

Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 - 2028



Contents

1.	Introduction	8
2.	Context	10
3.	Socio-Economic Evidence Base	22
4.	Vision, Themes, High Level Goals and Sustainable Community Objectives	31
5.	Implementation Arrangements	44
6.	Monitoring and Evaluation	46
Appendix 1: Glossary		50
Appendix 2: Public Consultation Information		54
Appendix 3: Membership of relevant structures		58
Appendix 4: Alignment with the RSES for the Southern Region		62
Appendix 5: Glossary of Acronyms		64

Message from Cathaoirleach

I welcome this new Local Economic and Community Plan for County Kilkenny. It allows us to refresh and refocus our vision and provides us with a framework to keep supporting the sustainable growth of our local economy and communities.

It embraces an inclusive approach towards growth and the benefits this can bring. It also acknowledges the urgency to act now to implement positive climate and biodiversity actions, so that the benefits of success will be felt by all of our communities, now and long into the future.

The High Level Goals, Outputs and Outcomes that we set ourselves will collectively work to ensure that our County continues to have a resilient, productive and sustainable business base. It will also allow us to carry on building the capacity of our residents, so that they can enhance their contribution and experience throughout their lifetimes regardless of the individual challenges they may face. This is critical if we are to keep tackling the consequences of deprivation, and fulfilling our commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of all people of all ages in our communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism, Planning & Development Policy (SPC) and Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) for leading the development of the Plan, alongside council officer leads.

An extensive process of engagement, capturing the views of communities and businesses throughout our County, has been critical in shaping the ambition and priorities set out within the LECP. I thank all those who have participated in the process and encourage others who have a desire to affect change to contribute to its delivery and implementation. I look forward to working with you all and seeing the positive impacts of our collective actions.



*Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick,
Cathaoirleach,
Kilkenny County Council*



Joint statement from Chair of SPC1 Cllr Ger Frisby and Chair of the LCDC Declan Gibbons

This is our second Local Economic and Community Plan, which builds upon our achievements in implementing the first.

Recent years have seen us face unprecedented global challenges, the effects of which have cascaded down from the national and regional level to shape our daily lives and change the outlook of every resident and business in Kilkenny.

Refreshing our Plan has allowed us to positively shift our focus so that we can face into the next six years and embrace the opportunities arising from a fast-evolving 21st century, while preparing for challenges that we may face.

At a national level, considerable thought has gone into setting ourselves up for success. We have a national Climate Action Plan, Roadmap for Social Inclusion, Healthy Ireland Framework and Project Ireland 2040. This Plan represents our local response to these strategies, also reflecting the clarity now provided by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) to realise the spatial objectives of sustainable economic growth, including the national Town Centre First Policy. It will ensure that our businesses and communities are equipped to be resilient and innovative, and inspired to carry on creating a place that we can be proud to call our home and place of work.

The ten High Level Goals which form the framework for the Plan reflect the breadth of its remit. They are structured around the twin pillars of economic and community but are cross cutting, responding to important synergies as well as the overarching commitment towards climate action. They give us the tools to co-ordinate existing public funds to maximise their impact, and to attract complementary funding from the public and private sectors.

The Council and the LCDC are fully committed to the delivery of this Plan and the accompanying Implementation Plan 2023/2024. We wish to thank the members of the LCDC and SPC1 for their continued support and commitment towards their development and future delivery.

I would also like to thank all those departments of the Council, groups, stakeholders and organisations who have identified themselves as having a responsibility for leading individual actions and committing to a process of ongoing monitoring to facilitate ongoing refinement and reprioritisation. The delivery of change will be down to your continued enthusiasm, dedication, hard work and commitment to the inclusive and sustainable development of County Kilkenny.



Cllr Ger Frisby
Chair SPC1



Declan Gibbons
Chair LCDC

LECP Structure & Summary

This is Kilkenny's second Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). It builds upon our first 2016 to 2021 Plan and provides us with a new framework to deliver positive change within the City and County.

Part 1: Vision, High Level Goals and Objectives

The first part of our Plan presents our new Vision and accompanying High Level Goals and Objectives. These reflect our understanding of the socio-economic issues and opportunities documented in our Socio-Economic Statement and summarised in this Plan. They capture the views of all the residents, businesses and stakeholders who contributed to an extensive process of consultation and engagement in 2022.



Vision Statement

By 2028 Kilkenny will be a future-ready, citizen-centric and welcoming county that is climate resilient, provides jobs, attracts highly productive businesses, delivers inclusive services and celebrates creativity

Kilkenny is not immune from the fast-evolving 21st century. As the county moves full forward into a new Local Economic and Community Plan period, we are setting out a future-ready, citizen-centric plan that responds to the greatest challenge of climate change; contributes to the transition to a low-carbon circular economy; and continues to provide jobs and attract or grow cutting edge highly productive industries, all while emissions fall.

We want to do this together, reflecting the warm, positive and friendly community we are; welcoming new visitors to explore the beauty of our county's built and natural heritage; celebrating our creativity with us; attracting, retaining and training a highly skilled and productive workforce through new third-level education infrastructure; and building on partnerships that deliver inclusive services to meet the changing needs of our whole community. Like a team of players, by doing lots of small things well together, we believe that we can achieve much more.

We will work to realise this vision through the achievement of the ten High Level Goals explained within this LECP, these being:

Theme 1: Climate Change

Goal 1: To ensure that climate action is embraced, and that our actions and interventions are embedded across all areas of the LECP in order to contribute positively to the global climate and biodiversity crisis affecting our citizens and support Ireland to achieve its climate and biodiversity goals and obligations

Theme 2: Economic

Goal 2: To build a resilient, sustainable business base and support new and existing businesses to grow, be enterprising and take advantage of new opportunities

Goal 3: To realise the economic and social value of Kilkenny's built and natural heritage, its cultural reputation and offer, and its growing tourism, creative and cultural sectors

Goal 4: To ensure our rural economy and communities are supported to develop sustainably

Goal 5: To increase the number of economically active people in the County by ensuring access to further and higher education infrastructure and to lifelong learning for every working age resident who wants to work to enhance their educational qualifications and achieve the skills required

Goal 6: To grow the number of third level graduates working in County Kilkenny

Theme 3: Community

Goal 7: To reduce inequalities and promote and enhance the importance of health and wellbeing

Goal 8: To reduce the number of people living in deprivation and promote community development, community resilience, climate justice, integration, diversity and social inclusion

Goal 9: To develop increased local capacity and improve targeting of social investment through increased engagement and participation with local community groups that will deliver improved community facilities, supports and services

Goal 10: To support the provision of appropriate community supports and services for new and existing housing developments

Part 2: Implementation Plan

Within the lifetime of our first Plan we have faced a series of unparalleled challenges arising from global events. We have, as a Council with our stakeholders faced into these challenges and sought wherever possible to ensure that positive plans are progressed to the benefit of those who live and work in the City and County.

This experience has served to highlight the importance of having a clear but equally flexible framework to deliver individual actions, which cumulatively work to ensure our businesses and communities are as prepared and resilient as they can be to react to the issues but also the opportunities which arise from change.

The Implementation Plan which, whilst an integral part of this LECP, is published as a separate document to reflect its iterative nature and has been assembled with the support of a broad range of partner organisations and stakeholders. It sets out our priority actions to deliver against our Vision and Goals. We have prioritised actions which we believe will make the most impact. Every action is expected to start to deliver in the first two years of our strategy with the Plan representing a live document, allowing us to reflect the achievement of identified actions and create new ones as required over the full six-year lifetime of the LECP.

The successful delivery of the identified actions will be dependent upon those identified as having lead responsibilities committing resource and seeking additional funding sources as required. The Council will provide the support required and will be responsible for monitoring progress and adapting the Plan as required to respond to changes, constraints and opportunities.

1. Introduction

'It is our ambition that every resident, community, visitor, employee and employer in Kilkenny is helped by this LECP to realise their potential and to make their best contribution to enable a positive future for our County over its lifetime and beyond.'

Purpose

The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Kilkenny, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

It is inevitable that over the lifetime of the new LECP we will face a range of new challenges and opportunities. Whilst many of these have yet to present themselves, we do know that we have a responsibility to ensure that the new LECP helps us to take every opportunity to build resilience within our communities, businesses and our workers.

It is also apparent, in the context of national and international agreements and commitments, that this LECP will be required to play its part in addressing the inter-generational challenges associated with climate change.

It is our ambition that every resident, community, visitor, employee and employer in Kilkenny is helped by this LECP to realise their potential and to make their best contribution to enable a positive future for our County over its lifetime and beyond.

A Plan built through engagement

This LECP builds on our previous document, the 2016-2021 LECP. In embarking on this new Plan we took the opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved but recognised that whilst we have made demonstrable progress, the aspirations captured in the Vision and Goals of the previous plan continue to represent a work in progress.

This LECP has been required to adhere to the 2021 National Guidelines¹. Figure 1.1 sets out in diagrammatic form the process that we have followed in the development of this LECP.

Engagement has been integral to the Plan's development. In accordance with Stages 1 and 2 of the above process the Council prepared and consulted upon a Socio-Economic Statement during summer 2022. The consultation approach and the outcomes are described in full in the appended **Kilkenny Socio-Economic Statement – Consultation Report**.

In summary, the consultation coalesced around a baseline survey (open for five weeks from 26 August to 30 September 2022), an in-person workshop and five virtual workshops with the public and key stakeholder groups.

The outcome of this engagement process was an agreement around the High Level Goals and related Objectives that provide the framework for this LECP.

The establishment of high-level outcomes and prioritised actions within the Implementation Plan (Stages 3 and 4 of the process) involved contributions from stakeholders across Kilkenny, via one-to-one engagements, who will play a leading role in realising the ambitions of our LECP.

¹ Government of Ireland (2021) Local Economic and Community Plans Guidelines 2021



Figure 1.1: LECP Development Stages

Source: LECP Guidelines, 2021

2. Context

This LECP is aimed at responding proactively to the unique needs and opportunities of Kilkenny, the City and the County. We set out in more detail what the data tells us about the definitions of these opportunities and challenges in the next section. Before doing so though this section provides an introduction to Kilkenny, one which will be familiar to many stakeholders using this LECP but which is intended to assist in framing the narrative of the remainder of this Plan.

In setting a context it is important to acknowledge that in helping to realise local ambitions this LECP also represents the primary mechanism for the Council to bring forward relevant actions arising from existing and future Government policy. These policies will continue to evolve but we draw out here the key documents and their relationship with our LECP.

Similarly, the LECP will enable the Council to contribute towards the delivery of plans and strategies across a regional footprint. This includes but is not limited to the priorities and objectives established within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region and the South East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024. Within this section we outline the relationships with this regional tier of strategy and the LECP.



Introducing Kilkenny

County Kilkenny is a medium-sized inland county located in south Leinster, covering just under 2,100 square kilometres. County Kilkenny is part of the newly configured Southern Region and is strategically located within the southern half of the state. The county has direct access to the Irish Sea, through Belview Port on the River Suir and through New Ross on the River Barrow.

Kilkenny City is the largest settlement in the county and dominates the local economy. It is close to Dublin (115km) and other major urban centres including Cork (145km), Limerick (110km) and Waterford (48km). Kilkenny is also close to Shannon International Airport (155km) and Rosslare Europort (105km).

The River Nore runs through Kilkenny City and bisects the county on a north-south axis. The Rivers Barrow and Suir are natural boundaries to the east and to the south of the county, respectively.



Figure 2.1: Kilkenny Location Context

Aligning the LECP with wider cross-cutting priorities

In accordance with the Guidelines we have developed our LECP to ensure that it aligns with and complements strategies and identified priorities from a national to a regional scale as well as our own City and County Development Plan. We summarise key points of consistency and alignment within this section, recognising that the LECP along with other local plans and strategies cascade down from the wider framework supporting the Government's vision of national transformation.

