



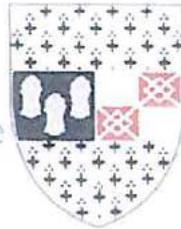
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHLATHARLOCHA



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford City & County Council



Wexford
County Council

Minister Simon Coveney,
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government,
Customs House,
North Dock,
Dublin 1.
30th March 2017

Re: "Ireland 2040 – Our Plan" Joint Submission

Dear Minister Coveney,

We write in respect of the above referenced.

As the Chief Executives of the five Counties which make up the South East Region of Ireland, we would like to endorse this joint submission which is being made in support of the South East Waterford City Region.

We look forward to participating further in the preparation of the National Planning Framework in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Enright,
Chief Executive,
Wexford County Council.

Michael Walsh,
Chief Executive,
Waterford City and County Council.

Joe MacGrath,
Chief Executive,
Tipperary County Council.

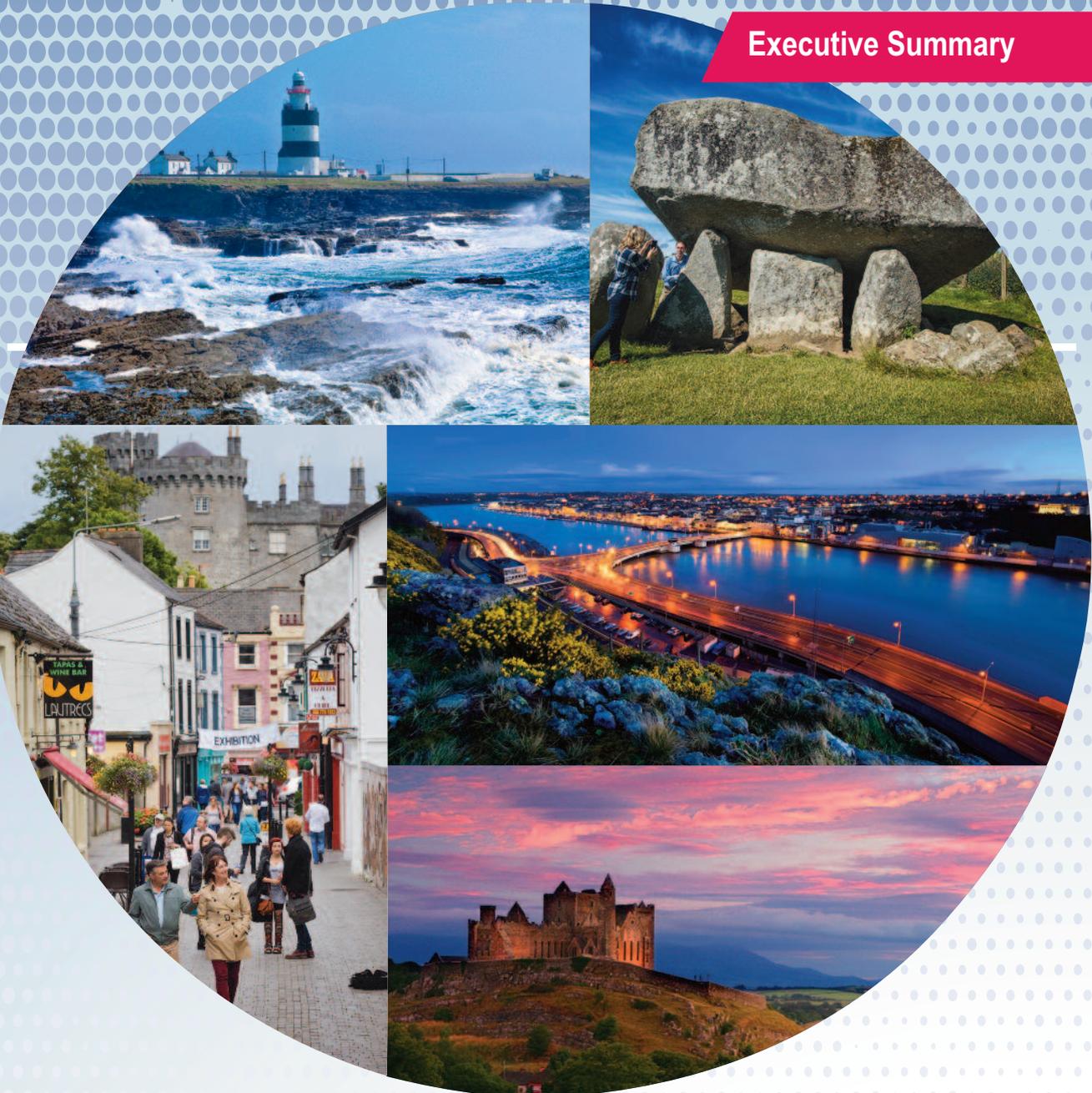
Colette Byrne,
Chief Executive,
Kilkenny County Council.

Dan McInerney,
Acting Chief Executive,
Carlow County Council.

IRELAND 2040: **Our Plan** National Planning Framework

South East Waterford City Region

Executive Summary



JOINT SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE OF:



Our Vision for Ireland in 2040

- A strong and sustainable Dublin as a key driver of international competitiveness.
- A series of connected City Regions acting as a counterbalance to Dublin with the appropriate levers to compete.
- A rural Ireland with enhanced connectivity and a repurposing of its towns and villages in the context of urbanisation, globalisation and technological change.
- An appropriate re-distribution of population, away from the Greater Dublin Area, to the regions.





What are the key levers to allow the South East Waterford City Region to fulfil this vision?

A Key Gateway to Europe and Counterbalance to Dublin

- Development of our Ports.
- Sustaining the West East Freight Activity provided by the Ballina to Waterford Rail connection.
- Developing an extended runway at Waterford Airport to deliver regional international connectivity by air.
- Improvement a) in train frequency and b) in travel time through upgrading of the physical infrastructure of the Waterford to Dublin rail line, via Carlow and Kilkenny and the Dublin to Wexford and Rosslare Harbour rail line.

Partnering The Atlantic City Regions

- A motorway replacing the existing N24 and ensuring connection of all the City Regions of Ireland by motorway.
- Improvements to the N80 and N25 to appropriate national primary standard standards.
- Policy incentives to enable greater physical and virtual collaboration between the City Regions.

Sustaining Jobs and Human Capital

- Delivery of a Technological

University of The South East with Primary Campuses in Waterford and Carlow and out-reach campuses in Wexford and Kilkenny as a unifying proposition and driver of learning and innovation.

- Ensuring 10,000 of the additional third level places required in the state are delivered by the Technological University of the South East.
- Policy direction to redress the imbalance in FDI investment in the South East.
- Progressing key strengths in the region in agriculture, food nutrition, life sciences, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, engineering, design and mobile applications.
- Doubling tourism visitor numbers over the life of the plan, under Irelands Ancient East through collaboration and key projects such as Cruise Tourism, Greenways and Munster Vales.
- Delivery of international broadband connectivity via the Great Island connector and of dark fibre connectivity between all of the Cities.
- Development of strategic sites such as the Abbey Creative Quarter and Trinity Wharf.



Doubling Waterford City's Population

- Prioritising the Development of the North Quays.
- Ensuring key enabling infrastructure outlined in the Waterford Planning Land Use and Transportation Strategy for the Greater Waterford area is advanced.
- Ensuring the key role of student and innovation centres in City development is reflected in the make-up of the Technological University of the South-East.

Health and Well-Being

- Ensure that the Health Services are so developed as to ensure a Centre of Excellence in University Hospital Waterford and that services across the Region are appropriate to meet the needs of 700,000 in population.
- Enhanced investment in our natural amenities as a resource for residents and visitors alike.



Rural Ireland

The key issue to be addressed in the context of Rural Ireland is the repurposing of towns and villages consequent on the redirection of their market function and challenges to their employment base due to technological change.

The key elements for the delivery of change should be

- Enhanced provision of broadband connectivity to towns and villages with speeds well in excess of that proposed under the National Broadband Scheme.
- Focused and specific funding of consequence to enable regeneration targeted at community and private sector co-involvement, with the primary targets being the economic and residential functions of our smaller urban centres.
- Co-ordination and/or rationalisation of the multiplicity of existing schemes in the Rural Development area.



IRELAND 2040: **Our Plan** National Planning Framework

South East Waterford City Region



JOINT SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE OF:



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1 Introduction

Ireland has a unique and exciting opportunity now to plan for a better future for all for the next 20 years and beyond. The “Ireland 2040 - Our Plan” Issues and Choices Document suggests that the most important question that needs to be asked at the outset of the National Planning Framework (NPF) process is, what the vision should be for our Country, what sort of place should Ireland be in 2040 and what do we need to do to achieve this?

In response to the request for submissions, the Local Authorities of the South East, Waterford, Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny and Carlow, working in collaboration, are pleased to make a joint submission to the NPF. The five Local Authorities, together, have the vision, ambition, capacity, statutory remit, governance and proven track record to coordinate and drive the delivery of the NPF. The South East Waterford Region (SEWCR) can be developed into a nationally significant economic, social and sustainable

location, achieving effective regional development, creating sustainable communities and increasing the quality of life for all who live, work and visit the region.

The difficulties faced by the Country in addressing existing and new challenges, require that a strong framework is put in place.

By recognising that the need to replace the concept of business as usual, with the idea of effective regional development, playing to our strengths rather than assuming that a single model suits all areas, will allow us to achieve the national vision and goals we all share, such as improved living standards, a desire for people to live in safe, vibrant communities and to experience life-long health and well-being.

