

# KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL’S SUBMISSION TO REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGIE

## RESPONSE TO KEY QUESTION FROM ISSUES PAPER

	Kilkenny County Council Response
<p>1. What must the RSES do to facilitate the cities and Metropolitan Areas of Cork, Limerick and Waterford in achieving their full potential at international, national and regional level and to act as the main “engines” of economic growth in our region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The region as a whole has to distinguish itself from the other Regions by focussing on its unique selling points (USPs) and draft strategies/projects to further and promote these. Furthermore the sub regions have to undertake a similar exercise. These strategies/projects will need to be funded and promoted both nationally and internationally.</li> <li>• Promotepolitical and administrative co-operation within City Regions and between city Regions.</li> <li>• Improve connectivity between the major cities and between the cities and the hinterlands which feed them. Each city has to identify its unique selling points and how they fit into the collective. Cities also have to come to terms with their central place function and need to be considered in accordance with their current and potential areas of influence, which could include a reach well in excess of the perceived city boundaries. The MASPs are a case in point. The reach of cities far exceed their current political boundaries and it is the responsibility of cities to take a responsible approach to furthering not only their own interest, but all areas within their area of influence.</li> <li>• Central to the creation of economic growth engines lies investment, both from local and foreign sources(Foreign Direct Investment). Such investment needs to focus on essential enabling infrastructure and technologies for job creation such as investments in the knowledge economy and third level facilities that could anchor and thus retain such industries within the area.</li> <li>• <b>Boost Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)</b> in the South East Waterford City Region. It is accepted that attracting FDI cannot form the sole economic development strategy for the region. However, it can play a huge role in increasing economic activity and reducing unemployment.</li> </ul>

FDI jobs also tend to be of higher quality, better paid and provide for much needed graduate employment. The south east not securing a fair share of FDI jobs. With almost 11 per cent of the population of the state, the south east has less than 7 per cent of the total FDI employment in the state, spread across approximately 70 IDA client companies located in the region.

The IDA target to increase the number of IDA investments in the South East by 30-40 per cent by the end of 2019 (compared to the 2010-2014 period) is the same target provided for in all of the regional APJs outside of Dublin. This target therefore will not be sufficient to close the gap in FDI employment between the South East and the rest of the country. Furthermore, given that approximately 70% of FDI investments on average are from existing client companies, just 13 of the target of 44 FDI investments are likely to be new companies locating in the region. It is therefore vital that the FDI targets for the region are increased as part of the preparation of the next regional APJs.

The IDA strategy states that to win investments in the future “will require greater co-operation, collaboration and integration to develop and present the strongest possible proposition” for regions.<sup>1</sup> The 5 local authorities in the region have acknowledged this and are collaborating and resourcing the development of a new branding and marketing strategy, which will act as a ‘call to action’ to unify the region to work together to attract more: entrepreneurs; talented people; visitors; and in particular - inward investment to the South East. The IDA recognises that Ireland has a large number of attractive cities and towns that have a proven ability to attract FDI. The south east has a number of these urban centres spread across the region that will play a critical role in helping to attract FDI to the region. The IDA strategy also points out that key factors crucial to attracting and retaining FDI, are:

- Achieve critical mass of population and urban centres;
- The ability to attract and develop appropriate skills (talent);
- The existence of clusters in specific industry sectors/activities;

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<sup>1</sup> IDA Ireland Strategic Plan: Winning Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019

- Alignment with the IDA global team’s targets for the sectors, geographies and new opportunities;
- Regional infrastructure and place-making, including social and cultural capital; and
- Availability of property solutions.

The last two factors listed above are critical in the context of the south east: As regards regional infrastructure, the region needs to secure a fair share of the funding to be made available by Government under the proposed 10-year National Investment Plan to be linked to the NPF. The regional infrastructure to be prioritised are referred to elsewhere in this paper. As regards property solutions, there is a lack of available high quality ‘Advanced Office Space’ that can be marketed by the IDA as part of their overall package for the south east. This is a major impediment in attracting FDI to the region. While the IDA plans to develop 2 further Advance Technology Buildings (ATBs) in the region is very much welcome, these will not be adequate on their own to attract and provide for the scale of FDI the region requires. The proposed “Smart Growth fund” (National Policy Objective 7a) referred to in the consultation document to support strategic development and renewal of urban areas that have become run-down so that they can be utilised for the purposes of providing new housing, employment and amenities is very much welcome. The South East Waterford City Region envisages that this fund will assist the regeneration of key strategic and multi-purpose sites being developed by local authorities in the region. These include the North Quays Strategic Development Zone in Waterford; the Abbey Quarter, Kilkenny; Trinity Wharf, Wexford; and Kickham Barracks, Clonmel. Each of these sites includes plans to provide advance office space as a critical component of the redevelopment. In this regard, the local authorities of the South East Waterford City Region recommends that the IDA be authorised to support these strategic developments.