National priorities

National transformation and recognising geographic distinctions

This LECP forms part of the overall process for national transformation set out in Project Ireland 2040 and supporting national policy documents including the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP), as well as Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland.

These national policy documents provide a clear geographic vision to achieve change. Kilkenny is located within the NPF defined Southern Region. The Southern Region extends across 3 Strategic Planning Areas (SPA) which includes the 3 cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford, each designated as a Metropolitan Area. Waterford is identified as a City & Metropolitan area and Kilkenny City is designated as a 'Key Town' in the RSES. The NPF observes that whilst the South East has a strong urban structure, much of the area is rural in character encompassing some of Ireland's most productive agricultural land.

The NPF identifies important regional opportunities around leveraging growth associated with strong national and international connectivity, especially via ports proximate to continental Europe; strengthening Higher Education Institutes (HEIs); and further balancing employment and housing development in key settlements and county towns, with this understood to include Kilkenny City. It observes that such growth must be based on infrastructure and quality of life, rather than long distance commuting to Dublin.

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The LECP will support the Council's current journey towards committing to locally set targets that will ensure a more positive environmental future for all of our residents and employees.

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These spatial principles are supported by this LECP through its recognition of the importance of balancing change across our geographies to ensure the City and our rural settlements benefit together from change, and physical and virtual connections are enhanced to encourage greater numbers of our residents to live and work in the County.

Responding to a Climate and Biodiversity emergency

This LECP fully recognises the importance of providing a framework through which to support the national process of developing a statutory basis for climate change intervention, including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 and the ongoing implementation of Climate Action Plans at a local level.

The LECP will support the Council's current journey towards committing to locally set targets that will ensure a more positive environmental future for all of our residents and employees.

It supports the growth of our local economy and our population but in tandem aims to ensure that this is achieved whilst protecting and improving our natural heritage and biodiversity.



The LECP recognises the importance of having a workforce with the skills and expertise necessary to respond to existing business needs, allowing them to grow and invest, and attract further generations of large high-profile employers to the County.

Creating a more resilient national economy

Acknowledging the economic challenges faced in recent years, the LECP recognises the actions and priorities developed nationally to set Ireland on a path towards creating a more resilient national economy, recognising the importance of the rural economy in this journey.

It sets out how we will contribute towards bringing forward relevant actions arising from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, National Economic Recovery Plan and the Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025. The Town Centre First policy is central to this vision and supports the regeneration and development of rural towns and villages to contribute to the local and national economy and to enable and encourage people to live and work locally. It recognises the importance of having a workforce with the skills and expertise necessary to respond to existing business needs, allowing them to grow and invest, and attract further generations of large high-profile employers to the County.

Sustainable Development Goals

As specified in article 66B of the above noted 2014 Reform Act, the LECP has been developed within the context of the principles of sustainable development, including the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These wide-ranging goals have been fully considered and are reflected in both the economic and community High Level Goals we have set ourselves.



Figure 2.2: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals



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This LECP will enable those most in need of support to realise their potential in County Kilkenny through a comprehensive consideration of their needs and the integrated support which can be provided.

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Social Inclusion

Addressing the consequences of poverty and realising social inclusivity continue to be of significant importance where individuals, households and communities have and will continue to be affected by the consequences of wider global economic events. The ‘Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025’ was approved by Government and published in January 2020. Its primary ambition was to ‘reduce consistent poverty to 2% or less and to make Ireland one of the most social inclusive countries in the EU’.

The Roadmap highlights the need to recognise that a person’s wellbeing is not something that can be measured simply by reference to relative income measures, often used to categorise poverty. It instead needs to be considered more holistically, taking account of housing, health, community, education and family.

The importance of acknowledging the interrelated nature of needs and related support for families, those with disabilities and other particularly vulnerable groups continues to be recognised in the allocation of targeted monies and the commitment to deliver the above ambition. This LECP will enable those most in need of support to realise their potential in County Kilkenny through a comprehensive consideration of their needs and the integrated support which can be provided.





Regional priorities

As the framework for the economic and community development of the local authority area, the LECP is the primary mechanism at the local level to bring forward the relevant actions arising from national strategy but also importantly regional strategies and policies that have a local remit. This includes, for example the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

The RSES introduces eleven statements, which collectively are intended to form the Strategy to enable the building of a Strong, Resilient and Sustainable Region.

These being:

- (i) Compact Growth**
- (ii) Enhanced Regional Accessibility**
- (iii) Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities**
- (iv) Sustainable Mobility**
- (v) A Strong Economy**
- (vi) High-Quality International Connectivity**
- (vii) Diversity, Language, Culture and Heritage Enhancement**
- (viii) Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society**
- (ix) Sustainable Planned and Infrastructure-led Development**
- (x) A Healthy and Learning Region**
- (xi) Inclusive International Region**

In support of delivering these ambitions the RSES identifies the following 5 economic principles.

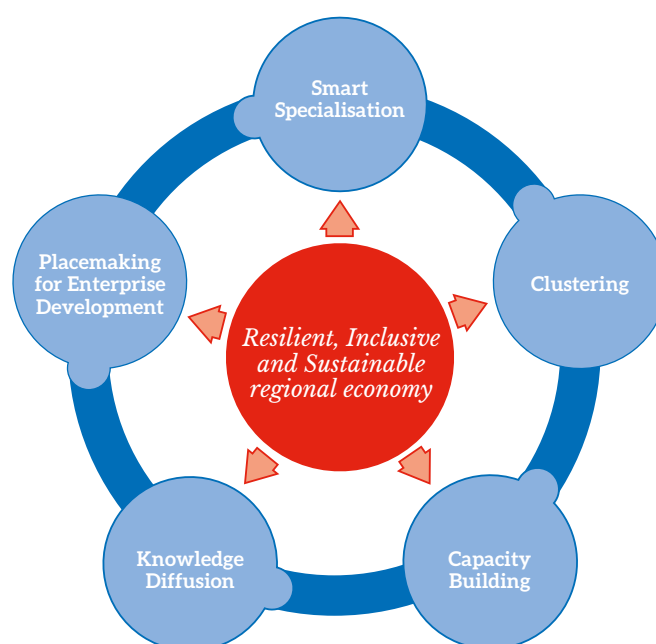


Figure 2.3: 5 principles of the RSES Economic Strategy

The RSES Economic Strategy and the Smart Southern Region Initiative seek to support better places, liveability and associated high quality of life through active participation and collaboration, connected communities with a focus on mobility, environment, creativity and wellbeing allied to the use of technology and digitalisation as a tool in the solution of regional/local challenges.

Specific recognition is given within the RSES to the contribution of tourism, enterprise and industry in Kilkenny to the wider regional economy, acknowledging its existing strengths and potential, to which this LECP responds.

Regional co-operation and collaboration with the South East local authorities on key infrastructural and regional enhancement projects is of vital importance to Kilkenny. Whilst this LECP is focussed on our own authority it acknowledges the importance and benefits associated with regional collaboration.

The South-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 includes projects and initiatives across the four South-East counties to deliver five key strategic pillars:

- 1 Start and grow: Encouraging entrepreneurship and enhancing the region's start-up ecosystem**
- 2 Green growth: Ensuring that the green economy becomes an engine for future job creation and economic growth in the region**
- 3 Smart specialisation and clustering: The principles of smart specialisation and clustering are critical for the region to create a resilient, inclusive, sustainable and competitive economy**
- 4 Innovate: Building on our existing RD&I capacity to place innovation at the heart of the South-East economy**
- 5 Place: Developing a region that is attractive to both domestic and international visitors and communicating the benefits of living and working in the South-East**

This LECP acknowledges these pillars as well as the range of actions the Plan proceeds to identify. These include, for example, the provision of support to position the South-East as a destination for design-led thinking, design innovation, education and training and the development of four Regional micro-clusters in Pharma, Lean Manufacturing, Green and Digital Marketing. Another action of importance to Kilkenny given its economic strengths is the commitment to an exploration of the opportunity to develop a Financial Services Centre of Excellence in the region.

Other identified opportunities for economic collaboration include the Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/Rail network, as identified within the RSES. Further regional priorities have been identified by the First Citizens forum including a focus on the enhancement of the IDA Office; investment in the South East ports (Belview and Rosslare); the upgrade project on N24/N25; and the South East Technological University (SETU). This LECP supports these regionally significant investments and seeks to ensure their benefits are realised by current and future residents and businesses in the County.

The RSES in its consideration of the people and places of the region and the overall approach to development identifies Kilkenny as a Key Town given its role as a self-sustaining regional driver and a major centre for the delivery of public services, as well as its economic and business role and higher order retail function. Policy RPO 11 of the RSES supports the local authority to target population growth of between 30% and 40% for Kilkenny City to 2040, subject to capacity analysis and sustainability. Policy RPO 12 'Kilkenny City' further supports the City to leverage its strategic location and accessibility to the Port of Waterford & Rosslare Europort, Waterford Airport and to build upon its inherent strengths including the finance, technology and creative sectors, skills, innovation and enterprise, tourism and retail services.

Resonating with the national recognition of the importance of the rural economy, the RSES identifies the importance of sustainable rural development and the rejuvenation of small towns and villages, this recognises the critical importance of ensuring sustainable transportation options are available to all communities.

This LECP also acknowledges and supports the RSES identified priority to develop a Balanced Concentric Metropolitan Area for Waterford, including significant expansion of the north side of the River Suir. This recognises that parts of the Waterford Metropolitan Area, including Ferrybank and Belview, are within the jurisdiction of the Council and that the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) sets out key objectives for the employment and population growth of this Metropolitan Area. As a Regional City of Scale the Waterford MASP establishes a targeted population increase of 55-60% to 2040.

The importance of education, upskilling and lifelong learning within the region is highlighted in the Southern Regional Assembly 'Towards a Learning Region' (2022) paper. This recognises that the transformation of the region's Human Capital base, namely the skills, talent and knowledge contained within its residents, will be critical in supporting the Region's continued transformation towards a knowledge-based and high value economy. The critical role of improved lifelong learning is recognised in order to address skill shortages and build resilience and capacity across the labour-force, with this requiring the ongoing development of the Region's skills and education proposition.

Similarly, from an environmental perspective the RSES and other regional strategies support the realisation of improved Blue Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity, with the 'Our Green Region: A Blue Green Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions Framework for the Southern Region' – published in 2022 a significant regional initiative. This LECP recognises the opportunities in Kilkenny to contribute towards these regional initiatives.

Similarly, this LECP recognises that at a regional level there is clear support to realise the economic and social potential of the existing strong tourism offer. Fáilte Ireland have developed an Ancient East Tourism Action Plan for the region and work is ongoing in finalising the inter-related strategic plan for Tourism in Kilkenny, acknowledging it as a year-round international destination.

The Council, through this LECP, will support these priorities described within the RSES and other regional strategies, including the identified priority areas of investment and infrastructure projects to ensure positive impacts are realised. The LECP also responds to the stated ambitions to support growth, including the retention and attraction of new people enhancing its reputation as a place to live and work.

Local priorities

This LECP is consistent with the core strategy and objectives of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the existing Corporate Plan 2019-2024 and will, in its implementation, assist in delivering identified existing and emerging actions within these documents. It will support the Council’s Mission Statement within the City and County Plan to: ‘develop sustainable, connected, economically thriving and proud communities with the consideration of climate change embedded into all of our policies and services’.

To this end it will support the realisation of economic and social benefits of new infrastructure and residential and commercial development in a sustainable way, promoting the compact growth of Kilkenny City, Ferrybank/Belview (as part of the Waterford MASP), the District Towns, the other settlements in the spatial hierarchy and through the strengthening of our rural economies and communities.

