Kilkenny County Council

KILKENNY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PRE-DRAFT ISSUES PAPER

2020
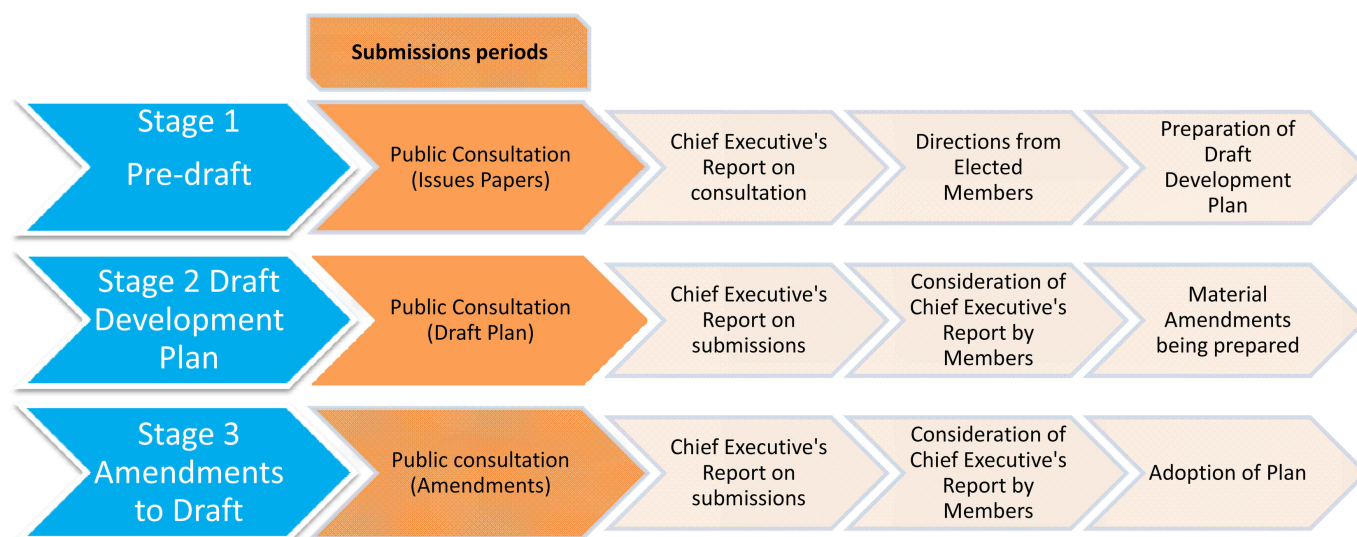2026

April 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

|	Submissions periods			
Stage 1 Pre-draft	Public Consultation (Issues Papers)	Chief Executive's Report on consultation	Directions from Elected Members	Preparation of Draft Development Plan
Stage 2 Draft Development Plan	Public Consultation (Draft Plan)	Chief Executive's Report on submissions	Consideration of Chief Executive's Report by Members	Material Amendments being prepared
Stage 3 Amendments to Draft	Public consultation (Amendments)	Chief Executive's Report on submissions	Consideration of Chief Executive's Report by Members	Adoption of Plan

One of the most important functions of Kilkenny County Council is the making of a Development Plan for the City and County. The review of the County and City Development Plans begins on 20th April 2018.

A new consolidated County Development Plan will replace both the previous County and City and Environs Development Plans.

This review process will take two years to complete. The Development Plan will set out the strategic spatial vision and future direction for the county over a six year period from 2020 to 2026.

In developing this we will build on our previous successes and our strategic advantages as a county. We will maximise the strengths of our citizens, communities, built and natural heritage, infrastructure and tourism to their full potential.

The process of making a Development Plan is set out above.
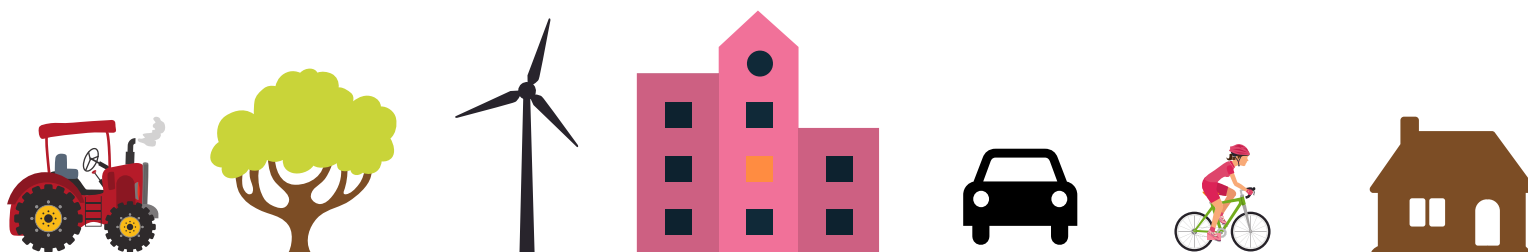
CONTEXT

The Government recently published Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region is currently being prepared, in line with this.   The diagram below illustrates where the Development Plan sits in the hierarchy of the Irish planning system.

This Issues Paper is the first step in the preparation of a new Development Plan.

At this early stage in the process, we are considering the "big picture" issues in the county. This Issues Paper is intended to stimulate debate on some of these matters and to encourage and facilitate your involvement in the process at this early stage. We encourage you to actively participate in helping to shape the future of your county. There will be further opportunities to engage in the process and we would sincerely hope that you take every opportunity to make your contribution.
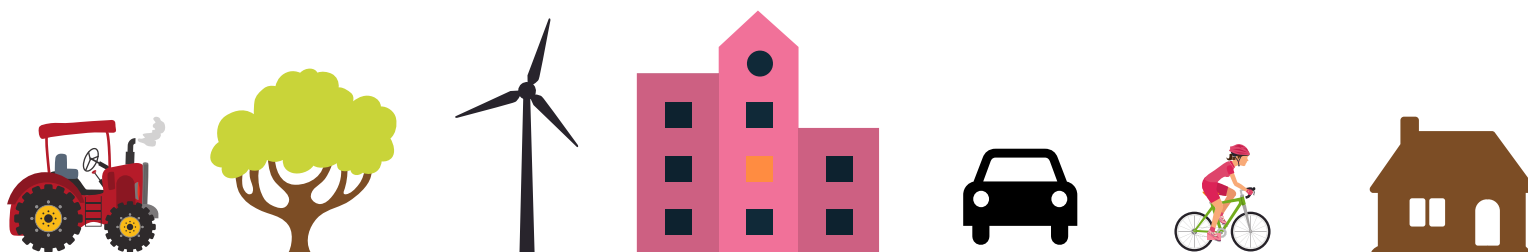
The Development Plan can help to create a more inclusive, attractive, competitive and safe city and county. The success of the next Kilkenny County Development Plan depends on your active participation.

At this stage, we need to hear from you!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......

- What is your vision for both Kilkenny City and County?
- How can the overall structure of Kilkenny be physically, economically and socially enhanced by the Development Plan so as to make it an attractive place to live, work and visit?
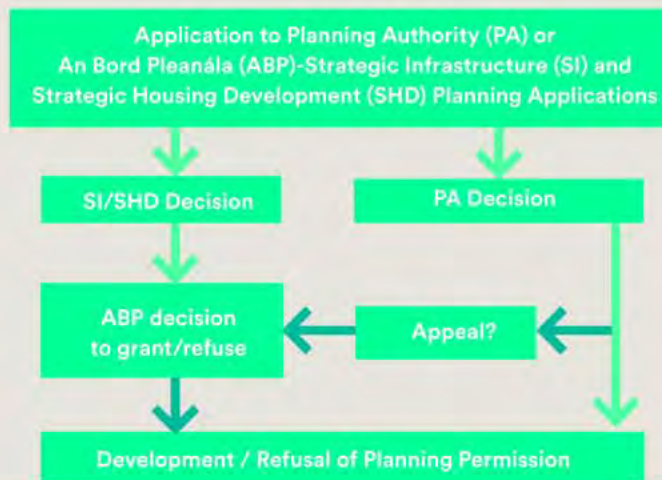
Irish Planning System
An Overview

NATIONAL
National Planning Framework

REGIONAL
Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies

LOCAL
Development Plans
(Including Core Strategy)

Local Area Plans

EU, National Legislation and Policy

EU Directives

Planning Legislation

Ministerial Guidelines

Government Policy

Capital Programmes

Local Authority

Housing Strategy

Retail Strategy

Local Economic and Community Plans

Capital Programme

Establishes Policy Context for...

Assessment of and decisions on development proposals

Application to Planning Authority (PA) or
An Bord Pleanála (ABP)-Strategic Infrastructure (SI) and
Strategic Housing Development (SHD) Planning Applications

SI/SHD Decision

PA Decision

ABP decision to grant/refuse

Appeal?

Development / Refusal of Planning Permission

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Notwithstanding the individual sectors discussed in this Issues paper, there are several cross cutting issues of both local and national significance which affects all sectors throughout the County. These include but are not limited to:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

• which implies that today's generation can meet their development needs without compromising future generations' ability to do the same. Sustainability lies at the heart of all policies and will be central to the Development Plan. Environmental sustainability in particular is a fundamental requirement and the Development Plan will comply with all Irish and European legislation.

HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

the focus of which is the continuous improvement of the quality of design of the built environment. A high quality of design makes places more appealing to work, live and play in and leads to improved pride and sense of community. High quality design in our built environment therefore has a direct impact on our perception of our surroundings and can improve our quality of life.

CLIMATE CHANGE

• the adaption for which is a fundamental issue that will also underlie all proposals contained in the Development Plan. Scientific evidence is showing that the climate is changing and it is imperative to consider how human activity is influencing such change and how resultant impacts such as increased flooding can be better planned for or averted. National targets aim to cut non-Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) emissions by at least 20% by 2020 (over and above 2005) levels. It is estimated that non-ETS emissions will be 4% - 6% below 2005 levels by 2020 and by 2030 total non-ETS emissions will be 1%-3% below 2005 levels. The main areas where reduced carbon emissions can be achieved are energy, land use planning, transport, waste management and biodiversity.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

the focus of which is the improvement and wellbeing of all individuals. The Development Plan will provide for objectives that can promote a sense of community, promote access to social infrastructure, information and resources. Social inclusion will be a key concept underpinning the Development Plan.

1. POPULATION

Kilkenny's population in the 2016 Census was 99,232 persons, which was a 4% increase from the 2011 figure.   The City's population was 26,512, which was an increase of 8.5%.