This submission advocates that the South East needs Waterford to be a regional city of consequence, with economic, demographic and sustainable planning focusing on Waterford City and the large regional urban centres of Wexford, Carlow, Clonmel and Kilkenny City and the potential of the people and assets all within 1-hour driving time.

The SEWCR is a region of approximately 582,000 people with Waterford City at its heart, with the urban centres of Clonmel, Carlow, Wexford and Kilkenny City being integral to the success of the City Region.

This submission demonstrates that the SEWCR is working to a single vision for the success of the Region and the Country as a whole. A regionally significant step - change

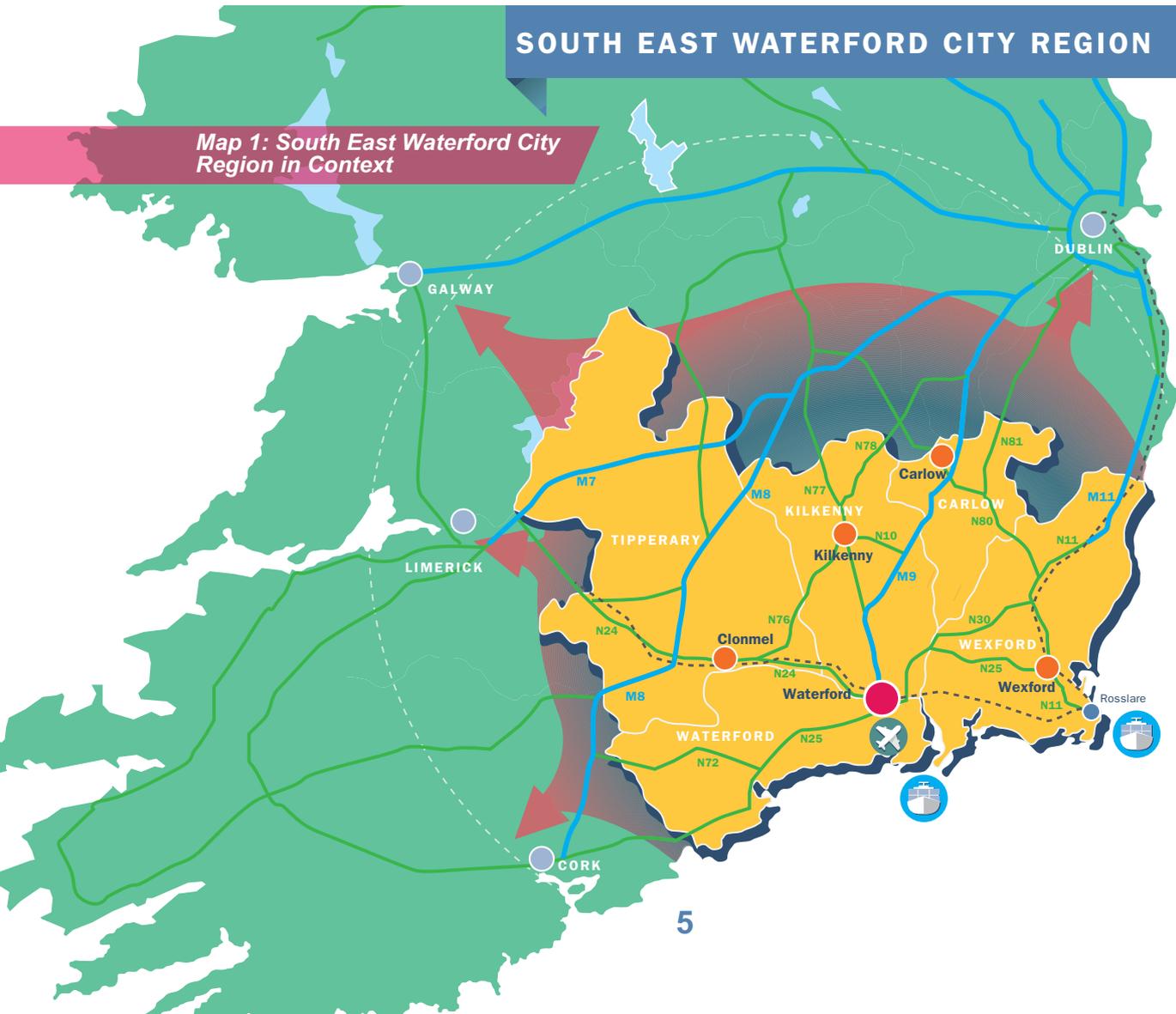
in the promotion of the South East Waterford City Region has been identified by the local authorities to deliver effective regional development between the local authorities, building on recent success in the areas of jobs, culture, and greenway/blueway development. This step change has the potential to deliver co-ordinated planning and investment that will be long term and transformational. The Local Authorities have considered the key assets, the strategic aims and actions required for the region and the availability of immediate capacity, to ensure the SEWCR delivers the critical mass to compete at an international level.



2 Vision for the South East Waterford City Region (SEWCR)

It is our vision that the SEWCR will be branded and developed as Ireland's Gateway to Europe, working in support of the Greater Dublin Area. The Region's economic and social performance can be developed to be sufficiently important to positively affect the performance of the national economy and help relieve development pressure on Dublin. The region will also be a major player with the other Atlantic City Regions of Cork, Limerick and Galway while also linking with the Midlands / North West as a national counter balance to the greater Dublin Area.

To maximise the potential of South East Waterford City Region as a Smart, Safe, Inclusive, Innovative location, serving Ireland and linking to Europe while embracing its cultural heritage and natural environment.



3 South East Waterford City Region: Key Messages

3.1 South East Waterford City Region in Context

Up until 2014, the South East Region was defined as the geographical area which comprises the local authority administrative areas of Waterford City Council and Wexford, Kilkenny, Waterford, Carlow and South Tipperary County Councils. The region was bounded by the Mid West, Midland, Mid East and South West regions. This area was further given statutory effect in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

In 2014 the Local Government Reform process merged Waterford City and County Council and North and South Tipperary County Councils, created the new Regional Assemblies through the abolition of the Regional Authorities, and the dissolution of the Town Councils.

While the SEWCR now sits within the Southern Regional Assembly area, for the purposes of this submission the most appropriate spatial expression of the SEWCR is based on modern economic, infrastructural, demographic and social interrelationships and potential, rather than historical administrative areas. In that regard, it is more appropriate to examine the spheres of influence of the key assets which lie within it. These assets include, but are not limited to;

- Waterford City.
- Urban Centres of Clonmel, Kilkenny City, Wexford and Carlow.
- Waterford Airport.
- Belview and Rosslare ports.
- Motorway and Rail connectivity to the Dublin region.
- Strategic employment land banks.
- Legacy and tradition of regional development and inward investment.
- Internationally renowned 3rd level institutes.
- University Hospital Waterford, Clonmel General Hospital, Wexford General Hospital, St. Luke's General and Kilcreen Orthopaedic Hospitals Kilkenny.
- A critical mass of 582,000 people with talent and human capital.
- Cultural, heritage and environmental assets.
- Regional Settlement structure and availability of land capacity for future housing, and land employment related development.