It acknowledges the economic strategy of the Development Plan and its identification of the industry sectors which will be key to its future economic development and employment growth. These being: Financial Services, Technology, Manufacturing, Agriculture & Food, Creative Industries, Tourism & Hospitality and Third Level Education. It also recognises the Plan’s identification of the critical role that the retail sector plays in the areas economy, especially through the promotion of the vitality and viability of its existing town centres and Kilkenny City.

The LECP also aligns with several of our other more topic-based local strategies, a number of which will be refreshed and revisited over the lifetime of the LECP. The relationship with these documents and their future iterations is reflected within the Implementation Plan, which references the delivery of these strategies and plans as a number of the identified priority actions.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The LECP has undergone Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening processes in order to establish whether there is a need for further detailed assessment. The prepared Screening Reports are available on the Kilkenny County Council website with these concluding that neither an SEA nor an AA is required.





3. Socio-Economic Evidence Base

We published our Socio-Economic Statement in final form in December 2022. The full Statement is available and has been published separately. We replicate here the distilled socio-economic highlights and the SWOT analysis. These have informed the setting of the vision and goals of this LECP, with the process explained more fully within the appended Consultation Report.

Socio-Economic Highlights Demographics and Housing

Some 103,685 people currently live in County Kilkenny, according to the preliminary findings of the 2022 Census². While the population has grown since the last Census in 2016, the rate of growth (4.5%) was the second lowest of the state's 26 counties, marginally ahead of only County Donegal. The population of the state, in contrast, grew by some 7.6% over this period.

Circa 61% of the population growth recorded in County Kilkenny between Census years related to natural increase, as births outnumbered deaths. The rest was accounted for by net immigration, albeit it is of note – and shown at Figure 3.1, where Kilkenny is labelled as “KK” – that **the rate of net inward migration was relatively low when compared to other counties**, based on a standardised rate per 1,000 residents.

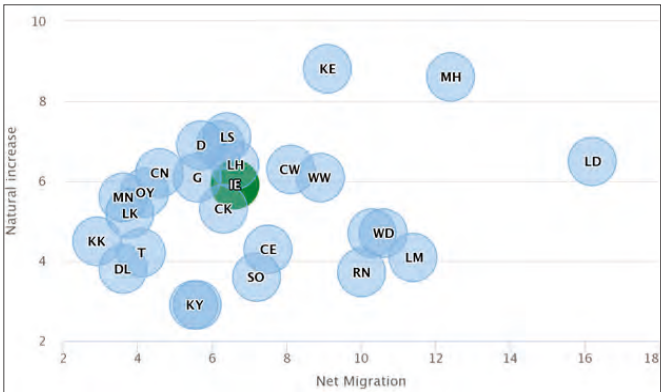


Figure 3.1: Average Annual Natural Increase and Estimated Net Migration per 1,000 Residents (2016-22)

Source: CSO

The RSES introduces official projections, developed by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), which are based to 2016 but suggest that County Kilkenny could have as many as 110,000 residents by 2026. The Council has extrapolated this projection to estimate that there could subsequently be circa 111,077 residents in 2027, and it follows that **there could be around 112,154 residents in 2028** – the final year to be covered by the new LECP – based on the same logic³. This would make the population some 8.2% larger than it was in 2022.

² CSO (2022) Census of Population 2022 - Preliminary Results

³ The Council calculated the average annual population growth between 2016 and 2026 (1,077) and added this to the latter to arrive at an estimate for 2027, so the same has been done here to produce an estimate for 2028

Residents lived in one of the **41,279 dwellings that existed throughout the County in 2022**, with the housing stock having grown by circa 5.2% since 2016⁴. This represents growth at a rate that exceeded all but ten of the state's 26 counties, approaching the state average of 6.0%.

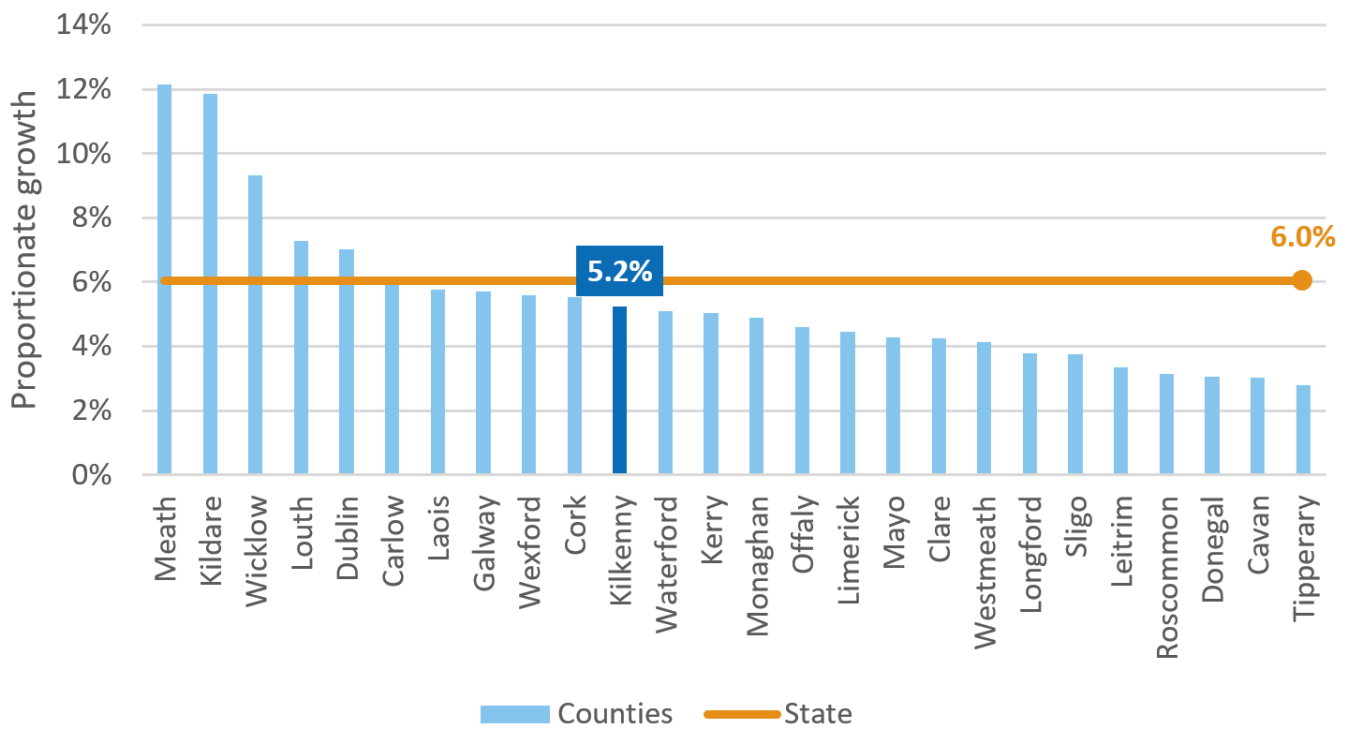


Figure 3.2: Benchmarking Growth in Housing Stock (2016-22)
Source: CSO

⁴ CSO (2022) Census of Population 2022 - Preliminary Results

Circa 1,619 households were recorded on the County Kilkenny Housing List in 2021, having been approved for social housing support. This was the fewest since 2010, with the number of households on the list continuing to fall year-on-year over the last five years⁵. Despite this positive trend nearly 300 households were reportedly homeless as of April 2022.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of the County's residents (88%) were classified as "White Irish" as of the 2016 Census, with equivalent data from 2022 yet to be published⁶. A further 8% had another "White" background, with this including a small number of Irish travellers (0.6%). Most of the remainder had Black or Asian ethnicity, excluding the small number that did not respond to this question (1.5%).

The Local Economy and Labour Force

County Kilkenny had circa 4,691 enterprises in its private business economy in 2020, according to the Business Demography Survey. This was the most recorded in any year since at least 2008, having grown by some 15% from the low recorded in 2014.

Some 93% of the County's businesses employed fewer than ten people, slightly exceeding the state average of 92%. Only six businesses employed more than 250 people, such businesses being almost half as prevalent as seen nationally⁷. This includes an under-representation of FDI businesses, with a key priority for Kilkenny being the strategic development of investment initiatives such as the Abbey Quarter and Belview Port so that the infrastructure is in place for FDI investment.

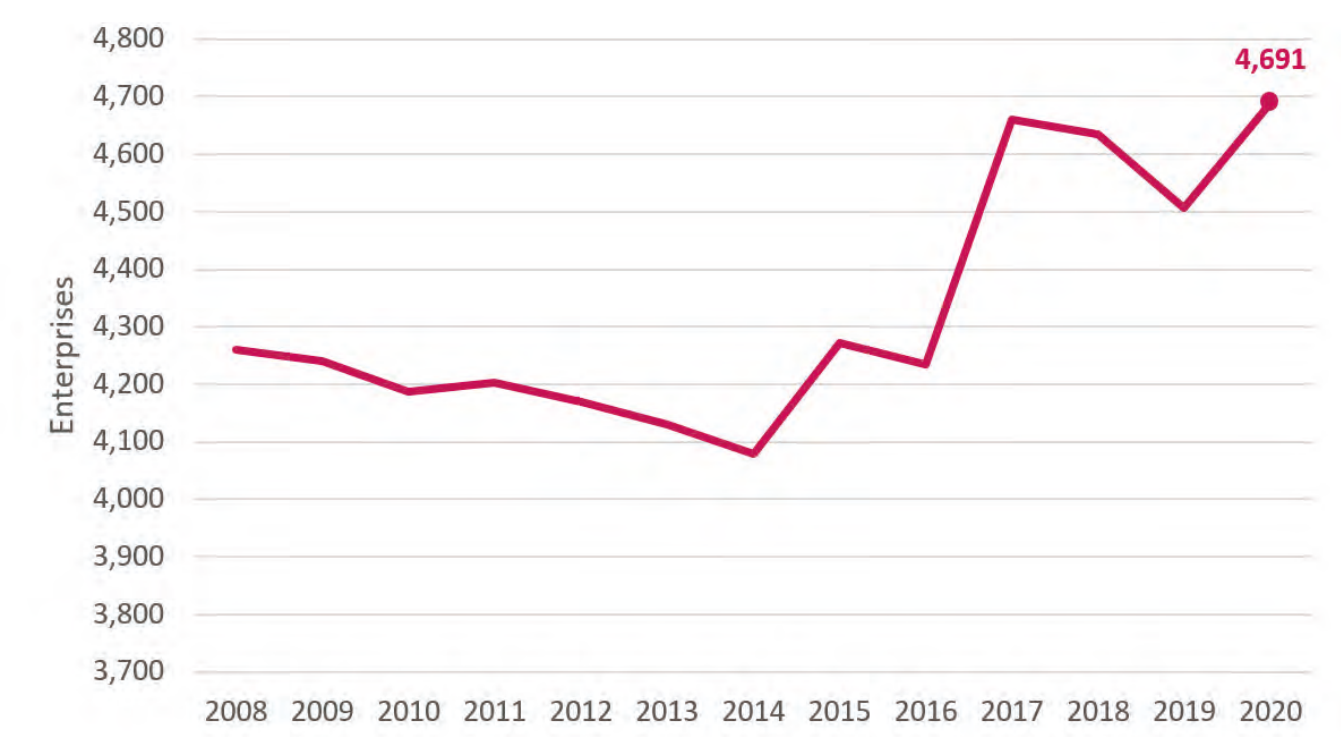


Figure 3.3: Change in Number of Enterprises in County Kilkenny
Source: Business Demography Survey

Businesses employing more than 50 people were also less prevalent in the County than across the state, but have notably increased in number since 2014 by almost half (47%).