Kilkenny works within a regional framework which sets out the targets considered necessary for each county. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region is currently being prepared, in line with the recently published National Planning Framework (NPF).   This will project what population Kilkenny will achieve to 2040. In the absence of a finalised RSES, a population projection has been estimated.

According to the NPF, the target for the Southern Region is that it will grow by 340,000 - 380,000 to 2040. This represents a range between 21-24% growth. Applying this to Kilkenny, the county is projected to grow by between 21,000-23,000 people to 2040. For 2026, this means that the population would be targeted to grow to between 107,000 and 108,000. This includes the large urban centres of Ferrybank and Kilkenny. Waterford City, including Ferrybank, is targeted to grow by between 50-60% from its current level of 54,000 to about 81,000 in 2040, and the settlement of Ferrybank will accommodate a proportionate share of this. Kilkenny city's rate of growth is outstripping the county at present and it is targeted to grow to over 29,000 by 2026.

Core Strategy
The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement for an evidence based 'Core Strategy' to be included in County Development Plans. Under the Act, a Core Strategy focuses on:

• Defining a settlement hierarchy for the County that is consistent with the national and regional policy objectives (e.g. for housing and population targets).
• Transposing the prescribed housing and population targets set at County level for the rural and urban centres identified within the settlement hierarchy.
• Providing an evidence based rationale for the land proposed to be zoned for residential and mixed use development having regard to the capacity of existing zoned land and the phasing of development taking account of the location of public transport and services.
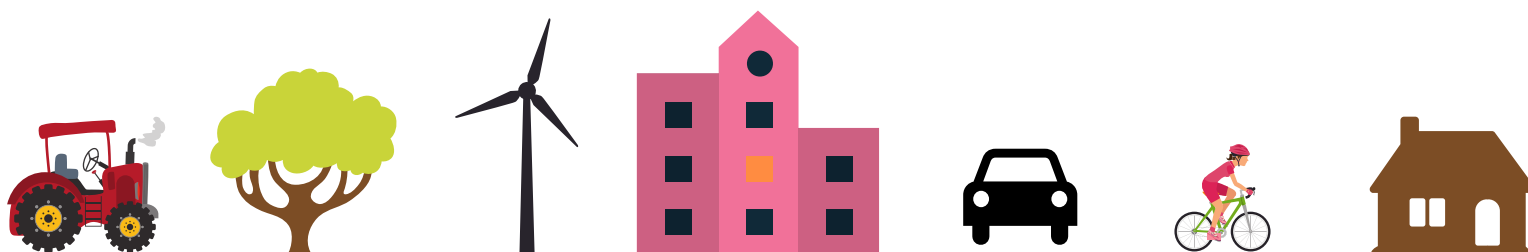
• Demonstrating how the Planning Authority has had regard to the statutory Retail Planning Guidelines in setting out objectives for retail development.

• The key purpose of core strategies is to ensure that local authorities identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the right locations to meet housing and population targets. While the Act does not expressly require core strategies to deal with other land uses such as employment and commercial zones, it has been the practice that local authorities do undertake an appropriate level of analysis to provide for such uses.

How and where we plan to meet our housing targets must be set out in the Plan's Core Strategy and Housing Strategy. We need to ensure sufficient housing is available in the right places, with good infrastructure, services and amenities, if we are to improve the quality of life for our citizens. We must also provide for the right type and mix of housing to reflect the different requirements of all of our citizens which can change at the different stages of their lives. Kilkenny has a diverse housing stock located in a wide variety of areas, both urban and rural. The City, and the towns, villages and rural areas have their own character which influences where people choose to live. Providing an appropriate scale and type of housing development which respects and enhances the character of our urban and rural areas will be a key challenge.

The changing demographic profile of the County is illustrated on the chart below. The population has increased significantly in the over 45 age cohorts. This has implications for the type of services required presently and in future years e.g. in terms of demand for health and social services and diverse accommodation and one which we will address in the new Development Plan.
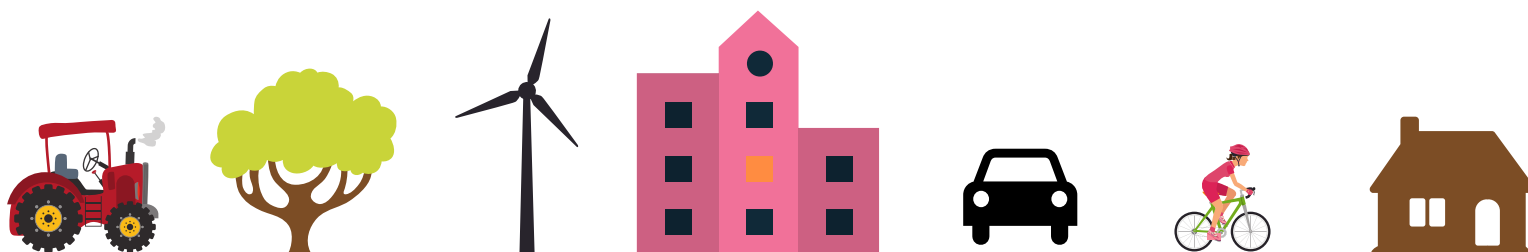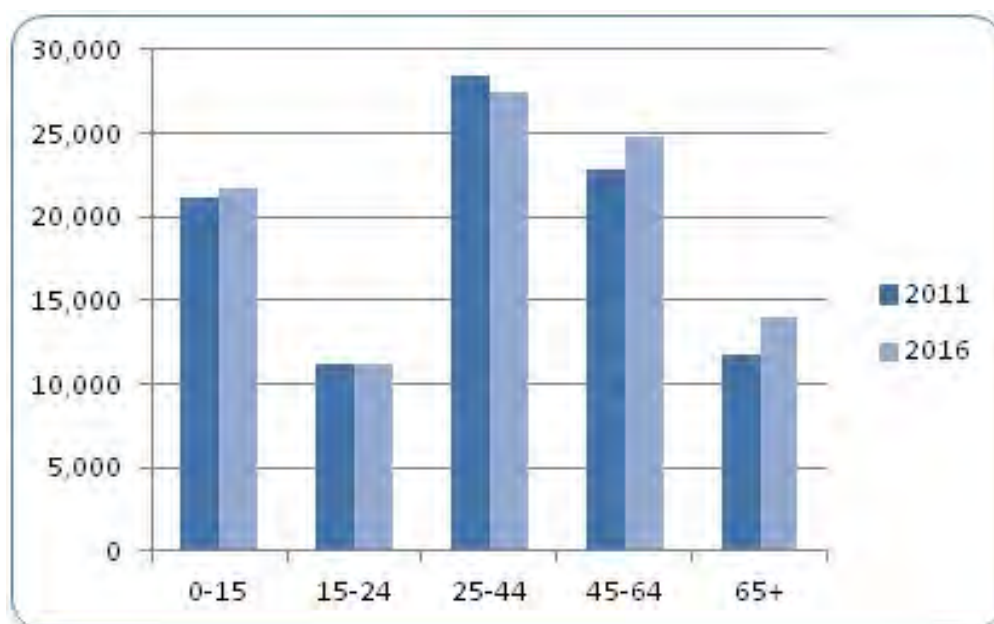
Comparison of the age profile of Co. Kilkenny between 2011 and 2016

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......?

- How do we ensure sustainable patterns of settlement and employment?
- Should we have minimum requirements for residential density and would this help the delivery of social, community and physical infrastructure?
- If we want lower density housing, should we zone more land for residential use and reduce the amount of land available for other uses e.g. amenity, agriculture, etc.?
- Are there settlements that could absorb greater development and what criteria should be used to determine how much and where it should be provided?
- What type of housing should be in villages?
- Are some areas more suitable for apartment type units?
- Should larger new housing estates be built in phases and what advantages, if any, would this have?
- Should we have specific housing, which may have different standards, to reflect different needs such as those for students, older people, and disabled people?
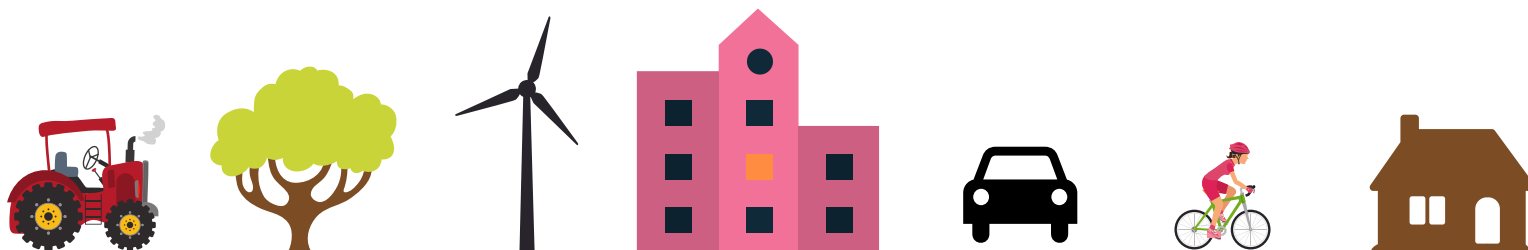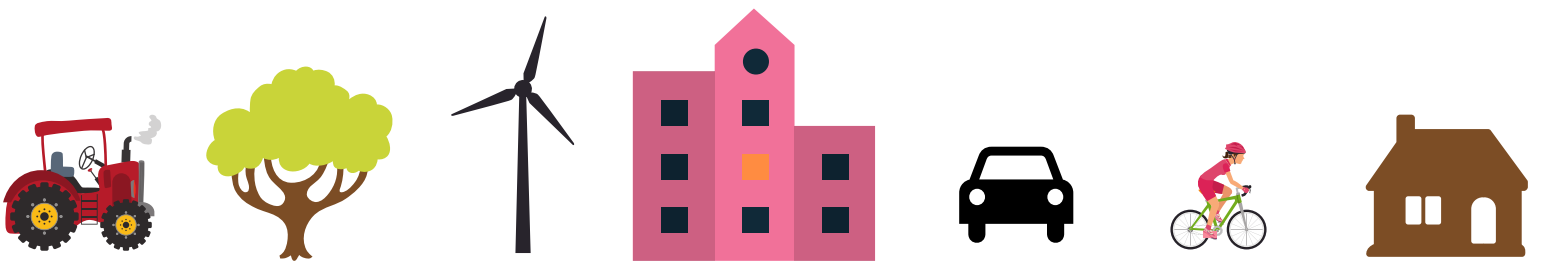
2 HOUSING/SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

A key element of the settlement strategy is the Settlement hierarchy, which sets out the role of the city, and various towns and villages and the services that should be provided in the various categories of centre. The current County Settlement hierarchy is as follows:

County Settlement Hierarchy

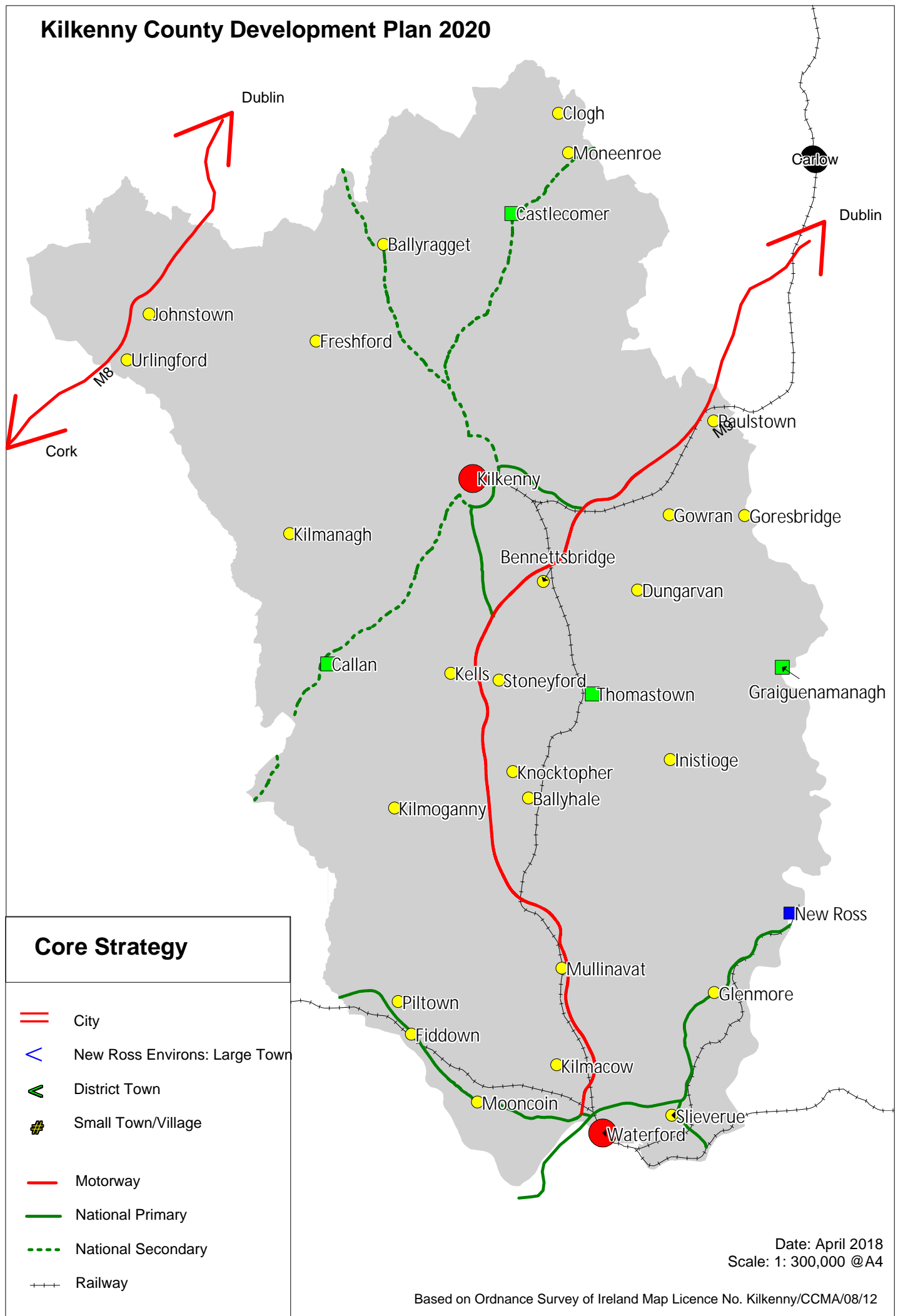| Type of Urban Centre	Town/Centre
Gateway	Waterford (Ferrybank/Belview in Co. Kilkenny)
Hub	Kilkenny City
Large Town	New Ross (Environs of in Co. Kilkenny)
District Town	Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown
Smaller Towns and Villages	Ballyhale, Ballyragget, Bennettsbridge, Clogh-Moneenroe, Dungarvan, Fiddown, Freshford, Glenmore, Goresbridge, Gowran, Inistioge, Johnstown, Kells, Kilmacow, Kilmanagh, Kilmoganny, Knocktopher, Mooncoin, Mullinavat, Paulstown, Piltown, Slieverue, Stoneyford and Urlingford.

Under the current Settlement strategy, a total of 31 settlements have been classified based on their size and range of function, and from a social, economic and community perspective. A settlement hierarchy is important as it influences the investment programmes of various sections of the Council, such as Roads etc.

In a time of scarce resources, it is important that investment will be targeted in the right places and that it will support and underpin the settlement hierarchy. As discussed under the Population topic, we have estimated that the County will grow to over 120,000 by 2040.

Kilkenny has significant capacity to deliver sustainable growth. For example, the two planned neighbourhoods of Loughmacask and the Western Environs in Kilkenny City have capacity for circa 4,800 homes to accommodate circa 12,500 people (a 47% increase over 2016 levels).

Kilkenny County Development Plan 2020

Dublin

Clogh

Moneenroe

Carlow

Dublin

Castlecomer

Ballyragget

Paulstown

Johnstown

Freshford

Urlingford

M8

Cork

Kilkenny

Gowran Goresbridge

Kilmanagh

Bennettsbridge

Dungarvan

Callan

Kells Stoneyford

Thomastown

Graiguenamanagh

Inistioge

Knocktopher

Kilmoganny

Ballyhale

New Ross

Core Strategy

Mullinavat

Piltown

Glenmore

Fiddown

	City
<	New Ross Environs: Large Town
◄	District Town
#	Small Town/Village

Kilmacow

Mooncoin

Slieverue

Waterford

Motorway

National Primary

National Secondary

Railway

Date: April 2018
Scale: 1: 300,000 @A4

Based on Ordnance Survey of Ireland Map Licence No. Kilkenny/CCMA/08/12

In addition, the established neighbourhood of Ferrybank, as an urban area in the south of the county, has significant capacity for population growth in the region of 12,600 with improved services now supported by Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund funding. The County's District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown, along with its smaller towns and villages, have the capacity for planned population growth.

The Development Plan needs to establish, on the basis of average household size, how many units will be required to meet this growth, in each of the settlements. This must also bear in mind that the Departmental Guidelines on Development Plans recommend providing for an additional 3 years supply. This amount of units is then translated into an area of zoned land. Given the tight constraints set down by the Core Strategy, we will need to take an active land management approach. This means that sites will be assessed to ensure that there are no factors preventing any land zoned coming forward for development during the life of the Plan.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......?

- Do you think the settlement hierarchy should be changed and if so, how?
- Are there settlements that should be designated for additional growth, e.g. settlements with an existing rail line?
- Are there measures we could include in the Development Plan to address the issues associated with the current housing crisis?
- Where should we encourage growth within the County to achieve balanced growth in accordance with regional guidance?
- Is Kilkenny achieving its objective to provide quality housing located in balanced sustainable communities?
- What type and scale of employment, shopping, service, leisure and recreational activities should we provide for in town, village and local centres?
- How can the Development Plan ensure that an appropriate mix of units to accommodate a suitable range of tenures is provided in the County, including for students?
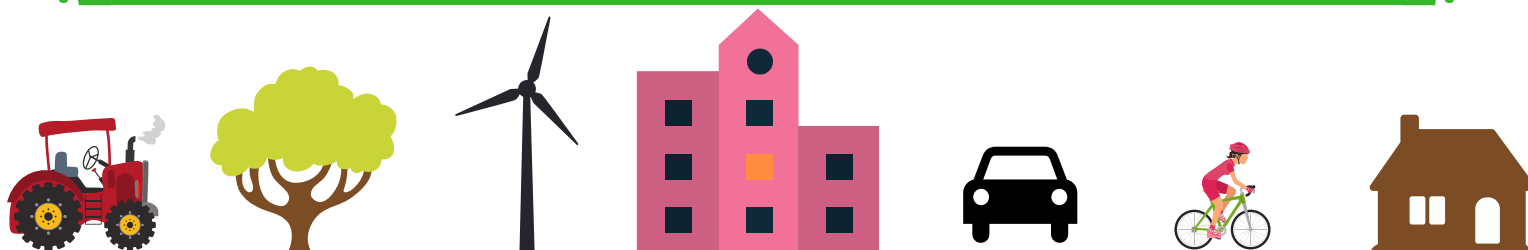
# 3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

a Economic Strategy

Kilkenny has a strong and diverse economic base which is characterised by high levels of investment in areas such as retail, agriculture, IT, tourism and culinary, arts and craft. Agricultural production in particular has been key to Kilkenny's continued economic growth. Nationally and internationally, large enterprises in the agricultural sector have shown significant growth in the recent past. IT driven service industries also recorded strong growth and played a significant role in local employment creation, with large benefits to the local economy.

The Economic Strategy for the County is set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), with the overarching theme of the economic dimension of the Action Plan being job creation and to Foster a High Employment Economy. The LECP has several high level goals, most of which will directly impact the economy, including goals to support the Enterprise Economy, facilitate Innovation and Entrepreneurship, develop the Rural Economy, protect and Utilise the Natural, Cultural and Built Environment and contribute to Regional Growth and International Potential.

Kilkenny County and City both have excellent enabling infrastructure to assist with achieving these goals. Kilkenny's accessibility is second to none; on national motorway and rail networks with links to an international seaport, adjacent to two Institutes of Technology and situated in a strategic location at the heart of the South East Planning Area (SEPA), between Carlow, Waterford, Wexford and Clonmel. The strategic location of Kilkenny within the South Eastern Planning Region enables both the County and City to grow whilst strategically contributing towards the growth of the entire sub region.