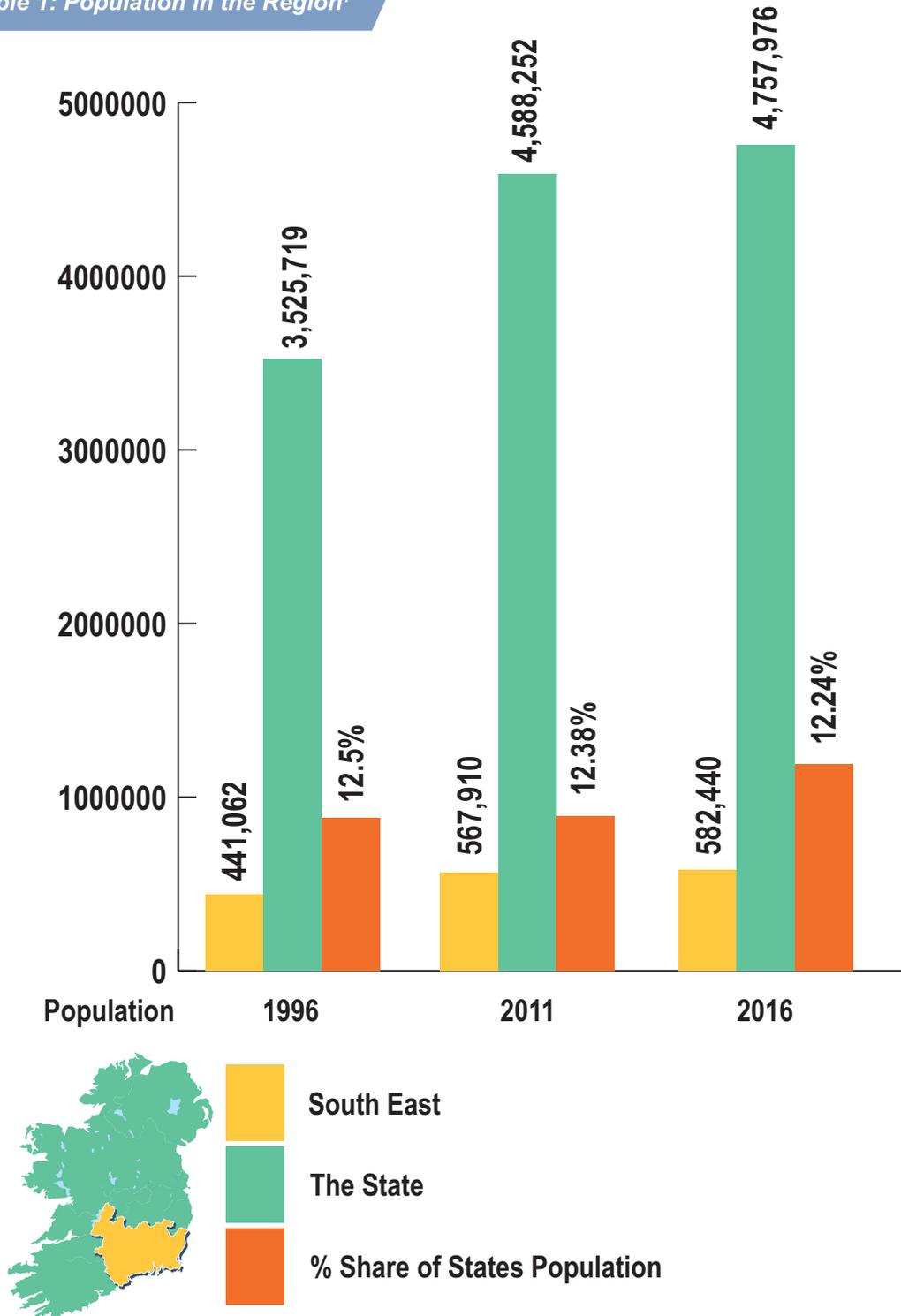
IRELAND 2040: Our Plan

The SEWCR is anchored by the City of Waterford, Belview Port, Rosslare Port, Waterford Airport, the third level institutes, together with the urban areas of Clonmel, Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny City and the rural hinterland which surrounds them.

Preliminary results from the 2016 Census show a population of 582,000 for the South East Waterford City Region which represented a 2.5% increase over the five year period 2011 - 2016. The region has lagged behind the national growth rate of 3.7% over the same period.



Table 1: Population in the Region¹



The 2011 Census demonstrated that the South East Region has a relatively young population with 28% of the population under the age of 20, and close to 49% of the population under the age of 35.

¹Source of data: Commentary on Census Preliminary Results - Urban Structure circulated Southern Regional Assembly



3.1.1 Ireland's sustainable polycentric development

For Ireland to compete on the world stage and in Europe, it needs a strong capital, therefore growth in Dublin must continue, but only in a sustainable way. Consequently, all future growth cannot be allowed to be Dublin centred as has been generally the case to date and a real viable and alternative approach now must be identified and implemented.

To that end, there is only one alternate possibility to Ireland's sustainable development, that is polycentric development, with the regional cities of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway, becoming real economic drivers of their regions. Without interference, the market place will partially deliver on this but only to a very limited extent. Allowing the market place to go it alone, will not produce the required quantum of sustainable

development in these cities that Ireland now requires.

Therefore, we must now ensure that the cities of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway are now enabled for propulsive growth in a sustainable fashion. It is also accepted that successful regions need successful cities.

Consequently this NPF, the subsequent Capital Plan and the RSES's must facilitate, enable and monitor the implementation of the pertinent Planning Use and Transportation Strategies in these cities, to cater for the level of growth required and to enable in a sustainable way Ireland's population growth of possibly an additional 1,000,000 people by 2040 and an additional 2,000,000 people by 2060.

We respectively suggest therefore, that this NPF should reference and enable Dublin's sustainable growth, and the propulsive growth of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway. In that regard, we believe this NPF should identify and enable the development of the following regions namely, Mid East Dublin City Region, South East Waterford City Region, South West Cork City Region, Mid West Limerick City Region and the West Galway City Region. If this NFP succeeds in this, together with growth in urban centres of scale and a very strong rural development approach, Ireland's future sustainable development and competitiveness is secure.

A critical component to the success of this proposal is connectivity between the cities of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway and to the Midlands / North West, all of which must be prioritised. This should now be achieved by utilising the existing M8 and developing a motorway between Waterford and the M8 and the M8 and Limerick, in our view, it is neither necessary, practical, nor cost-effective to develop the M20 in isolation to the M8 as has been proposed in some quarters.



3.2 SEWCR - A Key Gateway to Europe and Britain and the alternative City Region on the East Coast

The SEWCR is made up of polycentric urban areas, all working together for the benefit of the South East. Waterford City, Clonmel, Wexford, Kilkenny City and Carlow come together as a City Region which is not only closest to Dublin, but is also closest to mainland Europe and Britain.

Map 2: South East: Gateway to Europe and Britain



Unlike smaller urban centres around Dublin, the SEWCR, because of its population of 582,000, can retain its identity when viewed against Dublin. Its proximity to Dublin offers the potential to create one of Ireland's alternative City Regions whilst ensuring Dublin remains an important international city by

offering connectivity, a high quality of life and the availability of strategic land banks. By developing the SEWCR as a linked City Region to Dublin will provide a long term sustainable approach to the development of East of Ireland in a sustainable manner.



3.3 Waterford City

3.3.1 City Expansion

Our national economy relies heavily on the performance of our cities and better functioning, sustainable and more vibrant cities will ensure economic growth and continued social advancement. Under the NPF a more focused targeting of investment towards city regions would address growing imbalances between the greater Dublin area and elsewhere. An effective Waterford City region, driven by a strong and growing Waterford City would generate sufficient economic and commercial synergies to act as an effective alternative to Dublin in terms of critical mass, population and other resources.

Given the importance of economic growth in Waterford to improving national economic competitiveness the NPF should ensure that investment priority is aligned to enable infrastructure blockages to growth in roads, public transport, broadband etc. to be released. This will ensure that the delivery of commercial/employment and

housing development, essential to the future economic growth of the Waterford city region, is not delayed. Such investment will act as a catalyst for private investment across all sectors.

Waterford City needs to grow to at least double its population to realise its potential as the driver of economic prosperity for the SEWCR and for the region to act as a 'counter magnet' to the growth of Dublin City and complement the other Regional Cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway. This 'critical mass' - additional 50,000 population and the enhanced linkages with the other cities will impact positively on the growth and expansion of the SEWCR as a whole and the strategic urban settlements of the region.



The city expansion will be driven to a large extent by the designation of the North Quays Strategic Development Zone (NQ SDZ). The Government-designated strategic brownfield site has the potential to become the catalyst in the future expansion of Waterford city. This development needs to be prioritised as a development of national scale in the NPF and complemented with an associated funding mechanism. Future growth needs to be managed and planned for with the accompanying level of capital

funding and enabling infrastructure, such as bridge crossings, rail terminus relocation, public bus expansion and strategic road improvements provision to unblock its full potential. An accompanying implementation plan is required which must set goals, milestones and measures of success while identifying resourcing and funding and monitoring mechanisms.

3.3.2 Facilitating the NPF in the SEWCR

It is the view of the five Local Authorities in the region that the NPF should positively pursue a rebalancing of growth rates and investment in a sustainable manner, so that Dublin can continue to play its international role, while being complemented by a significantly strengthened role for the next tier of city regions, and supported by a network of rural settlements and areas.

Capital spending must be aligned with the need to transition to a sustainable, low carbon economy and society. It cannot occur everywhere. Geographically, the SEWCR has the potential to provide strategic linkages to both mainland

Europe and Britain, while also being a strategic location along the east which can grow in support of the Greater Dublin Region. Therefore it is advocated that due to its strategic location the SEWCR has the capacity to increase its share of the national population and GDP, with supporting infrastructure and investment.

In order to facilitate the levels of growth anticipated in the NPF the following key supporting elements must be provided for:

- The establishment of the SE Technological University on a multi-campus basis, with the primary centres in Waterford and Carlow and further campuses in Kilkenny and Wexford.
- A linked Capital Investment Programme that can deliver the entire necessary social and physical infrastructure to realise the potential of the SEWCR as one of the alternative City Regional drivers for growth outside of the Dublin region.
- Good internal and external connectivity - Road, rail, bus, and air to and from the region
- Overcoming infrastructural impediments within the Region and between Waterford City and its regional population centres to release the potential of the region as a city region of scale.
- Development of a transportation hub in Waterford City in order to capture the full benefits of the significant investment already made in roads/rail/the airport and Belview port.
- The NPF must prioritise the immediate development of University Hospital Waterford, as a proper functioning regional hospital, this in turn will release much needed capacity in the adjacent hospitals in the Region and in Dublin and Cork, as the SEWCR then grows, additional further investment will be required

Delivering Waterford as the regional city of scale, together with providing the enabling infrastructure as outlined above will be critical to national and regional competitiveness and growth into the future. Such strategic investment in conjunction with appropriate rural development programmes will be required to ensure the sustainability and growth of urban centres of scale.

3.4 Governance

The lesson from the National Spatial Strategy was that it lacked legislative and regulatory oversight. There was no mandatory obligation to implement the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy at national, regional or local level.

The Ireland 2040 Issues and Choices Consultation Document, recognises that the National Planning Framework requires strong implementation at all levels, and puts delivery at the centre of the NPF. It is the view of the signatories to this submission, that business as usual at implementation level is not an option. We must look at other options and other ways of being successful. The local authorities, state and semi-state agencies, welcome this commitment by Government to a whole of Government approach to the NPF. As outlined in Section 1a collaborative approach has been entered into between the Chief Executives of the local authorities and together with consultation with key stakeholders in the region are committed to following through this collaborative approach locally to create an effective SEWCR. Monitoring, implementation and review on a regular basis will be essential if the NPF is to succeed. Under local government reform, significant changes have already

taken place in the structures of local authorities within the region through amalgamation of Waterford City and County Councils, and North and South Tipperary County Councils, and the abolition of Town Councils. The establishment of the Local Enterprise Offices and the Local Community Development Committees has also proven successful. The organisations involved have demonstrated that they can deliver when required to do so, in an efficient and effective manner.

