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DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE
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National Spatial Strategy Hubs

Development Issues and Challenges

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BACKGROUND

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) identified a network of cities and larger urban areas and designated as Gateways whose development was to be promoted as part of the Government's overall framework for achieving more balanced regional development. Nine medium to large towns or pairs of towns were also identified in the NSS as Hubs to ensure that the positive effect of the Gateways in the regions would be extended to areas between the Gateways, and provide a link to the rural parts of the region.

The nine Hubs identified in the NSS are (in alphabetical order): Castlebar/Ballina, Cavan, Ennis, Kilkenny, Mallow, Monaghan, Tralee/Killarney, Tuam and Wexford.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), in co-operation with Forfás, commissioned a study to review development issues associated with Gateways² and to identify investment priorities in these urban areas. In order to complement this earlier study, the Department also undertook an investigation of development issues associated with the Hubs. As part of the investigation, Hub authorities provided responses to a questionnaire prepared by the Department.

HUBS PROFILE

Some of the key points which emerge regarding Hubs are set out below.

- o The population in all Hubs in 2002 was 143,000, which comprised 3.6% of the national population at that date, rising to 157,000 and comprising 3.7% of national population by 2006 (est.).
- o The NSS sets out indicative 2020 population targets for Hubs which in total amounted to 280,000 people. Based on 1996 – 2002 population growth rates, it would appear likely that four of the nine Hubs are likely to meet their NSS indicative target populations (i.e. Castlebar/Ballina, Ennis, Mallow and Tralee/Killarney). However, in the case of the other five Hubs (Cavan, Kilkenny, Monaghan, Tuam and Wexford), a substantial uplift in performance would be required to reach the NSS targets by 2020. Consequently, in order to be realistic in these latter cases, some re-adjustment of the indicative population targets may be necessary or else the target date of achieving these levels would need to be set for beyond 2020.

² Gateways Investment Priorities Study – DEHLG/Forfás 2006

- o Travel-to-work patterns using the 2002 Census data were reviewed in order to identify the commuter catchments for the Hubs. Some Hubs (Castlebar/Ballina, Tralee/Killarney and Wexford) appear to draw workers from quite extensive areas (e.g. 20 to 30 kms) including extensive rural and remoter areas around the Hubs. Those Hubs which are located relatively close to the larger cities (e.g. Ennis, Mallow and Tuam) had more restricted catchment areas. The smaller north-eastern Hubs, which are more distant from large cities (e.g. Cavan and Monaghan), also had more restricted catchment areas but are nonetheless important from the perspective of demonstrating the linkages between the Hubs and rural areas. However, these border-area Hubs would almost certainly have additional catchment areas within Northern Ireland for which data is currently unavailable.
- o Development Plans for all of the Hubs had been made after the publication of the NSS and these plans generally make references to their Hub status. However, there is considerable variation regarding the level to which the Hub designation has made a difference to the approach to planning.

KEY ISSUES

Key issues were identified on the basis of the responses to the questionnaire circulated to Hub authorities. The issues can be classified under the following main headings:

- o ***Building the Local Economy.*** All Hubs are very concerned about promoting economic development and creating the type of local economic conditions that will enable the Hubs to act as a key driver for regional and local development, both within the Hub towns themselves and in the wider rural areas of which they are a part.
- o ***Governance.*** A range of governance issues are highlighted in this report, including the need for better alignment of Development Plans, establishment of implementation and co-ordination arrangements, the role of Hubs in the wider rural community and the need for a prioritised approach to funding for critical Hub investments in areas such as physical and social infrastructure to serve both the Hubs and a wider and more rurally-based catchment.
- o ***Land and Infrastructure.*** Adequate amounts of serviced land, broadband roll-out and water and wastewater infrastructure are accepted as issues where programmes are required.
- o ***Transport Connectivity.*** Road and rail connections between Hubs and Gateways and between Hubs and their wider rural areas are seen as particularly

important issues which need to be adequately addressed, particularly through the national and non-national road networks.

DRIVERS OF GROWTH

Based on the Hub authority responses and other information, four key drivers for future growth have been identified in this report.

- o **Governance and Leadership.** Suitable governance arrangements backed by strong and committed leadership (at public, private and community levels) are the essential requirement to drive growth and development into the future.
- o **Plans and Programmes.** Strong local support and leadership needs to be translated into appropriate plans and programmes. In particular, it is necessary to have a clear vision, suitable policies and plans, and a well-defined implementation programme.
- o **Resources.** Adequate resources need to be allocated by Hub authorities. In particular, some level of prioritisation is required when funds are being secured and allocated (e.g. development contributions, national funds, EU funding); adequate staff resources need to be allocated; suitable information bases need to be established and maintained to track changes and to enable sound policy and implementation decisions to be made.
- o **National Support.** Key areas within which national support is required are in the allocation of funds (e.g. through the NDP 2007-2013 and in Departments' 5-yearly capital envelopes); delivery of major programmes (e.g. Transport 21); creation of adequate monitoring systems; and assurance that the development issues in the Hubs are factored into the deliberations of the various committees involved in national and regional development matters (e.g. DoEHLG's NSS Inter-Departmental Steering Committee (IDSC), RPG National Steering Committee etc.).

Taking the above into account, four key Departments are identified in this report as being especially important in supporting the development of Hubs, namely:

- ◆ Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (NSS/RPGs responsibility and planning, water and waste water, non-national roads, local government etc.),
- ◆ Transport (Transport 21),
- ◆ Enterprise Trade and Employment (enterprise promotion and support), and
- ◆ Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (ICT and broadband issues).

In addition to these key roles, there are other roles for other Government Departments and Agencies, especially the enterprise agencies.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Three levels of capital investment priority are identified for the Hubs in this report which are based on the Hub authorities' responses and other considerations.