Kilkenny is well positioned to support sustainable economic growth through the following key opportunities:
• Abbey Quarter (city centre) has the potential to deliver 60,000sqm of mixed residential and employment use. Refurbishment of the existing Brewhouse building will commence later this year.
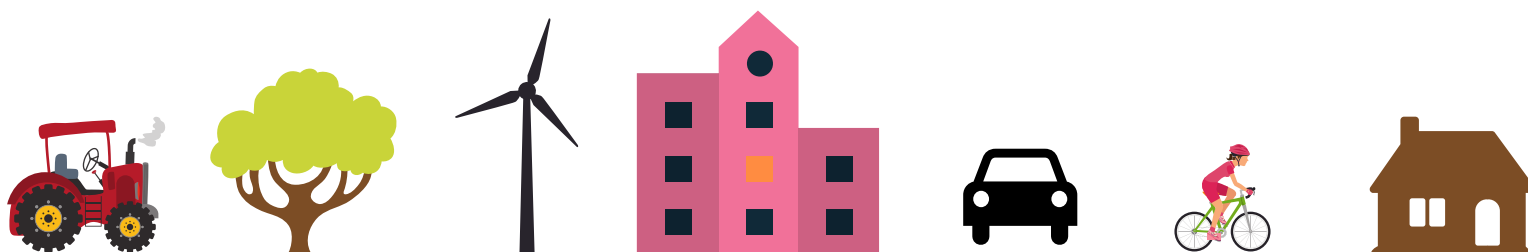
• Kilkenny's tourism attractions continue to evolve (e.g. Medieval Mile Museum), as a "Hero" site within Ireland's Ancient East, this can be a potential game changer for Kilkenny and the South East Waterford City Region, attracting further tourist revenue and boosting job creation.

• The City's future expansion areas of Loughmacask and the Western Environs have capacity for circa 4,800 homes, 12,500 people, within the overall concept of the compact 10 minute city.

• Infrastructure (road, water services and public park) is being provided in the Western Environs of Kilkenny city to enable delivery of 800 houses and two post primary schools

• The Ferrybank area has the potential to deliver significant sustainable growth in the context of the targets set for Waterford City in the National Planning Framework.

• The Belview Port area, in close proximity to Waterford, with its strong industry and employment base, has significant existing capacity for expansion; 190 hectares are zoned for development as a strategic employment location.

• Kilkenny's District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown, along with the smaller towns and villages, have significant growth potential in areas such as agriculture, food, energy and tourism. Well established and serviced communities in these rural towns have the capacity for significant population growth utilising planned land use and place making principles.

• City Business parks also have capacity for sustainable employment growth, within a short distance of new homes.

However, challenges remain, including the unemployment rate of 8% in the South East region. There is still a significant proportion of commuters travelling from Kilkenny's city, towns and villages to work as far afield as Dublin and hence it is imperative to create local jobs by growing the existing sectors and establishing new sectors, thereby ensuring a diverse and resilient local economy. Kilkenny contains the critical mass and has the distance from Dublin to be capable of being successful in sustaining itself in employment terms, whilst being careful not to repeat mistakes of commuter-driven development.
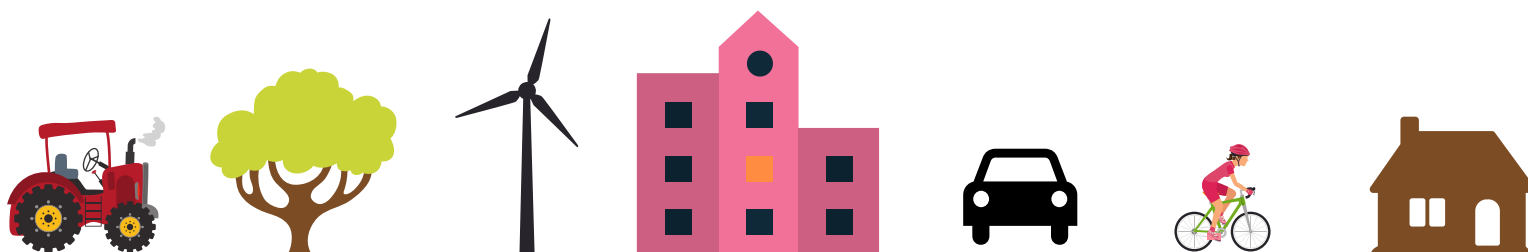
b Retail

The retail environment is changing and significant migration to online sales rather than through traditional on street outlets is posing significant challenges to all town and city centres. This change in the retail environment, in combination with the limited opportunities for modern "living over the shop" type housing in town centres may be at the heart of increases in dereliction and reductions in footfall in many towns throughout Ireland, which should also be acknowledged and planned for in the Kilkenny Development Plan. As such it is important to develop quality retail and commercial environments that will in turn improve the vibrancy and enhance traditional on street experiences in both the city and smaller towns. The Development Plan should also continue to anticipate retail leakage from the City and County and put in place mechanisms to mitigate and counter such trends at an early stage.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......?

- How can Kilkenny be promoted to encourage enterprise, attract inward investment and to increase employment?
- What characteristics and opportunities exist in Kilkenny City and County and how can these be leveraged to attract new employers, highly skilled workers and tourists?
- Is the Plan sufficiently geared towards supporting existing business?
- How can existing employment areas be regenerated, should priority be given to these areas or should alternatives be developed?
- What are the rural growth industries and how can the Development Plan support them?
- Is agricultural land given sufficient priority as an economic asset and if not, what needs to be done?
- How do we improve the retail and business environment in our City, towns and village centres to ensure their long term vibrancy and sustainability?
- How can we encourage the occupation of upper floor units for residential purposes in town centres?
- What type and scale of retail opportunities should be provided and where are they best located?
- How can the County Development Plan best support new home based and online work patterns such as e-commerce?
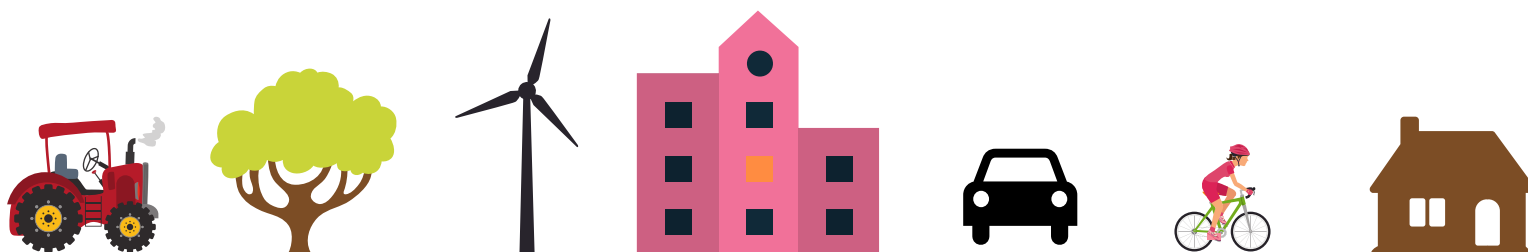
4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The National Planning Framework has the objective to protect and promote the sense of place, culture and the quality of the Irish rural landscape which makes it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

a. Agriculture

Agriculture, including the milk and beef production, tillage, horticulture, equine and forestry sectors remains the economic backbone of the rural areas of County Kilkenny. The protection of land for agricultural production, combined with sustainable farming practices will ensure continued food security and rural prosperity. With changing technology in agriculture it is however envisaged that changes such as mechanisation will continue to increase productivity whilst the supply of full time labour from rural areas will need to also be accommodated in other economic sectors prevalent in the larger towns and the City.

b. Rural Settlement

County Kilkenny is a predominantly rural county with a broad range of rural settlement patterns, ranging from urban type estates in rural towns and small villages to one off housing in the countryside.

The National Planning Framework has the objective to base the need for rural housing on a demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area, which together with siting and design criteria for rural housing will have regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements. The National Planning Framework also has the objective to activate the potential for the renewal and development of such rural towns and settlements. The Development Plan will aim to support a sustainable rural settlement pattern whilst having due regard to the protection of the needs of rural families and the rural environment.
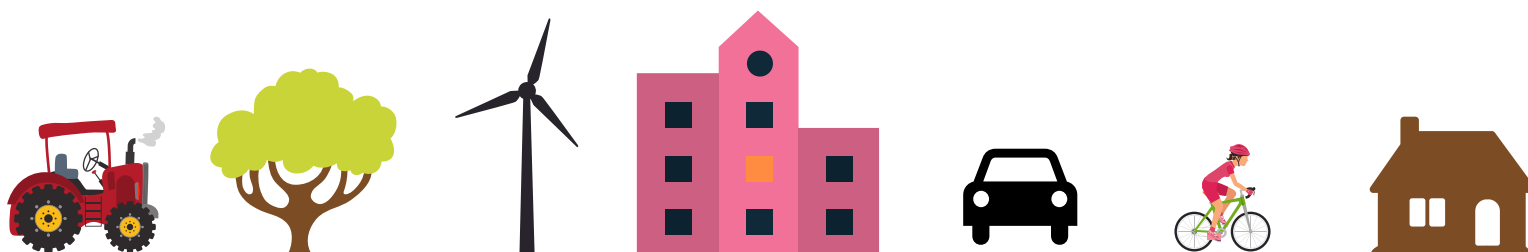
Extractive Industries

The extractive industry plays an important role in providing materials to the construction, industrial and energy sectors. The extractive industry furthermore provides rural employment and as such is inextricably interwoven into the rural fabric, including its landscape and rural economy. The industry can however have serious impacts on the rural landscape and amenities generally, including water pollution, dust, vibration, traffic generation and visual scarring of the landscape. It is therefore important to ensure that the extractive industry is appropriately located, managed and regulated so as to protect the rural landscape, character and environment from the potential impacts of the industry.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER......?

- What role can the Development Plan play in ensuring that sustainable agricultural production is supported and enhanced?
- Do you think the nature of rural settlement should be changed in order to support critical mass in service provision in towns and villages and if so, how can this be achieved?
- What criteria should be used to determine economic and social need to live in the Countryside?
- What are the most significant issues relating to the extractive industry and how can the Development Plan support the industry whilst also safeguarding the environment?
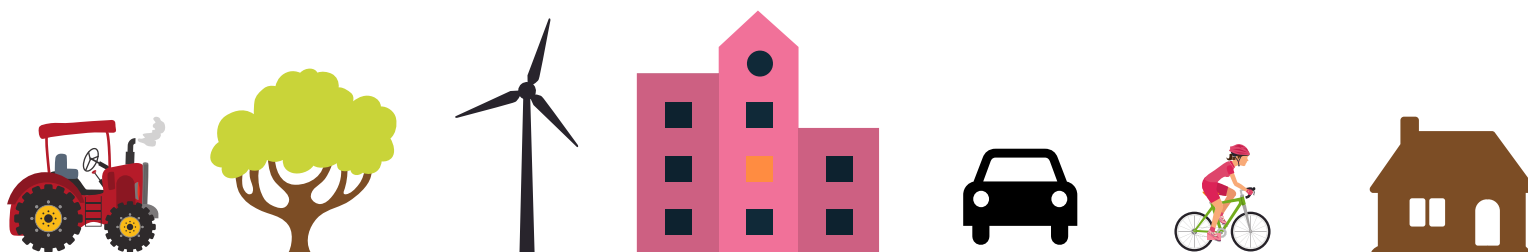
5 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

If Kilkenny City & County are to continue to grow and thrive they must have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate development. Land use planning, transport and mobility are fundamentally linked. Transport and land use play a central role in the economy of the County. It is essential to have an efficient strategic transport system for the future economic, social and physical development of the City and County.