The organisations within the SEWCR have a history of working together on projects which benefit the region as a whole. The construction of the M9, the Waterford City Bypass, the New Ross Bypass, Waterford Airport, Belview employment area etc. have been achieved through co-operation and collaboration across administrative boundaries. At a strategic policy level there are also examples of good emerging cooperation such as the Regional Economic Forum, the South East Action Plan for Jobs, the European Capital of Culture bid and supporting Fáilte Ireland's brand proposition "Ireland's Ancient East."

The opportunity now exists for the SEWCR to grow and enhance that level of cooperation so that the local authorities, state agencies and the private sector in the region, work collaboratively on delivering on the NPF and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. This would result in a series of intertwined interventions in the region delivering high level policy objectives and projects for an enhanced quality of life, social equity and sustainability for a 2040 Ireland.

It is essential that the south east unites and collaborates (e.g. for the purposes of branding and selling the region; attracting inward investment; and delivering on essential regional infrastructure.) Implementation on a cross organisational and cross boundary level to achieve and realise actions and maximise investments is required. An integrated and proactive approach will grow the economic base and develop the sectoral/business clusters as identified through the regional economic forum and attract investment.

Strategic Actions

- With support from the Regional Authority and with statutory backing, set up a regional implementation group for the South East Planning Area to co-ordinate high level cross boundary issues and ensure delivery of NPF and RSES objectives through local partnerships and alliances

3.5 Infrastructure and Connectivity

The long-term objective for the SEWCR is to achieve effective development and the provision of sustainable infrastructural systems which are key determinants to effective growth. Among the key infrastructure systems required to achieve this are water, wastewater and transport. These infrastructural systems are delivered by a range of providers and operators, both public and private with the overall ambition

for an improved level of 'connectivity' within the SEWCR, between the regions and the rest of the country, mainland Europe and beyond. Access to global and European markets is critical to the success of the region and providing a gateway to Europe with associated connectivity in the transport sector between the key transport links and nodes is imperative.

Map 3: Key Infrastructure



STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport  Ports  Motorway  Major Roads  Major Roads  | <p>EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Waterford IT  Carlow IT  Carlow IT Wexford Campus  Limerick IT Clonmel Campus  Kilkenny Campus NUI Maynooth  College Carlow (St.Patricks) |
|--|--|

3.5.1 Waterford Regional Airport

Waterford Airport began operating international flights from its site just 7.4km from Waterford City in 1985. Since then passenger demand at the Airport has experienced considerable fluctuation owing to changes in economic performance at home and abroad together with ease of access to larger airports through improvements in the national road network. Nevertheless Waterford Airport served an average of 83,000 passengers per year over the period 2003 - 2013.

necessary to facilitate use of the Airport by larger/jet propelled aircraft which would give the airport capacity of the order of 300,000 to 500,000 passenger journeys each year and relative to the low investment cost needed, makes economic sense and represents an excellent investment in the future development of the South East Waterford City Region. The utilisation of the existing capacity at the airport will be more cost effective than the cost of developing additional infrastructure mooted for Dublin airport.

The extension of the runway is

Strategic Actions

- To secure the Waterford Airport runway extension to accommodate jet carriers and strengthening of air transport services to and from the South East Waterford City Region.





3.5.2 Rosslare and Belview Ports

It is recognised internationally that Ports can contribute significantly to the economic recovery and long term competitiveness of industries in world markets while adding value and jobs in their respective regions. Ports have a key role to play in the development of an efficient and sustainable trans-European network by diversifying transport choices and contributing to multimodal transport.

Both Rosslare and Belview are identified as nationally significant (Tier 2) ports. In addition they meet

the European Commission's criteria for inclusion in the comprehensive network under the TEN-T proposals². Investment in connectivity to the TEN-T network will give high added value for the region and the country as a whole. To accelerate the continued growth of the South East Waterford City Region, the operating status of Rosslare and Belview ports as key linkages to mainland Europe and Britain will need to be addressed so as to place the seaports inside the core network.

3.5.2.1 Belview Port

Belview Port handles very substantial vessels with ships drafts of up to 9.5 metres and lengths of up to 200 metres. Belview has excellent inland connectivity with direct access to the M9 and N/M11 via the N25. It also has an active mainline rail connection. The Port Authority

and Kilkenny County Council are currently working collaboratively in the preparation of a Port Masterplan and a land use plan to facilitate port growth of bulk cargo to 1,6333,000 tonnes and containers to 90,000 TEU by 2020.

²National Ports Policy 2013 p27

3.5.2.2 Rosslare Europort

Rosslare Europort is Ireland's second busiest in terms of ship visits, passenger ferry and unitised freight, and is designated as one of only five ports of national significance in the National Ports Policy. The Port has recorded growth of 6% in freight units in 2014-2015. The current long term port development, costing between €65 and €70 million, considers a number of development options.

One is deepening the existing 'berth two' to handle deeper RORO ships and the other option is the construction of a new berth on reclaimed land that would have enough space capable of a RORO ramp to deeper water. Such options would improve depth from 7.2 metres to 9 or 11 metres, attracting larger freight/cargo shipping with rail freight sidings.

Strategic Actions

- In line with Government policy the SEWCR is committed to acting to ensure that both ports of national significance achieve their full potential
- To support and assist the development planning of the major seaports so as to ensure effective regional development and through collaboration at national level, lobby for enhanced Ten- T status for Belview and Rosslare ports at European level.
- To develop and maximise a cruise liner capability for the South East Region at appropriate berthing locations.

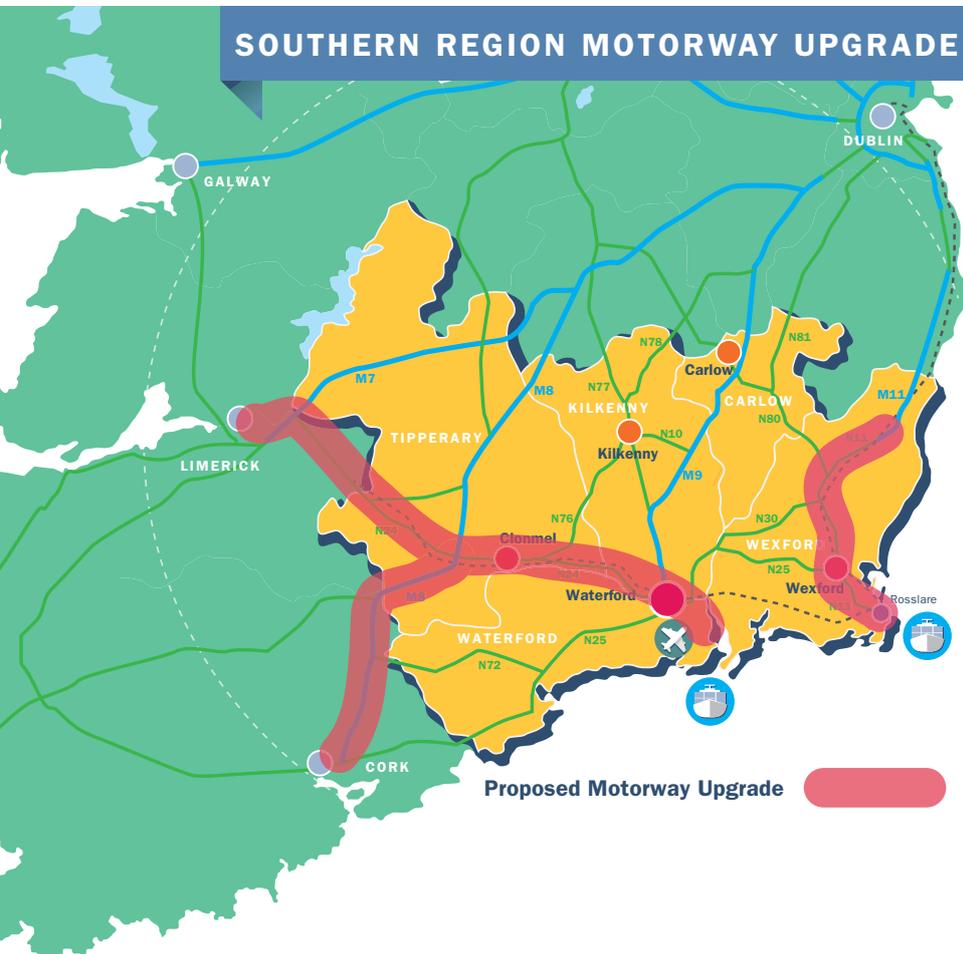
3.5.3 Transport Networks

3.5.3.1 Strategic Corridor Links

At a European level, core network transportation corridors have been introduced to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the core network. Within Ireland the core of the corridor focuses on linking Cork to Belfast via Dublin. The core network brings together public and private resources and concentrates European support in order to remove bottlenecks, build missing cross-border connections and promote modal integration and interoperability, integrate rail freight corridors and urban areas into the TEN-T integrated EU transport networks while promoting clean fuel and other innovative transport solutions.

While Ireland is located within the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor at EU level, the core of the corridor focuses on linking Cork to Belfast via Dublin and while access to these three networks and nodes is available from the SEWCR, the region is not included within the core.