- Jobs require the full complement of social and housing infrastructure to create the stability for growth and to foster sustainable communities, essential for an improved standard of living.
- Cities and large towns rely on economies of scale for cost effectiveness in service provision and where achieved, such economies of scale will lower the cost of operations, increase production of goods and services thereby enhancing the cities’ and the region’s competitiveness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With higher outputs comes an increased need to optimally operate and allocate infrastructure and the improved utilisation information and information technology is paramount to ensuring same. The use and further promotion of Smart City technology will be central to achieving this.</li> <li>• The Southern Region as a whole will have to make better use of its collective assets and will need to pool and distribute its resources in a balanced fashion to the benefit of the region as a whole. It is the proposal of Kilkenny County Council that a Project Delivery group be established similar to the structure currently delivering under the South East Action Plan for Jobs.</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of the Regional group would be to provide horizontal coordination and implementation of the objectives of the NPF and the RSES.</p> <p>This Regional group should be made up of a core steering committee with sectoral expertise sourced and brought in on a task or project specific basis as appropriate. This structure should facilitate full Regional collaboration or bi-lateral project-based working relationships between counties as appropriate. The value in developing cross-county working relationships as well as Regional scale ones is important.</p> <p>Sustainable working relationships for collaboration need to be developed over time. Such a structure as proposed would require cross government departmental buy-in, together with a strong policy/statutory backing which would coordinate both strategic policy development and implementation across local authorities, government agencies and wider public policy levels in support of the NPF.</p>
<p>2. What are the potential barriers to achieve the targeted levels of 50-60% growth in our cities and what must be done to ensure that at least half of that projected growth occurs within the urban core on infill and brownfield sites?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population projections seem to be based on both anticipated local growth and the influx of workers as a result of the creation of economic opportunities. The population targets therefore seem to be ambitious and hence pro- active integrated strategies around job creation, housing, schools etc. will need to be put in place to realise same as a do nothing scenario is not an option. Should these not be achieved, the attractiveness of Ireland and the Southern Region in particular as a destination both for investment and living will wane and the targets as set may not be achieved.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate growth an active land management approach will need to be followed which identifies lands for the full complement of urban needs, puts in place strategies for the release and development of these lands and ensure that the resources, both financial and otherwise are allocated to the servicing of lands to unlock its potential.</li> <li>• The major obstacle to growth in the lack of infrastructure development, with the lack of proactive bulk Water and Wastewater provision being cases in point. The current reactive approach places a large burden on private developers, in many cases making development unaffordable. Public funds should in all cases be used for the upfront provision of infrastructure and the cost should be recouped from levies on subsequent developments.</li> <li>• An active land management strategy where infrastructure provision, both physical and social, is encouraged will make central areas more attractive. The provision of such infrastructure, in combination with penalties such as site value taxes and the Vacant Site Levy, will create incentives for brownfields development by firstly making land more affordable and secondly creating a demand for developments in central and sought after locations.</li> </ul>
<p>3. What are the key transformational projects that will further assist our cities and Metropolitan Areas of Cork, Limerick and Waterford to grow and prosper as vibrant urban communities with an enhanced quality of life?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformational projects should focus on accessibility, energy efficiency and the utilisation of the Smart technology. Transport Infrastructure including public transport such as bus services and tram services, park and ride/stride in combination with enabling mechanisms for cycling and walking within cities, should be encouraged. In combination with the above, mechanisms to discourage reliance on individual cars should be promoted. Cities should future proof all new infrastructure by integrating potential for upgrade in the initial layouts.</li> <li>• <b>Improve connectivity to and from the region</b> by road, rail, bus and air, as well as enhanced broadband. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the N24 Waterford to Limerick route be upgraded to Motorway standard, thereby linking all of the Atlantic City Regions by motorway. This will also provide a critical linkage from the South East Waterford City Region to the Cork-Dublin-Belfast transport corridor; the Waterford-Dublin transport corridor also has the potential to act as an economic driver for the region in the same way as the Dublin-Belfast transport corridor is being prioritised in the draft NPF; and upgrading the N80, which forms part of the designated EuroRoute connecting the South East to the Midlands.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

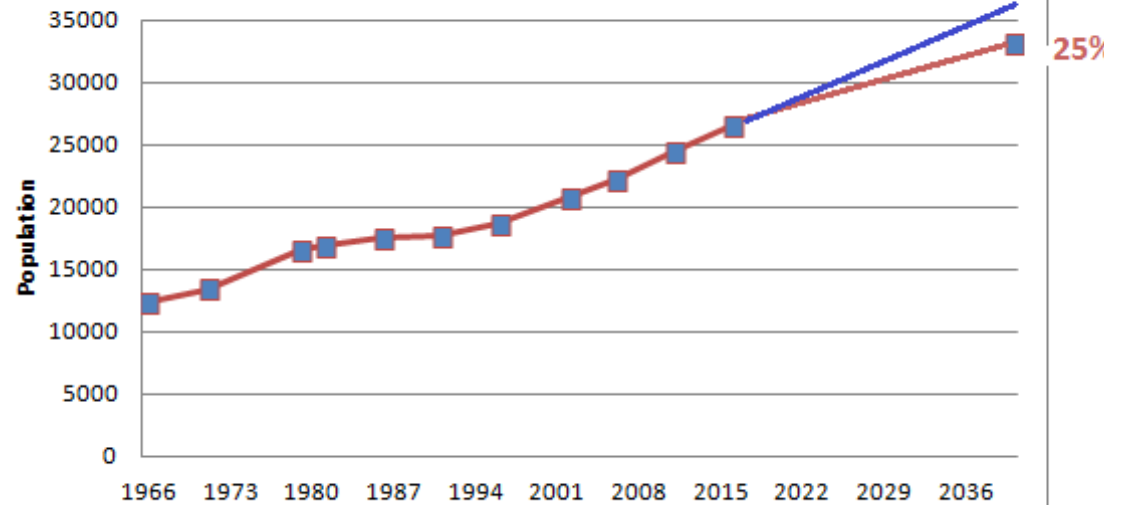
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Integrated scheduling of connections between all transport - rail, bus, and shipping services within the region. Rail connectivity between Waterford and Dublin needs to be improved to also meet the needs of Carlow and Kilkenny City, and the Rosslare to Limerick rail line needs to be retained to future-proof sustainable transport for the Southern Region.</li> <li>○ expedite the roll out of the National Broadband Plan to ensure that all parts of the region can access high speed broadband. Broadband connectivity is not only of critical importance for attracting investment, facilitating economic growth and stimulating innovation - it is fast becoming a necessity of everyday life. In this regard, National Policy Objective 23, namely to support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan is welcome.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The use of sustainable energy sources should be promoted by the cities. Energy provision should be diversified to allow for a multiplicity of smaller contributors, such as roof top projects that will facilitate selling electricity back to the grid through Smart meters.</li> <li>● Infrastructure that links cities to each other and improve their accessibility to and from their hinterlands should be promoted. This will ease cooperation on regional basis, enhance regional interdependency, further enhancing economies of scale and promoting competitiveness.</li> <li>● Projects should focus on the upgrading of the public realm.</li> <li>● Projects should focus on projects of architectural merit.</li> </ul> <p>Kilkenny and the other counties in the region will need to secure adequate resources from the National Investment Plan to help improve connectivity.</p>
<p>4. How can Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) effectively co-ordinate sustainable development patterns and delivery of key infrastructure?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) should consider the cities' wider areas of influence rather than only their administrative or political boundaries. The MASPs strive to achieve integration of all functions within the city region coordination with the resultant benefits of economies of scale. As such the advantages that can accrue from a cooperative approach</li> </ul>