Over a quarter of the County's businesses (26%) operated in the construction sector, which is proportionately larger than the state average (22%) and has grown its business base by some 20% since 2014. Nearly a fifth of businesses (19%) are in the wholesale and retail sector, which is likewise larger than it is nationally (17%) but has grown at a much slower rate of 5%. Roughly one sixth of the County's businesses (16%) involve professional, scientific or technical activities, falling slightly short of the state average (17%) but notably growing by more than a quarter (26%) since 2014. No other one sector accounts for more than 8% of the County's private businesses.

Nearly 3,500 people were employed in the County's agriculture, forestry and fishing sector as of the 2016 Census, rising by around 3% since 2011. Recent decades have seen growth in the number of large farms, spanning more than 50 hectares, and a reduction in the number of small farms. Forests account for around 11% of the County's useable land and the majority of this (82%) relates to commercial forestry, coming into maturity over the next twenty years.

The County attracted 727,000 tourists in 2019, the last complete year unaffected by Covid-19. This was relatively evenly split between domestic and international tourists, albeit with the former slightly more prevalent accounting for 53% of this total. Kilkenny was Ireland's second most popular domestic short-break destination and the City supported a significant number of festivals and events. There is a strong pipeline of planning permissions for additional hotel rooms within the City, which if delivered will continue to grow the capacity of Kilkenny to accommodate increased numbers of tourists on overnight breaks.

At least two thirds (65%) of the County's residents had a broadband internet connection as of the 2016 Census, falling slightly below the state average⁸ (71%). While there is no more recent data available for the County, the latter is believed to have risen to the point where 85% of households throughout Ireland had fixed broadband as of 2021. This notably compares to the figure reported for the South-East SPA, of which County Kilkenny is part⁹ (84%).

⁵ Table 13 of Kilkenny Housing Strategy (2021-27) includes numbers on the housing list for the period 2010 – 2019. Data for the last three years confirms numbers have continued to reduce: 2019 – 1,988 households, 2020 – 1,899 households, 2021 – 1,619 households

⁶ The CSO have indicated that the first 'official' results from Census 2022 will be published between April 2023 and December 2023. These timeframes are outside of the programme for the preparation of this LECP.

⁷ Circa 0.24% of businesses in the state employed more than 250 people in 2020, compared to 0.13% in County Kilkenny

⁸ These are minimum figures given that this was "not stated" in some responses

⁹ CSO (2021) Internet Coverage and Usage in Ireland 2021

The 2016 Census showed that County Kilkenny, like the wider state, has seen **declining levels of lower education attainment and increasing levels of third level educational attainment**. The County nonetheless continued to lag behind the state average for third level education (36/40%) albeit it is hoped that the establishment of the South East Technological University (SETU) in May 2022 – creating the region’s first such university – will have a positive impact in encouraging greater numbers of residents to continue studying.

County Kilkenny saw its younger working age population, aged 20 to 34, reduce over the five years to the 2016 Census. This also occurred across the state but at a slightly less pronounced rate (11/13%). Equivalent data from the 2022 Census is not yet available.

Health and Wellbeing

Some 89% of the County’s residents reported that they were in good or very good health at the 2016 Census, surpassing the state average of 87%. Less than 2% reported themselves to be in bad or very bad health. This was generally consistent with the findings of the preceding Census.

Circa 13% of residents reported that they had at least one disability as of 2016, falling slightly below the state average (14%). Over a third of these residents (37%) were aged 65 or above, while 66% were aged 45 or over.

Nearly half (46%) of those reporting disabilities had difficulty with pain, breathing or another chronic illness, with slightly fewer (43%) having difficulties with basic physical activities. One quarter had a learning difficulty.

People with disabilities were less than half as likely to work as the general population (22/53%) and less than half as likely to have access to a car or van (8/20%). Circa 15% lived in social housing compared to 9% of the general population.

Deprivation, Poverty and Social Exclusion

County Kilkenny saw a dramatic increase in deprivation over the five years to 2011, following the economic collapse of 2008. A partial recovery occurred over the subsequent period to 2016, albeit deprivation levels continued to exceed the state average. County Kilkenny’s relative deprivation score¹⁰ of -0.3 classified the County’s measure of affluence as ‘marginally below average’ in 2016 as compared to the baseline state average of 0.9 (‘marginally above average’)

Across the County, scores across all 113 Electoral Divisions range from categorisations of ‘Disadvantaged’ to ‘Affluent’. At higher geographical levels, however, pockets of relative deprivation can be masked. In total there are **2,763 people living within Small Areas which fall within the category of ‘Very Deprived’**.

Table 3.1 shows the ten electoral districts within County Kilkenny which have the highest deprivation ratings. For comparison the table also shows the relative index scores for the two urban Kilkenny electoral districts.

	Electoral District	Deprivation Relative Index Score (%)
1	Urlingford	-12.4
2	Johnstown	-12.0
3	Ferrybank	-11.0
4	Graiguenamanagh	-9.3
5	Goresbridge	-8.6
6	Clogh	-8.3
7	Freshford	-7.9
8	Pollrone	-6.8
9	Castlecomer	-6.1
10	Callan Urban	-5.9
	Kilkenny No. 1 Urban	-2.9
	Kilkenny No. 2 Urban	1.3

Table 3.1: Electoral Districts with highest relative deprivation ratings (2016) - Kilkenny Urban Electoral Districts included for comparison

With lone parents generally at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion, it is of note that there were **around 4,260 households in County Kilkenny led by lone parents** as of the 2016 Census. This equated to circa 18% of all households and fell below the state average of 20%.

There has been **a gradual reduction in the number of crimes recorded** in the Kilkenny/Carlow Garda Division. Circa 5,140 crimes were recorded in 2019 compared to 8,590 in 2010, and this fell further to 4,370 in 2020 albeit this may have been influenced by reduced mobility during the pandemic.

Climate Change and Energy

The Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy describes how **climate change is already having a significant impact on the County**, with these effects likely to increase in their frequency and intensity¹¹.

Over the decade to 2019, the County recorded **increases in both the number of days with heavy rainfall and the number of flooding events**. It also experienced extreme temperatures over the same period, with 2018 for instance seeing red warnings for snow in February followed by one of the hottest summers on record.

The most up to date information on energy and emissions in County Kilkenny comes from the South East Energy Agency's Energy Hub (Regional Observatory for Energy and Emissions Data)¹². This shows that **in 2018 the county of Kilkenny consumed 2,888 GWh of primary energy and emitted 1,640 ktonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)**. The Transport sector was responsible for the highest energy use in 2018 (33.61%), followed by Residential (26.47%) and Industry (26.42%). The Agricultural sector was responsible for the highest level of carbon dioxide emissions in 2018 (51.97%), followed by Transport (14.85%), Residential (14.11%) and Industry (12.36%).

In the context of the above it should be borne in mind that Council services account for about 3% of the emissions of the County. While the Council must take measures to reduce the emissions from its own services, in order to have a significant overall impact, it must also be cognisant of the opportunity to use its influence and role as an exemplar to reduce emissions across the County in general.



¹⁰ The deprivation index scores are rescaled allowing assignment to an 8-point scale of descriptive labels ranging from -30 (extremely disadvantaged) to above 30 (extremely affluent)

¹¹ Kilkenny County Council (2019) Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

¹² The South East Energy Agency Energy Hub (regional observatory for energy and emissions data) <https://www.energyhub.ie/sustainable-energy-action-plans/annual-data-kilkenny/>

Economic and Community SWOT Analysis

Strengths and Opportunities

Central location within the South East Strategic Planning Area with good road and rail links to Dublin and elsewhere

A popular tourist destination, hosting numerous festivals and events with the potential to increase the length of visitor stays and their contribution to our local economy

A track record of partnership work, based on integrated delivery mechanisms

Established community networks and voluntary sector

A growing number of private businesses

An increasingly skilled population, set to benefit from the newly established South East Technological University

A healthy pipeline of homes with planning permission suggesting that the County will be well placed to sustain the comparatively positive recent growth of its housing stock

An established natural heritage and built environment

A rural economy that is established and growing in an outstanding natural setting

Weaknesses and Threats

Slowing population growth with relatively little in-migration

A diminishing number of young adult residents with this having an impact on labour availability as well as the demographic profile of many of our communities outside of Kilkenny City

A continued need for social and affordable housing and evidence of homelessness

Overreliance on construction and retail sectors, with room for greater diversity

Under-representation of larger employers, including FDI businesses

Third level education attainment continues to lag behind the state average

Persistent deprivation at a level that exceeds the state average, with evidence of clear concentrations of more acute deprivation

A lack of certainty around how tourism will recover from Covid-19

Climate change is already having a significant impact in the County

The above SWOT reflects the outcomes of a detailed analysis of available datasets and the insights of key stakeholders across the County. It is important in reflecting on the opportunity presented by this LECP to also reflect on the views of those surveyed as part of our engagement process.

These positive perceptions provide an exceptionally valuable foundation from which to build in addressing both the opportunities identified in the SWOT above but also the challenges, many of which reflect deep-seated and complex issues which have had negative consequences for too many of our residents for too long.

Respondents were asked to describe Kilkenny in three words, and the following word cloud demonstrates that impressions were overwhelmingly positive.



Figure 3.4: Responses to 'Describe Kilkenny county in 3 words'



4. Vision, Themes, High Level Goals and Sustainable Community Objectives

The extensive process of engagement with our communities, businesses and other stakeholders on our Socio-Economic Statement facilitated the generation of a new Vision for this LECP alongside 10 High Level Goals, each underpinned by several Objectives.

The Vision, Goals and Objectives reflect the rapidly changing circumstances faced now and in recent years by our different communities and those with an investment in the County.

The realisation of our ambition and the achievements sought through our High-Level Goals will allow us to face into continuing uncertain times by creating a more resilient economy and communities across the County. In doing so we will play to our strengths whilst looking to address potential weaknesses and sustain the good work which has helped us to ensure those more vulnerable members of our community are provided with the support they need.

Vision 2023 – 2028

“

By 2028 Kilkenny will be a future-ready, citizen-centric and welcoming county that is climate resilient, provides jobs, attracts highly productive businesses, delivers inclusive services and celebrates creativity

”

Kilkenny is not immune from the fast-evolving 21st century. As the county moves full forward into a new Local Economic and Community Plan period, we are setting out a future-ready, citizen-centric plan that responds to the greatest challenge of climate change; contributes to the transition to a low-carbon circular economy; and continues to provide jobs and attract or grow cutting edge highly productive industries, all while emissions fall.

We want to do this together, reflecting the warm, positive and friendly community we are; welcoming new visitors to explore the beauty of our county's built and natural heritage, celebrating our creativity with us; attracting, retaining and training a highly skilled, healthy and productive workforce through new third-level education infrastructure; and building on partnerships that deliver inclusive services to meet the changing needs of our whole community including their health and wellbeing. Like a team of players, by doing lots of small things well together, we believe that we can achieve much more.

Kilkenny is a warm and welcoming city, where all, no matter their gender, age, origin or town, are treated fairly and with respect. People who live and work in Kilkenny take pride in calling this county their home; they feel that they have a stake in its success.

Kilkenny has a bold vision to step up to the greatest challenge facing humanity this century; and that is climate change. As we surmount this obstacle to human existence, our lives will need to adapt. In the city centre and surrounding towns and villages, there will be greater pedestrianisation and fewer cars, and enhanced sustainable means of travel connecting our communities. As people breathe in the cleaner air in our green spaces, they will be surrounded by a thriving ecosystem of wildlife and habitats, who co-exist with our built environment and now benefit by it. As we shop, we are conscious of the circular economy, reducing our waste and re-using precious resources where possible. People will be proud of Kilkenny's contribution to turning the tide against rising temperatures and bio-diversity collapse.