- o **Highest Priority.** Water and wastewater facilities and roads infrastructure are seen as essential requirements, without which growth in the Hubs would be significantly curtailed.
- o **High Priority.** Investments in education and broadband are seen as vital interventions which can contribute towards building the regional and local economies. Health investments are important because the diversity and quality of health services has direct quality of life benefits and can also contribute towards drawing new enterprises into the Hubs. These investments can act as drivers for the Hubs and for the wider rural areas of which they form a part.
- o **Priority.** Ensuring that key sites and potential development areas (e.g. central brown-field sites and/or large blocks of potential residential land) are available for development can be essential in providing a springboard for new private sector investment. In some cases, it may be appropriate for planning authorities to take an interest in or acquire key sites to ensure that adequate amounts of development land are released into the market to meet emerging demand and to provide a development impetus. In addition, prioritisation of environment quality improvements would cover matters such as pedestrianisation of parts of a central area, upgrading of parks, construction of cycle-ways, linear parks along rivers/streams etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains four sets of core recommendations, relating to:

- o **Governance of Hubs Authorities.** It is recommended that each Hub form a high level Hub Development Committee (HDC) either by adapting existing structures or forming a new implementation vehicle. In the case of linked Hubs, it is particularly important that this Committee comprise representatives from both Hubs. The basic task for the Committee would be to draw up implementation programmes (see below) and to oversee their implementation. Each Hub should nominate a Hubs Development Officer to provide support for the HDC and deal with day-to-day implementation and co-ordination matters.

- o **Hub Project Implementation Programmes.** Each Hub should have a project orientated short- to medium-term (e.g. up to 5 years) programme which would be updated annually. The programme would need to set targets, allocate responsibilities, indicate priorities and set indicative funding requirements etc.
- o **DoEHLG oversight role.** The Department has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the NSS, and has a particularly important role in promoting and supporting Hub growth. Recommendations in the main report cover the need to:
 - focus Departmental funds in ways which support Hub development;
 - support (and input into, where appropriate) the Hubs' implementation programmes;
 - undertake research on cross-cutting Hub issues;
 - input Hub investment issues into the NDP 2007-2013; and
 - monitor Hub development and review annual reports from the Hub authorities.
- o **Role for Other Departments and Agencies.** It is recommended that existing NSS co-ordination or cross-Departmental arrangements be adapted or extended to ensure that Hubs-related issues can be dealt with efficiently and effectively at central Government level.

1 BACKGROUND

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) which was published in 2002 sets out a broad strategy aimed at promoting more balanced regional development within Ireland. Key to achieving this aim was the identification of nine Gateways/linked Gateways (referred to hereafter as Gateways)³ and 9 Hubs/linked Hubs (Hubs)⁴. Figure 1 indicates the location of the Gateways and Hubs.

In 2005, consultants were appointed by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to investigate the investment needs and priorities of the Gateways and their report was published in 2006. In order to complement this Gateways research, an investigation into development issues at Hub level was undertaken. As part of this analysis, a questionnaire was circulated to the Hub local authorities which posed various questions regarding their Hubs (copy of questionnaire attached at Appendix 2). This report draws together the various outputs from the questionnaire together with other data on the Hubs.

2 REPORT AIMS

The overall aim of this report is to explore the many development issues associated with Hubs and to make recommendations which can support and advance Hub growth and development.

More specifically, the report has the following objectives:

- o to briefly set Hubs within the context of the NSS (section 3);
- o to provide a brief overview picture of the Hubs (section 4);
- o to identify some of the main development issues which exist across all the Hubs (section 5);
- o to identify drivers for growth in the Hubs (section 6);
- o to outline some investment priorities which would facilitate development in the Hubs (section 6); and
- o to set out recommendations (section 7);
- o to set out a more detailed picture of development issues in each of the Hubs based on the individual questionnaire responses in the Appendices;

³ Gateways - Dublin, Cork, Limerick-Shannon, Galway, Waterford, Dundalk, Sligo, Letterkenny linked with Derry and a linked Midland Gateway involving Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar.