	<p>rather than individual or selfish benefit should form the basis for the MASPS. This will require not only joined up thinking but also the pooling of resources.</p> <p>In order for the MASPs to be successful, the following are required;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joined up political decision making</li> <li>• Joined up retail /economic strategies</li> <li>• Joined up infrastructure planning and project implementation</li> <li>• Focus beyond the city boundaries to the hinterland and other nearby economic drivers/larger centres</li> </ul>
<p>5. How can the City Regions assist in the economic growth of the three cities in the Southern Region?</p>	<p>Regional <b>development</b> requires regional <b>co-operation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A united South East Waterford City Region will be anchored by Waterford City, and supported by the City of Kilkenny, along with the urban centres of Carlow, Wexford and Clonmel.</li> <li>• The region’s track record in collaboration is a strong base on which to build future initiatives (e.g. the South East Action Plan for Jobs, joint regional initiatives on tourism, University for the South East, Waterford Regional Airport and the Regional Greenways Office).</li> <li>• Establishment of a regional implementation group – this is imperative.</li> <li>• Practical measures are proposed here; MASP for the City of Waterford extending into its zone of influence, a review of PLUTS, a joint Retail Strategy, a joint Local Area Plan, and a Service Delivery Plan. It is recommended that existing legislative mechanisms and practices such as Section 85 Agreements and shared service models be utilised fully to ensure cross-local authority working arrangements take place with cost apportionment to be agreed.</li> <li>• local and regional co-operation is the way forward. Discussions are already underway between local authorities to establish a regional office for strategic policy development and implementation.</li> </ul>

	<p>Kilkenny's <b>economic</b> strengths and <b>potential</b> can <b>propel</b> the <b>City Region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Belview Port area, in close proximity to Waterford, with its wealth of existing industry and employment, has significant existing capacity for expansion; 190 hectares are zoned for development.</li> <li>• Abbey Creative Quarter can cater for the current growth areas of financial development, design and animation.</li> <li>• City Business parks also have capacity for sustainable employment growth, within a short distance of new homes.</li> <li>• Kilkenny's tourism attractions continue to grow (e.g. Medieval Mile Museum), as a Hero site within Ireland's Ancient East, this can be a potential game changer for Kilkenny and the South East Waterford City Region, attracting further tourist revenue and boosting job creation.</li> </ul>
<p>6. What are the potential barriers to achieve the Draft NPF targeted levels of 20-25% growth for larger centres (with populations in excess of 10,000) and how can the RSES address these barriers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be limited barriers in some instances. A 20 to 25 % growth rate until 2040, when considering trends in recent history, may be insufficient for some larger town in that such growth may not be ambitious enough.</li> </ul>



### Kilkenny City's population Growth



- In some instances there may be some of the following issues at play:
  - Limited opportunity for economies of scale due to dispersed population
  - Under investment in infrastructure, in particular water and wastewater
  - Lack of jobs
  - Lack of supply and cost of housing
  - Red tape

7. Are there examples of infrastructure “packages” which would be strong integrated growth enablers capable of transforming our larger Regional settlements?

**Establish a multi-campus Technological University for the South East (TUSE)**, building on the success the existing third level Institutes in Waterford and Carlow, with further campus facilities in Kilkenny and Wexford. A multi-campus TUSE as a strong research and development hub is paramount to accelerate economic growth and development of the region and would undoubtedly make it more attractive for inward investment. Almost two thirds of students from the region access 3rd level

education outside of the South East, with only 40% returning. This 'brain drain' is a major contributory factor in 2 major challenges faced by the region:

1. the continual challenge of a shortage of skilled workers faced by employers across all of the key sectors, including Pharma/Med-Tech, Engineering and Financial Services; and
2. the very low number of HPSU businesses. While there are some great entrepreneurial case studies (e.g. Eirgen; NearForm; FeedHenry) the region simply does not have enough of these. One of the main reasons for this is that a large cohort of the entrepreneurial pool in the region – the people with the 'get up and go' are leaving and not returning.