Where and how we build the places we work and live in affects our life choices and in particular how we travel to and from other areas we need to access.
Transport infrastructure and services means roads, footpaths, cycle ways and buses, trains and taxis within the city and county.

There is opportunity for the Development Plan to consider the provision of integrated scheduling of connections between all transport - rail, bus, and shipping services within the region. Rail connectivity between Waterford and Dublin through County Kilkenny needs to be improved to provide for commuter services so that workers living in Dublin can take up employment opportunities in locations along the rail route. The Rosslare to Limerick rail line through Kilkenny also needs to be examined (e.g. should it be retained to future-proof sustainable transport for the Southern Region).

One of the key roles of the County Development Plan is to implement national policy regarding road, rail and public transport generally.
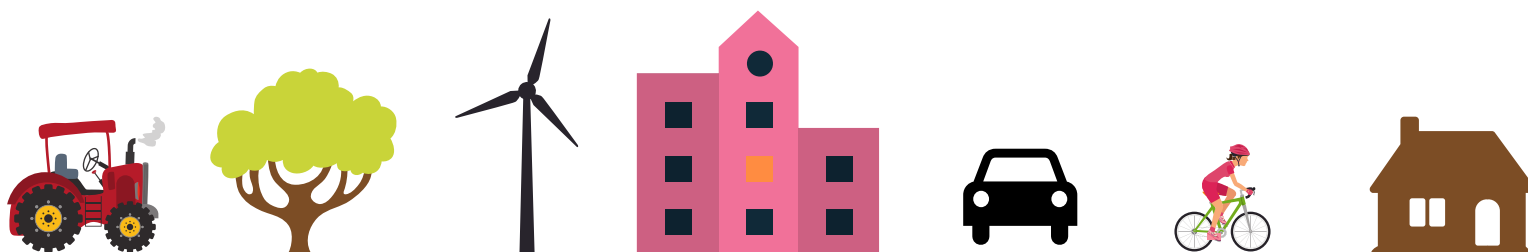
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......?

- How to manage private car access and parking in our towns while at the same time making them places that people desire to live, work and play in?
- How do we reduce the need to travel in the way that we guide where new development is located?
- How best can we co-ordinate and integrate transport and land use planning in order to reduce the demand for travel and dependence on private car transport?
- How do we future-proof the County? Is new or improved transport infrastructure required in the city & county and where?
- What should be done to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport more?
- How can rural living be more sustainable and rural isolation be reduced with greater accessibility?
- How can we create successful streets that easily facilitate the needs of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians in our towns and residential areas?
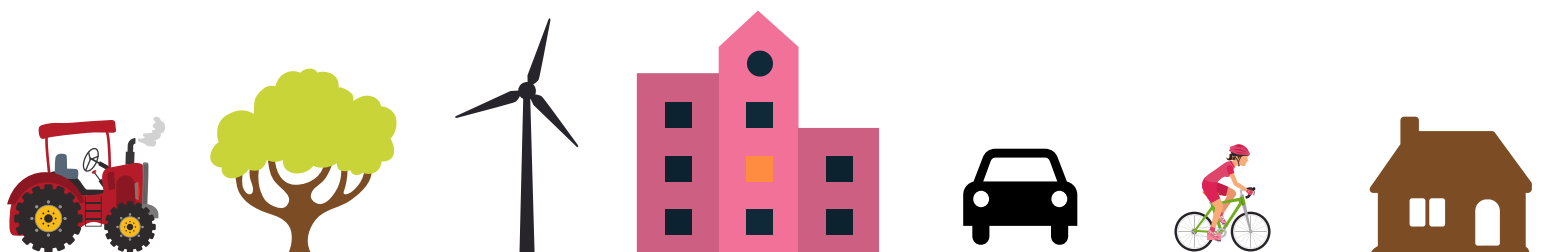
6 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change

Climate change is recognised as a significant global environmental problem and this is why this is one of the cross cutting themes of this Development Plan. Evidence of this can be seen in the changes to our average temperature, rainfall intensity / patterns, increased flooding and extreme weather events. It is accepted that this is likely to continue and that we need to adapt to these changes. In December 2012 the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) published the "National Climate Change Adaptation Framework". The framework requires local authorities to integrate climate change adaptation into development planning. Climate change adaptation will inform policies and objectives throughout the Development Plan process with increased emphasis on sustainable development and travel patterns, energy use and the protection of green infrastructure.

Resilience to climate change impacts can be improved by well-designed places and buildings. Carbon emissions can be reduced through, for instance, good physical connections with surrounding areas which encourages walking and cycling and by having easier access to public transport.

Assessments

As part of the Development Plan review Kilkenny County Council is required to carry out a number of environmental assessments. These include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and also a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
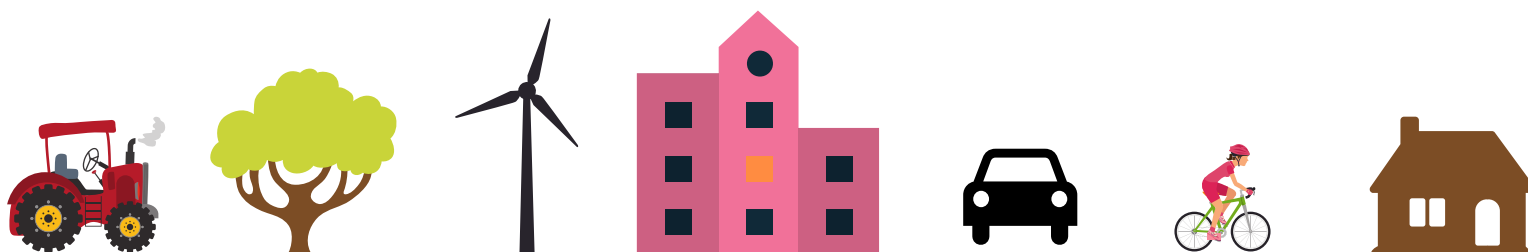
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Development Plans is required under the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. SEA is a statutory process, involving the evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the new Development Plan before a decision has been made to adopt it. The objective of the SEA process is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and promote sustainable development by contributing to the integration of environmental considerations with the preparation of statutory plans.

Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment
The Development Plan will be subject to Appropriate Assessment, as required by the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The Directive aims to create a network of protected wildlife sites in Europe through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. Appropriate Assessment is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of the Development Plan, separate from and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites in view of the conservation objectives of the sites. At present, within Kilkenny there are 8 SAC sites and 1 SPA site.

Flooding
In recent years, we have become increasingly aware of the importance of factoring the risk to people, property, the overall economy and the environment from flooding into the planning system. In 2009, the Government produced Guidelines to integrate Flood Risk Management into the planning process.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out for the county as part of the last Development Plan in 2014, and this will be revised as part of this Development Plan. This assessment will establish the areas of flood risk and will ensure that development takes due account of this risk. This report will be published as part of the Draft Plan and will be available for comment.
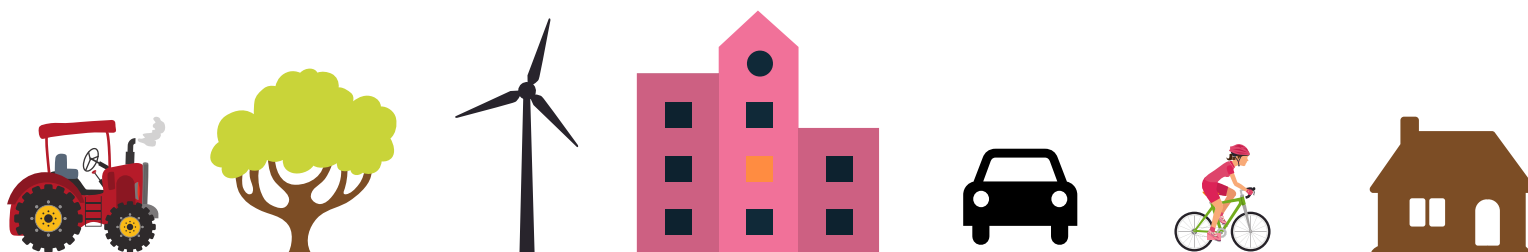
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER…….?

- How can the Council achieve a balance between the growth of the County and the protection of the environment?
- How can we encourage the use of green roofs, green streets or other green infrastructure approaches (e.g. tree planting) in new or existing development to provide solutions in relation to water management and the need to adapt to the predicted impacts of climate change?
- Should the Development Plan give positive support to the development of renewable energy at the expense of other considerations?
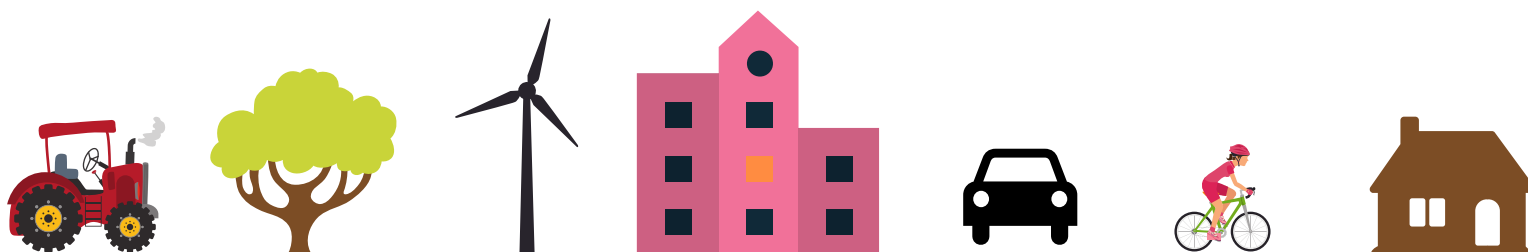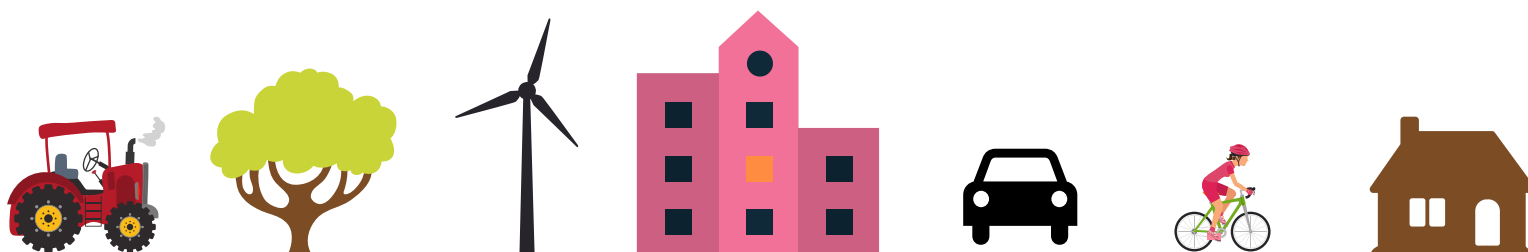
7 TOURISM

Kilkenny's history, heritage, and landscape have provided an invaluable tourism asset for both the City and County, which has the potential to sustain a significant element of our local economy. Kilkenny is marketed as a heritage destination and has a large number of visitor attractions associated with heritage, both built and natural. There is also potential to build on the contribution of the County's natural and built heritage to the economic development of Kilkenny, further improving the tourism product. Tourism is currently a major revenue generator for County Kilkenny, estimated by Fáilte Ireland to be worth approximately €94m to the County in 2016.