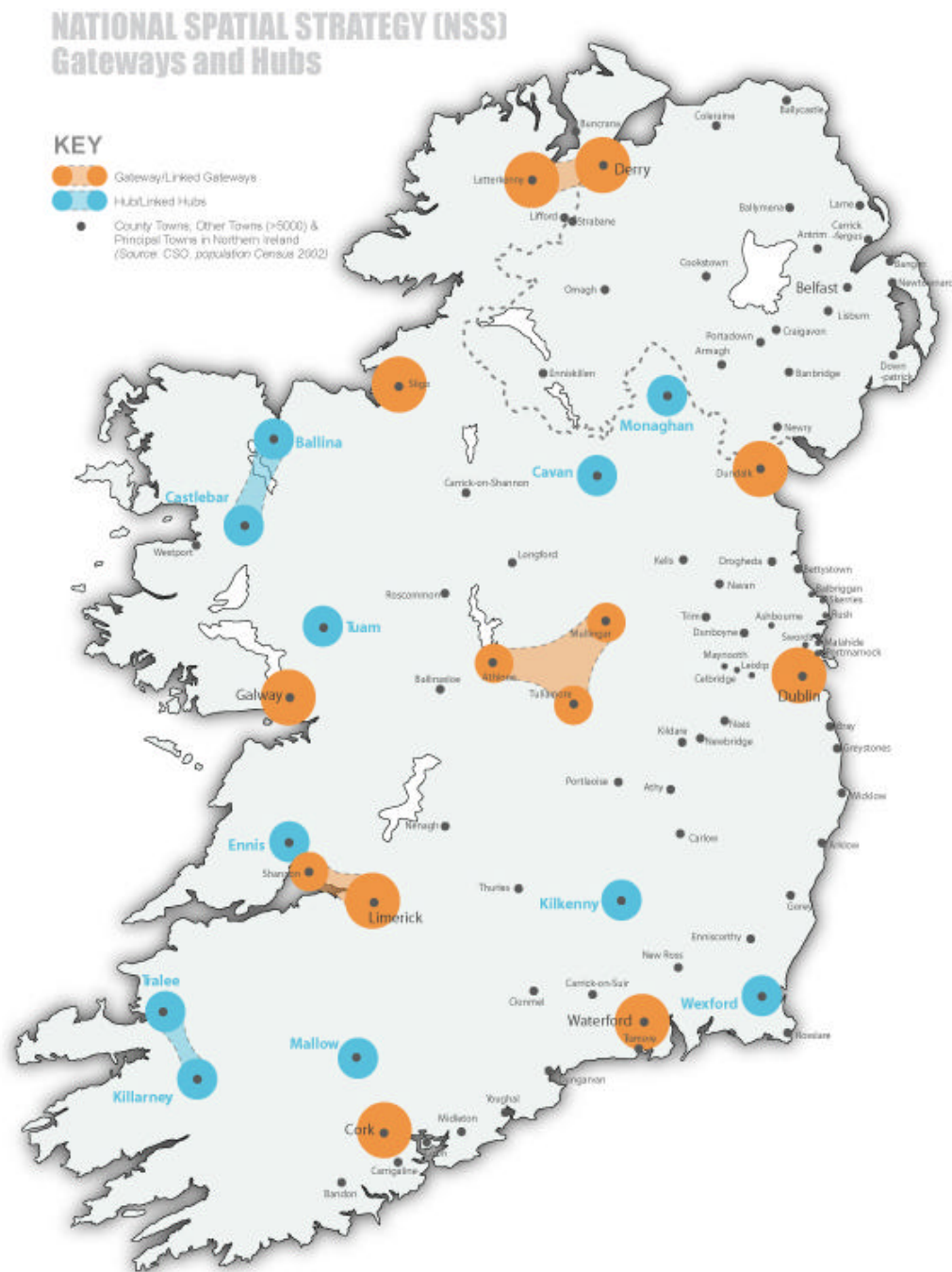
⁴ Hubs – Castlebar/Ballina, Cavan, Ennis, Kilkenny, Mallow, Monaghan, Tralee/Killarney, Tuam and Wexford

3 HUBS IN AN NSS CONTEXT

The Gateways outside Dublin are seen as the main urban areas which need to drive the process of building up critical mass in the regions and provide a complimentary balance to demographic growth and commerce away from the Dublin area. The Hubs play two important associated roles:

- o firstly, as supporters of Gateway growth, and
- o secondly, as drivers for local sub-regional development.

Figure 1: Gateways and Hubs



3.1 Gateways and Hubs

The NSS states that the *“links and interactions between the existing and new gateways mentioned and the process of energising areas associated with these gateways, will be complemented and strengthened further by the development of certain medium-sized towns as Hubs.”* (p.46, NSS (2002))

The inter-relationship between Gateways and Hubs and their roles in driving wider regional development is set out in various places in the NSS. For example when dealing with the Hub towns of Tuam, Mallow and Ennis, the NSS states that:

“Each of these towns is well positioned to act as a strong market and service centre for an extensive rural hinterland, while interacting with its neighbouring gateway. The improvement of physical and other connections between the gateways and hubs, when improved, will ensure that the capabilities and critical mass of the gateways can be used more effectively to the benefit of the gateway itself, the hub and other towns, and related villages and rural areas.” (ibid.)

3.2 Hubs and sub-Regional Growth

Hubs can play a strong local sub-regional development role in a number of ways:

- o Faster and more dynamic growth in Hubs will mean that the employment, services and other benefits of such growth will extend further out into the surrounding rural areas.
- o Higher population and a more diverse economic base (i.e. more critical mass) in the Hubs can provide larger markets for products and services produced in local surrounding areas.
- o More critical mass in Hubs will mean that, over time, wider ranges of social, business, community facilities and support services will be provided. This in turn would improve the attractions of living (and remaining) in rural areas.
- o Hubs could be linked into appropriate more local sub-regional networks so that the benefits of Hub growth for the surrounding areas does not just occur as a ‘by-product’ of growth, but takes place in a focussed and co-ordinated manner.

3.3 Hub Characteristics

The NSS provides a broad description of Hubs and the roles they fulfil as set out briefly below.

Characteristics of Hubs
1) <i>A significant urban population in the range of 20,000 – 40,000 set in an associated rural hinterland</i>
2) <i>Primary and secondary education facilities with the option of third-level or outreach facilities.</i>
3) <i>A mix of local, medium-sized and larger businesses serving local, regional and national/international markets.</i>
4) <i>An important local node in transportation and communication terms:</i> <i>(a) on the national road and rail or bus networks,</i> <i>(b) with access to a national or regional airport,</i> <i>(c) having adequate, reliable, cost-effective and efficient access to port facilities, and</i> <i>(d) with effective and competitive broadband access.</i>
5) <i>Effective local transport system with facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.</i>
6) <i>Local and/or regional hospital.</i>
7) <i>Wide range of amenity, sporting and cultural facilities including public spaces and parks.</i>
8) <i>Effective water services and waste management arrangements.</i>
9) <i>Strategies for physical, social and economic development.</i>
10) <i>Phased zoning and servicing of land-banks in anticipation of needs associated with growth.</i>
11) <i>Industrial and local business parks.</i>

One of the interesting points regarding this outline of the Hubs' role is that their function is seen in the context of energising their surrounding regions, and to some extent, the country as a whole.

4 BROAD HUBS PROFILE

4.1 Introduction

The intention in this section is to provide a brief overview profile of some relevant issues in relation to Hubs. Details regarding specific development and other matters in relation to each Hub are set out in Appendices to this report.