Kilkenny's economy is robust, resilient and resolute. Realising the ambition and objectives of the RSES Economic Strategy and the Smart Southern Region initiative and in attracting new highly productive industries, such as fintech, gaming and design, and pharmaceuticals, the economy provides more jobs for residents. Working together, the county's economy grows while emissions fall, and less environmentally intense sectors are supported in the transition to a low-carbon economy. On Kilkenny's high street, more units are occupied and bustling with trade, with the right and proper interventions to support them. In towns across the county, enterprise hubs serve as incubation spaces for new start-ups to propel new opportunities for growth, making Kilkenny a top destination for starting, growing and succeeding as a business. By attracting new jobs and workers, we have the capacity to house them in our communities.

Kilkenny is proud of its heritage and the rest of the world is taking note. The county is a top Irish and European tourist destination and is increasingly punching into the global tourism scene. Its unique architecture and arts & craft offer attracts tourists and their spending power, which support a bustling tourism sector. Visitors spend time, not just in the city, but exploring what the rural county has to offer, particularly active excursions along new waterway routes connecting the south east. The celebration of Kilkenny's heritage makes it a firm nodal point in all aspects of decision-making in the county.

Kilkenny is a rural county located in the South-East SPA of Ireland, with a web of towns, villages and farms, who all contribute an enormous amount to Kilkenny's success and the wider success of the region. They will be well, and reliably connected with one another, Kilkenny City and the rest of Ireland. Their vitality will complement the growth and development of Kilkenny City as a 'Key Town' and the Kilkenny component of the Waterford Metropolitan Area in accordance with Project Ireland 2040 and the RSES.

The county's agriculture sector remains a core tenant of economic activity and plays its part to fight climate change, by utilising more sustainable and efficient practices. Rural communities are treated with respect and equality; serviced by a strong foundational offer that is locally available and not dependent on Kilkenny city.

Kilkenny's workforce can outwit the best. Building upon the SRA Learning Region Initiative a well-trained and well-educated, dedicated cohort of professionals have been raised within the county, without the need to travel far from their origins. A new university provides a menu of third-level education options, including apprenticeships for our hospitality sector and graduates for our cutting-edge industries.

“

The LECP serves to ensure that economic and community strands are inter-related and aligned, recognising that progress against one will have material benefits for the other.

”

“

Kilkenny's economy is robust, resilient and resolute.

”

High-Level Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

In the process of arriving at our High Level Goals it became clear that Climate Change represented an over-riding theme that would be key to defining the success or otherwise of our other Goals. Climate Change is therefore identified as an all-encompassing 'theme' with its own High Level Goal, objectives and outcomes.

The LECP serves to ensure that economic and community strands are inter-related and aligned, recognising that progress against one will have material benefits for the other. Recognising the structure of existing governance arrangements within the Council, however, the goals are sub-divided under a separate Economic and Community Theme.

The ten High-Level Goals we have set ourselves will enable us to ensure that this LECP will be an instrument of positive change. We consider these goals to be challenging but also achievable and realistic.

The successful delivery of these Goals and Objectives will be realised through our Implementation Plan, which is published as a separate document but forms an integral part of our LECP. Measuring success requires a set of realistic and targeted outcomes. This section therefore presents under the relevant theme:

- A High Level Goal
- Associated Objectives
- Related High-Level Outcomes



Theme 1: Climate Change

Goal 1: To ensure that climate action is embraced, and that our actions and interventions are embedded across all areas of the LECP to contribute positively to the global climate and biodiversity crisis affecting our citizens and support Ireland to achieve its climate and biodiversity goals and obligations, we will...

Objective 1a: implement the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019 – 2024) and a future Climate Action Plan due for publication in 2023, which will set out how the local authority intend to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the services we deliver by at least 7% per annum and by 51% by 2030

- High level outcome: Achieve the Council's carbon reduction targets
- High level outcome: Demonstrate progress in the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy
- High level outcome: Communities mobilised to deliver climate action
- High level outcome: Deliver and promote evidence-based climate action through adaptation and mitigation
- High level outcome: Demonstrate governance, leadership and partnership to deliver climate action

Objective 1b: support the commitment underpinning the ISO50001 certification to deliver a 50% improvement in the energy efficiency target over the ten years from 2021 and elevate take-up of grants available as a response to the current energy crisis and ensure long-term improvement in energy efficiency or the installation of renewable energy technologies.

- High level outcome: Achieve the Council's energy efficiency targets
- High level outcome: Increase the take-up of supports aimed at improving energy efficiency from a 2022/2023 base

Objective 1c: implement measures associated with the Circular Economy (eliminating waste and pollution through a transition to renewable energy and materials) to deliver a resilient system to the benefit of businesses, the environment, and citizens in the County.

- High level outcome: Enterprise mobilised to deliver climate action and transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy
- High level outcome: 'Just transition' embedded in climate action

Objective 1d: Implement measures associated with Smarter Travel initiatives

- High level outcome: Increase modal share of sustainable transport modes (by bike or by path) and reduce car dependency
- High level outcome: Enhanced public transport service for all communities

Theme 2: Economic

Goal 2: To build a resilient, sustainable business base and support new and existing businesses to grow, be enterprising and take advantage of new opportunities, we will...

Objective 2a: support the growth of existing and emerging higher-value sectors within our economy, including engineering, life sciences (including medtech), craft and design, ICT, Green Tech and fintech companies to realise the benefits of clustering

- High level outcome: Increase the number of businesses and numbers employed in these sectors from a 2022/23 base

Objective 2b: facilitate sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation by encouraging design thinking, providing support and infrastructure to our businesses enabling them to achieve their strong ambitions for expansion and growth and to increase their scale and resilience

- High level outcome: Increase in numbers of businesses participating in productivity and sustainability programmes from 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Increase in the number of businesses employing ten or more people from a 2022/23 base
- High-level outcome: Increase in the numbers of businesses who engage in first time exporting from 2022/2023 base

Objective 2c: ensure our local economy contributes proportionately and integrates with the growth of the region and maximises its international reach by improving the attractiveness of Kilkenny as a place to do business

- High level outcome: Increase in internationally-trading EI or IDA Ireland client companies from 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Increase employment at a rate above or at least in line with the regional rate of growth

Goal 3: To realise the economic and social value of Kilkenny's built and natural heritage, its cultural reputation and offer, and its growing tourism, creative and cultural sectors, we will...

Objective 3a: ensure communities can partake in, and get the maximum benefit from improvements to the cultural life of the City and County

- High level outcome: Increased numbers of events and initiatives offered by arts and cultural facilities which encourage attendance by residents of Kilkenny
- High level outcome: Promote compliance with Universal Design Guidelines in materials promoting the cultural life of the City and County

Objective 3b: build on Kilkenny's reputation as a county of 'must visit' experiences and balance the visitor experience through an expanded yearlong offer, which encourages our visitors to stay longer and explore more of our County's landscape and heritage

- High level outcome: Increase in room and bedspace occupancy, including length of stay, from 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Evidence of the creative, heritage and cultural sectors working together to enhance Kilkenny's reputation as a world class tourism destination
- High level outcome: Expanded tourism product offering for visitors to 'see and do' within the County

Objective 3c: support growth in sustainable and accessible businesses and information in these sectors, ensuring balanced representation across the County

- High level outcome: Increase the size of the tourism and creative and cultural sectors from a 2022/23 base (employees count)
- High level outcome: Support and protect our natural, built and cultural heritage through increased funding / investment

Goal 4: To ensure our rural economy and communities are supported to develop sustainably, we will...

Objective 4a: enhance the quality of life in rural communities, by protecting habitats and maintaining a balanced sustainable environment and agricultural economy

- High level outcome: Sustained economic output of the agricultural sector across the County from a 2022/23 base
- High-level outcome: Support farmers to innovate and be more sustainable as set out in Teagasc's 'Farm to Fork' strategy
- High level outcome: Improvement of natural habitats from a 2022/23 base

Objective 4b: sustain and improve services and infrastructure, developing "Smart", "Accessible" and "Connected" rural towns and villages to help them realise their potential as attractive places to live and visit

- High level outcome: Create towns and villages that are viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hubs for local communities as per the Town Centre First Policy
- High level outcome: Increase the availability of high-speed broadband services in rural settlements from 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Increase modal share of sustainable transport modes (by bike or by path) and reduce car dependency



Goal 5: To increase the number of economically active people in the County by ensuring access to further and higher education infrastructure and to lifelong learning for every working age resident who wants to work to enhance their educational qualifications and achieve the skills required, we will...

Objective 5a: work with our businesses to ensure they have a labour-force which has the flexibility to respond to current and changing skill-based requirements, including those arising from new emerging sectors

- High level outcome: Reduction in unfilled vacancies, in particular in growing sectors, from a 2022/23 base

Objective 5b: continue to support improvements in continuous educational attainment, with a particular focus on the delivery of further and third level educational infrastructure, including industry led apprenticeships

- High level outcome: Increase in the number of enrolments within further and higher-level education from a 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Increase in numbers of completed apprenticeships from a 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Improved literacy (digital and paper) to enable equal access to all lifelong learning opportunities

Goal 6: To grow the number of third level graduates working in County Kilkenny, we will...

Objective 6a: capitalise on existing and planned investment, such as Ireland's newest Technological University (SETU) by making regional and national links between our business community, our universities and graduates

- High level outcome: Increase in the number of undergraduates enrolled within County Kilkenny from a 2022/23 base
- High-level outcome: Increase the participation level in third level education from a 2022/23 base

Objective 6b: increase the share of all recent graduates who obtain a job in the County

- High level outcome: Increase the proportion of graduates obtaining a job in County Kilkenny from a 2022/23 base

Theme 3: Community

Goal 7: To reduce inequalities and promote and enhance the importance of health and wellbeing, we will...

Objective 7a: focus on addressing the wider social determinants of health – the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work and age – to create economic, social, culture, recreation and sport opportunities and a physical environment that will foster improved healthy living

- High level outcome: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- High level outcome: Contribute to the target to reduce by one third by 2030 premature mortality from non-communicable diseases

Objective 7b: support improvements to mental health, including a pro-active approach to recognising the importance of wellbeing, environmental context and encouraging creativity

- High level outcome: Promote positive mental health and well-being for all at all ages

