# LECP Draft Economic Actions Feedback Report

The draft economic actions report was issued for public consultation from 5th to 30th November 2015. The process of consultation included issuing the plan to business representative organisations, state agencies and making available online for the general public on <https://consult.kilkenny.ie>.

The draft actions report was also presented to each of Municipal District meetings.

There were 4 submissions made through the public consult site:

* National Transport Authority
* RGDATA
* Southern Regional Assembly
* Maurice O’Connor

7 submissions were received directly via e-mail:

* IT Carlow
* Kilkenny Library Service
* Kilkenny Arts Office
* South East BIC
* Failte Ireland
* Kilkenny Tourism
* Castlecomer Unemployment and Economic Task Force

**A summary of the main points from Municipal District presentations were:**

**Castlecomer MD –**

A state agency placed in Castlecomer to focus on job creation in Castlecomer

The plan needs to be targeted at town level.

Broadband needs analysis for north Kilkenny area

Tourism opportunity for tourist routes linking the city to north Kilkenny.

Annual report to the Municipal District on progress of the LECP.

**City East & City West MD –**

Broadband is a critical infrastructure required all across the county

“Fab Labs” should be looked at for educational development

It is important to link the whole county through tourism.

Rural towns are in dire need of assistance

Public sector could do more to help SME’s in public procurement

The plan required the resources to fulfil the potential offered.

**Piltown MD –**

Tourism assets such as Tory Hill should be used more

The regional economic forum should provide good opportunity in 2016

ERDF funding has worked week for Ireland previously and should be included in the LECP.

Social enterprise offers potential and should be studied, for facilities, opportunities and resources.

Broadband is essential for communication and business

Monitoring and reporting is needed at MD level, there should be co-ordination at local level

**A summary of the main points from public submissions were:**

Proportion of events & training to occur in rural areas.

Matching of skills of unemployed with industry specific opportunities., such as manufacturing and building.

Acknowledgement of REDZ zones within the county.

Structured training programme for front of house staff in tourism sector.

Social enterprise, co-op style accommodation in Castlecomer and also use as training facility with link up to Thomastown.

Greater connection with Kildalton & Teagasc, examine equine study.

Tourism promotion to expand beyond the city.

A commitment by the Council to support Castlecomer Discovery Park.

Provide training locally in rural areas.

REDZ and LEADER funding should be used to support rural towns.

Retail should be promoted in Castlecomer.

Broadband in Castlecomer is a major problem for investment and development.

Village renewal / Tax incentive for rural towns should cover investors as well as owner occupiers.

EU funding opportunities should be promoted countywide.

Where possible, the link between High level Goals and objectives to specific planning policy objectives in the Regional Planning Guidelines and County Development Plan should be clearly stated so as to highlight the consistency of the LECP with this wider policy context.

An annex table, such as the example below would assist in documenting policy consistency with the RPG, CDP and other relevant policies and could be beneficial and informative, either as an appendix or within the LECP text, as appropriate.

In terms of the LECP process, the LECP documents would benefit from a summary of the outcomes from the public consultation meetings, Focus Groups and bilateral meetings held with stakeholders to illustrate the input into policy formulation and as part of the evidence base.

The Regional Assembly notes that a comprehensive SCOT (Strengths/Constraint/Opportunities/Threats) has been prepared which identifies key issues in the County and makes a strong contribution to the development of the Goals and Objectives.

It is considered that actions contained in the draft LECP documents are practical and specific. However, further consideration of the time-bound element (i.e. deadlines instead of a timeframe) and inclusion of steps for delivery would assist in future implementation, monitoring and review of the LECP.

The importance of South Kilkenny as part of the Waterford Gateway is evident in Goals relating to Belview Port and the importance of the relationship to WIT and it is clear that the relationship to the Waterford Gateway is a strong one with 50% of all commuters leaving the County identifying Waterford as their destination. It would seem that there may be scope  for potential added value in actions focussed on Kilkenny’s part in Waterford as the regional Gateway and economic driver of the region. The elaboration of Kilkenny’s role as part of the Waterford Gateway could be integrated into some existing Objectives and Goals along with consideration of joint actions with Waterford City and County Council. Such actions could contribute to beneficial outcomes for both Local Authorities with potential collaborative actions, for example, in relation to sustainable transport modes or provision of educations, skills and training, which could prove to be more effective as collaborative actions and achieve better outcomes for both Kilkenny and Waterford Local Authorities in relation to the communities of Ferrybank and South Kilkenny.

Is there scope for Action No. A35 of Goal 6 to be more focussed to develop specific actions for sustainable travel to address the high level of commuting from Kilkenny to Waterford as highlighted in the discussion around Access and Communications infrastructure?

In preparing the final draft of the LECP, consideration could be given to the inclusion of graphics and maps to illustrate Co. Kilkenny in its regional context.

The objectives and actions proposed in the LECP for Kilkenny are cognisant of travel patterns and transport demand at a regional level.

It is recommended that the local authority should revise the wording of the overarching objective for goal 6 to recognise the importance of planning principles and the location of development to contributing to sustainable and integrated transport systems, rather than focusing solely on infrastructure innovations.

The stated draft transport Actions, Actions A35-A37, could be revised to more adequately encompass this multi-modal approach.