Kilkenny County Council has rolled out a Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme for the period 2017 to 2022 to drive, support and help sustain the tourism industry in Kilkenny. The extent to which the Council can improve tourism's performance will however be dependent on a combination of internal and external factors, which includes government policy and the impacts of Great Britain leaving the European Union (Brexit).

Fáilte Ireland's brand propositions Ireland's Ancient East (IAE) as a significant marketing opportunity for Kilkenny. Kilkenny is and will continue to be a significant attraction within IAE, and intends embracing all opportunities presented by a major marketing and branding campaign, which is entirely consistent with Kilkenny's history and heritage. Kilkenny has many untapped tourism resources, including its people, its heritage and its natural environment. Several projects are underway to expand the tourism product such as the Kilkenny Greenway in the South and the Medieval mile and the Linear Walk in Kilkenny City. A major opportunity is the exploitation of the untapped tourism potential associated with the three major rivers flowing through the County, being the rivers Barrow, Nore and Suir.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......**?**

- How can the Development Plan assist in supporting and expanding both urban and rural tourism?
- How can Kilkenny best achieve its growth objectives whilst protecting its heritage and tourism product?
- How can Kilkenny best utilise its natural environment, including its major rivers, to expand and enhance its tourism product?
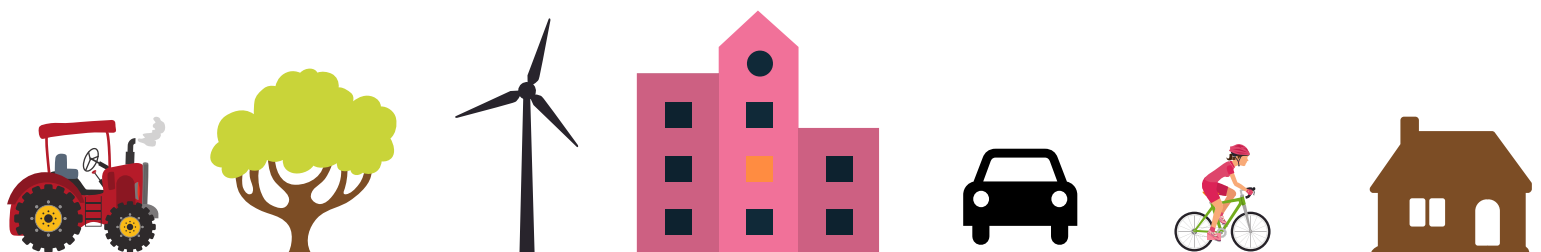
8 URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Creating spaces for people to live and work requires good design. People will be encouraged to live in spaces that have a sense of place. Urban design is essentially a tool to assist in the craft of creating quality urban spaces; it is about how buildings are put together to shape and enliven our streets and civic spaces. Good urban design includes:

1. Respecting the existing character;
2. Creating a clear distinction between public and private spaces and ensuring that public areas are suitably supervised by adjoining buildings;
3. Ensuring that an area is easy to navigate and is permeable;
4. Facilitating diversity in terms of uses and appearance;
5. Facilitating longevity, by designing streets and buildings that can be adapted to a variety of uses during their lifetime;
6. Encouraging visual identity and interest and discourage functional anonymity.

The aim of the Council is to achieve the highest standards possible in urban and architectural design whether urban or rural.
The Council published a Rural Design Guide in 2007 with the aim of promoting the highest standards of design and sustainability and this gives practical guidance for single dwellings in County Kilkenny.

There is a challenge in adapting older buildings for modern use and to accord with modern energy and access standards whilst retaining their historical and architectural integrity. An inflexible approach to the continued adaptation of buildings in many instances may lead to abandonment and dereliction.
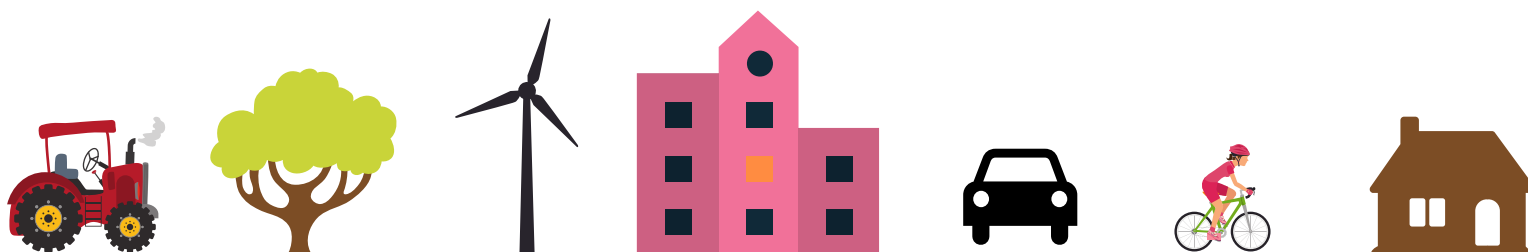
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER....... ?

- How can we make our urban areas more attractive places to live in?
- How do we best reconcile form and function with heritage in a Medieval City where the use of Brownfield (urban redevelopment) sites are promoted and where the new will sit side by side with the old?
- Should changes be made to the Rural Design Guide?
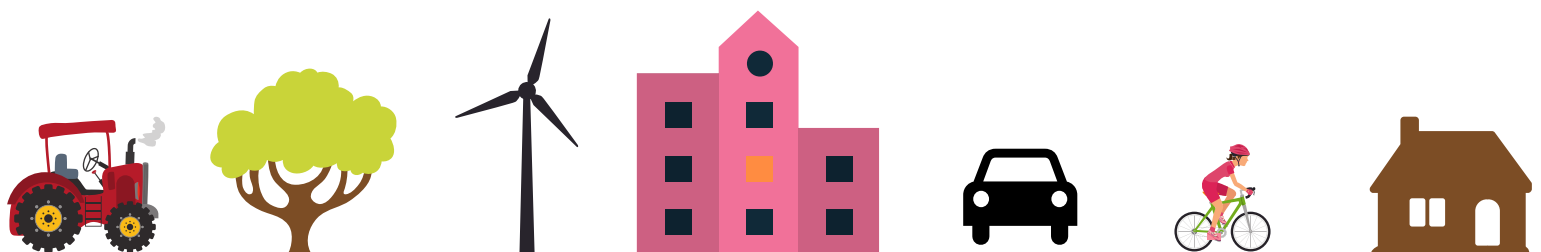
9 INFRASTRUCTURE

a. Water and Wastewater
Since January 2014 Water and Wastewater has been the responsibility of Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council treats water and wastewater in accordance with a service level agreement with Irish Water. Potable water is treated to food standard, with the appropriate monitoring and testing.

Water distribution input in the county has amounted to 27,166 m3 per day over 365 days, amounting to 9,915,500 m3 of potable water per year. Given the losses on the network a far greater production is however required to meet the future demand. Waste Water in similar quantities is disposed of safely back to the environment.

b. Water Conservation and Water Quality
Kilkenny County Council has significantly reduced water distribution input from 33000m3/day in 2010 to the current figure of 27,166m3/day which is a reduction of 18%. This has been achieved through active leakage detection, demand management, pressure management and watermains rehabilitation.

The Draft National River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 published in 2018 seeks to ensure full compliance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This requires restoring water quality to at least good status, the prevention of deterioration in water quality, implementation of objectives for designated protected areas and an overall focus on protection of water quality. To date Government action has focussed on the main sources of pollution - a nitrates actions programme to address agricultural runoff and investment to address pollution from urban waste water treatment discharges. Additional measures to meet Ireland's obligations under the WFD will be implemented, including increased investment in Waste Water Treatment Plants and changes or restrictions on further discharges.
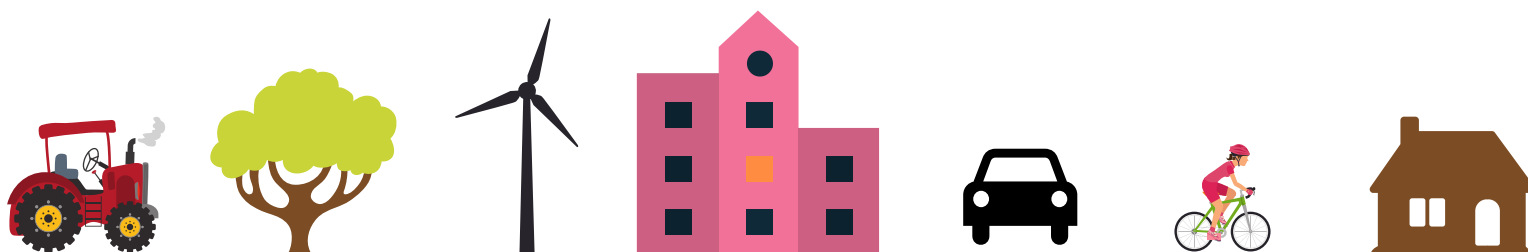
c. Surface Water and Sustainable Drainage

All new development applications must account for how the surface water runoff will be managed on development sites. As such, the County Council aims to control runoff from such sites through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), which aims to contain surface waters on site for gradual release back to watercourses or public drainage systems. SuDS thereby reduce the rate and quantity of surface water runoff and improve water quality from developed sites by replicating, as closely as possible a 'greenfield' situation. It is however important to follow best practice, including the use if interceptors, to ensure that SuDS do not negatively impact when discharging directly to watercourses.

d. Waste Management

The Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 is the guiding document for waste management in County Kilkenny. Kilkenny County Council's role in waste management is focused on education, prevention, ensuring resource efficiency activities, regulating householders, businesses and waste operators and enforcing waste legislation. Waste infrastructure provided by Kilkenny County Council mainly includes bring banks and a civic amenity centre. Kilkenny County Council support the new SRWMO (Southern Region Waste Management Office) and WERLA (Waste Enforcement Regional Local Authority) as well as taking a lead role in the implementation of specific tasks such as tackling unmanaged household waste, remediation of historic landfills, local campaigns on waste prevention and specific waste enforcement activities in County Kilkenny.

e. Electrical and Gas supply

The electricity transmission network of Kilkenny comprises mostly 110kV (kilovolt) circuits and one 220kV circuit in the South of the County. Kilkenny County Council recognises the need to enhance the electrical infrastructure to ensure that increased demand is met for increased energy security, economical growth and job creation.