4.2 Development Plan Status

County Development Plans are the key documents which guide future development in the Hub towns. The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires plans to be updated every six years. Although plans may be varied at any time during the six-

year period, it is normally only when the main review takes place that a comprehensive and thorough re-evaluation of all the planning and development issues is undertaken. At least two years before a new Plan must be made, the Planning Authority must advertise its intention to review the Plan. Public consultation takes place at several stages during the review process. The table below indicates, in the case of Hubs, when the current Development Plans were made and when the formal process of reviewing should commence and be completed. Good practice suggests that Planning Authorities should start the review process up to a year before the date by which they must inform the public that a review is commencing.

Table 1 – Status of Existing County Development Plans

Hub	Adoption date of current Plan	Formal Review Period	Date when new Plan must be Made
Ballina (and Environs)	June 2003	Jun 2007 - Jun 2009	Jun 2009
Castlebar	May 2004	May 2008 – Jun 2009	Jun 2009
Cavan	March 2003	Mar 2007 – Jun 2009	Jun 2009
Ennis	January 2003	Jan 2007 – Jan 2009	Jan 2009
Kilkenny	July 2002	Jul 2006 – Jul 2008	Jul 2008
Killarney (and Environs)	October 2003	Oct 2007 – Oct 2009	Oct 2009
Mallow	April 2004	Apr 2008 – Apr 2010	April 2010
Monaghan	May 2000	May 2004 – May 2006	May 2006
Tralee	December 2003	Dec 2007 – Dec 2009	Dec 2009
Tuam LAP ⁵	January 2007	Jan 2011 – Jan 2013	Jan 2013
Wexford	April 2002	Apr 2006 – Apr 2008	Apr 2008

The information in Table 1 indicates a number of important factors.

- o All the Hub towns have Development Plans which were prepared after the publication of the NSS. They should thus have taken their Hub status into account. However, a review of the Plans indicates that there is considerable variation in the way in which the designation is incorporated into the plans (in one case, no mention is made of the NSS or the Hub designation).
- o Seven of the 11 Hub towns will have commenced their review process in 2006 or will do so in 2007. Thus, in the recent past or in the relatively near future, the

⁵ Local Area Plan. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000, LAPs are required to be consistent with the City/County Development Plan.

opportunity will arise for the majority of Hub towns to undertake thorough analysis of Hub and sub-regional development issues, to process available Census 2006 data and produce updated Development Plans which set realistic, yet optimistic, growth targets. They can also set the policy context for innovative measures to support accelerated growth in the Hubs.

4.3 Population Growth

Population size and growth rates are particularly important factors when considering developmental issues. It is therefore important to get a broad understanding of the performance of the Hubs in recent years on the basis of available data and also the size of the challenge which they face in order to meet NSS indicative targets.

Table 2 – Hubs Population Growth 1996 - 2006

Hub	1996	2002	2006 (est.) ⁶	% Growth Rate 96-02 ⁷	% Growth Rate 02-06
Ballina	8,762	9,647	10,594	1.62	2.37
Castlebar	8,532	11,371	12,592	4.90	2.58
Ballina/Castlebar	17,294	21,018	23,173	3.30	2.47
Cavan	5,623	6,098	7,380	1.36	4.89
Ennis	17,726	22,051	24,558	3.71	2.73
Kilkenny	18,696	20,735	22,595	1.74	2.17
Killarney	12,011	13,137	14,448	1.50	2.41
Tralee	19,950	21,987	22,836	1.63	0.95
Killarney/Tralee	31,961	35,124	37,345	1.59	1.54
Mallow	7,768	8,937	10,338	2.36	3.71
Monaghan	5,842	5,936	6,587	0.27	2.64
Tuam	5,627	5,947	6,919	0.93	3.86
Wexford	15,862	17,235	18,330	1.39	1.55
All Hubs	126,399	143,081	157,178	2.09	2.38
State	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,234,925	1.30	1.97

A number of observations can be made regarding the data in this table.

⁶ The CSO's definition of each town and its environs is taken as the spatial extent of each Hub in 1996 and 2002. In the case of 2006 data, the CSO has not yet issued population numbers based on the same process for defining the extent of urban areas. Estimates were therefore based on the preliminary 2006 ED data in order to arrive at Hub populations.

⁷ Growth rates are compound annual rates.

- o The Hubs population grew faster than the population of the State as a whole between 1996 and 2002 (2.09% vs. 1.3%) and again in the 2002 – 2006 period (2.38% vs. 1.97%). However, it is appropriate to note that the increase in the Hubs' growth rate in this period (0.29%) was lower than the increase in the rate for the State as a whole (0.67%).
- o The total Hubs population at 157,178 in 2006 represents only a small portion of the State population (3.7%). The Hubs also represent a considerably smaller population compared with the population in the Gateways outside of the GDA. Given their relatively modest overall size, the Hubs are likely in the foreseeable future to have only a relatively small impact on the overall regional balance of population between the GDA and the rest of the country⁸. However, at a regional and sub-regional scale, they can play a very important sub-regional and local development role.
- o The rates of population growth between 1996 and 2002 and between 2002 and 2006 vary considerably between the Hubs. In the former period the two fastest growing Hubs were Castlebar and Ennis. However, in the 2002-2006 period, Cavan, Mallow and Tuam were the fastest. Tuam and Cavan in the earlier 1996-2002 period had the second slowest and third to slowest growth rates respectively. In some cases, there have been significant relative drops in the rates of growth (e.g. Monaghan and Tralee). Clearly, there has been considerable variability in growth patterns over the last ten years at Hub level.

The NSS does not set hard and fast population targets up to 2020, the outside limit of the NSS timeframe. Instead it states in relation to the NSS itself, that *"...it is important to be satisfied that this 20-year spatial framework is sufficiently robust to deal with population growth that could vary depending on demographic and economic/employment growth trends."* This flexible approach is appropriate for the regions, Gateways and Hubs within the NSS framework.