The South East Waterford City Region firmly believes that the above challenges can only be effectively redressed by delivering upon the commitment for the TUSE. This is all the more critical in light of the projected demand for third level provision in the years ahead (as outlined in section 2.) Furthermore, National Policy Objective 32, which includes as an objective the expansion and consolidation of third level facilities that will contribute to regional development is welcome. Kilkenny City is well placed to provide a campus facility for the expanded TUSE, in particular within the redeveloped Abbey Quarter.

- integrated scheduling of connections between all transport - rail, bus, and shipping services within the region. Rail connectivity between Waterford and Dublin needs to be improved to also meet the needs of Carlow and Kilkenny City, and the Rosslare to Limerick rail line needs to be retained to future-proof sustainable transport for the Southern Region.
- Broadband rollout (both urban and rural) is probably the most urgent growth enabling infrastructure package that can be rolled out. The objective should be to expedite the roll out of the National Broadband Plan to ensure that all parts of the region can access high speed broadband. Broadband connectivity is not only of critical importance for attracting investment, facilitating economic growth and stimulating innovation - it is fast becoming a necessity of everyday life. In this regard, National Policy Objective 23, namely to support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan is welcome.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create knowledge based centres of excellence through encouraging co-location of certain industries.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>8. How can the RSES assist the work of Local Authorities and other stakeholders in incentivising urban centre renewal and achieving targets for 30% of new housing on infill/brownfield sites?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate investment in infrastructure in these areas</li> <li>• Promote Co- location of industries (clustering)</li> <li>• Densification strategies (focus on underutilised lands thorough active land management</li> <li>• Limit sprawl in the larger centres (identify critical size of town wherafter certain limitations will start to apply.)</li> <li>• The planning system should deliver well designed streetscapes and compact housing with pocket parks, children play areas, good connectivity, safe walkways &amp; cycle lanes, public transport, park &amp; ride facilities.</li> <li>• Housing units should be designed to be family friendly.</li> <li>• The public realm should be designed for children.</li> </ul>
<p>9. How can the RSES support the development of high quality and socially inclusive urban communities which can become locations of choice to live, work, visit and invest in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make cities more attractive- focus on design, urban renewal through incentives</li> <li>• Good planning applied to street &amp; housing design. Good connectivity that encourages active transport and use of public transport. Provision of amenities, services and access to transport infrastructure within 10-15 minutes walking distance. Support for local culture, protection of local history and archaeology.</li> <li>• Ensure that services for housing are delivered upfront or in tandem with housing.</li> <li>• Focus on recreation (becoming bigger issue as people have more time)</li> <li>• Provide a wide range of services including engineering, social, sport and recreation.</li> <li>• Active land management</li> </ul>

<p>10. What are the key challenges and barriers to the achievement of sustainable economic and population growth for towns less than 10,000 population and rural areas?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy accessibility to rural housing which reduces potential for villages.</li> <li>• Creation of sustainable local good jobs based around local resources.</li> <li>• More prescription proactive approach to land management is required from the local authorities.</li> <li>• Inadequate level of Water/Wastewater Infrastructure in many towns</li> <li>• Historical development patterns</li> <li>• Begging bowl attitude from rural areas.</li> <li>• Perceptions</li> </ul>
<p>11. How should we define the hinterlands or functional areas of towns with populations of less than 10,000 people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach of retail/Reach of services – schools/shops/hospitals</li> <li>• How services are being delivered is changing and will change with changing technology and the quest for evermore efficiencies e.g. banking, shopping, health, central and local government services. Below 10,000 population there are which Act as urban settlements and should not be considered rural in a planning context. The CSO definition of 1,500 is a good fit for urban in the Irish settlement context.</li> <li>• Political boundaries could be used e. g. Municipal District boundaries, Electoral Divisions,</li> </ul>
<p>12. What are the most suitable criteria for determining the range of services which would be necessary for towns of between 1,500 and 10,000 people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of services should be determined by its population and its role in the settlement hierarchy. Cognisance must also be taken of role envisaged in future it's potential role in the hierarchy in the future, e. g. Middleton on the rail line identified as growth centre.</li> <li>• Connectivity</li> </ul>
<p>13. What is the most appropriate form and density of residential development in these existing towns?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form and density should be based around the scale and character of the area and be a design led process. Density is not a one size fits all tool.</li> <li>• The form and density needs to reflect the needs of people who will live there.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The form must be of high quality and must be appropriately serviced.</li> </ul>
<p>14. What are the key infrastructure priorities (physical and social) to address to achieve tangible population and employment growth in rural areas, in particular to assist vibrant regenerated town and village centres which are competitive and attractive locations of choice for living and working?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water and Wastewater</li> <li>• Easy Access to Schools/3<sup>rd</sup> level</li> <li>• Easy access to appropriate level health care.</li> <li>• Broadband</li> <li>• Proximity to amenities such amenity and recreation facilities for all age groups.</li> </ul>
<p>15. How can the RSES support growth and diversity in rural economic sectors which are successfully embedded in our region, particularly agriculture, marine, forestry, tourism, energy and the green economy? What are the examples of other emerging sectors that will further drive the rural economy and what are infrastructure requirements that will assist their success?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote sustainable agriculture production and while facilitating general(main stream) agriculture production also identify niche sectors in food production and added value that are suitable to the assets of the region.</li> <li>• Development of a renewable energy policy for the region based on wind, wave, and bio energy.</li> <li>• Developing a circular economy approach to all sectors of activity. This could be a unique selling point for the region.</li> <li>• Tourism can be developed in line with the National strategy outlined through Failte Ireland. The region can benefit from two marketing drives in the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.</li> <li>• The delivery of a fast broadband service in a short timeframe is a necessity.</li> </ul>
<p>16. How can the RSES strengthen protection of the rural environment and rural resources in tandem with objectives for sustainable growth in the rural population and employment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that plans and programmes comply with Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.</li> <li>• Pursue policy of centralisation of communal infrastructure - currently too many small settlements that are not viable</li> <li>• Focus on service provision and increasing their reach</li> <li>• Ensure that operational practices in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and other industrial productions follow the principles of sustainable development (circular economy).</li> </ul>