A gas pipeline runs from direction Paulstown through the County past Kilkenny City and on towards Callan to the West and Ballyragget to the North. A spur from the main gas pipeline extends down to Great Island in County Wexford and into Belview Port. Although gas is used in some areas along this pipeline, many areas do not have direct access to gas via the network and are reliant on mobile gas in the form of cylinders or gas tanks installed in housing estates and at business premises.

The Council will continue to work with agencies to ensure the orderly rollout of energy infrastructure and to promote clean energy in as far as is practicable.
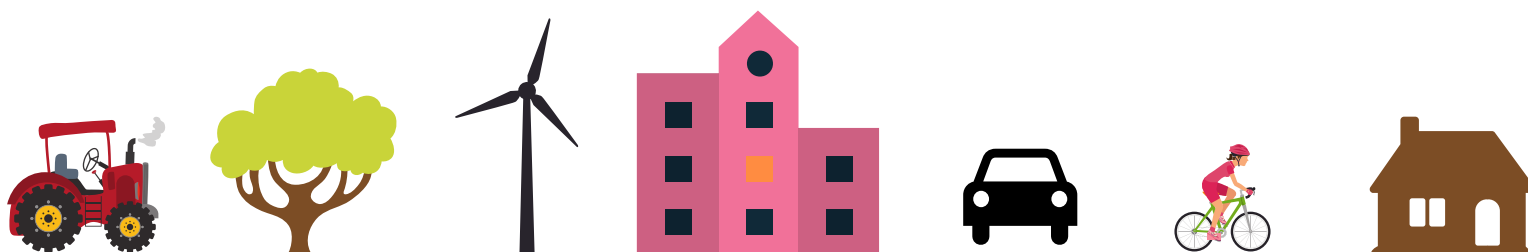
f. Telecommunications and Broadband

In April 2016, 22,739 dwellings in Kilkenny had broadband access, an increase of 14.8% since April 2011. A further 3,800 dwellings had non-broadband internet access, an increase of 2.1%, while the number of dwellings with no internet access fell by 19.6% to 7,512.

Currently there is poor broadband and mobile provision in the rural areas of Kilkenny and the Governments Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce has been setup to address these issues across the Country.

Kilkenny County Council will make every effort to facilitate mobile operators to increase the coverage and quality of mobile services in the county and to assist with the rollout of National Broadband Plan across the county, thus digitally better enabling the County. Currently 37% of County Kilkenny is within this plan.

Following on from the National Broadband Plan which primarily addresses the lack of high speed broadband connectivity in the rural areas, there will be locations within the city boundaries that have fallen behind in terms of connectivity speed and availability. Kilkenny County Council will endeavour to facilitate and support broadband and mobile operators to improve these speed and service issues within the city boundaries.

g. Renewable Energy

Renewable energy comes in many forms, including wind energy, solar energy or biomass. Although renewable energy reduces carbon emissions, its production is not always without controversy. The production of wind energy requires substantial wind turbines, the combined visual impact of which could negatively impact the rural landscape character. On the other hand, Solar energy covers a larger extent of land, although with a much reduced visual profile. Kilkenny County Council supports the low carbon economy and the use of renewable energy for a cleaner future. To date permissions have been granted by the Council and on appeal to An Bord Pleanála for 39 wind turbines in 8 locations, together with 12 solar farms covering an area of approximately 160Ha.
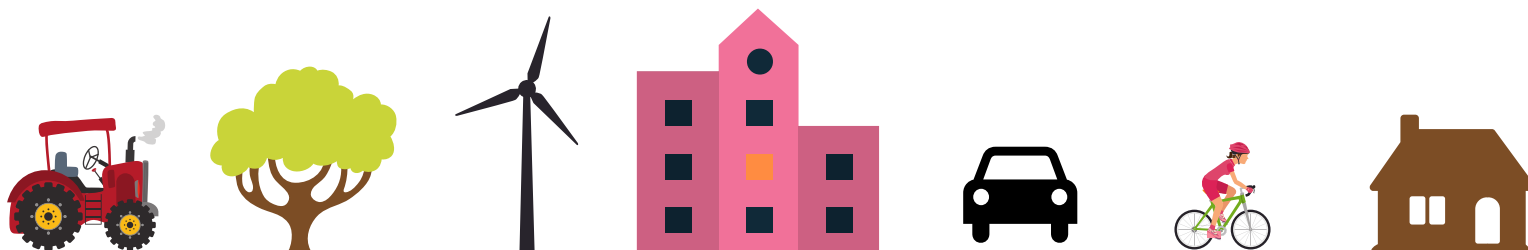
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.......?

- What measures can be taken to improve water quality?
- Are there significant factors contributing to deterioration in the water quality of groundwater or rivers and how can this be addressed?
- How can the County Development Plan support the relevant external agencies in the provision of:
- Electricity;
- Gas;
- Water and Wastewater;
- Renewable Energy;
- Telecommunication and broadband infrastructure?
- Are there adequate recycling facilities in the County and if not where should they be located?
- How can Kilkenny best tailor its policies on renewable energy to support the renewable energy industry but also protect the landscape's amenity and ecology?
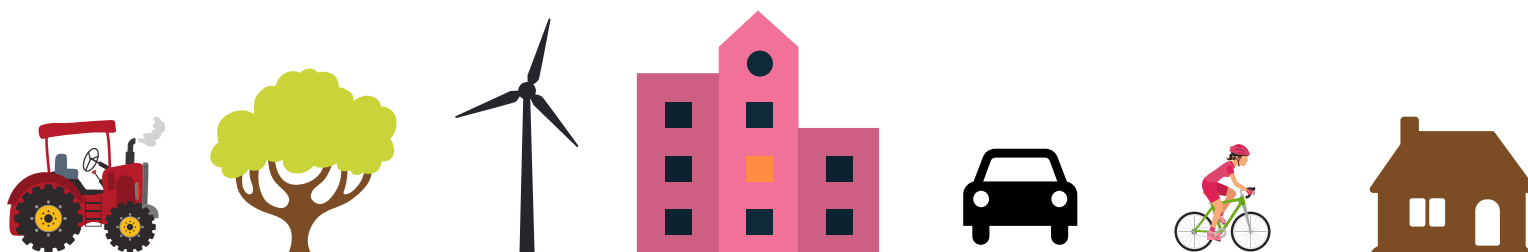
10 SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Community facilities are vital to the life of the county. Schools and other educational facilities, libraries, churches and other places of worship, crèches, youth clubs, meeting spaces, cultural centres (such as Kilkenny Arts office and the Butler Gallery), health centres, primary care centres, hospitals and social service centres, all help to maintain and nurture a sense of community as well as providing for the educational, cultural, social and health needs of citizens. Similarly a diverse range of recreation and open space facilities such as sports pitches, public parks, indoor sports centres (like the Watershed), and walking and cycling routes, are vital to the health and wellbeing of the residents of the county.

Kilkenny has a range of high quality open space, recreational and community facilities provided by the public, private and voluntary sectors. However there continues to be a need for additional facilities and improvements to existing resources to raise standards and serve an expanding population.

Older people need to be catered for and the inclusion of the needs of the older citizen should be central to any good community policy.

a. Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
Under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, each Local Authority was directed to set up a Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The LCDC was established for the purpose of developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development in the county. The LCDC has responsibility for the preparation of a 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), which in Kilkenny covers the term 2016-2021. The LECP sets out economic and community objectives that will promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the County. It addresses a wider range of community issues, including developing infrastructure to address social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage, reverse social and economic decline and to realise growth potential and the sustainability of communities.
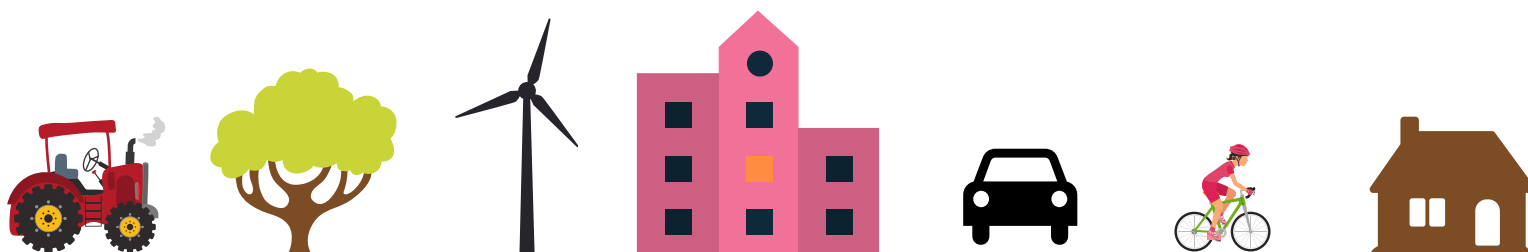
b. Education and Childcare

Educational facilities have an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities. The Council will continue to work with the Department of Education and other stakeholders in the provision of educational facilities, at primary, secondary and third level. The provision of childcare facilities is an important factor for economic and social wellbeing. Quality childcare can also make a significant contribution to healthy development in the early years of a child's life. While the Council is not directly involved in the provision of childcare services, the Development Plan should ensure that sufficient facilities are provided particularly in newly developing areas and sustained where possible in existing towns and villages.

c. Healthcare

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by public, private and voluntary agencies within the County. The primary role of Kilkenny County Council in relation to healthcare is to ensure that there is an adequate policy framework in place and that healthcare facilities are permitted subject to good planning practice.