The NSS does however set indicative population 2020 targets for Hubs within a broad range, namely from 20,000 to 40,000 people. In Table 3 below, indicative target populations at the end of this timeframe have been allocated to each Hub on what is regarded as a reasonable basis. Comparing recent growth rates with these indicative targets for each Hub, it is possible to appreciate the approximate scale of the challenge which faces the various Hubs.

⁸ This is a role which falls particularly on the Gateways outside the GDA as they represent a combined population which is significant proportion of the GDA population.

Table 3A – Hub Population Trends Relative to their NSS Targets

Hub	2006 (est.)	2020 NSS Indic. Target	2002-2006 % Growth Rate ⁹	% Rate Req. to Reach Target
Ballina/Castlebar	23,173	40,000	2.47	3.98
Cavan	7,380	20,000	4.89	7.38
Ennis	24,558	40,000	2.73	3.55
Kilkenny	22,595	40,000	2.17	4.16
Killarney/Tralee	37,345	40,000	1.54	0.49
Mallow	10,338	20,000	3.71	4.83
Monaghan	6,587	20,000	2.64	8.26
Tuam	6,919	20,000	3.86	7.88
Wexford	18,330	40,000	1.55	5.73
All Hubs	157,178	280,000	2.38	4.21

Table 3B – Hub Population Trends Relative to NSS Targets

Hub	2020 NSS Indicative Target	2020 Pop (at 2002-06 growth rates) + 20%	% Above or Below NSS Target (target base)
Ballina/Castlebar	40,000	32,610	- 18.48
Cavan	20,000	14,390	- 28.05
Ennis	40,000	35,798	- 10.50
Kilkenny	40,000	30,518	- 23.70
Killarney/Tralee	40,000	46,287	+ 15.72
Mallow	20,000	17,211	- 13.95
Monaghan	20,000	9,481	- 52.59
Tuam	20,000	11,751	- 41.24
Wexford	40,000	22,740	- 43.15
All Hubs	280,000	218,384	- 22.01

The above tables 3A and 3B highlight a number of factors.

- o In order to meet the indicative targets set out above, the population in all the Hubs combined would need to increase at a rate which is substantially above the rate experienced between 2002 and 2006 (Table 3A: 4.21% vs. 2.38%).
- o If growth in the Hubs combined were to be 20% above that experienced in the 2002-06 period, then the combined Hub population in 2020 would be 218,384,

⁹ Annual percentage growth rate

still over 60,000 (or 22%) short of the indicative population target. Apart from Tralee/Killarney, the rates of growth required to meet the indicative 2020 targets are all substantially above the rates experienced over the 2002-2006 period. (Table 3B).

In a separate exercise, Hub authorities were asked to provide their own estimates of Hub growth and Table 4 below indicates the responses that were received.

Table 4 – Future Hub Populations as Assessed by Authorities

Town	2002	2005/6	2010/11	2015/16	2020/21
Castlebar/Ballina	21,018	-	-	-	-
Cavan	6,098	6,100	10,000	13,000	-
Ennis	26,170*	30,770	-	-	35,270
Kilkenny	20,735	24,000	-	-	-
Tralee/Killarney	70,500*	76,300	80,900	83,800	85,500
Mallow	8,937	-	-	-	20,000
Monaghan	5,717	-	5,830	5,912	-
Tuam	5,947	-	-	-	-
Wexford	17,235	19,900	22,500	25,400	27,200

*Note: In some cases (e.g. Ennis, Tralee/Killarney), the CSO 2002 population figures do not equal the population estimates for the same year made by the LAs because the defined areas are not the same (see point 1 below). The Tralee Town Development Plan 2003 – 2009 indicates a population in the Town area of 21,272 in 2006, 22,355 in 2011 and 23,200 in 2020.

The data in Table 4 indicate a number of difficulties involved in looking ahead into the future.

- 1 There is no overall definition of the spatial areas that are being considered. For example, in the case of Tralee/Killarney, the electoral districts (EDs) within which the towns fall are used. These give a considerably greater population in 2002 than that indicated by the CSO figures for the towns themselves.
- 2 There is no direct comparability regarding future projection dates.

However, taking the data as supplied, it becomes clear that the Hub authorities are in almost all cases anticipating substantial levels of growth into the future. The exception is Monaghan Town where, over a 13-year period up to 2015, population growth of only about 200 people is expected. It should however be noted that the draft Monaghan and Environs Development Plan 2006-2012 indicates a target

population of 15,000 for the Hub town by 2020. Meeting high-growth expectations poses significant challenges for Hub, county, regional and national authorities.

The overall conclusions emerging from the population data are:

- o The Hubs were growing moderately faster than the national rate from 1996 to 2006. However, in order to meet broad indicative NSS targets by 2020, they would need to grow at substantially higher rates in the future.
- o Based on growth rates in the recent past (2002-2006), only one Hub (Tralee/Killarney) is likely to reach or exceed its indicative target population by 2020. The others would need to increase their grow rates very substantially in order to do so.
- o The increased rates of growth required to meet indicative NSS Hub targets are probably unrealistic in almost all cases. Therefore, it may be more practical and appropriate to reconsider the targets set for 2020 or to set up a longer-term horizon for their achievement. Table 5 below sets out revised indicative targets which are mostly based on growth rates for each Hub which are 20% above the 2002-2006 rates.