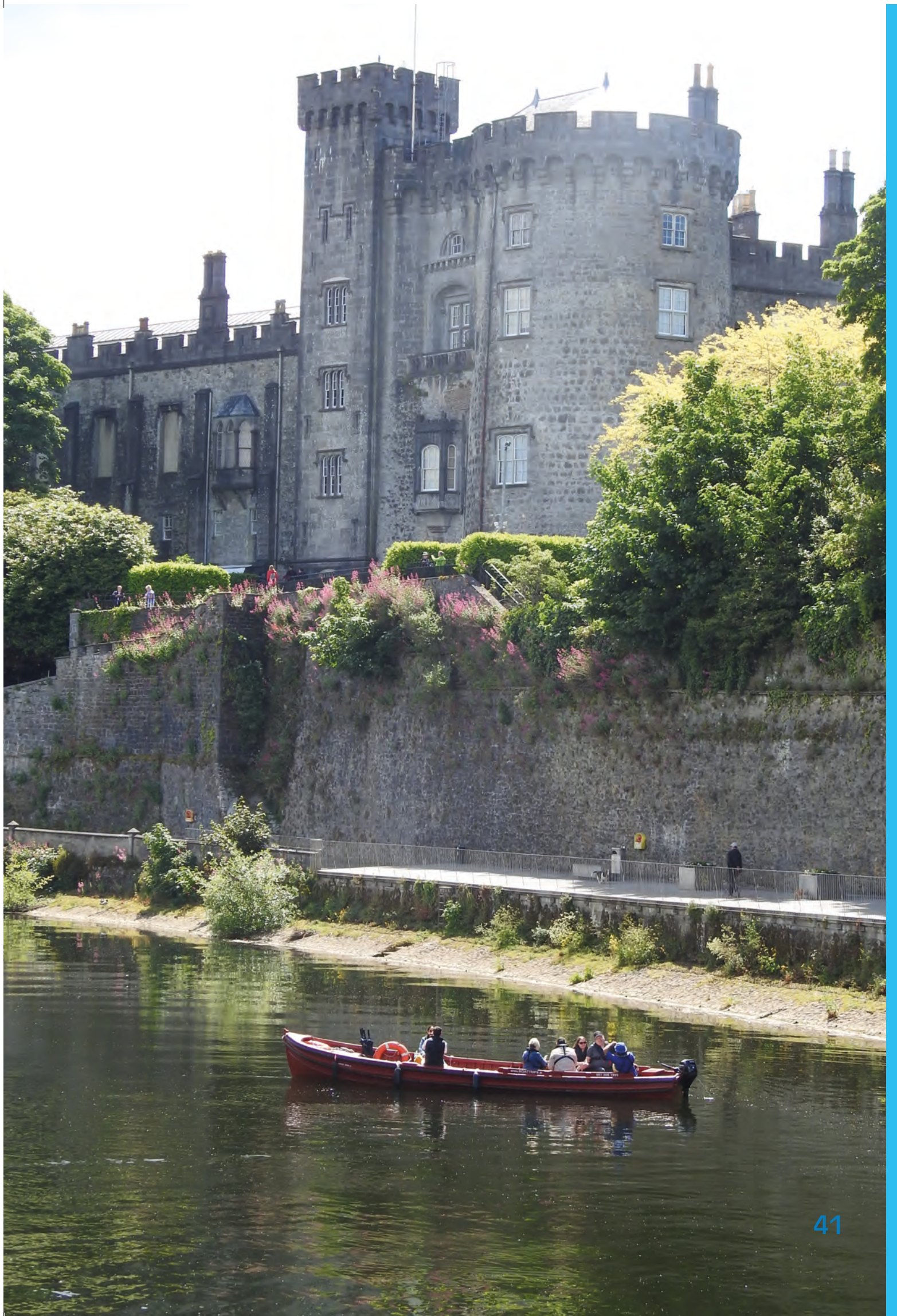
Goal 8: To reduce the number of people living in deprivation and promote community development, community resilience, climate justice, integration, diversity and social inclusion, we will...

Objective 8a: dedicate targeted resources and integrated approaches across all service delivery areas to those people and places where issues of deprivation and poverty are concentrated

- High level outcome: Funding proportionately directed to areas and groups identified as having acute levels of deprivation and poverty

Objective 8b: promote and support intercultural awareness, community resilience, integration and diversity through meaningful engagement with citizens, to ensure equality of opportunity for older people, those living with a disability and all minority groups

- High level outcome: Increased participation of minority groups of working age within employment or education (economically active) from a 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Reduction in older persons reporting loneliness from a 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Increase numbers within minority groups participating in local elections and community and voluntary activities
- High level outcome: Increased evidence of engagement of marginalised and minority communities with KCC and other lead partners
- High-level outcome: Ensure community resilience





Goal 9: To develop increased local capacity and improve targeting of social investment through increased engagement and participation with local community groups that will deliver improved community facilities, supports and services, we will...

Objective 9a: respond positively to the implications of a changing age profile and the associated risk of individuals in rural and urban areas becoming socially excluded

- High level outcome: Increase in numbers of participants of local community groups registered or active with all stakeholders from a 2022/23 base

Objective 9b: learn from successes and broadening participation to assist the specific groups who remain discouraged or lacking in confidence to engage more pro-actively with their communities

- High level outcome: Increase in recorded participation across all age groups in community activities / groups registered or active with all stakeholders from a 2022/23 base

Objective 9c: identify, define, and report on community needs and capacity, to target the delivery of future support and infrastructure

- High level outcome: Improved co-ordination of information across the community and voluntary sectors to map funding of community groups / facilities

Goal 10: To maintain the provision of appropriate community supports and services for new and existing housing developments, we will...

Objective 10a: embed support within communities for the most vulnerable households

- High level outcome: Reduction in transiency rates (moves within less than 12 months) of more vulnerable households within newly developed social housing from a 2022/23 base
- High level outcome: Communities confirming satisfaction in their new housing developments
- High level outcome: Increased evidence of engagement with the Travelling community around housing issues

Objective 10b: be proactive in the face of fluctuating and emerging housing demand pressures across Ireland, and as those in need of accommodation present themselves within the county.

- High level outcome: Identify and manage the use of temporary accommodation for households new to Kilkenny and the increase in provision as required
- High level outcome: Reduction in the number of rough sleepers from a 2022/23 base

5. Implementation Arrangements

Developing our Initial Implementation Plan

In order to deliver our Goals, Objectives and Outcomes we have produced our initial Implementation Plan. This is published in parallel to the LECP and must be read alongside it. The Implementation Plan will be updated every two years to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to changing context, opportunities and challenges.

The Implementation Plan sets out a series of actions against each objective that we believe will make an individual and collective impact in delivering the High Level Outcomes.

It is important to note that not every idea, good initiative, or commitment identified through the process has been referenced. We have had to prioritise actions, recognising that the LECP will be supported by a much wider number of strategies, organisations and groups in Kilkenny, regionally and nationally. Actions have therefore been prioritised through a process of engagement with those agencies who have been and will continue to be responsible, alongside the Council, for supporting change and growth in Kilkenny.

It is not a closed list. The organic nature of the LECP means that it will be possible to identify additional actions where they are necessary to respond to changing circumstances and funding opportunities, or are identified as important by our stakeholders, businesses and citizens. We will refresh the identified actions through our process of annual monitoring over the full six-year duration of the Plan.



The Implementation Plan will be updated every two years to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to changing context, opportunities and challenges.



They do, however, provide an important starting point to ensure there is accountability and a commitment to progress.

A collective responsibility

Many of the actions will be led by the Council because it is responsible for delivering change and realising established targets for change and growth through its corporate objectives, responsibilities and existing strategies. This includes for example our contributions to national targets established to demonstrate our commitment to addressing the climate and biodiversity crisis.

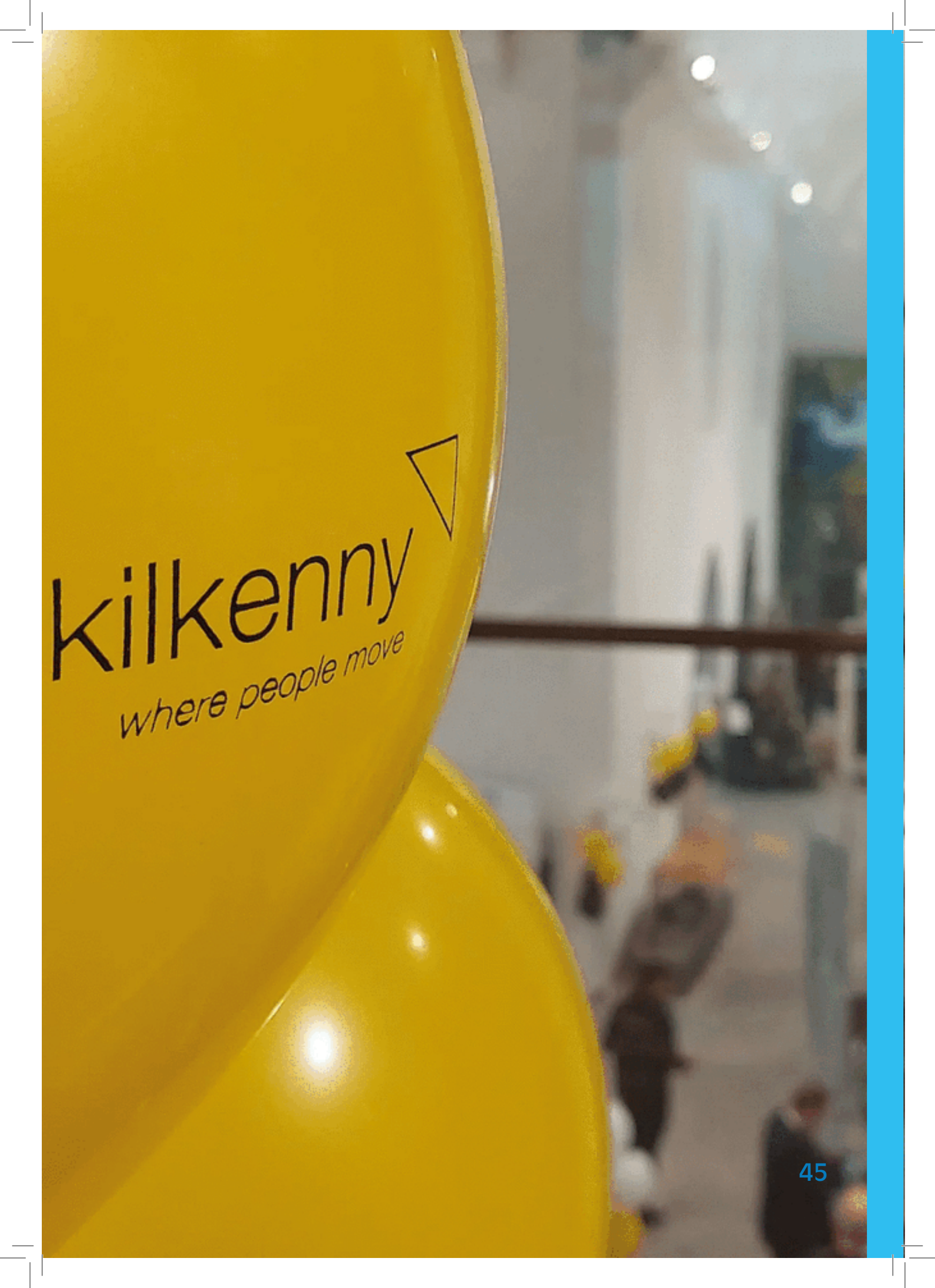
The successful delivery of the actions in their totality will, however, be co-dependent on a number of factors, in particular adequate resources being provided and allocated to named actions, and the co-operation of and collaboration between agencies and organisations, alongside the Council, in the delivery of the actions agreed.

Under-resourcing and lack of co-operation will, at a minimum, slow down the delivery of actions within the agreed timeframes and at worst, prevent them being satisfactorily achieved at all.

It is envisaged that agencies which are identified as having a lead role in the delivery of actions will allocate appropriate resources to help deliver the priority actions, along with their core area of activity. Lead agencies will report, as appropriate, to the SPC for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism and the LCDC in relation to their progress in the implementation of actions.

Agencies identified as having a supporting role will be expected to offer proportionate support and allocate resource to assist those leading actions.

Monitoring the implementation of the actions will be critical to ensure they remain relevant and on track, and to identify potential gaps. A monitoring and evaluation framework is included in the following section of this LECP.



kilkenny
where people move

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The LECP will be implemented over the six-year period from 2023 to 2028.

Priority actions have been identified in the Initial Implementation Plan which will commence within the first two years of this period. A number of these actions will complete within this time horizon while others will be delivered in additional years and potentially over the full lifetime of the LECP.

The monitoring of progress of individual actions will therefore be critical in ensuring that the LECP and the Implementation Plan are responsive to change and in holding those tasked with delivering to account. This will facilitate a process of continuous evaluation alongside more formal reporting mechanisms and outputs.

Responsibilities for and outputs of this process are described below.

Responsibilities

The monitoring of High-Level Goal 1 (Theme 1 Climate Change) will be the responsibility of Kilkenny County Council, given its wider corporate responsibilities to report on performance against national targets on this issue.

The monitoring of the economic actions (Theme 2) will be the responsibility of Kilkenny County Council's SPC for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism (SPC1). This will include liaising with those Lead Partners outside of the Council who are responsible for economic actions.

The monitoring of the community actions (Theme 3) will be the responsibility of the County Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). This will include liaising with those Lead Partners outside of the Council who are responsible for community actions.

