increase in tourism related employment, in accordance with the Government Tourism Strategy: *“People Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025.”*

Regional Product / Experience Developments: Blueways and Greenways

Kilkenny County Council recognises and fully supports regional cooperation and collaboration, and will play an active part in developing a tourism region of scale, within Ireland’s Ancient East.

Blueways and Greenways offer opportunities to develop regional amenities of scale which will allow the region to attract more visitors and encourage cross County collaboration. Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford Local Authorities have agreed to develop Greenway connectivity in the South East, along a new **South Kilkenny Regional Greenway**, linking New Ross and Waterford, and along the River Barrow towards Dublin. A regional greenways office will be established in New Ross with staff from the three councils.

Local and Community resilience

Kilkenny County Council will work closely with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, and with Failte Ireland, to ensure that local community tourism initiatives are developed and supported. Existing products/experiences such as *“Made in Kilkenny”*, *“#tastekilkenny”* and *“Trails Kilkenny”*, all have potential to promote economic activity at community level, and in addition to their tourism impact they have the potential to make a real social and community impact, and we will ensure that all of our plans in this area will also augment the ambitions of KLP’s Local Development Strategy 2014 – 2020, and we look forward to positive engagement with KLP. National initiatives like the REDZ programme, CEDRA, Town and Village Renewal schemes and Rural regeneration initiatives will also be used to develop local resilience and contribute to the mainstreaming of tourism business at community level, and a destination/hub development pathway is set out in **Appendix 2.**

Specific tourism objectives in the adopted LECP in Tourism Product/Experience Development are set out below:

LECP Objectives	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
Business Tourism Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential –	Undertake an analysis of business tourism potential in County Kilkenny with reference to conferences, business and major tourism entry points (such as Rosslare Port and Waterford Regional Airport), marketing and PR and Ireland’s Ancient East campaign. This action will closely link with other regionally-focused actions.	KCC	Failte Ireland; KLP; Kilkenny Tourism; Destination KK	2017
Business Tourism Strengthen the enterprise base and encourage job creation	Promote greater business links between the tourism and food sectors, in particular promoting use of local produce by the local hospitality sector and attracting visitors to Kilkenny for additional food and beverage related activities. This will include building on the success of the Savour Kilkenny Food Festival. Launch the “Taste Kilkenny” agri food project	KCC (LEO)	Kilkenny; KLP; Teagasc; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Bord Bia	2017 - 2022
Outdoor Pursuits Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential –	Improve the visitor experience and business capability of outdoor activity providers active in tourism. Initiatives to include analysis of the potential for: linking activity hubs and amenities; protection and management of the county’s Green Infrastructure and the development of the County’s river assets for fishing, boating and blueway trails. This will include engaging with the Ireland’s Ancient East team to identify opportunities with the highest potential.	KCC; KLP;	Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Outdoor activity providers	2017 -2018
Regional Tourism Development Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential – adhering to FI Ancient East Brand	Undertake an Asset Mapping exercise across the county to develop: area based specific tourism strategies. This will also include initiatives focused on delivering a quality international cross county tourism experience around the Ireland Ancient East Brand. In particular, the potential to develop international “stand-out” products based on Kilkenny’s comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage. This action will include the development of the Medieval Mile Museum as a potential ‘hero site’ within Ireland’s Ancient East, and identifying the opportunities to leverage the themes and stories which will work best to bring Kilkenny to an international audience.	Failte Ireland;	KCC,KLP; Kilkenny Tourism	2017 - 2018

Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential – in promoting and further developing “Irelands Medieval Mile”	Continue development of the ‘Medieval Mile’ and develop an action plan that links complementary visitor attractions across the county aimed at prolonging and enhancing the visitor experience. This will be a critical element of Kilkenny's offering within Ireland's Ancient East. Cross promotion of nearby attractions will be important in the success of encouraging visitors to spend more time in the region rather than using it as a transit zone.	KCC	KLP; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Heritage Council	2017 - 2019
Education and Training support Encourage and support upskilling, job mobility and enterprise creation and management	Promote greater awareness of the tourism product/offering across the County (through initiatives such as “Know Your Own County” Campaign); develop tourism ambassadors for the County; and highlight potential career opportunities within the tourism sector. This will also include delivery of Local Tour Guide Training Programmes to upskill service providers, to increase knowledge and co-ordination of existing and new visitor attractions, and to encourage cluster marketing and collective initiatives.	KCC / ETB	KCC ETB;KLP; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Heritage Council	2017 - 2022
Rural Tourism Development Increase economic activity and build sustainability into the rural economy	Rejuvenation of rural towns and areas by developing a strategic plan for each Municipal District. These will include proposals to enhance the consumer experience and attractiveness of town centres and villages for both heritage and cultural tourism.		KCC.KLP; Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce	2017 - 2022
Rural Tourism Development Increase economic activity and build sustainability into the rural economy	Develop a walking, cycling and waterways trail strategy to include the potential of enterprise related activities and job creation potential and linked to tourism actions.	KLP	KCC; Failte Ireland; NPWS	2017 - 2022
Access Infrastructure - Encourage integrated transport systems through the use of existing and new infrastructure innovation.	Support the development of a linked County and City integrated transport service. This will include supporting the further development of rural transport initiatives such as Ringalink. This action will also focus on specific actions for sustainable travel to address the high level of commuting from Kilkenny to Waterford.	KCC	KCC Kilkenny Tourism; Rural Transport Network	2017 - 2022
Built Environment	Support the development of the Abbey Creative Quarter, the Medieval Mile and the 5 medieval walled towns (that are part of the Irish Walled Towns Network.)	KCC	Heritage Council; Failte KK Tourism; DCCoI	2017 -2022

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

To develop and support a sustainable calendar of festivals and events to attract more visitors and enhance Kilkenny's reputation as a vibrant place.

Rugby World Cup 2023

Ireland, through the I.R.F.U., has made a bid for the Rugby World Cup in 2023, and a decision is due in November 2017. Kilkenny has been positively identified as a possible host venue for Pool B games; (attendance circa 20,000), and our selection is due to the reputation that Kilkenny has earned over the years as a destination which can welcome handle large scale events. Our Tourism Team are working closely with the Nowlan Park/ G.A.A Authorities and the I.R.F.U. to put together an event plan should we be successful in the bid process. The economic benefits to Kilkenny, both short term and long term should be seen as a return on the significant investment decisions made by successive Councils, and a vindication of farsighted funding decisions.

Kilkenny has gained a reputation for its international calendar of festivals and events, built up with the support of Kilkenny County Council, and our tourism development proposals are planned so that the County becomes a stage where festivals can be presented, with a premium being placed on designed outdoor performance spaces.

Kilkenny has an exciting array of well-established , international standard, festivals which enhance the tourism offering, including the *Cat Laughs Comedy Festival*; *Kilkenomics*;, which brings together some of the world's leading economists and financial commentators with comedians; *Kilkenny Arts Festival*, which features the best of visual art, street performance and classical music; and the *Savour Kilkenny* food festival which showcases the produce of local food producers, and our new Christmas festival, *Yulefest Kilkenny*.

Tradfest and *The Watergate Theatre* were winners of music awards by I.M.R.O for 2016, and are supported financially by Kilkenny County Council.

There is a potential to gain further leverage from the creative arts in County Kilkenny. The county has a tradition in the creative arts, cinema, media and design. This is supported by the proposed development of a creative quarter at the former Smithwick's Brewery site in the centre of Kilkenny City.

County based festivals such as the Graiguenamanagh Town of Books, and the Kells Reign of Terror, and the fledgling Fairy Tale Festival, have the potential to become annual fixtures, with financial support so that they develop sustainably.

Kilkenny County Council will seek out other high quality creative festivals and events which provide an economic impetus, with the goal of making use of the wide variety of venues in

the City and County which are ideal for entertainment. County venues such as Ballykeefe Amphitheatre, The Hub at Cillin Hill, Woodstock, Castalia Hall and Shankill Castle.

“Let’s Celebrate 2017 - The Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland” was published in February 2017, and :

“The study analyses the twelve months of events taking place between 1st March 2015 and 29th February 2016. During this period, over 4 million people attended Ticketmaster events in the Island of Ireland. This attendance generated €1.7bn of net additional revenue and €669m of net additional Gross Value Added (GVA). This is only the money that would not otherwise have been generated had the events not gone ahead. These figures take into account the spending by attendees as part of their trips (food, drink, merchandise, accommodation, transport) and the impact upon relevant supply chains of this spending by attendees. An estimated 3.7m+ bed-nights were generated by these trips with 433,666 attendees coming from outside the Republic of Ireland. For every single €1 spent on a ticket, an additional €6.06 of revenue is generated within the rest of the economy.