Table 5 – Revised Indicative Hub Populations Targets for 2020

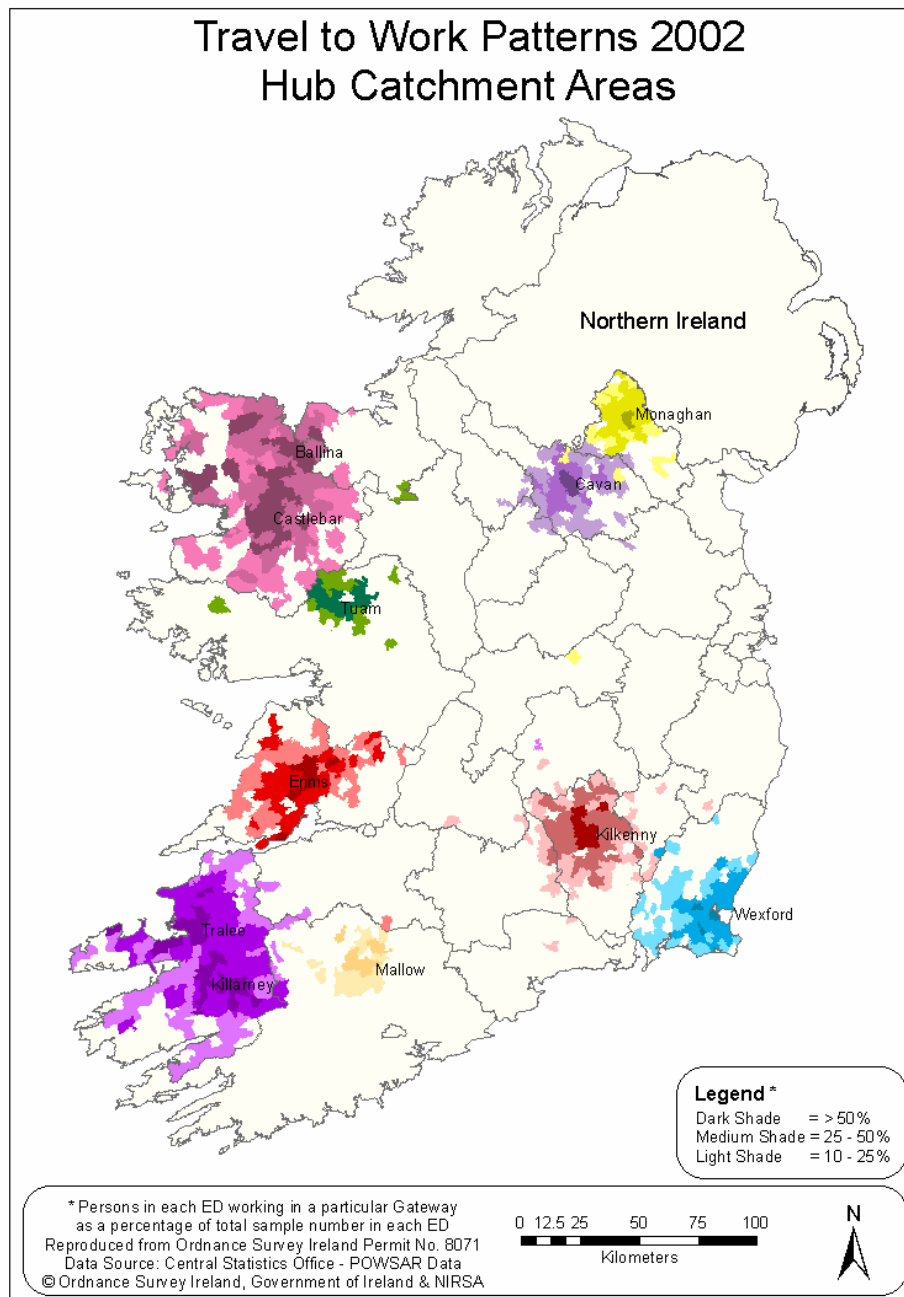
HUB	2006 Pop (est.)	Current Indic. 2020 Target	Rev. Indic. 2020 Targets	Increase Needed 2006 - 2020
Ballina/Castlebar	23,173	40,000	32,500	9,327
Cavan	7,380	20,000	15,000	7,620
Ennis	24,558	40,000	35,000	10,442
Kilkenny	22,595	40,000	30,000	7,405
Killarney/Tralee	37,345	40,000	47,500	10,155
Mallow	10,338	20,000	20,000	9,662
Monaghan	6,587	20,000	10,000	3,413
Tuam	6,919	20,000	12,500	5,581
Wexford	18,330	40,000	22,500	4,170
All Hubs	157,178	280,000	225,000	67,775

4.4 Regional Impact

As discussed above, one of the two main roles of Hubs as outlined in the NSS is to provide a stimulus for growth in their associated sub-regions. Hubs are essential in providing for the retail, services, entertainment etc. needs of the populations in their

catchment areas. Data on the relationships between the Hubs and their associated catchment sub-regions in terms of these aspects is somewhat lacking. However, one proxy indicator for the relation between the Hub and its hinterland is travel-to-work patterns.