Action 37 should be revised to provide for the development of an 'integrated transport plan' for Co. Kilkenny, to deliver transport for all trip types, based on the existing and future forecast demand for travel.

The LECP should include an objective to establish a Social Enterprise Support Hub in Co. Kilkenny.

Vacant sites in towns and villages are fully investigated for reuse and that developers with new retail proposals are directed to design their proposed plans to fit into the existing retail zones, town centres and villages in Kilkenny in a manner that will enhance their role as centres, their economic performance, retain existing jobs and facilitate the creation of new jobs.

Investment in new retail development projects should be directed within town centres.  There should also be investment in environmental improvements, transport infrastructure and town centre management.

The County Council should work with the Heritage Council and other bodies to ensure that Heritage buildings throughout Kilkenny are conserved and redeveloped with the assistance of conservation architects in a way that will contribute to the cultural, social and economic viability of the local community.

adopt a strict town centre first approach and discourage any new greenfield site, edge of town or out of town development until the current unused retail and other buildings in the town centres are revamped and reopened for business.

The County Council should make a specific commitment in this plan that retail warehousing should be accommodated only on lands specifically zoned for such purposes.

 Mapping of national policies and strategies against the LECP could be helpful.

Report of outcomes from public consultation and meeting would help.

Actions should include a time-bound element.

Action 35 could be more specific.

Climate change should be a cross cutting theme.

Need to support heritage in order to use as a marketing proposition.

Action 3 – include heritage breeds and varieties.

The absence of a University in the South East region is a weakness and Kilkenny County Council strongly supports the creation of the Technological University.  This is a major economic development priority for the Region.

A fulltime course portfolio offering a comprehensive set of programmes from Levels 6-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications delivered entirely in and connecting specifically to the needs of Kilkenny needs to be delivered in Kilkenny to facilitate social and economic development. This must also be linked to the provision of lifelong learning and industry-tailored professional development education.

The Library Service is a tourism and cultural resource promoting awareness of local cultural heritage, to individuals, schools and communities ( both local and the Kilkenny diaspora) through activities, events, exhibitions and Local Studies resources both in-house – at the reference/research room @ Library H.Q.-and online. The library Schools’ Service targets primary and post-primary schools countywide. The Library service could assist through the provision of resource material for “Know your own County”, disseminating promotional literature though the county network and [www.kilkennylibrary.ie](http://www.kilkennylibrary.ie),  and on social media i.e. Face book, Twitter and library blog.

In addition branch libraries provide public internet and /or Wi-Fi access to cultural heritage websites such as [www.askaboutireland.ie](http://www.askaboutireland.ie) including Kilkenny content provided by Kilkenny Library Service

To facilitate this process South East BIC is prepared to locate a BIC Staff person who would operate from a Kilkenny location one day a week, fortnight or monthly depending on demand. KLEO would provide suitable accommodation and refer possible clients following a joint filtering process. The BIC staff would also provide access to other BIC services to existing LEO clients for example SYOB, Mentoring, access to HBAN as appropriate.

SEBIC to promote the European Business network to Kilkenny export orientated businesses.

SEBIC to promote EU funding opportunities to suitable Kilkenny based businesses.

BIC together with KLEO and Chamber would aim to establish and develop a self- sustaining Business Angel Group Syndicate / Network that would be initially Kilkenny focussed and could be either sector specific or more likely a generalist syndicate.

BIC and KLEO enter into a Service Level Agreement that will outline the actions, roles and responsibilities of each party together with suitable timelines and a monitoring process.

It’s vital to capitalise on the ‘Great Escapers’ segment of the ‘Ireland’s Ancient East’ proposition.  Low cost accommodation, hostel type, is a requirement if Kilkenny is to gain market share of groups participating in outdoor activities and ‘soft adventure’. As Failte Ireland research shows, the increased uptake in outdoor physical activities indicates a real opportunity for Kilkenny to provide a greater range of activities.

The appointment of a dedicated person to lead and develop tourism in Kilkenny is required so there’s greater coordination.

The need for a strong focal point acting as an information depot on the parade square would serve to drive visitors across the county. However, it needs to be resourced in tandem with visitor needs and not closed at 5pm.

The re-introduction of Tourism Ambassador programme.

Ensure that the development of the Creative Quarter includes infrastructure for local emerging and professional practitioners alongside the other creative industry developments.

Support the multiplicity of Arts Festivals

There will be an Ireland's Ancient East Food Story developed - this will offer opportunities for Kilkenny to leverage its food offering as part of Ireland's Ancient East. Fáilte Ireland invests significant funding and supports into festivals in Ireland's Ancient East and Food Tourism.

Engage with Fáilte Ireland Ireland's Ancient East team to identify the opportunities to leverage the themes and stories which will work best to bring Kilkenny to an international audience

IAE/FI have an extensive marketing strategy to promote Ireland's Ancient East including Kilkenny across digital channels in international markets. IAE/FI will have a visitor orientation and cross selling strategy across IAE including County Kilkenny.

Fáilte Ireland business supports will be available as part of Ireland's Ancient East

Rural towns and villages will play an important in Ireland's Ancient East as they are home to many hidden gems and significant communications will be encouraging visitors to get off the beaten track and discover these areas.

Fáilte Ireland will be driving an extensive communication strategy for Ireland's Ancient East to increase visitor numbers.