Live entertainment therefore, is an essential part of Ireland’s economy and tourist sector, which is powered by the international appeal of Ireland’s cultural richness and the unique warmth and enthusiasm of Irish audiences. Our research found that almost all attendees at live entertainment events in Ireland would recommend attendance to their friends and family. Live music goers gave an average mark of 8.8 out of 10 for the quality of the event(s) entertainment scene in Ireland makes them more likely to re-visit. The cultural strength of Ireland drives the willingness to purchase tickets, which in turn makes live entertainment such a vital facilitator of tourism and economic growth in Ireland”.

Kilkenny County Council continues to offer financial support to Festivals around the County. The future funding challenge will be to develop a multi annual funding model which will support those festivals which have the capacity to sustain our tourism industry i.e selective investment.

LECP Objectives	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential	Develop a strategy for Festivals as an economic driver, building on the very successful range of existing festivals programmed throughout the year in Kilkenny.	KCC	Kilkenny CoCo; CKLP; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Local Festival Organisers	2017 - 2022

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Kilkenny Tourism Ltd. is the primary vehicle within Kilkenny for tourism marketing and promotion, and employs a Marketing Company and a P.R. specialist, each of whom is required to develop an agreed annual strategy for both marketing and P.R. These contractors are appointed by competition on a fixed term contract basis.

Creating a well designed web presence, with appropriate content management systems, which work across all media and platforms, is essential in order to promote and market Kilkenny. Our digital presence across social media requires ongoing investment, and a full review of our existing digital presence will be undertaken in 2017, to ensure that our tourism is dynamic and capable of reacting to emerging trends.

International Marketing: Kilkenny | Wexford | Waterford

The key challenge facing tourism in the South East region is to attract more overseas visitors and thereby reduce its dependence on the domestic market.

Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford sit under the leading tourism brand of *Ireland's Ancient East* which is being promoted by the national tourism agencies Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland. However, it is important that the South East presents a strong regional presence and unique identity to attract international visitors to the region. To that end, a number of collaborative tourism marketing initiatives aimed at the UK market have been undertaken in 2016, and further campaigns are in hand for 2017. Collaborative partners include Tourism Ireland, Rosslare EuroPort, Irish Ferries and Stena Line.

The positioning of the region as a destination offering a quality heritage and culture experience within the context of Ireland's Ancient East opens the doors for the region to capture an increasing share of 'sightseers and culture seekers' who are the majority of overseas visitors to Ireland. Not only can the region attract visitors to experience an urban offering but it can also offer a choice of convenient touring bases for visitors who wish to explore the broader region.

LECP Objectives	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe
Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential	Design a county marketing and communications strategy to include activities around the design and distribution of marketing materials, cluster initiatives, historical, and heritage interpretation signs and cultural information signs. This action is aimed at increasing visitor numbers, sustaining the quality of the visitor experience and prolonging the visitor's stay	KCC	KCC; CKLP; Failte Ireland; KKT; Heritage Council; Connect Ireland; Destination	2017 - 2021

	in the county. This action will also include maximising the potential of digital marketing, and use of tourism apps, video promotion and social media.		KK	
--	--	--	----	--

Transforming the Kilkenny Visitor Experience

Capital investment in our product and experiences (the **Medieval Mile Museum being our most recent example**), identifying our best visitor prospects, and strategic Branding and Marketing are central to achieving differentiation in a saturated market place.

Big Data in Tourism

Kilkenny must invest in ensuring that our digital presence, including social media platforms, is at the cutting edge of technology. Recent developments show how we can identify international best prospects by using “big data” to ensure that our campaigns are targeted at a **diaspora** which can now be identified across international boundaries, using smart **data analytics**. Census of population, surname searches, etc. are now available and accessible as never before, allowing us to make smart decisions.

Branding and marketing which is in tune with Kilkenny’s positioning as the medieval capital of Ireland, a hero site of Ireland’s Ancient East, an ancient city and county with contemporary appeal, a centre for art and design etc., must be designed to support the high standard experiences being demanded by a discerning tourist.