<p>17. Population and economic growth within our region will require inward migration. What are the key priorities at a regional level for service and infrastructure provision that will make the region a high quality and competitive location by choice to attract and retain people from a variety of cultural backgrounds to live and work here?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> level educational facilities</li> <li>• Good health facilities</li> <li>• Good intra-and inter-regional connectivity particularly in the quality of public transport.</li> <li>• Good international connectivity</li> <li>• Equality of access to services</li> </ul>
<p>18. Noting the Draft NPF targets for the Southern Region, what are the key challenges to achieving 175,000-190,000 new housing units in the region by the year 2040?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of sufficiently well located land.</li> <li>• Sufficient level of services for the available land.</li> <li>• Capacity of Building industry to deliver across the region.</li> <li>• Job creation to drive house growth</li> <li>• Functioning housing market is required</li> </ul>
<p>19. In strengthening the evidence base to determine future housing needs, what are the key regional level issues the RSES should address to support the delivery of quality homes for diverse and socially inclusive communities, adhering to the goals of creating compact, sustainable places?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The areas targeted for housing provision across the region need to have appropriate level local area plans, masterplanning or SDZ approach to ensure the delivery of socially inclusive communities</li> <li>• High quality design in the planning process is required for high quality environment .</li> </ul>
<p>20. What are the key supporting infrastructures that will ensure the supply of strategic housing locations to succeed in attracting residents and workers to our region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social educational, Recreational and engineering ,</li> <li>• Broadband</li> <li>• Release land for construction</li> <li>• Bulk water/Wastewater</li> <li>• Bulk transport infrastructure</li> </ul>

21. What are the barriers to achieving 220,000 additional jobs in our region by the year 2040?

The population and jobs targets for the underperforming South East Strategic Planning Area need to be sufficiently ambitious to support the corresponding economic development required to help close the gap that exists between it and the stronger Planning Areas in the region. For example, according to the latest CSO National Household Quarterly Survey (NQHS) for Q2 2017, the South East has the second highest unemployment rate in the country at 8.3%, which is c2% higher than the national average. Kilkenny County Council considers that a major contributory factor in this underperformance is the fact that the South East is not securing a proportionate share of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The IDA target to increase the number of IDA investments in the South East by 30-40% by the end of 2019 (compared to the 2010-2014 period) is the same target provided for in all of the NUTS III regions outside of Dublin. This target therefore will not be sufficient to close the gap in FDI employment between the South East and the rest of the country. The RSES needs to provide greater ambition for the underperforming South East SPA to help it realise its full potential. The strategic plans of enterprise agencies such as the IDA in turn need to reflect and align with this.

The IDA strategic plan (2015-2019) states that to win investments in the future “will require greater co-operation, collaboration and integration to develop and present the strongest possible proposition” for regions. The 5 local authorities in the South East region have acknowledged this and are collaborating and resourcing the development of a new branding and marketing strategy, which will act as a ‘call to action’ to unify the region to work together to attract more: entrepreneurs; talented people; visitors; and in particular - inward investment to the South East.

The South East will need to secure adequate funding under the proposed 10-year National Investment Plan towards critical infrastructure (e.g. to improve connectivity) that will in turn help improve the attractiveness of the SPA and maximise its full economic potential, that will in turn help the Southern region provide a serious counter balance to Dublin and the Eastern Region.

There is a lack of high quality ‘Advanced Office Space’ that can be marketed by the IDA as part of their overall package for the South East. This is a major impediment in attracting FDI to the region. While the IDA plans to develop 2 further Advance Technology Buildings (ATBs) in the region are very much welcomed, these will not be adequate on their own to attract and provide for the scale of FDI the region requires. Kilkenny County Council welcomes the “Smart Growth fund” proposed in the Draft National Planning Framework, especially if it can be utilised for the purposes of supporting the provision of advance office space, services (e.g. water, broadband, etc.) and public realm on these strategic sites.

	<p>Investment in critical infrastructure, including fibre broadband, and renewable energy, will be required.</p> <p>The successful development of the South East Waterford City Region will be facilitated by the delivery of the Technological University of the South East (TUSE), with Kilkenny as a base for one of the campus facilities.</p>
<p>22. What are the existing strengths of the region's economy, particularly the specialisms that distinguish the region nationally and internationally as an economic location?</p>	<p>Kilkenny is a highly productive agricultural part of Ireland and is the home of Glanbia's global HQ. It has substantial resources in dairying cattle and cereal production. Both farmers and agri-businesses have invested significant amounts of money in recent years and are well positioned to increase both food production and innovation in the agri-tech sector.</p> <p>The Belview Port area, in close proximity to Waterford, has significant capacity for expansion, to propel the growth of the South East Waterford City Region. Glanbia's recent investment of €150m in an ingredients production plant has identified the area as a food production zone of international scale.</p> <p>Kilkenny's quality of life attributes continues to attract major financial services and there is scope for growth here. The Abbey Quarter is an ideal location to cater for expansion in these areas.</p> <p>Kilkenny has a well established history and reputation as a creative cultural centre and this has been reinforced with the establishment of the national headquarters of the Design and Craft Council of Ireland in the City along with plans to develop a design and craft and innovation centre.</p> <p>The success of Kilkenny-based animation studio Cartoon Saloon on the world stage, together with its plans to expand in international partnership to establish Lighthouse Studios, has placed Kilkenny on the cusp of significant development as a European and international centre of animation.</p> <p>The success of TSSG (Telecommunications Software &amp; Systems Group), which was formed as part of the Waterford Institute of Technology in 1996, and has a research and innovation centre at St. Kierans</p>