Figure 2 – Hubs Travel-to-Work Patterns 2002



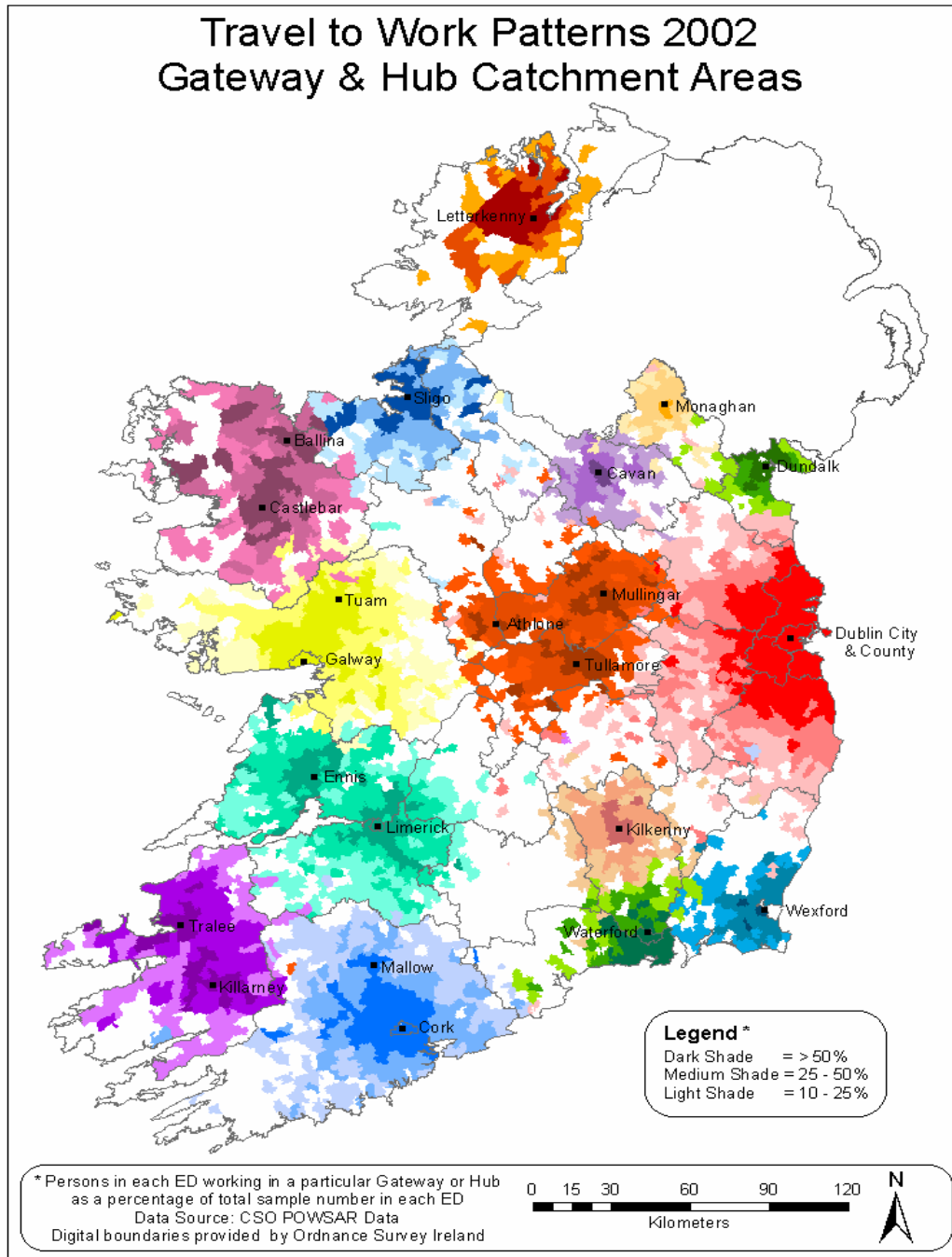
Map XX

Figure 2 above indicates the areas from which the Hubs draw their labour force on a daily basis. A number of observations can be made regarding the ‘footprints’ indicated on the above map.

- o The most obvious factor is the substantial variation in the spatial extent of the Hub's 'footprints'. This variation is an indication of the diversity in terms of the size and character of the Hubs.
- o In particular, both Castlebar/Ballina and Tralee/Killarney draw their workers from very large areas across their whole counties. For example, in the case of Tralee/Killarney, the footprint covers about 3,300 km². Across the long axis of the footprint (running approximately north to south), it extends for just over 80 kms. The Castlebar/Ballina footprint is approximately the same size and has a long axis (also running roughly north to south) which is over 85 kms. The extent of these 'footprints' suggests that these Hubs already play very significant sub-regional developmental roles. Interestingly, the growth rates required in both Hubs to reach the indicative 2020 population targets are approximately similar to the growth they experienced over the 1996 to 2002 period. (Table 3B) If NSS-supported interventions could result in enhanced rates of population growth, it may well be that these Hubs could play development roles over even wider areas.
- o Of the non-linked Hubs, Ennis has the largest catchment footprint. An interesting point in this regard is that it has a relatively large footprint and yet is in relatively close proximity to the much larger Limerick-Shannon Gateway. This strongly suggests that, even in this type of spatial context, Hubs can play independent sub-regional development roles. Clearly, they are not confined to becoming dormitory towns for their larger neighbours.
- o Cavan and Monaghan are relatively close and have 'footprints' which are contiguous. This factor suggests that some form of co-operation between the two towns could be an appropriate way forward for the towns, especially as growth rates required for these towns up to 2020 to meet the NSS indicative population targets are well above their 1996-2002 growth rates. Moreover, the footprints in Figure 2 relate only to travel patterns in the Republic. It is likely that Monaghan, and Cavan to a lesser extent, draws workers from across the Border: thus, their actual footprints may be somewhat larger than those indicated above.
- o In the cases of Tuam and Mallow, their footprints are modest in size, possibly because they are all located relatively close to major cities and to some significant extent, play mainly a supporting role to their relatively close Gateway neighbours. This suggests that a key challenge for these Hubs is to strengthen their local sub-regional roles. Ennis may provide an example of how Hubs within relatively close proximity to a much larger Gateway city can play these wider sub-regional roles.

Building on the previous map, Figure 3 below indicates the travel to work patterns in 2002 for both Gateways and Hubs.

Figure 3 – Gateways/Hubs Travel-to-Work Patterns 2002



The most striking features of these joint travel-to-work patterns from a Hubs perspective are:

- o Apart from Tuam and Mallow, the Hubs occupy distinct spatial ‘niches’, each having its own defined footprint. This suggests that, in the case of the majority of the Hubs, they are able to play clearly defined local sub-regional roles and to support Gateway growth.
- o The pattern in the South East is interesting in that the size of the Kilkenny and Wexford Hub footprints match that of the Waterford Gateway. This pattern suggests that an integrated approach to the development of the Gateway and the two Hubs is an appropriate way forward for the region.
- o Looking along the western seaboard, a potential western corridor is emerging strongly with Mallow, Ennis and Tuam directly on the corridor, and Castlebar/Ballina and Tralee/Killarney flanking the corridor. In light of the proposals to develop the Atlantic Gateway cities of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway¹⁰ and the proposals in Transport 21¹¹ to develop the Atlantic Corridor and to progressively open up the rail link along this western route, the development potential in the Hubs along and just off this corridor seem assured in the medium to longer term.