Current brand propositions, including *Ireland’s Medieval Mile*, *The Medieval Mile Museum*, and *Kilkenny: Living History Loving Culture*, have been created with great care and attention, and they each promise the visitor a certain expectation.

In order to deliver on that promise to “transform the visitor experience”, Kilkenny County Council, with Fáilte Ireland, recognised the need for collaboration and communication at all levels within the local tourism industry, and in order to develop Kilkenny as a destination it was decided to form a group of key influencers from within the trade, and supplemented by Council officials to bring their insights to destination development issues.

Destination Kilkenny is a trade led tourism partnership made up of key private and public agency stakeholders. Its purpose is to bring coordination and focus to the ‘experiential development’ of tourism in Kilkenny. This is achieved through the effective collaboration and strategic alignment of all key private and public agency stakeholders. It is committed to working together to identify and prioritise the various work programmes/actions that will advance the development of the visitor experience in Kilkenny from a domestic and, particularly, an international visitor perspective.

It recognises the high level of mutual dependency that exists between all enterprises and agencies in Kilkenny, and has set out the following work areas, with sub groups set up to share the work load:

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

- To assist with direction of capital investment from a Tourism perspective
- To assist in the integration of current and future capital investments with tourism

FESTIVALS, EVENTS, AMBASSADORS

- Central box office for all festivals
- To integrate festivals into the welcome and ambassador programmes
- Generate new ideas for festivals
- Create a strong funding committee to help deal with Failte Ireland investment

WELCOME & VISITOR MANAGEMENT

- To review signage / display and ease of access
- To assist in the integration of tourism from City to County - Opportunities county wide
- Educational programmes for front line tourism staff & part time festival volunteer teams

STATISTICAL RESEARCH / DATA GATHERING

- To compile data from various tourism sources
- To compile this data into a quarterly report on statistics countywide
- To assist in the creation of new data points within the city and county environs

PLAN REVIEW

- To review Kilkenny City and County Tourism Development plan
- To ensure that the final plan will bring real value with actionable strategies that can make a difference to Kilkenny

BUSINESS TOURISM

- To investigate the possibility that Kilkenny can be a national and international conference hub

- Create a vetting process with ‘Conference Partners’ etc
- Compile a report on the possibilities and challenges Kilkenny faces in this arena

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This work programme is aligned with the objectives of the LECP, which has the benefit of the democratic adoption as policy by Kilkenny County Council. As such, it will require regular reporting back to Council through S.P.C.1 “Economic Development and Tourism” and, it will form an important element of the part of the annual presentation made to the Council on the status and delivery of the LECP.

Internal review by and through the Director of Services and Management Team will ensure a streamlined and timely reporting facility.

DRAFT

Appendix 1:

ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE – ACTION PLAN

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TOURISM SUPPORT ACTIONS

- I. Develop in house identifiable Tourism Team, with service plan, and budget.
- II. Mainstream the tourism service across all KCC service areas, particularly within the Cultural Services Directorate (Heritage, Arts, Conservation, Library)
- III. Drive the ONE KILKENNY concept, city and county interdependent
- IV. Build and protect existing reputation
- V. Concentrated support to MMM and engagement with Kilkenny Civic Trust
- VI. Drive Local structures Kilkenny Tourism / Destination Kilkenny
- VII. Develop strategic alliance with KLP, developing mutual work programmes.
- VIII. Continue collaboration with Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland
- IX. Identify strategic alliances with Waterways Ireland/OPW/ Coillte/ Civic Trust
- X. Develop a research and data analysis resource to provide accurate timely information on visitor numbers, profile, best prospects.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- I. Implement a positive relationship with Carlow Kilkenny Leader Partnership in aligning plans which are mutually productive in tourism capacity building at local community level.
- II. Develop sub County, clustered, Destination Groups/ Hubs, reporting through the Municipal Districts for the following geographic areas/ hinterlands:
 - CASTLECOMER / NORTH KILKENNY/ GORESBRIDGE/GOWRAN
 - KELLS / CALLAN/ and hinterland
 - JERPOINT (Abbey, Park ,Mt. Juliet etc)
 - INISTIOGE / GRAIGUENAMANAGH/ THOMASTOWN
 - PILTOWN /OWNING/ LINGAUN / KNOCKROE(in conjunction with KLP)
- III. Review rural transport options with CKLP
- IV. Continue “Medieval Mile” development, including business engagement
- V. Devise appropriate training themes, in conjunction with LEO /ETB / Failte/ KLP/ Civic Trust
 - (Castlecomer Enterprise Centre for Hospitality/ FETAC Accredited)
 - (Thomastown School of Food)
- VI. Devise and deliver trade led front of house familiarity training, and cross selling.