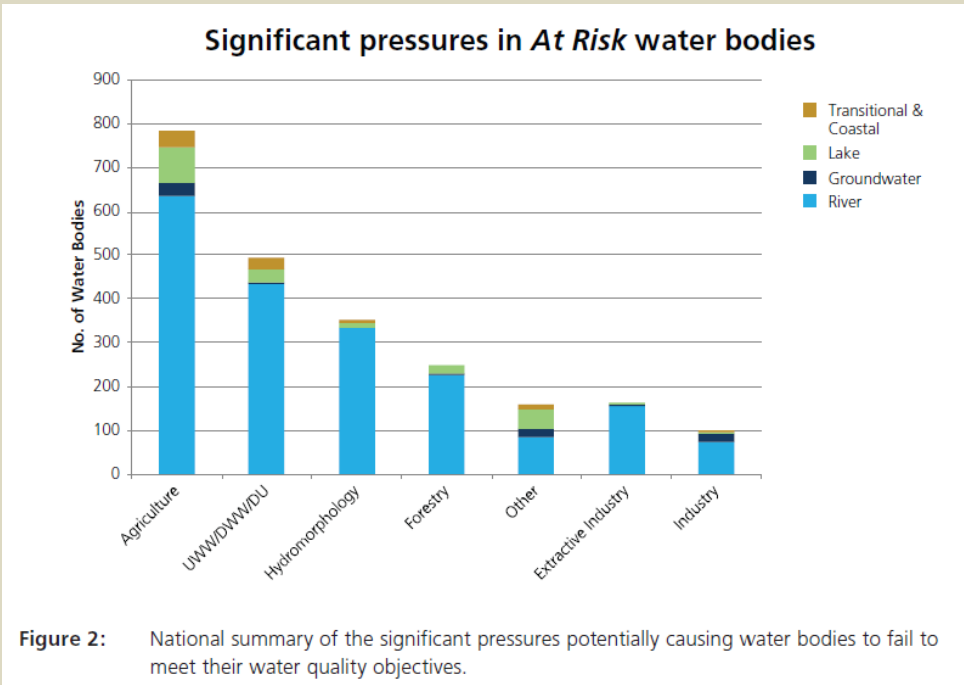
	<p>College, Kilkenny, is testament to the positive outcomes for innovative, collaborative initiatives.</p>
<p>23. How do we maximise opportunities in the emerging sectors of the economy for the benefit of the region as a whole and what can we do to address those sectors that are in decline?</p>	<p>It is accepted that regions need to identify and prioritise opportunities for economic growth. This will include developing hubs/centres of excellence based on the strengths of the region. Kilkenny County Council (KCC) is already proactively supporting the development of centres of excellence in conjunction with the third level institutes, local industry and other private and community stakeholders in the region. For example, KCC is a key stakeholder in the establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the national design innovation hub (NDIH), which builds on the legacy of the Kilkenny Design Workshops and the strong tradition of creativity that exists in the County from local artisan craft producers (e.g. Nicky Mosse) through to animation (e.g. Cartoon Saloon); and</li> <li>• the precision agriculture centre of excellence (PACE), which has arisen from the strong agricultural heritage of the county, and which will provide innovation services to agricultural companies and high potential start-ups (HPSUs) nationally. PACE will establish the South-East as an international leader in precision agriculture, and will also provide specialist incubation facilities for HPSUs.</li> </ul> <p>This targeted approach will ensure that future economic growth is well founded in the region and will lead to more sustainable job creation.</p>
<p>24. What needs to be done to ensure that the benefit of increased economic activity in our cities and larger urban centres is transferred into the rest of the towns, villages and more rural parts of the region?</p>	<p>Investment in critical infrastructure and enhancements to regional connectivity, including fibre broadband, and renewable energy, will be required.</p> <p>While the M8 and N9 motorways provide excellent north-south connectivity through the region to Dublin, the N24 Waterford to Limerick east-west route needs to be upgraded to Motorway standard, thereby linking all of the Atlantic City Regions by motorway. This will also provide a critical linkage from the South East Waterford City Region to the Cork-Dublin-Belfast transport corridor; the Waterford-Dublin transport corridor also has the potential to act as an economic driver for the region in the same way as the Dublin-Belfast transport corridor is being prioritised in the draft NPF; and upgrading the N80, which forms part of the designated EuroRoute connecting the South East to the Midlands.</p>