The key linkages available from the South East Waterford City Region to the corridor are the Waterford to Limerick link (N24), the N25 linking Rosslare, Wexford, Waterford and Cork, the M/N11 Wexford to Dublin and the N80 linking the Midlands (Tullamore M6) to the ports and urban centres of the SEWCR and allowing relief of pressure on the M50.



These routes require upgrading and development to appropriate standard to ensure faster and ‘timelined’ delivery of road freight and passenger traffic. The M9 is currently the only completed link between the region and Dublin, while the M8 runs along the western edge of the region.

3.5.3.2 Radial Corridors

Intra-regional connections have and are being improved by the M9, the Waterford City bypass, the M11 and the recently commenced New Ross bypass. The radial connections between Waterford city and its

supporting large urban centres and the interconnection between the larger centres should also be upgraded and improved to National Primary 100km/hr design standard.

Strategic Actions

- Development of the N24 Waterford to Limerick route to Motorway standard, thereby linking all of the Atlantic City Regions by motorway.
- Improvement of the N25 Rosslare to Cork route
- Development of the N80 linking the N11 across to Carlow (M9), Portlaoise (M7) and Tullamore (M6) to full national primary route standard.
- Development of intra regional road connections between urban centres to National route standard.

3.5.3.3 Rail/Bus

There are 3 no. rail passenger service routes: Waterford to Dublin (Carlow and Kilkenny), Waterford to Limerick (Clonmel) and Rosslare/Wexford to Dublin. There is a connection to Cork via Limerick Junction, while the Waterford to Wexford rail passenger service has been discontinued.

There is potential to upgrade and improve both mainline passenger services to Dublin and Limerick by investing in rail

replacement and alignment and provision of faster rolling stock. Freight services could be developed in 'off-times' (overnight) with particular emphasis on servicing seaports in Rosslare, New Ross and Belview.

Further potential to develop commuter service between Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Clonmel and Wexford should also be investigated in order to provide enhanced services and improve inter and intra regional connectivity.



Public bus services (both private and public operators) are well represented regionally and nationally. Dependability of services and scheduling of connections between rail and bus services needs to be improved to attract more passengers to public transport options while the existing public transport bus services in Waterford and Kilkenny Cities will need to be extended.

Strategic Actions

- Improve rail connectivity between Waterford and Dublin meeting the needs of both Carlow and Kilkenny City urban centres and between Wexford and Dublin.
- Develop integrated scheduling of connections between rail, bus, and shipping services within the region.
- Retain the Rosslare to Limerick rail line to future-proof sustainable transport for the Southern Region

3.5.3.4 PLUTS

The current PLUTS 2004 – 2020 provides a framework for the planning of wider Waterford City gateway region. Many of the key objectives in the PLUTS related to the North Quays. A revised PLUTS 2020 – 2040 should be the strategic framework embedding the principles of the emerging National Planning Framework in a cohesive manner into the local Development Plans.

It should provide for the accelerated growth of Waterford on both sides of the River Suir in Waterford and Kilkenny as the Regional City, urban regeneration in Waterford city and development of the North Quays with the necessary capital investment allocated to do achieve this, in particular bridge connectivity between the North and South Quays requires prioritisation.

Strategic Actions

- Implement the recommendations of the Waterford Planning and Land Use Strategy for the Greater Waterford Area to provide for accelerated growth.
- Review the Waterford Planning and Land Use Strategy in the context of a future doubling of the population in the study area by 2040 as against the 80,000 population currently provided for in the document.



3.5.3.5 Cycling/Walking

'Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future' seeks to reduce overall travel demands and promotes more efficient and sustainable transport movement including a shift to more sustainable means of transport. The Guidance sets national targets for modal change with target for car commuting to drop from 65% to 45% by 2020 and for cycling to reach

10% of journeys made by 2020. The smarter travel initiative has had dramatic success in changing public attitudes to walking and cycling and forms a vital element of transport infrastructure for the SEWCR.

Strategic Action

- Secure the development of interconnecting greenways and blueways throughout the region through a regional greenways office.

3.6 Water Services

Irish Water is the Utility Service Provider of water supply and wastewater treatment in the country. These are critical elements of infrastructure underpinning the quality of life of residents, visitors and commercial investment for the South East Waterford City Region. The Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) compiled by Irish Water has been so devised to ensure the quality and security of water supplies, that we have an environment that is protected from the impacts of wastewater discharges, and that we have efficient modern systems that meet the needs of customers, contribute to economic growth and development, and provide value for money.

The provision of water and wastewater treatment capacity in the immediate Waterford City environs

presents no major obstacle to future development, subject to limited and immediate investment in increased aeration capacity. . The combined output from the various water supply schemes provide plentiful supply of good quality drinking water that can cater for future projected demand.

The lack of a planned solution from Irish Water for the provision of water services to smaller towns and villages has implications for promoting sustainable rural development and place making and providing viable alternatives to one off rural dwellings. It is critical for the sustainable development of the SEWCR that the key investment plans which are derived from the WSSP will be consistent with the sectoral demands of the region, its settlements and population targets.

Strategic Actions

- Ensure that the business plan and investment programme of Irish Water are aligned to the growth projections for the SEWCR, recognising the importance of the County Towns.
- Ensure that aeration capacity at the Waterford Wastewater Treatment Plant is increased with urgency.
- Ensure water capacity is adequate to meet the projected growth of the greater Waterford City area.

3.7 Communications

Internet speeds have increased dramatically in recent years thanks to advances in broadband, yet many rural areas still do not benefit from good connectivity and very often lack the reliability and speed of broadband found in towns and cities. The roll out of broadband throughout the Country offers rural areas the opportunity to compete with larger urban areas. The option for people

to relocate to benefit from quality of life considerations, is now a real possibility and should be directed towards rural villages and towns. Urban centres continue to benefit from the increasing broadband speeds. The provision of Smart Cities and Towns should be prioritised as part of the NPF.



Strategic Action

- Leverage existing or proposed infrastructure, to deliver optic fibre network with high-speed broadband and improved telecoms services throughout the region.

3.8 Education and the Knowledge Economy

Education starts with the primary and secondary sector. The requirement for high quality schools is a key requirement to attracting investment and people to the SEWCR.

A significant level of investment has already been committed to primary and secondary education under the schools capital programme³.

The SEWCR is served by a range of third-level and fourth level institutions including the Institute of Technology Carlow with facilities in Carlow and Wexford, Waterford

Institute of Technology and the Limerick Institute of Technology with two campuses in Tipperary. Other educational establishments include the NUI Maynooth campus in Kilkenny and Carlow College (St. Patrick's), Carlow. The potential offered by our third level institutions must be fully exploited. The colleges also offer the ability to develop and introduce courses which could support the delivery of graduates directly into the economic clustering which takes in the SEWCR.

³Building on recovery: Investment in the South East.

3.8.1 Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

WIT has approximately 8,000 full time and approximately 1,400 part-time students, with a range of academic programmes covering Humanities, Health and Nursing, Science and Informatics, Engineering and Architecture, Business and Education. Over 60% of WIT's undergraduates are registered on bachelor degree courses and 10% of its students are registered as postgraduate students up to PhD level. WIT has strong links to industry with the majority of

the technical and businesses courses incorporating a period of placement in industry. WIT engages with research partners, regional and national stakeholders and industry, in particular the EU Framework and Science Foundation of Ireland (SFI) Research Centres Programmes collaborating with multinationals such as IBM, Cisco and EMC. Sanofi, Boston Scientific, Schivo, Teva, Bausch & Lomb and Merck Sharp and Dohme.

3.8.2 Institute of Technology, Carlow (ITC)

ITC is the fourth largest Institute in the country with approximately 7,000 students. IT Carlow is a key driver of progress and development in the region and it was noted as an important consideration in the decision of UNUM (a strategic software services centre) and Merck (human vaccines and biologics) to locate in Carlow.

Research, Development and Innovation (RD) is an integral part of the ITC's activities and is a vital aspect of the interaction of the Institute with industry and other HEIs, nationally and internationally. The Institute is also building research capacity in Advanced Security Technologies (SecurityCORE) in association with

the Irish Defence Forces. The newest CORE is EngCORE which provides an umbrella for the diverse research interests of the School of Engineering and acts as a focal point for the exchange and development of research programmes in relation to its main thematic areas; Applied Mechatronics, Circuits and Systems and the Intelligent Built Environment. IT Carlow has developed and continues to maintain its linkages at all levels with Commercial Enterprises, Industries, Statutory Bodies, States Agencies and International Organisations in order to create economic development through technology transfer and education.

3.8.3 Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)

LIT is based in Limerick City and Tipperary. It has two campuses in Tipperary which are home to almost 1,000 full time and part-time students. A wide range of courses are provided for these two campuses including degree programmes in Games Design and Development, Computing, Creative Multimedia, Digital Animation, Marketing with languages.

LIT is also actively involved in research with some of its key areas of research and development are bio-technology (through the Shannon Applied Bio-Technology Centre and the Cells Group), renewable and sustainable energy (through the ACORN Centre and the Centre for Rural and Sustainable Development), food technology (through the FooDs Centre), enterprise (through the BEST Centre) and Games Technology and Design (through the GAMES Centre).

3.8.4 Technological University for the South East (TUSE)

The establishment of a South East Technological University of excellence, as a strong research and development hub is paramount to accelerate economic growth and development for the region, and needs to be identified as a development of national importance in the NPF. Economic and social indicators portray the SE Region as having considerable potential to develop, and more detailed analysis highlights areas of particular need, particularly in regard to level of educational attainment. The TUSE will provide the competitive

advantage and support for technological innovation and creativity for the Region, the State and internationally. There is strong research to show that the development of TUSE on a multi-campus basis has the potential to exert a lasting impact on economic and social development in the region. The multi campus nature of the TUSE builds on the strengths of the existing Technological Institutions and provides the core infrastructure and academia to facilitate immediate start up.