d. Nursing Homes/Residential care

For people in need of residential care for any number of reasons, the location of facilities is extremely important. Nursing homes and residential care homes should be integrated wherever possible into the residential areas of towns and villages where residents and staff can avail of reasonable access to local services.

e. Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is about the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups and communities. Creating a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge. The Development Plan has a role in facilitating such initiatives through promoting good placemaking, for example ensuring new developments are designed with good connectivity and permeability for all. Social inclusion will be a cross cutting theme within the new Development Plan.
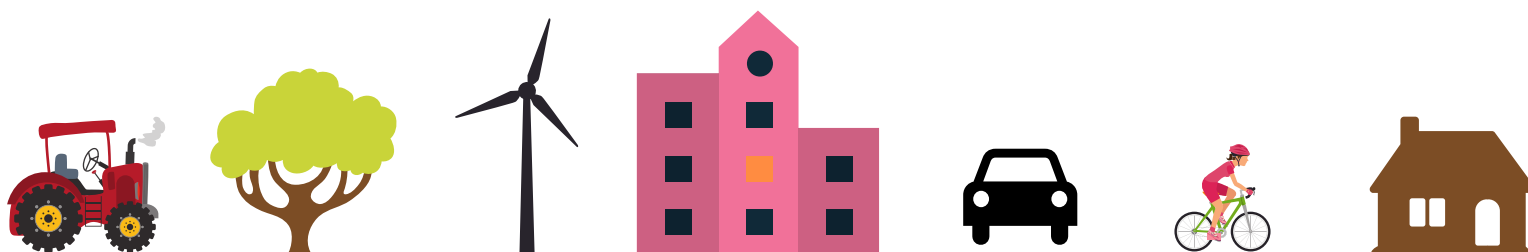
f. The Arts

Culture is one of the main elements in a city's identity. Culture is a key factor in attracting people to live, work and visit and is an essential ingredient in local place-making and quality of life for its citizens. Kilkenny's Arts Office continues to develop, co-ordinate, motivate, inspire, strengthen and cultivate the arts sector throughout the county. All of our activities serve as an investment for the community, the local economy, and the tourism and heritage sector. The Development Plan has a role in terms of continuing to explore possibilities for the development of further cultural facilities across the county and to encourage the creative sector to continue to contribute to the prosperity of the County.

g. Libraries

There are a total of 9 libraries around the county (Callan, Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Graiguenamanagh, Loughboy, John's Green (Local Studies), John's Quay, Thomastown, & Urlingford).

h. Fire Service

There are 7 fire stations throughout the County in Callan, Castlecomer, Freshford, Graiguenamanagh, Thomastown, Urlingford and Kilkenny.

Questions to consider.........................?

- How can the Council work with education stakeholders to facilitate current and future educational requirements in appropriate locations?
- How can the County Development Plan assist the library service to continue to play an active role in all communities?
- Are the needs of different cultural, ethnic, youth, elderly and persons with a disability being accommodated in our community?
- Have you ideas as to how social and community infrastructure should be funded?
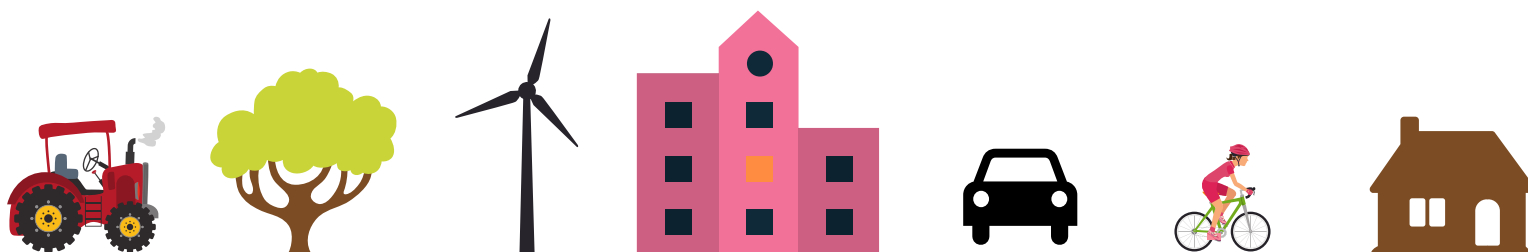
11 LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

County Kilkenny has a rich and varied built, natural and cultural heritage resource. Landscapes, rivers, woodlands, hedgerows, geology, plants and animals are all part of our natural heritage. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures such as houses, shops, churches, bridges and mills are features of our built heritage. Our cultural heritage includes aspects of heritage, such as traditions, practices, knowledge and skills, which are an expression of our culture.

Kilkenny's heritage is that which makes the county unique, what gives it its special character and its 'sense of place'. It is a valuable economic resource. It is the basis for Kilkenny's tourism industry, and brings significant economic benefits to the county. Heritage is also vital for the health, well-being and quality of life of communities.

a. Natural Heritage
Natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day, often referred to as biodiversity, including rivers and woodlands, hedgerows, mammals, birds and plants. It also includes geology and landscape.

Our natural heritage provides significant economic benefits for the county. It underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation, and is a core component of the county's green infrastructure. Protection of the county's natural resources is regarded as necessary to sustain economic growth.

A number of areas in County Kilkenny have been identified as being of exceptional importance for wildlife at a national and/or international level. These areas are protected through national and European legislation and these sites have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. In addition, certain plant, animal and bird species found in the county are considered rare or vulnerable and are protected by Irish law.

The new Development Plan will seek to maintain the protection afforded to the designated sites and the ecological network in the current Development Plan.
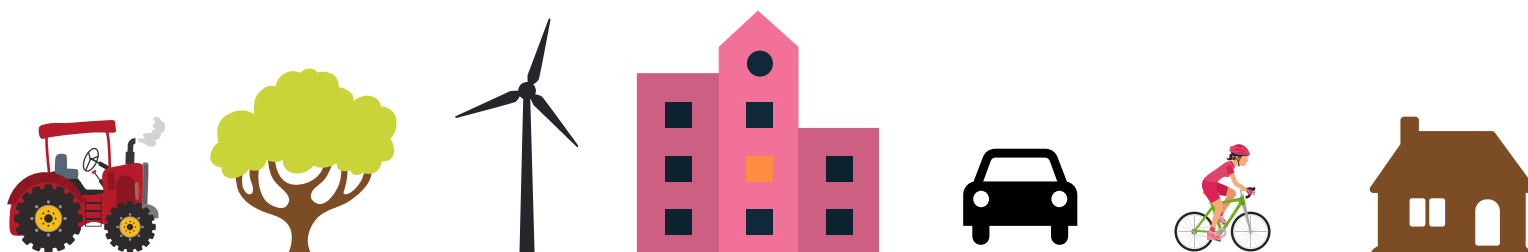
b. Landscape

"Landscape" is defined as an area whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The landscape of County Kilkenny is a dynamic and valuable resource which incorporates all aspects of the natural, built and cultural heritage. Landscapes provide a sense of place and characterise the county for local residents and visitors alike both in terms of a place to live and also for recreational and tourism purposes. A Landscape Character Assessment forms part of the current Development Plan.

c. Built Heritage

Built heritage includes all man-made features, buildings, and structures in the environment. It includes our rich and varied archaeological and architectural heritage. The historic, innovative or rare buildings and other man-made structures constructed by previous generations of Kilkenny inhabitants as homes or places of industry, commerce, defence, leisure or worship form the architectural heritage of the county. Protection is provided for this by the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014 by way of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). We have a legal responsibility to include a RPS in our Development Plan to protect buildings of special interest or significance.

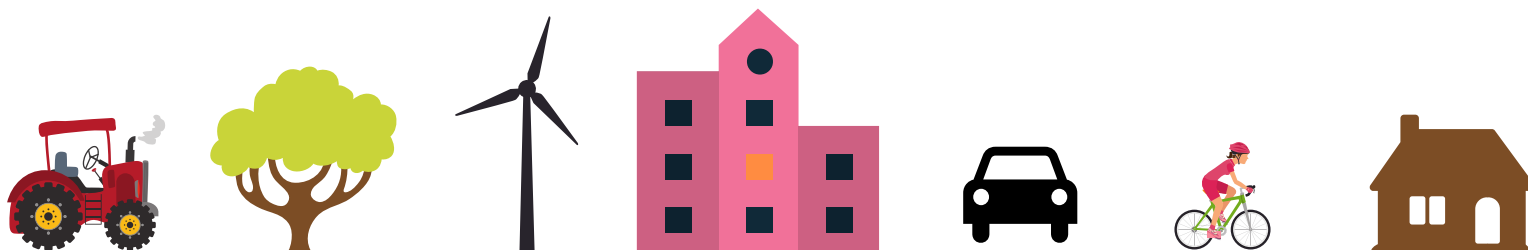There are 10 ACAs in the County and 9 ACAs in the City:

Architectural Conservation Areas

County Kilkenny	Kilkenny City
1. Ballyragget	1. City Centre
2. Bennettsbridge	2. Kilkenny Castle
3. Callan	3. St. Canice's
4. Castlecomer	4. John Street
5. Freshford	5. Patrick Street
6. Gowran	6. Michael Street and Wolfe Tone Street
7. Graiguenamanagh	
8. Inistioge	7. St. Mary's
9. Johnstown	8. Lacken
10. Thomastown	9. Talbotsinch

d. Green Infrastructure

Open space forms an important part of the network of green spaces around us, sometimes referred to as our 'green infrastructure'. 'Green infrastructure' planning can help us to plan for open space in the county as a central part of the planning process.
The multifunctional role of green infrastructure enhances opportunities for recreation and tourism, encourages new business to invest in the county and has a role in climate change adaptation. The current Development Plan identifies green infrastructure as a key strategic asset for the county.

Questions to consider..........................?

- What makes a good open space or park?
- How can the built environment, in the urban or rural context, be designed to have the least impact on our natural heritage and biodiversity?
- How can we encourage the use of green roofs, green streets or other green infrastructure approaches (e.g. tree planting) in new or existing development to provide solutions in relation to water management and the need to adapt to the predicted impacts of climate change?
- Are there any buildings or structures of special interest in your area that should be added to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS)?
- How can the County Development Plan best strike the balance between conservation and renewal, to encourage the reuse of Protected Structures that have fallen into disuse?
- Should we change any of our existing Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) or can you identify any new ones?
- How can natural heritage and biodiversity be enhanced?
- How can greater access to the natural, built and archaeological heritage be facilitated, while having regard to the sensitive nature of many sites?