PRODUCT/ EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

AIM: Deliver economic return on investment.

- I. Align product development to Ireland's Ancient East (story telling, signage, consistency)
- II. Produce a Business Tourism strategy for Kilkenny
- III. Identify funding opportunities and Capital Grants, and align our product development to exploit opportunities.
- IV. Progress existing Capital Grants applications .
- V. Develop pre planning of REDZ and Town and Village Renewal Schemes for 2018 to 2022 and seek out opportunities for match funding, to deliver better product.
- VI. Engage with Greenway regional office to support and advise.
- VII. Engage with Blueway development, particularly Barrow Way and Goresbridge.
- VIII. Develop workshops and collateral with local communities telling local stories
- IX. Develop and support tourist centric activities (best practice example Castlecomer Discovery Park)
- X. Convert assets into experiences (e.g. Woodstock, Lingaun Valley, Jerpoint Abbey, Jerpoint Park, Kells Priory) .
- XI. Develop Food Tourism #tastekilkenny, continue current partnership with the LEO/CEDRA to promote Kilkenny as a Food Destination (development of new #tastekilkenny.ie, video etc).
- XII. Engage with current KLP review of Trails Kilkenny, and participate in revised product
- XIII. Develop Equestrian Tourism, building on existing equine related activities - Gowran Park, horse training, pony trekking, bespoke equestrian holidays/tours.
- XIV. Build new engagement with GAA, locally and nationally.
- XV. Engage with private development Smithwick's Experience and
- XVI. Develop and publish vacation planners (1 day, 2day, week etc,)

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS:

- I. Provision of a centralised box office in Kilkenny City
- II. Develop the concept of Music Kilkenny

Kilkenny has hosted an abundance of performers in locations ranging from intimate venues to Nowlan Park outdoor stadium which has played host to many international superstars such as Rod Stewart, Andrea Bocelli, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan and Paul Simon who have entertained both local fans and many who travelled from outside the region and overseas to attend the performances.(The Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland, 2017)

- III. Develop County festivals of scale and encourage existing funded festivals to use County venues.
- IV. Support the Destination KK proposals for festival development
- V. Review Council funding criteria commencing 2018, and consider:
 - Developing a multi annual funding model for those festivals who deliver economic impact and which actively support the tourism industry, and engage with promoters to support a viable sector. Develop KPI'S, and criteria for allocation of funding.
 - Identifying those local community festivals which are predominantly local community events and which may not wish to develop a tourism impact, and transfer some festival funding to community development,

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- I. Drive the ONE KILKENNY theme
- II. Provide a relevant, contemporary, themed Annual Marketing and PR Plan.
- III. Carry out a complete redesign of existing printed and digital material.
- IV. Provide a relevant strategic social media platform
- V. Compile a Kilkenny “image content pool”
- VI. Review and enhance existing Medieval Mile signage and create a unique MM brochure
- VII. Engage with local communities and trade to encourage the use of social media, with training opportunities.
- VIII. Use the personas created by Failte to inform/educate the local trade, particularly rural B&B’s
- IX. Exploit existing Failte segmentation, Culturally Curious, Social Energisers etc
- X. Concentrate on U. K. and France for 2017, using the proposed Marketing campaigns at Rosslare and Tourism Ireland.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

- I. Continue existing collaboration with Waterford and Wexford
- II. Develop proposals as per SEAPJ.
- III. Further develop connections with Carlow, Wexford, Laois and Kildare on Barrow Way awards scheme.
- IV. Identify cross county initiatives with Tipperary regarding Lingaun Valley, Butler Trail.
- V. Greenways Project

REVIEW PROCESS

- I. Provide Quarterly progress reports to SPC and Municipal Districts, Kilkenny Tourism.
- II. Provide content for Monthly management report.

Appendix 2:

Community “Hub / Destination” Groups

One of the recurring themes in our community workshops was in the area of communications; both internal and external. Every community has a unique sense of pride and knowledge in their own local area. In order to exploit that sense of pride, and convert it into action it is necessary that people understand how to develop attractions which will resonate with a potential visitor and give the visitor a reason to visit the locality.