Strategic Actions

- Establish as a matter of priority a Technological University for the South East on a multi campus basis, building on the success of the existing third level institutes, crucially developing human capital in the region and giving gravitas to the educational infrastructure of the region.
- Funding for the Technological University for the South East to be on a par with that of other universities e.g. the availability of funding through the EIB.

3.9 Health

The SEWCR is served by a network of health services. These include University Hospital Waterford at the centre of the region, but also Clonmel General Hospital, Wexford General Hospital, St. Luke's and Kilcreen Hospitals in Kilkenny as well as a large network of primary care centres, nursing homes and community related health infrastructure. The Whitfield Clinic Private Hospital is located in Waterford City while the Aut Even

private hospital is located in Kilkenny.

Waterford University Hospital (WUH) must be developed immediately to support the additional population of the city and region and be equipped to provide health services of excellence thereby freeing up capacity in the county hospitals and Dublin and Cork. The NPF must prioritise the development of WUH in order for it to function at a scale that is appropriate to the region.

Strategic Action

- Ensure that the investment programmes of the HSE are aligned to the growth projections of the SEWCR and allows for the incremental development of the health services and in particular the Waterford University Hospital to be equipped to provide a health service of excellence.



3.10 Human Capital

The SEWCR, with its population of 582,000, offers abundant human capital resources. At a time when primary production continues to diminish as a share of GDP and productivity is increasingly dependent on technological innovation and information, the availability of an educated, skilled and adaptable workforce is a major selling point for this region. The SEWCR has also significant potential to grow its human capital through the up skilling of the existing workforce which will be facilitated by the strong and developing education infrastructure and by attracting new talent through the promotion of the many qualities of the region which makes it an attractive place to work and live.

Human capital development requires strategic planning to ensure that there are clear linkages between education and training and existing enterprises and that it is relevant to existing labour force skills and education levels. These linkages must be planned spatially and sectorally to ensure effective regional development. To this end the South East Regional Skills Forums plays a pivotal role in providing links and improved understanding between the Higher Education Institutes, Key State Agencies and Employers through the establishment of a network of regional skills structures.

Capacity

- The catchment of 582,000 people within the SEWCR, spread through both Waterford City, the large urban centres of Clonmel, Wexford, Kilkenny City and Carlow, offers a talent pool for enterprise development. This resource can provide a significant contributor to the overall economic performance.



3.11 Economic Development and Job Creation

The South East Waterford City Region has a dynamic and broad based enterprise sector. It is a City Region of scale with a critical mass of 582,000 of a population base in five large urban centres, three strong higher and further education institutions, two nationally significant seaports and a regional airport. It contains a strong industrial heritage, a range of world class

manufacturing activities, significant potential in tourism, pharmaceuticals and in medical devices, a strong locally traded services sector serving consumer and business markets together with a burgeoning internationally trading service sector. The economy of the region has in recent years experienced a gradual growth.

- Unemployment down from 20.1% in 2012 to c. 9.4% now,
- The number of firms supported by Local Enterprise Offices has increased by 18% between 2013 and 2014
- Investment made by Enterprise Ireland of €27.2m in 2013-14.
- Agricultural output significantly increased by + 17% between 2011 and 2013 accounting for 20.6% of national agri-output, and
- Benefited from an increased tourist revenue spend of +20% between 2011-2013.

Notwithstanding this, the SEWCR is faced with a number of challenges which it continues to address.

- There is a significant gap that exists between the south east and the rest of the country in terms of wealth and employment with a high level of unemployment (i.e. 9.4% compared to 6.8% nationally).
- FDI employment in the region grew by just over 4% in 2016 – the second lowest of all eight regions.
- There is also a lack of high quality office accommodation available, especially for inward investment projects
- The bulk of the labour force is employed in relatively lower quality jobs (e.g. only 25% of all manufacturing jobs are in high technology related areas; and the region has the lowest rate of STEM-related graduate employment in the country)
- An over-reliance on traditional enterprises and low skilled service work and part-time employment.
- The Gross Value Added (GVA) per person in the region is the third lowest of the eight NUTS III regions in the country, at c. 71% of the national average,
- Disposable income at c. 93.5% of the national average, and
- Third level education attainment rates are lower and there is relative under investment in the existing third level education base. It is estimated that circa two thirds of students accessing third level education do so outside of the south east and only circa 40% subsequently return to the region representing a significant brain drain of a well-educated workforce which could contribute significantly to the future economic development of the region.

The SEWCR with the necessary supports and inputs has some of the key factors identified by the IDA as crucial to attracting and retaining FDI investment.

These include;

- A critical mass of population and urban centres. South East has a population of 582,000 with 5 large urban centres (i.e. with >20K pop) in the region
- The existence of clusters in specific industry sectors/activities⁴; the objective is to build clusters of excellence in these traditional and growing sectors
- Alignment with the IDA global team's targets for the sectors, geographies and new opportunities.
- Regional infrastructure and place-making, including social and cultural capital.
- The strong quality of life and low cost of living features of the region.
- Availability of property solutions and those planned over the short, medium and longer term by the local authorities⁵.
- Expand the remit of the IDA to facilitate the development of sites and buildings, supporting key local authority driven developments option for the Irish economy.

⁴The South East Action Plan for Jobs (SEAPJ) has identified 6 sectors with the greatest potential for job creation in the region, namely Agri-food, Tourism, Creative Industries and Engineering as well as growing sectors in Life Sciences and Financial Services.

⁵Each local authority in the region has ambitious and well developed plans to deliver advance office space that will support the IDA strategy for FDI (e.g. Trinity Wharf, Wexford; Creative Quarter, Kilkenny; North Quays, Waterford; Ballingarrane, Clonmel, ATB Carlow).

3.12 Smart Economy

Our urban centres, as the main drivers of economic growth, are attracting an ever increasing number of people that seek new opportunities, prosperity and a better quality of life. It is projected that by 2040 over 70% of the population will live in urban areas. It is projected that 80% of economic growth will be generated in cities. While this urbanisation trend contributes to the development of stronger regions, it is largely unsustainable unless the economic, social and environmental challenges are addressed.

For the past two decades advances in ICT and digital technologies have

changed the world: the Internet, mobile communications, social networks and the “cloud” have changed us into a connected, “always on” society with new expectations on how we seek and find information, how we access education and services, how we work, how we engage with our peers and how we communicate. In Ireland, the value of the digital economy has been estimated to be €12.3b or 6% of GDP and it is expected to grow to €21.4b by 2020. There are over 100,000 people employed in the digital economy (Indecon 2016).

Capacity

- The SEWCR has the ability to develop as a key contributor to Ireland's national growth through high quality employment opportunities, bringing unemployment levels below the national average; GVA levels above the national average; and third level education investment and capacity at a par with the rest of the country.

Strategic Actions

- Build on the South East Action Plan for Jobs (SEAPJ) structure and the established collaborative efforts between state agencies and local champions as an effective instrument for the future economic development of the region.
- Develop and promote a brand proposition (under the SEAPJ) for living, working, visiting and doing business in the region supported by all main stakeholders communicating the unique offering, strengths, experience and reputation of the south east
- Develop clusters of excellence, based on the region's traditional and growing strengths
- Establish a Technological University (multi-campus model) for the South East and accelerate the expansion of LIT Clonmel. Pending a decision on the Technological University for the South East, decisions on investment in the existing Institutes of Technology should not be delayed. Furthermore, a borrowing framework needs to be put in place for the Institutes of Technology, so that they have parity with universities.

3.13 Natural Resources

The SEWCR is made up of a rich mosaic of natural resources and amenities such as hard/soft coastlines, uplands and mountains, marine, rivers and water bodies, wetlands, urban landscapes and land cover including intensively managed farmland, forestry/woodlands and high nature value farmland. In addition the geology of the region is diverse and offers potential for development in terms of mineral exploration and aggregates sectors. These natural resources present challenges in

terms of achieving balanced and sustainable development but also provide a range of development opportunities in terms of primary food production, value added processing and eco-tourism. Developing a green economy around these regional attributes will yield significant results for businesses, particularly in rural areas where natural resources are located while a range of further opportunities exist in renewable energies for farmers, energy producers and businesses.

3.14 Agriculture

The SEWCR is the most highly productive agricultural part of Ireland and is the home of Glanbia's global HQ. It has substantial resources in dairying and cattle, cereal production, fruit and vegetables. Both farmers and agri-businesses have invested significant amounts of money in recent years and are well positioned to increase food production. Food Wise 2025 has

identified a long-term vision for this sector based on the continued development of efficient and environmentally-friendly production which in turn delivers sustainable export growth on global markets and which will benefit primary producers, processors and the food manufacturing sector, as well as the wider economy.





3.15 Maritime Economy

In addition to the natural agriculture resources, the region is bounded by a substantial area of Irish territorial waters where marine spatial planning will be essential to manage resources such as aquaculture, seabed mining, tourism and oceanic energy while also requiring the appropriate integrated management of the coastal zone and associated national and European designated sites. There is a significant role to be played by the existing commercial ports at Belview, New Ross and Rosslare in addition to fisheries harbours at Dunmore East and

Kilmore Quay while potential opportunities for berthing of pleasure craft exist on both maritime and inland waters. The SEWCR offers significant potential to grow the number of cruise liners which visit the Country.