The LECP Advisory Group, comprising representatives of the LCDC and SPC1, will have the responsibility for co-ordinating the monitoring process and preparing associated reporting outputs. This Group will draw upon support staff from the LCDC and SPC1 as required to prepare the annual monitoring reporting outputs.



The monitoring of progress of individual actions will be critical in ensuring that the LECP and the Implementation Plan are responsive to change and in holding those tasked with delivering to account.



Monitoring outputs

It is expected that those responsible for monitoring will collate information throughout the year to inform an annual monitoring process. This will include:

- Liaison with other national, regional and local agencies to collate published County level datasets which are required to assess progress against relevant High Level Outcomes;
- Assembly of case study materials relating to specific actions as appropriate. This will be important in documenting success and could include information reported in the press / other networks with the material collected also offering an important resource for the external promotion of the Council and other stakeholders; and





- Collation of milestone achievements against actions from other local agencies who are nominated Lead Partners
This will be particularly relevant where the KPIs for actions relate to milestones such as the production of a document, appointment of a position or a specific event.

Information assembled will, as appropriate, be drawn together and presented to the SPC and the LCDC at their meetings throughout the year as a means of feedback and monitoring progress. Any issues arising will be actioned through these meetings.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will help ensure the LECP is aligned with and supports county, national, EU and other key strategies. It will also ensure that lessons learned are systematically captured to improve future actions and outcomes.

Drawing upon the process of continuous monitoring the Advisory Group will prepare an Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Document each year.

This output will need to include:

- Where applicable metrics / performance evidence against the High-Level Outcomes by way of a simple dashboard. For those Outcomes which do not lend themselves to quantified measurable indicators a concise summary of performance should be stated;
- A progress update against each action, including evidence to support progress against the identified KPIs;
- A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) assessment of the progress of each action;

- Explanation where actions have not progressed as envisaged; and
- A removal of actions from the Plan where they are satisfactorily completed and/or for a justified reason they are no longer applicable / deliverable.

Once the above is assembled the document should conclude with:

- An overall summary of progress;
- Clear identification of Objectives where there are concerns around the level of progress;
- Identified constraints which need to be considered and are impacting on performance including suggested actions to address; and
- The identification of additional actions to be included in the Implementation Plan.

The report will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening processes as appropriate. This will ensure the LECP Implementation will conform to the Regional Strategy and the City and County Development Plan.

The Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report will be presented to a joint meeting of SPC1 and LCDC for approval at their first meeting each year.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Appropriate Assessment (AA) – AA is the term given to the formal process by which any plan or project proposal undergoes an examination of its potential likely significant effects on sites designated as being of European-level importance and which are protected by National and European Law. These sites in Ireland constitute Special Areas of Conservation (currently candidate SACs or cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The obligation to undertake appropriate assessment derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and both involve a number of steps and tests that need to be applied in sequential order.

Accessible – Accessible information means that people with disabilities can readily access and understand it. An accessible service is one which is geared to serve people with disabilities alongside other service users. This LECP and Implementation Plan has sought to ensure its accessibility and that it reflects the principles of accessible services.

Biodiversity crisis – The Government declared a Biodiversity Emergency alongside a Climate Emergency. This acknowledged Irish biodiversity is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change recognising associated risks of habitat fragmentation and loss, over-exploitation, pollution of air, water and soil and spread of invasive species.

Carlow Kilkenny Educational and Training Board (ETB) – The ETB is the statutory education authority and the vehicle for the delivery of coordinated education and training programmes across Ireland.

Carlow/ Kilkenny Health Service Executive (HSE) – The HSE provides a wide range of health and personal social services to Carlow and Kilkenny.

Circular Economy – A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible, thus extending the life cycle of products.

Climate change – Includes both the global warming driven by human emissions of greenhouse gases, and the resulting large-scale shifts in weather patterns.

Climate action – The Irish Government acknowledges that climate change is already having a devastating impact on our economy, society and environment and will continue to do so in the future. It therefore recognises that taking ambitious climate action is necessary to ensure a sustainable future both nationally and globally. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 provides for supporting Ireland's transition to Net Zero and achieving a carbon neutral economy by no later than 2050. The Kilkenny Climate Action Plan, identified within the Implementation Plan, is consistent with the approved national Climate Action Plan.

Climate justice – Climate justice is a term used for framing global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. This is done by relating the effects of climate change to concepts of justice, particularly environmental justice and social justice and by examining issues such as equality, human rights, collective rights, and the historical responsibilities for climate.

Compact Growth – The National Development Plan (NDP) establishes an objective to deliver Compact Growth. This aims to secure the sustainable growth of more compact urban and rural settlements supported by jobs, housing, community services and amenities. The intention being to achieve effective density and consolidation as opposed to more sprawl of urban development.

County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership – A Local Development Company operating the Social Inclusion Activation Programme and the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme in the county. LEADER is co-funded by the EU and the Irish Exchequer and supports private enterprises and community groups to improve quality of life and economic activity in rural areas. The LECP Implementation Plan is intended to work alongside the relevant LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS).

Disability – The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in its presentation of statistics on disability classifies a disabled person as someone who responded 'yes' to having any of the seven identified long-lasting conditions or any of the four 'difficulties' categories.

Fintech – Fintech is technology enabled financial innovation that is changing the way financial institutions provide – and consumers and businesses use – financial services. Innovation and changes are creating new business opportunities and firms.

Green Tech – Green Tech short for green technology is a term that describes the use of technology and science to create products and services that are environmentally friendly.

Greenways – Greenways are trails built to be used exclusively by cyclists, pedestrians and other non motorised transport and are generally traffic-free routes. In 2018 the Government launched the ‘Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.’

Household – The Census defines a private households as one comprised of either one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping arrangements – that is, sharing at least one meal a day or sharing a living room or sitting room.

Implementation Plan – A document that entails the steps required to facilitate the execution and implementation of a plan, idea, model, or policy by presenting clear implementation steps that need to follow. A two year initial implementation plan has been prepared and published separately for this LECP.

Kilkenny Access Group – Is an group established to make Kilkenny city and county as accessible as possible and to raise awareness of access issues for people with disabilities.

Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN) – The PPN is the framework for public engagement and participation. The PPN will be the main link through which the local authority connects with the community, social inclusion and environmental sectors. The aim of the PPN is to facilitate and enable public organisations operating within the wider community to articulate and give voice to a diverse range of views, issues and interests within the local government system.

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) – The LEO is the first stop shop for business supports services and provides advice, information and support to existing businesses and people interested in starting up a new business, including entrepreneurs, early-stage promoters, start-ups and small business looking to expand.

Teagasc – The Agriculture and Food Development Authority is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities.

Medtech – Medtech is short for Medical Technology and captures all technologies used for medical purposes. The development of technologies and innovation in the health care sector have led to growing numbers of businesses involved in developing, producing and delivering Medtech.

National Development Plan – As part of Project Ireland 2040 the NDP sets out the Government’s over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030. It is an ambitious plan that balances the significant demand for public investment across all sectors and regions of Ireland with a major focus on improving the delivery of infrastructure projects to ensure speed of delivery and value for money.

National Planning Framework (NPF) – The NPF is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment.

Relative Deprivation – The state of deprivation has been described as ‘observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community to which an individual belongs’¹³. The Trinity National Deprivation Index 2016 uses four indicators to present a deprivation index – unemployment, low social class (based on occupational groupings), local authority rented housing, car ownership (as a surrogate for disposable income).

Ring a Link – A non-profit making, charitable organisation funded by the Department of Transport, offering affordable and convenient transport for rural dwellings of Counties Carlow, Kilkenny and South Tipperary. Ring a Link services are demand responsive and door-to-door.

Smarter Travel – Short for the Department of Transport’s Sustainable Transport Policy document ‘Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 - 2020’. This aims to get people to think about how and why they make travel choices for all trips that are made. It is supported by the Active Travel Programme which is aimed at facilitating investment in active travel options, including walking and cycling.

Social entrepreneurship – An approach by individuals, groups, start-up companies or entrepreneurs, in which they develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural or environmental issues. This concept may be applied to a wide range of organisations, which vary in size, aims, and beliefs.

¹³ Townsend, P., Deprivation. Journal of Social Policy, 1987. 16: p. 125 - 146

Social Enterprise – An enterprise that trades for a social/ societal purpose, where at least part of its income is earned from its trading activity, is separate from government, and where the surplus is primarily reinvested in the social objective.

Social Exclusion – Social exclusion refers to the inability to participate in society because of a lack of resources that are normally available to the general population.

Social Inclusion – The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity. The Government published the 'Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025: Ambition, Goals and Commitments' in 2020 with the aim of reducing the number of people in consistent poverty in Ireland and increasing social inclusion for those who are most disadvantaged.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) – Multi-annual programme that is aimed at reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion and equality. A central objective is to support disadvantaged individuals to improve the quality of their lives through the provision of lifelong learning and labour market supports. The Implementation Plan acknowledges SICAP actions.

South East Regional Enterprise Plan – The South East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 was launched in March 2022. It includes projects and initiatives across the four South-East counties (Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford).

South East Technological University (SETU) – SETU is the first technological university in south east Ireland. It is a multi-campus university with campuses located in Waterford, Carlow and Wexford.

Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) – The RSES came into effect on 31st January 2020 and provides a long-term, strategic development framework for the future physical, economic and social development of the Southern Region and includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) to guide the future development of the Region's three main cities and metropolitan areas – Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford. It seeks to achieve balanced regional development and full implementation of the Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework.

Stakeholder – A person such as an employee, customer, or citizen who is involved with an organisation, society, etc. and therefore has responsibilities towards it and an interest in its success.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – A systematic decision support process, aiming to ensure that environmental and possibly other sustainability aspects are considered effectively in policy, plan and program making.

Sustainable Development – Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UN's 2030 Agenda sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals, within a plan of action, which were adopted in 2015 by all UN Member States. The plan envisages a world in which nations can enjoy inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with decent work for all, and where consumption and production patterns, as well as the use of all natural resources, are sustainable.

Sustainable economy – The Environmental Protection Agency identifies that the economic resilience of Ireland is intimately linked to environmental quality and to the supporting role of Ireland's ecosystems and natural resources. The concept of a 'circular economy', described above, acknowledges the principle of sustainable economic growth whereby growth is maintained over the longer-term without creating economic problems or complications.

Town Centre First – The Government published 'Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns' in 2022. It aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. It supports 'Our Rural Future' and builds from the objective of Compact Growth and is recognised within the actions set out within the Implementation Plan.

TUSLA Child & Family Agency – The dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

Appendix 2: Public Consultation Information

This Appendix summarises the approach taken to public consultation on the LECP and the key outcomes. The full process and submissions obtained through the various engagement exercises undertaken are documented in full within the **Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan Consultation Report**.

Stakeholder Engagement Methodology

A process of public consultation and engagement was undertaken including an extensive exercise forming Stage 2 of the LECP methodology process.

In the Stage 2 consultation a baseline survey was undertaken as the first part of a two stage, four phased consultation and co-design process, utilising the UK Design Council's *"Double Diamond"* Methodology.

The survey included a total of 15 questions (closed and open queries). The respondents represented a range of stakeholders with an interest in Kilkenny, including residents, employees, visitors and elected representatives.

The survey was hosted on a dedicated project website, which summarised the survey's purpose and provided a copy of the Draft LECP www.yourkilkennylecp.ie.

The early "discovery" phase consultation process began with the county wide launch of the survey, seeking views and input into draft High Level Goals and objectives, based on research undertaken as part of the draft Socio-Economic Statement. The survey received a total of 344 responses, which broadly equates to a statistically valid representative sample of the population county of Kilkenny (2020 Census), at 90% confidence and a margin of error of $\pm 4.427\%$. The sample was weighted for age, gender and geography.