It is proposed to develop a number of sub county rural “destinations”, clustered around a location or a theme, and to assist communities to tell their own story, develop their own tourism structures and support them in viable tourism propositions. Such groups are not to be confused with heritage/ historical societies, or sports clubs or tidy towns groups, but must have a consumer focused ambition of developing a business product: tourism.

Step 1: Establish a destination development group

A cooperative approach to destination development is required to achieve success. Visitors are much more likely to visit an area if they have a clear image of that area and its identity, and if businesses in the area fit with this identity and promote their product accordingly. This approach will help achieve standout for the destination. –

1.1 Identify key stakeholders in the destination area

The first step is to identify relevant key businesses and organisations and to establish a working destination development group. Ideally, this group should have approximately 12 people in order to be effective, but this number will vary depending on the destination. For example, the group could include representatives from the Local Authority, Leader Company, County Enterprise Board, key tourism businesses and other key businesses, or business entrepreneurs within the destination. It could be a group that is already in existence, for example a marketing or community group that recruits new members, or it may be a totally new group. Following Step 2, others may need to be recruited and added to the group. Individuals can also be added at certain times for specific actions, as they are identified through the work of the group. Other individuals, such as restaurant owners and shopping centre managers, could be very relevant to the group and have worthwhile ideas for developing the full visitor experience. In addition, other companies will likely benefit from increased business as the destination develops and visitor numbers increase. In addition to this, an attempt should be made to map the destination area. Drawing the area on a map can highlight further opportunities, such as attractions located just outside the area initially considered that could be included.

1.2 Review plans and strategies

A review should be undertaken of all local strategies and plans which the destination plan needs to link into and complement. These could include the tourism section of the County Development Plan or Local Area Plan, a Leader Development Plan, or other Agency plan for an area. It is unlikely that these plans will correlate exactly with the destination area. This exercise could be undertaken by consultants, or even a local college.

1.3 Meet key stakeholders and establish partnerships

Partnership is central to destination development. For this reason, it is important to meet the key stakeholders in the destination to begin developing a shared vision in advance of beginning work on the destination plan. These meetings can be one-to-one with each agency, before identifying those who will form part of the destination development group.

1.4 Build trust, credibility and understanding of the value of a destination plan

It is important to demonstrate that a destination plan can benefit all involved by encouraging individuals to work together to achieve a shared vision for the area. Ideally, involvement of the wider community, including school children, college students, community and voluntary groups, should be encouraged. This involvement could amount to a simple thing, such as a primary school project on the destination (examining what the area is known for, what people come to see and do and what needs to be developed in the future). This will help also to inform parents and others of the destination plan identity and vision.

Step 2: Understand your destination and your visitors.

This step is designed to uncover two things:

1. What the destination has to offer (the products and tourism businesses)
2. What the visitor wants

These items probably won't match, but by trying to bring them closer together, you can identify the core of your destination development plan and what you need to achieve

2.1 Define what the destination has to offer

What are the strengths and assets (natural or man-made) of your destination? What, if anything, is unique to your destination? You should also identify the shortfalls in the product, in terms of quality, accessibility, quantity etc, and the areas for potential

development. This information may be gathered through research and by mining local knowledge (activities which can be undertaken by an existing Tourism Group, local educational body or by an interest group).

2.2 Consider how the destination is currently performing

Who are the visitors to your destination?

What are the key source markets?

What are the key market segments (e.g. what percentage of visitors are visiting friends and relatives) and key activity segments (e.g. walking, cycling, angling, equestrian, marine activities, learning English)?

What is the economic impact of visitors to your destination, that is, how much money are they leaving in the area?

It may be useful to estimate the daily spend of the key segments and multiply this by the number of days they spend in the destination, on average.

2.3 Identify what the visitor wants

It is important to have a clear understanding of the needs of your visitors. Answering the following questions might give you an insight into their needs:

Why do visitors come to the destination?

How do visitors find out about the destination and what there is to see and do?

How satisfied are they with their experience?

How do they get to the destination and around the destination?

What do they spend their time doing in the destination?

What other destinations are they visiting (both in Ireland and abroad)?