The local authorities within the region are committed to ensuring plan and policy documents, consistent with national policy and the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive 2014/89, are put in place, which will reduce conflict and improve synergies between different activities, increase coordination and cooperation between parties, protect the environment and assist in securing public and private investment into the region.

Strategic Actions

- Commission the preparation of a Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for Waterford Estuary which bounds counties Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny but which also connects strategically with counties Tipperary and Carlow via the network of inland waterways.
- The SEWCR will work collaboratively with The Dept of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in compiling data to assist in the preparation of a National Landscape Character Assessment and thereafter compile a regional landscape character assessment.
- To encourage the use of technology and innovative farming practices to reduce carbon foot print of food.

3.16 Tourism

The South-East Waterford City Region has a well developed tourism sector with a wealth of visitor attractions. The region has a number of high profile cultural events and visitor destinations which act as a further draw for visitors to the region. The Region has a natural asset base for tourism with some regional tourist attractions featuring prominently in Fáilte Ireland’s strategy Ireland’s Ancient East.

International connectivity is a key factor in mitigating the impact of Ireland’s peripheral location for potential investors and overseas customers.

The authorities in the SEWCR have developed an excellent track record in collaborating and co-operating to enhance the region’s tourism assets and potential. The authorities have worked together on implementing and supporting Fáilte Ireland’s brand proposition “Ireland’s Ancient East”, as a potential game changer for the region. The recent bid for the European Capital of Culture 2020 under the Three Sisters banner was an exemplar model of co-operation between Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny.



The region has further potential to grow its tourism performance in line with the national objectives for increasing overseas tourism numbers and revenues by a third and 40 per cent respectively by 2025, in particular through harnessing the full potential of the new Ireland's Ancient East value proposition and experience development, as well as other visitor destinations in the region⁶.

Government policy on tourism, as set out in People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025, commits to “an enhanced role for Local Authorities and recognition of the contribution of communities to tourism”. Specifically the policy envisages that Local Authorities will (amongst other roles):

- Continue to act as primary developer of a range of public tourism infrastructure, including outdoor tourism infrastructure and urban and rural heritage;
- Act as a link between the State tourism agencies and communities by supporting community effort with regard to major national tourism initiatives such as the Gathering;
- Support community effort in destination development, including assisting communities to align their efforts with the tourism agencies brand architecture and consumer segmentation model.

The LAs in the region are committed to the performance of these roles for the benefit of the entire region.

Tourism contributes significantly to the region's economy, with revenue from overseas tourists alone reaching €258 million in 2015 . The number of visitors continues to rise, with a 10% growth in overseas tourists from 2012 to reach 876,000 in 2015.



⁶SEAPJ Dept of Jobs Enterprise & Innovation 2015
⁷Fáilte Ireland Tourism Facts 2015





The area is superbly positioned to capitalise on the Ireland's Ancient East proposition. Three of the six major attractions within IAE - Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny Castle and Waterford Crystal - are located here. Scaling up the asset base and achieving international "stand-out" for the area, based on built and cultural heritage is a priority. A recent example of collaboration in this regard is the Irish Ferries Pembroke to Rosslare campaign, through which Wexford, Kilkenny and Waterford LA's worked with Rosslare Europort, Irish Ferries and Tourism Ireland to increase visitor numbers along the Pembroke Rosslare route.

Co-operation within the region is also active in the development of the Greenways and Blueways, which have been proven to be tourist magnets. The Waterford-Dungarvan Greenway was the first in the region, and at present the three authorities of Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny are working together for the

foundation of the New-Ross to Waterford Greenway. The next initiative will be to seek to progress the Barrow Corridor Study, which will involve the LA's of Carlow and Kilkenny, amongst others in the Mid-East region. Other cross-county walkways proposed are between Kilkenny and Tipperary for the Lingaun Valley and Butler Trails and between Carlow and Wexford for the Blackstairs Walks.

We will work with other State Bodies to maximum the benefit of state owned assets, e.g. Coillte, OPW, Waterways Ireland.

An analysis of the regional distribution of overseas tourists in 2014 indicates that the South East received 8% of visitors and 6% of revenue nationally. The disparity in visitors and revenue figures for the south-east may to an extent be explained by short trips to the area from visitors who are overnighing in Dublin, which doesn't generate the economic spill over in the south east. Addressing this disparity, seeking to achieve higher visitor numbers and increased revenue are key objectives for the SEWCR.

In order to harness the full tourist potential of the region, a number of strategic infrastructural investments would assist in the removal of blockages.

3.16.1 Unlock potential to increase tourism

The region now has an established tradition of pulling together to market and promote the region's tourist assets, and is primed to grasp the potential offered by Ireland's Ancient East. A number of strategic infrastructural investments would truly unlock this potential.

These include:

- **Improved Access Infrastructure**

Air and sea access infrastructure must be conducive to encouraging growth in visitors from regions that present the best prospect for tourism. Waterford Airport currently has no scheduled air services to and from the airport. Replacement services, in particular to the UK and beyond, is a strategic priority. Investment in the extension of the runway is also required to facilitate jet aircraft such as Boeing 737 thereby significantly increasing the attractiveness of the facility. As part of any strategic review of operations and infrastructure, an evaluation of business and tourism air routes for the SEWCR is required, together with consideration of their potential for development. This airport is critical for the overall development of the region.

Rosslare Europort is a major port providing a gateway to the SEWCR from Britain and continental Europe offering regular services to Fishguard, Pembroke, Le Havre, Cherbourg and Roscoff. A long-term strategic plan is needed to ensure traffic volumes and activity can grow over the coming decades. The Port Company must also give full consideration to the quality of the visitor experience in its investment plan.

- **Cruise Liners**

The large cruise liner market remains untapped due to inadequate infrastructure; improved berthing facilities to accommodate cruise liners must be addressed. The tourism 'cruise industry' has the potential to generate significant revenues for Waterford City and the SEWCR. However there are challenges as the cruise market in the Waterford Harbour area, Great Island and Dunmore East is totally under-provided for resulting in a significant loss of economic and employment potential. The NPF needs to prioritise the development of the cruise industry in the SEWCR in recognition of the significant contribution it can make to the local, regional and nation economy.

- **Greater Integration and Connectivity**

Linked to above, greater connectivity between large centres and greater integration between different modes of public transport is required. This includes the scheduling of local public transport to coincide with arrivals and departures from other modes. In order to maximise the benefit of the region's ports and airport it is essential that access roads in their immediate vicinity and linkages in the wider region are improved.

Strategic Actions

- Improve access infrastructure through Ports and Waterford Regional Airport.
- Development connectivity between large centres
- Develop integration between different modes of transport.

3.17 Place Making and Quality of life

Creating and maintaining environments that encourage people to make healthier, more active choices is central to making the healthy choice the easy choice. In addition to new homes and additional jobs to accommodate future growth and change, the National Planning Framework will need to consider the quality of life offer that is central to sustainable communities. This is not only to ensure that places are attractive for living and working in, but also to build a resilience within people and places that allows for better outcomes, particularly in relation to our wellbeing.

A characteristic of the spatial development of the SEWCR is the strong urban structure that acts as service centres for surrounding rural areas.

Measures must therefore be implemented to sustain larger urban areas as viable dynamic centres and to ensure rural towns and villages become vibrant places where people

socialise, live and work which can contribute in a complementary manner to the SEWCR. Targeted action and investment by the Government in rural towns and villages in the region is required including the implementation of the Action Plan for Rural Development (2017) “Realising our Rural Potential” together with a range of other economic and social initiatives such as the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, the Clár and Rapid Programmes, LEADER Programme, SICAP etc.

The local authorities of the SEWCR recognise that to change the current pattern of development and the health and wellbeing of people and places a move away from the business as usual model is required. To this end there is a recognition that greater policy integration and joined up investment decisions across policy sectors such as planning, health and transport policy is required.



Capacity

- The SEWCR is supported by a network of towns and villages which can assist in achieving sustainable and effective regional development. Key to this is the need for a framework of supports and policy at national and local level which will ensure that communities in towns and villages have increased opportunities for employment locally with access to quality public services and social networks that support a high quality of life.



3.18 Arts and Culture



Culture 2025 sets out the national policy on culture which

seeks to nurture creativity, boost citizen participation, help more people to follow a sustainable career in the cultural sector, promote Ireland’s cultural wealth and ensure a cultural contribution to wider social and economic goals. All these aims will enhance the daily lives of all citizens, improve their living, natural and built environments and assist in promoting the economic benefit which can be accrued from the cultural resource.

The South East Waterford City Region has a wealth of cultural assets including the National Opera House and network of performing arts theatres and venues, Gaeltacht, a network of historic settlements including Kilkenny City, Cashel, Waterford City, Fethard, Ferns and their iconic buildings, cultural landscapes including the Blackwater valley, Copper Coast, Barrow Valley, Slaney Valley, 3 Sisters Rivers and the people of the region to name a few.

The SEWCR has a strong history in creating and holding festivals. The diverse festival offering promoting the region's culture and heritage is a firm base to attract more visitors to the SEWCR while national initiatives such as Ireland’s Ancient East offer opportunities for more sites to be made visitor-ready.



Local communities are best placed to promote access to and engagement with their cultural heritage and this is evidenced by the strong network of arts and heritage groups within the region. The identification of local authorities as a key support pillar under Clár Éire Ildánach Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022 which places creativity at the centre of public policy, is a positive move in this area and should be further supported by the NPF. It acknowledges the need

for an integrated approach involving people and place and particularly continued and expanded use of public spaces such as libraries, churches, halls, theatres, public parks and squares. These are the keystones of our rural towns and thus supporting our cultural heritage enables revitalisation of rural towns and villages with consequential benefits for society, quality of life, local economy and the historic built environment.