The survey was promoted via a social media advertising campaign, with a reach of 161,686 impressions across County Kilkenny. The project website received 4,715 page views and 3,007 individual users, illustrating a conversion rate of 11.43%.

Further engagement workshops with key stakeholders helped further "define" the high-level goals and objectives. The workshops were promoted through a series of stakeholder letters (see Appendix 2) which were issued electronically from Turley Strategic Communications on behalf of Kilkenny County Council to 51 stakeholders across the community and economic sectors. The insights from the survey and workshops were shared with the project team, the LECP advisory group, before development and adoption of the final high-level goals and objectives of the LECP by a joint meeting of the SPC 1/LCDC.

Whilst the Stage 2 consultation formed the main component of the public consultation further stakeholder consultation was undertaken between December 2022 and March 2023 to develop the initial implementation plan for the LECP which identifies actions to achieve the high-level goals and objectives "delivery".

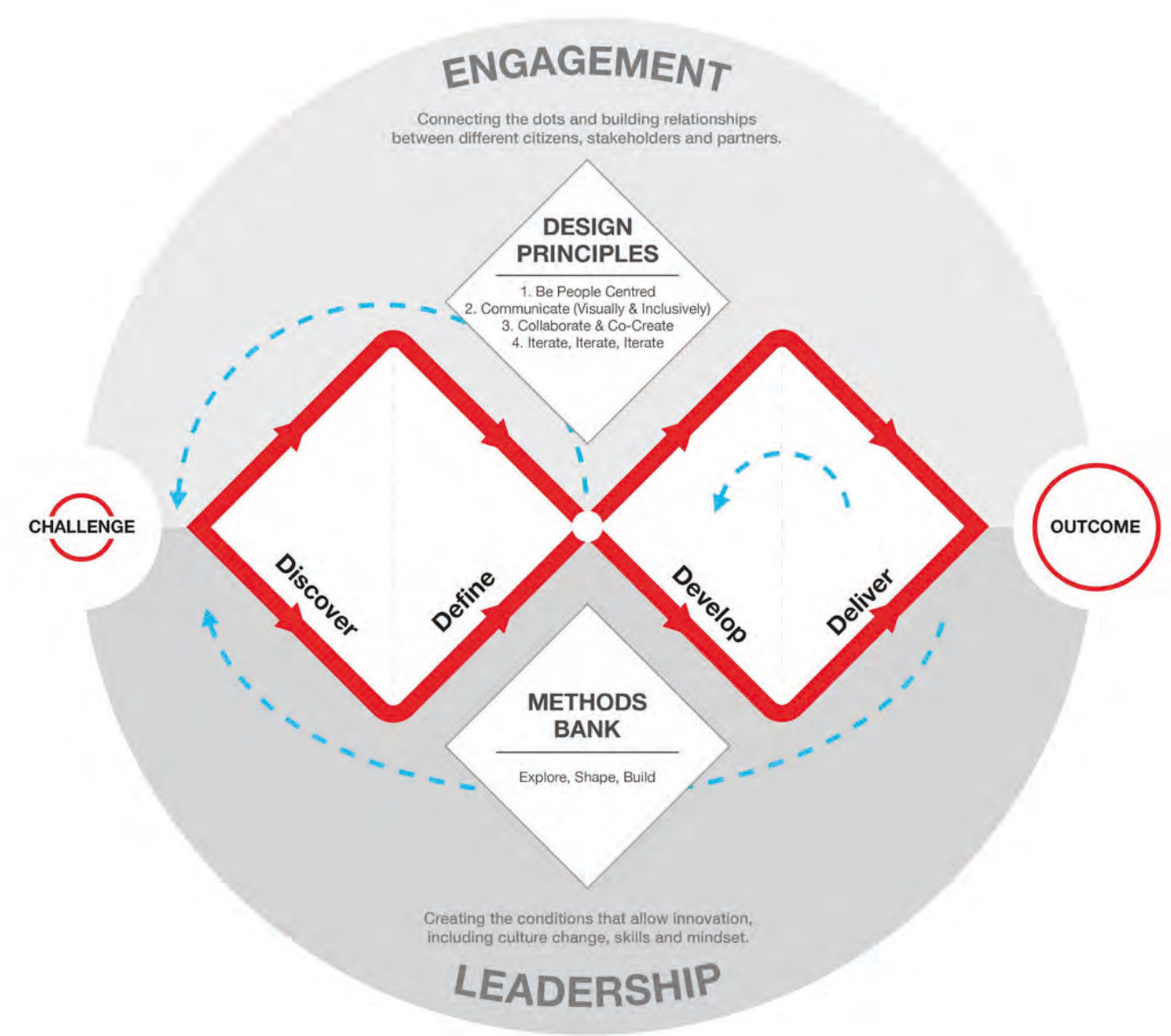


Figure 2.1 The Double Diamond model

Key outputs from the public consultation process

Feedback from the above engagement exercises was collated, analysed and presented in the Consultation Report, as a record of the public and stakeholder engagement in the LECP development process.

The consultation process resulted in a number of comparatively minor changes to the wording of the draft high-level goals and objectives. It suggested, however, a very strong in principle support, which resulted in the key areas of focus for each of the goals to be retained.

When asked to provide their vision for Kilkenny County and to sum it up, there was a broadly positive outlook, with a focus on ensuring the county's unique heritage and sectors are preserved and enhanced, all while maintaining an inclusive community.

Respondents were most likely to use words like beautiful, historic and friendly to describe the county, and their own visions for the LECP echoed and emphasised similar themes, such as housing, education, heritage and tourism, economic growth, the community, and environment. The development of the vision for the LECP sought to capture these views.

The Implementation Plan sought to build on the more detailed comments provided by the public and stakeholders in its initial identification of ideas for actions to deliver change.

Appendix 3: Membership of relevant structures

**SPC1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support
& Tourism, Planning & Development Policy**

Chairperson: Cllr. Ger Frisby

Elected Members

Name
John Coonan
Michael Doyle
Pat Fitzpatrick
Ger Frisby
Michael McCarthy
Eugene McGuinness
Maria Dollard
Patrick O'Neill

Nominated Members

Name	Sector	Pillar
Bill O Keeffe	Agriculture/Farming	IFA
Deirdre Shine	Business/Commercial	Chambers Ireland
Marion Acreman	Development/Construction	Chambers Ireland
Brian Hamilton	Environment/Conservation	PPN
Fiona O'Neill	Social Inclusion	PPN
Jimmy Duggan	Community & Voluntary	PPN
Eileen Moyles	Trade Union	ICTU

LCDC

Chairperson: Declan Gibbons

Nominating Group Memberships

Name of Member	Nominating Body – Public Representation
Aileen McGrath	Local Enterprise Office
Michael A. Fitzgerald	Teagasc
Eileen Curtis	Education Training Board
Sean McKeown	Kilkenny County Council (Vice Chair)
Julianne Power	Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
Derval Howley	HSE - Associate member
Martin Brett	Elected Representative
Michael McCarthy	Elected Representative
Gerard Frisby	Elected Representative
Joe Lyons	Elected Representative

Name of Member	Nominating Group - Private Representation
Declan Gibbons	PPN Comm & Voluntary (Chairperson)
Mary Mescal	PPN-Comm & Voluntary
Angela Hayes	PPN-Social Inclusion
Toluwani Akaehomen	PPN-Social Inclusion
Paul O' Rahilly	PPN-Social Inclusion
Martin Rochford	PPN-Environment
Bill O'Keefe	Irish Farmers Association
John Hurley	Chamber of Commerce
Denis Drennan	County Kilkenny Leader Partnership
Sheila Donnelly	Family Resource Centres



Appendix 4: Alignment with the RSES for the Southern Region

The Guidelines confirm that the LECP must be consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the core strategy and objectives of the City/County Development Plan. The Council has separately considered the alignment with the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 and ensured that the LECP will support the County Development Plan to realise its spatial and development objectives.

As the LECP identifies the RSES includes eleven strategy statements, which it confirms align with the relevant National Strategic Outcomes and the UN Sustainable Development Goals by way of a matrix on pages 26 – 28 of the document. A similar format is used here to identify the LECP High Level Goals and Objectives which in turn align with RSES strategy statements. This demonstrates alignment between the two documents, whilst recognising that elements of the LECP by its nature span beyond the scope of the RSES and are intended to directly reflect identified local priorities for Kilkenny.

RSES Strategy	High Level Goal Objective
1. Compact Growth: Strengthening and growing our cities and metropolitan areas; harnessing the combined strength of our 3 cities as a counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area, through quality development; regeneration and compact growth; building on the strong network of towns and supporting our villages and rural areas.	Objective 1d Objective 3c Objective 9c Objective 10a
2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility: Enhancing regional accessibility through upgraded transport infrastructure and digital connectivity allied to transformed settlement hierarchy.	Objective 4b Objective 6a
3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities: Strengthening the role of and improving quality of life in the Region's diverse rural areas and communities and valuing our rural Region as dynamic, resilient and outward looking.	Objective 3a Objective 4a Objective 4b Objective 8a Objective 9c Objective 10a
4. Sustainable Mobility: Transforming our transport systems towards well-functioning, sustainable integrated public transport, walking and cycling and electric vehicles.	Objective 1d
5. A Strong Economy: Building a competitive, innovative and productive economy.	Objective 2a Objective 2b Objective 2c Objective 4a
6. High-Quality International Connectivity: Optimising our international connectivity through investment and increased capacity in our ports and airports and provision of high-quality digital connectivity throughout our region.	Objective 2c Objective 4b
7. Diversity, Language, Culture and Heritage Enhancement: Strengthening and protecting our Region's diversity, language and culture, our recreational assets, and our national and built heritage.	Objective 3a Objective 3b Objective 3c Objective 9a Objective 9b
8. Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society: Safeguarding and enhancing our environment through sustainable development, prioritising action on climate change across the Region, driving the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.	Objective 1a Objective 1b Objective 1c Objective 1d
9. Sustainable, Planned and Infrastructure-led Development: Providing infrastructure and services in a sustainable, planned and infrastructure-led manner to ensure the sustainable management of water waste and other environmental resources.	Objective 2a Objective 4b
10. A Healthy and Learning Region: Achieving improved education, health and public services and facilities for all citizens and communities.	Objective 5a Objective 5b Objective 6a Objective 6b Objective 7a Objective 7b Objective 9c
11. Inclusive International Region: Building an inclusive outward looking international Region on the global stage.	Objective 2c Objective 3b Objective 8b Objective 10b

Appendix 5: Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CARO	Climate Action Regional Office
CPD	Continuing professional development
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committees
DCCI	Design & Crafts Council Ireland
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DEDP	Destination Experience Development Plan
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DOT	Department of Transport
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
EI	Enterprise Ireland
ETB	Education and Training Board
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRC	Family Resource Centre
FTTP	Fibre to the premise
HI	Healthy Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
IFA	Irish Farmers' Association
KCC	Kilkenny County Council
KITE	Kilkenny Integrated Transport Evolution
KK	Kilkenny
KLP	Kilkenny Leader Partnership
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KSIP	Kilkenny PPN Social Inclusion Pillar
KTCM	Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement
KTIG	Kilkenny Traveller Interagency Group
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency

MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework
NTA	National Transport Authority
NTE	Night-time economy
OPC	Older People's Council
OPW	Office of Public Works
PEC	Piltown Enterprise Centre
PPN	Public Participation Fund
PUG	Public Urban Garden
RAG	Red, Amber, Green
REDF	Regional Enterprise Development Fund
REISS	Regional Enterprise Innovation Scoping Scheme
RRDF	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SETU	South East Technological University
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism, Planning & Development Policy
SUMP	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TFI	Tobacco Free Ireland
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TUSLA	The Child and Family Agency
URDF	Urban Regeneration and Development Fund
UTT	Ulingford Town Team