Kilkenny County Council can assist with valuable information that can help answer these questions. You can also gain insights from your guestbook, the Fáilte Ireland Publicity Department, Tourism Ireland, Tourist Information Office staff and tour operators who are servicing the destination, and from websites such as Trip Advisor and online travel forums. Chatting to local tourism businesses will also provide valuable insights and information.

2.4 Look at your competitors, best practice and trends

Identify destinations here and abroad with similar products, assets or natural environments and market sizes, and use them as a point of comparison with your own destination. You should also identify the current market and lifestyle trends that might affect future demand in the destination. Search the Research & Insights section for current market and lifestyle trends relevant to your destination.

Appendix 3 SEAPJ Tourism Actions

No.	SEAPJ Reference	Action Description	Timescale	Agencies Involved
		Tourism Strategy - Ireland's Ancient East		
1	35	Develop a minimum of two cross county tourism initiatives which focus on delivering a quality international tourism experience which are hung off the Ireland Ancient East Brand, and include the Munster Vales area.	Q4 2016	Fáilte Ireland, LAs, LEADER, LEOs, Tourism Ireland
2	36	Develop the South East zone value proposition and experiences as part of <i>Ireland's Ancient East</i> , including in scaling up the asset base in the region and achieving international “stand-out” for the area based on its comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.	Q1 2016	Fáilte Ireland, LAs, LEADER, LEOs, Tourism Ireland
3	37	Promote and incentivise greater business links between tourism and food sectors, promoting use of local produce by the local hospitality sector and attracting visitors to the region for food and beverage related activities.	Q2 2016	Fáilte Ireland, Chambers, Industry, HEIs, LAs, Teagasc, Bord Bia
4	38	Identify opportunities which are appropriate to each county where co-ordination of attendance at Trade Shows can be managed at a regional level to ensure appropriate marketing and promotion of tourism offerings in SE. This will require coordination and collaboration on a) on shows to attend b) cross-marketing material and c) training on promotion.	Q4 2015	Fáilte Ireland, Industry, LAs, Teagasc, Bord Bia
5	39	Develop FET programmes for new entrants to the Hospitality and Tourism sector as well as upskilling Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for those currently engaged.	Q1 2016	ETBs, Solas, HEIs, Fáilte Ireland and Industry
6	40	Develop schools tourism initiatives such as “Know Your Own County” Campaigns and online tourism induction programmes for schools to (1) promote offerings within the region (2) develop future tourism ambassadors for the region (3) to highlight potential career opportunities in the sector.	Q3 2016	LAs, LEOs Business Representative Bodies, HEIs, ETBs
7	41	Ensure appropriate marketing material is available at Rosslare Port on visitor experiences and key destination locations in	Q2 2016	Failte Ireland, LAs , Irish Rail and

		the South East Region.		design companies
		Water Based Tourism		
8	42	Develop the rivers and coastal 'water margins' assets of the South East region as key elements of the Fáilte Ireland South and East region offer, including blueway trails linking activity hubs and amenities.	Q2 2020	LAs, Tourism, SMEs, LEOs, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, CIE, Harbour Commission
9	43	Develop a plan to improve the visitor experience and business capability of water activity providers (SMEs) active in tourism in coastal and river areas considered key to delivering on the objectives of both Fáilte Ireland's Experience Development strategy and the DAFM's marine strategy Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW).	Q2 2016	LAs, LEOs, DAFM, Fáilte Ireland,
		Use of ICTs		
10	44	Develop a strategy to increase adoption and use of ICT technologies in marketing and delivery of tourism experiences for the South East.	Q1 2016	HEIs, LEO's, Fáilte Ireland
		Capacity Building		
11	45	Tourism and hospitality enterprises to collaborate to develop appropriate training for the hospitality sector to improve customer service standards.	Q2 2016	Fáilte Ireland. ETBs, Solas, HEIs
12	46	Údarás na Gaeltachta will run a pilot project in the Déise Gaeltacht to build further capacity in existing and emerging tourism-related enterprises.	Q4 2016	Ú na G
		Quality of Place		
13	97	Establish a programme for large employers to collaborate to brand the region as a tourist destination.	Ongoing	Fáilte Ireland, LAs, industry
14	172	Develop an initiative to promote the conference centre facilities and attractions in terms of ease of access and accommodation in the SE.	Q2 2018	NAMA, LAs