3.19 Climate change /Low Carbon Economy/Energy

3.19.1 Climate Change

The changing climate will present different challenges across the region, based on the areas' vulnerability to climate risk. A pro-active approach in which the challenges posed by climate change are integrated into the development of policies, plans and programmes is essential.

Local authorities are subject to increasing demand from many quarters to improve services and overall performance. In developing adaptation plans, many local authorities will face similar challenges and adaptation matters to be addressed may have implications for their neighbouring local authority areas and may require solutions that stretch beyond their individual administrative areas. Therefore, in developing and analysing potential climate impacts and adaptive solutions, local authorities will opt to take a broader geographical or regional approach in preparing adaptation plans by working with adjoining local authorities. Working together can also be a practical and cost-effective way for local authorities to share knowledge, experience and resources or to take advantage of economies of scale.

The Local authorities in the SEWCR will take a proactive approach to climate change adaptation by integrating adaptation into the development of relevant policies, plans and programmes.

In addition to the direct provision of infrastructure to counter the anticipated effects of climate change, the SEWCR is committed to playing its part in achieving the national climate change objectives in order to mitigate against the predicted results of climate change so as to safeguard key assets in the region and develop the region in a sustainable manner.



3.19.2 Low Carbon Economy

The delivery of renewable energy infrastructure and the production of renewable energy will have to undergo a substantial transformation at the national and regional level. In line with the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) 2010-2020, the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) 2013-2020 and the White Paper - Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 the SEWCR would seek to accelerate the trend in reduction of Co2 emissions and decouple the relationship between increased energy consumption and economic growth.

To achieve this it will be necessary to ensure a managed transition away from use of fossil fuel to renewable technologies while achieving increased efficiency in energy consumption and developing the renewable energy resource. This offers the SEWCR the opportunity to be at the forefront of the development of the next generation of alternative energy.

The development of the renewable energy resource within the SEWCR is critical to the environmental quality and the economic and social wellbeing of the region for the following reasons:

- Security of supply - necessary to the functioning of society and the economy.
- Sustainability - reduces reliance on imported fossil fuel and can be harvested without damaging the environment;
- Reduced CO2 emissions - cleaner, less polluting energy sources ;
- Competitiveness - less exposure to volatile global energy prices;
- Investment and employment opportunities in rural and under-developed areas;
- Compliance with EU & National binding renewable energy targets.

Ireland has a legally binding target for renewable energy as well as a national target for energy efficiency which must be met by 2020 and the South East Waterford City Region is committed to realising its role in achieving these targets. This commitment will be realised through the development of the low carbon economy through out all sectors of the economy. The NPF must put in place the policy supports which allows for the low carbon economy to be at the forefront of the new jobs being created in the region.



3.19.3 Energy Generation and Transmission

A strong and secure transmission grid is essential for Ireland to attract and retain high-tech industrial investment, for the country to have competitive energy supplies and balanced regional development. The role out of Grid 25 (400Kv transmission) in the SEWCR has been modified in favour of 'boosting' additional power through the existing 220Kv Grid to ensure peak time demands are fully met.

Renewable energy resources are developing quickly and coming on line with up to 40% of national electricity demands being met through renewable sources. Wind, Solar, tide & wave, hydro, Biogas, Bio fuel production are the major renewable resources that can be developed further in the Region in order to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels in light of the major issue of climate change.

Capacity

The SEWCR offers the potential to significantly increase the amount of electricity produced from alternative sources. This would assist in making the region a net exporter of energy over the lifetime of the NPF.

Strategic Actions

- Secure the timely provision of a new interconnector between the European Super grid to a node at Great Island power station in order to provide security of supply and help balance the electrical grid
- Collaborate and cooperate at a regional level to prepare and implement a regional Climate change adaptation plan
- Implement appropriate flood defence measure for coastal protection and existing settlements.
- Assess the future potential of the region in terms of renewable energies onshore and off shore to maximise the region's contribution to transition to a low carbon economy.

4 Conclusion

The five local authorities of Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny and Carlow County Councils and Waterford City and County Council working in collaboration have come together to make a joint submission to the NPF.

That collaboration has set out a vision for the SEWCR

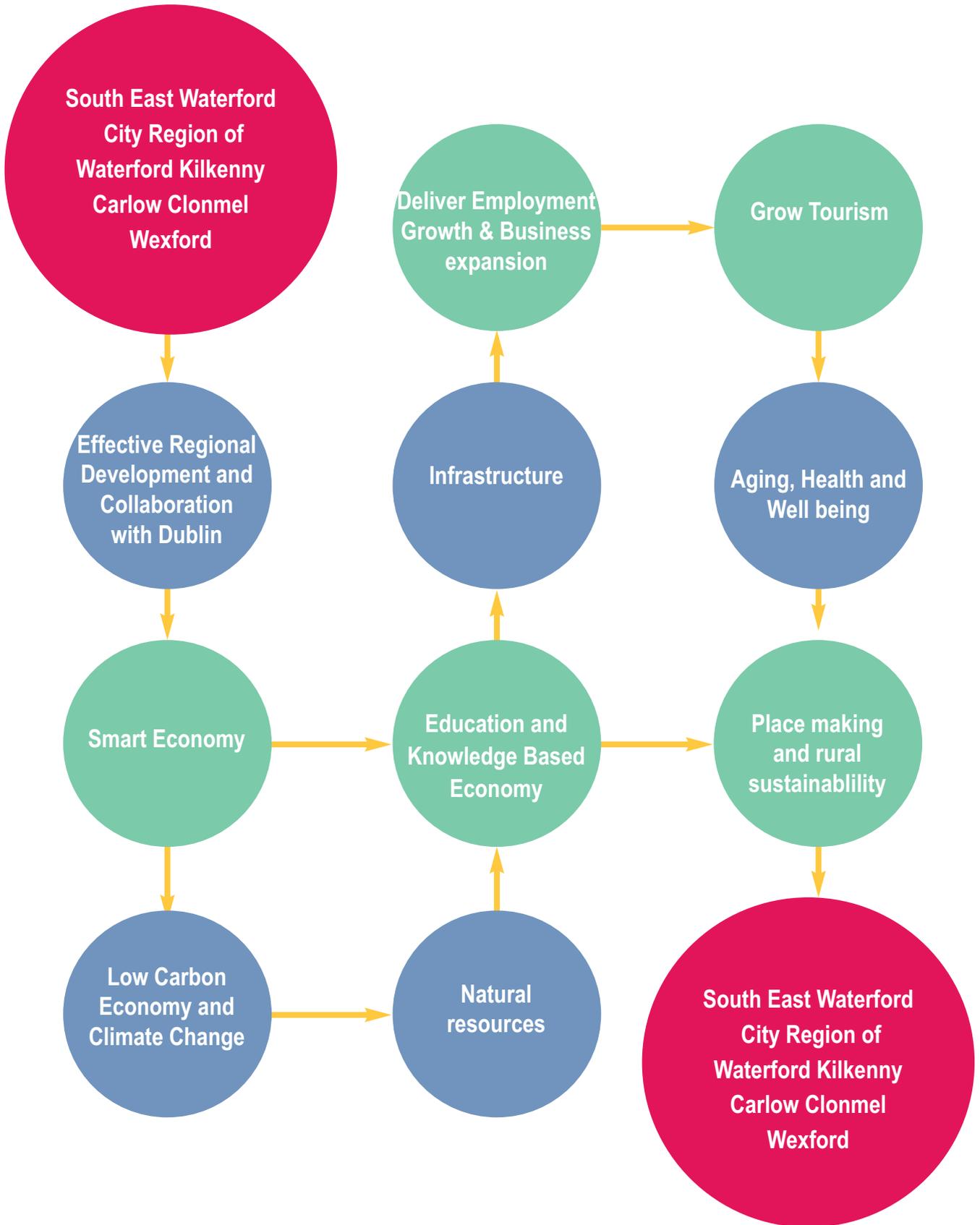
- ***To maximise the potential of South East Waterford City Region as a Smart, Safe, Inclusive, Innovative location, serving Ireland and linking to Europe while embracing its cultural heritage and natural environment.***

The vision is based on the polycentric urban areas of the region, its connections to the greater Dublin region, high quality of life, affordability, infrastructural assets and the availability of strategic land banks in all the major urban centres to provide the capacity within the region to deliver its potential.

Local leadership plays an important role in driving regional development, from the planning and delivery of critical infrastructures and the development of concentrated and well planned urban development to the facilitation of enterprise development through stimulating networking, agency collaboration and targeted regional initiatives.

While the SEWCR has the ability to develop as Ireland's Gateway to Europe and Britain, and as its alternative City region on the east of Ireland, a series of aims and actions must be put in place in order to achieve this.

These are illustrated in Figure 2, *Strategic Aims and Actions for the SEWCR.*



In the recent past there are examples which demonstrate an ability within the SEWCR to act collaboratively. This track record in collaboration is a strong base on which to build future initiatives in support of enterprise development such as the Three Sisters bid for the European Capital of Culture, the South East Action Plan for Jobs, joint regional initiatives on tourism, and Waterford Regional Airport and the Regional Greenways Office.

The submission demonstrates the capacity of the Region to deliver in the sectoral areas of employment, housing, education, port development, tourism, transport, health and human capital using existing and planned infrastructure and the desire by the local authorities to move away from the “business as usual” model for the delivery of effective regional development.