	<p>The runway at Waterford Airport should be extended to accommodate jet carriers and strengthening of air transport services to and from the South East Waterford City Region. Waterford Airport served an average of 83,000 passengers per year over the period 2003 – 2013. The extension of the runway is necessary to facilitate use of the Airport by larger/jet propelled aircraft which would give the airport capacity of the order of 300,000 to 500,000 passenger journeys each year and relative to the low investment cost needed, makes economic sense and represents an excellent investment in the future development of the South East Waterford City Region. The optimisation of existing capacity at the airport would be more cost effective than developing additional infrastructure mooted for Dublin airport, and would demonstrate a strong commitment to regional development.</p> <p>Integrated scheduling of connections between all transport - rail, bus, and shipping services within the region. Rail connectivity between Waterford and Dublin needs to be improved to meet the needs of Carlow and Kilkenny City and also to provide for commuter services from Dublin to Waterford so that workers living in the capital can take up employment opportunities in locations along the rail route. The Rosslare to Limerick rail line also needs to be retained to future-proof sustainable transport for the Southern Region.</p> <p>Also, expedite the roll out of the National Broadband Plan to ensure that all parts of the region can access high speed broadband. Broadband connectivity is not only of critical importance for attracting investment, facilitating economic growth and stimulating innovation - it is fast becoming a necessity of everyday life.</p>
<p>25. Are there parts of the Southern Region that are notably underdeveloped? What reasons are there for this and what can we do to overcome such blockages?</p>	<p>The South East Strategic Planning Area continues to underperform. The targets need to be sufficiently ambitious to support the corresponding economic development required to help close the gap that exists between it and the stronger Planning Areas in the region. For example, according to the latest CSO National Household Quarterly Survey (NQHS) for Q2 2017, the South East has the second highest unemployment rate in the country at 8.3%, which is c2% higher than the national average. Kilkenny County Council considers that a major contributory factor in this underperformance is the fact that the South East is not securing a proportionate share of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The IDA target to increase the number of IDA investments in the South East by 30-40% by the end of 2019 (compared to</p>

the 2010-2014 period) is the same target provided for in all of the NUTS III regions outside of Dublin. This target therefore will not be sufficient to close the gap in FDI employment between the South East and the rest of the country. The RSES needs to provide greater ambition for the underperforming South East SPA to help it realise its full potential. The strategic plans of enterprise agencies such as the IDA in turn need to reflect and align with this.

26. What are the key threats to water quality and how can investment in water and wastewater infrastructure be focussed so as to achieve the greatest possible return on investment and support the economic growth and health of citizens?

The **EPA Report “Water Quality in Ireland 2010 – 2015”** gives the following summary chart of the key pressures on water quality in Ireland.



Investment in wastewater infrastructure needs to be focussed in **At Risk** water bodies that have urban

	<p>waste water as a significant pressure.</p> <p>Investment in drinking water needs a focus on source protection areas. Not all such areas are properly delineated (GSI, NFGWS).</p> <p>Irish Water has a statutory responsibility for the quality of drinking water but has no statutory role in source protection areas. Pesticide detection in drinking water is an increasing issue.</p> <p>Local authorities are not being adequately resourced to investigate / manage source protection areas.</p> <p>In Ireland, the nitrates derogation is of critical importance to the dairy industry and Food Harvest 2020 expansion plans. The EU has already revoked the nitrates derogation for Denmark and imposed swingeing cuts to the number of cows that Dutch farmers are permitted to retain. The nitrates derogation for Ireland has recently been approved, however it is dependent on demonstration of improving water quality. Overall water quality in Ireland was static from 2010 to 2015. According to the EPA, the most recent results for 2016 and 2017 show a decline in water quality. It is too soon yet to say whether this is a significant trend.</p>
<p>27. Given the high level of emissions from agricultural activity and the transport sector, what are the key changes that need to be made to bring these sectors into line with national targets?</p>	<p>For the transport sector, there are a number of changes that will increase the sustainability of transport in region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated scheduling of connections between all transport - rail, bus, and shipping services within the region. Rail connectivity between Waterford and Dublin needs to be improved to meet the needs of Carlow and Kilkenny City and also to provide for commuter services from Dublin to Waterford so that workers living in the capital can take up employment opportunities in locations along the rail route.</li> <li>• The Rosslare to Limerick rail line also needs to be retained to future-proof sustainable transport for the Southern Region.</li> <li>• Belview Port has the potential to accommodate a modal shift to rail freight, and reduce road haulage, with the expansion of its multi-modal interchange.</li> </ul>

	Also the implementation of the Water Framework Directive is a significant challenge going forward.
28. How can the Southern Region become a leader in renewable energy production together with research and development into next generation technology?	<p>For significant brownfield sites, Renewable Energy Strategies should be devised, as Kilkenny County Council are presently undertaking with the Abbey Quarter in the heart of the city.</p> <p>RSES should acknowledge the need for devolved, small scale, unobtrusive renewable energy generation which will feed into the national grid, thereby rendering it more robust at local level and preparing it for the increased demand that will result from electrified transport modes such as electric cars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
29. What are the key changes which need to be made to grow the bioeconomy in the Southern Region?	<p>The Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence (PACE), which will provide innovation services to agricultural companies and high potential start-ups (HPSUs) nationally, is one example of an innovation in the bioeconomy. Kilkenny County Council is a key stakeholder along with the Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Glanbia, Alltech and Capita in this. PACE will establish the South-East as an international leader in precision agriculture.</p> <p>In addition, WIT's Eco-Innovation Research Centre (EIRC) is focused on developing new products, technologies, services and processes that contribute to sustainable development.</p>
30. Given the strategic location of the Southern Region's ports the region could become even more important strategic gateways to continental Europe after Britain leaves the EU, what are the steps required to realise the potential of our key ports?	<p>Investment is required in Belview to ensure that it has adequate infrastructure to cope with new trading arrangements after Brexit. The role and importance of ports with direct access to the EU should be identified and supported in the RSES as a means of maintaining and enhancing competitiveness.</p>

<p>31. What are the key economic and environmental issues to be addressed for our coastal and marine areas and how should we develop an integrated approach to support our coastal and marine areas?</p>	<p>The RSES must address how to balance the economic requirements and expansion of the Port, with the potential for tourism in the area. Belview could cater for an increase in cruise ship passengers, and the linkages with the Waterford to New Ross Greenway should also be capitalised upon.</p>
<p>32. What are the principal infrastructural and investment deficits preventing progress on the achievement of national planning policy objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water and Wastewater</li> <li>• Broadband</li> <li>• Land based Transport inter city connectivity between Cork Waterford Limerick and Galway.</li> <li>• Air transport.(make Shannon &amp; Cork more attractive) Upgrade Waterford runway for jet traffic.</li> </ul>
<p>33. What key infrastructural investment is needed to drive the development of the three cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cork Waterford and Limerick need motorway and rail connectivity.</li> <li>• Waterford Airport requires upgrading of runway to facilitate jet traffic.</li> <li>• Waterford requires the TUSE established.</li> <li>• Waterford requires two new bridges and upgrading of WWTP.</li> </ul>
<p>34. How can the RSES seek to improve the coordination and governance of public investment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Regional Assembly through the RSES needs to drive the strategic investments for the region with the constituent local authorities.</li> <li>• An implementation model or mechanism needs to be developed around each of the MASP's for each of the cities.</li> <li>• At national level across sectors for Government Departments and Semi state companies there is a requirement for co ordination of investment priorities to ensure all stakeholders are focussed on the delivery of the same priorities for the region.</li> </ul>
<p>35. What role can the Regional Assembly play in more explicitly aligning the investment plans of State Owned Enterprises with Government objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through its role at regional level the Regional Assembly needs to lead and county ordinate semi state investment with Government objectives/investment priorities. A structure along the lines of the SEAPJ is required for this to take place. The aligning of National and Regional objectives with semi state commercial decisions will prove problematic. Strong Regional leadership required.</li> </ul>

<p>36. What key infrastructural investment is required to facilitate the development of the towns and villages in the Southern Region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water and Wastewater</li> <li>• Amenities</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Sustainable transport options</li> <li>• Upgrading of rail stations and services at existing towns</li> </ul>
<p>37. What are the key infrastructure investments needed to support sustainable connectivity (including modal shift to sustainable transport modes) throughout our region including infrastructure between our large urban areas, within our metropolitan cities, towns and villages?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More frequent and more reliable rail connections</li> <li>• More frequent and reliable bus connections.</li> <li>• Upgrade of road infrastructure a structure where required, e. g. R700 to Wexford. R693 to M8 from Kilkenny. N80 from Wexford to Carlow</li> </ul>
<p>38. How best can the Regional Transport Strategy ensure that strategic road projects enhancing accessibility between our large urban centres compliment sustainable mobility goals for our region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In developing road projects for connectivity between large urban centres there should also be a parallel investment in bus and rail services to facilitate mobility change.</li> </ul>
<p>39. How can our airports and ports become economic drivers for the Southern Region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of international connections for airports and ports is of critical importance to the attraction of international mobile investment.</li> <li>• The landbanks surrounding airports and ports can offer locations for business and commercial activity that can act as economic drivers for their respective areas, such as Shannon Development , Ringaskiddy and Belviewstrategic area. The development of these areas through SDZ'S could be a suitable instrument to deliver liver.</li> </ul>
<p>40. Is digital infrastructure sufficiently prioritised as an essential infrastructure for the economic and social development of communities throughout our region's cities, towns, villages and rural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there is general recognition of the critical importance of digital infrastructure, the pace of delivery is far too slow.</li> <li>• The National Broadband Plan (NBP) has set an ambitious target to have 90 per cent of all homes in the country with access to high speed broadband by the end of 2020. The NBP defines high</li> </ul>

<p>areas? What are the main barriers to the successful implementation of the National Broadband Plan and other digital economy initiatives throughout our region and how can the RSES address this?</p>	<p>speed broadband as a minimum speed of 30Mbps download and 6Mbps upload. Demand for high speed broadband is ever increasing, so if the planned infrastructure set out in the NBP is not delivered on time it could well be a case of “too little too late.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main barrier to broadband is financial investment and the model for delivery.</li> </ul>
<p>41. What measures need to be put in place at a regional level to ensure full implementation of the National Policy Objectives in the Draft NPF and the more detailed policies and objectives of the RSES?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to regional assemblies the Regional authorities have no history of implementation. Implementation of RSES will be a significant challenge across a large region with competing sub regions. Careful consideration as to the implementation is required. This is as important as the document itself.</li> </ul>
<p>42. What would be the most appropriate form of political and administrative leadership to support the Regional Assembly in the preparation and oversight of metropolitan area strategic plans?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each MASP will require a bespoke solution as the administrative configuration around the each MASP is particular to each city.</li> <li>• For Waterford MASP 1. Decide the extent of MASP. 2. Decide on the strategic aims. 3. Agree local political and administrative structure for support and implementation.</li> </ul>
<p>43. What are the key indicators that could be used to determine the level of success of the adopted strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population growth rates and targets</li> <li>• Employment and unemployment rates</li> <li>• Gross Added Value (GVA)</li> <li>• Education attainment including Third level achievements</li> <li>• Tourism spend</li> <li>• Travel times to work and modal shift</li> <li>• Agricultural output and productivity</li> <li>• Improvement in water quality.</li> <li>• Improvement in air quality.</li> </ul>