5 DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Based on the responses received from the Hub authorities, it is clear that in many cases there has been considerable public sector investment and private development activity since the launch of the NSS in late 2002. This has been reflected, in particular, through significant progress on the infrastructure front, increases in residential development and the expansion in the retail and commercial sectors.

By reviewing the responses from the Hub towns and from other information available, it is possible to identify some of the main development issues which are facing the Hubs.

Governance Issues

- o Aligning their **Development Plans** to meet the challenges associated with becoming a Hub is an issue common to many of the Hubs. In most cases, the Hubs have up-to-date Plans or are currently reviewing their existing Plans.
- o Developing a range of **policy and planning frameworks** (e.g. broad strategic frameworks, Local Area Plans, Action Area Plans etc.) which are aimed at

¹⁰ ‘Atlantic Gateways; Achieving Critical Mass’ – DoEHLG/Shannon Development, 2006

¹¹ See <http://www.transport.ie/viewitem.asp?id=7048&lang=ENG&loc=1850>

unlocking development potential in parts of the Hubs (e.g. the central areas, new main residential districts etc.) is regarded as important.

- o Developing the necessary **networks** between different levels of government (at national, regional, county and local levels) and between Government and the private sector is seen as a key issue.
- o The role of the **private sector** is an issue of considerable importance. In some cases (e.g. Kilkenny), the public and private sectors are working closely together on issues such as developing an overall vision, on tourism development and on developing various policies. In other cases, the public sector has concentrated on opening up land for development and the private sector has responded in a 'traditional' way through taking up these opportunities by developing the land in question.
- o Establishing an appropriate **implementation vehicle** (e.g. a Hub Implementation Committee) to drive the co-ordinated and enhanced development of a Hub is highly important. Such a committee can deal with a broad range of issues from longer-term strategic perspectives to more short-term implementation matters. Almost all Hubs have structures of various kinds in place that could be adapted to create such a vehicle.
- o Securing **funding** to provide for infrastructure and amenity enhancing initiatives is a key issue for all the Hubs.
- o While Hub authorities have clearly focussed on ensuring that basic services such as water supply and sanitation are adequately dealt with, there is also a full realisation that development of the Hubs is also about ensuring that 'softer' **social services/facilities** are in place. In the case of some Hubs, reference is made that the funding mechanisms for these types of facilities are less clearly defined than is the case for the 'harder' services. Finding appropriate means of securing funds for these types of services/facilities remains a development challenge.
- o Development is to a significant extent driven by investor confidence. A number of Hubs have mentioned that the designation of **Hub status** in the NSS has boosted confidence and stimulated local investment and development.

Land and Infrastructure

- o Ensuring that adequate amounts of **serviced zoned development land** are made available in advance of actual demand is seen as important so that land availability does not hamper growth. Some Councils have been active in this

area through the purchase of land (e.g. for future expansion of a business park, land for a waste disposal site) which can then be developed when required. Regarding the provision of zoned residential land, it would appear that most Hubs have made adequate provision to cater for anticipated growth into the future.

- o Many of the Hubs have made progress under the MANs Programme to create a **broadband** network which can support service-led enterprise development and be an amenity for residents. However, some progress still remains to be made.
- o Ensuring adequate **water supplies** and **sewage** treatment works and networks is also seen as vitally important. Implementation of water conservation measures have also been introduced in some cases.

Local Economy

- o Building and sustaining local **economic growth** is for most Hubs the development issue. It is generally assumed that overall Hub growth into the future will depend significantly on an expansion in the number and size of local and regional enterprises. Growth in this sector would result in higher levels of employment and increased local spending power, which in turn would stimulate a wider range of retail and services sector choices and opportunities for residents. Population growth which is a consequence of this economic expansion would bring further economic growth, additional housing development and a wider range of community facilities to service this expanded population and economic base.

In a rapidly changing, increasingly knowledge-driven economic environment, relatively small towns such as Hubs which are mostly set in a broadly rural environment face particular economic development challenges. Issues such as transport and broadband connectivity, diversification in the rural economy, linkages to nearby Gateways and to smaller towns and villages in the Hubs hinterland all need to be explored carefully in order to strengthen the local economic base and so provide the sustainable local economic growth which the Hub towns regard as such an important issue.

Transport Connectivity

- o Enhancing the quality of the **central areas** through improvements in accessibility from the surrounding parts of the Hubs and amenity enhancing measures (e.g. pedestrianisation schemes) is a principal objective.

- o Improving **regional connectivity** through the provision of by-passes of towns on the national routes to nearby Gateways and other parts of Ireland would relieve congestion and result in improved environmental quality.
- o Provision of suitable local **public transport** is an issue for some Hubs. However, the likely viability of such services is dependent on the population size and the density of development, as well as the spatial structure of the Hub.

The above issues are complex and frequently inter-related. However, in order to ensure that there is sustainable growth in the Hubs, it is necessary to identify the drivers which can deal with these and other issues, and in doing so, help to ensure accelerated growth.

6 DRIVING HUB GROWTH

6.1 Introduction

Achieving accelerated growth in the Hubs will not occur unless there is a very concentrated focus on key drivers and “extra” effort made to progress crucial delivery objectives. A number of key drivers for growth can be identified, namely strong local leadership, appropriate plans and programmes, adequate resources, information and integrated national support.

6.2 Governance and Leadership

Having strong local leaders acting together in a coherent way is arguably the most important factor of all in achieving successful urban development. Strong and committed local leadership can find opportunities in many areas, can identify innovative approaches to overcome development problems and drive cost-effective funding and other interventions. Leadership in three key areas and coherence of activity is of vital importance, namely:

- o **Public Sector Leadership.** Leaders in this sector provide the framework within which business and communities can respond. Strong and committed leadership is required to undertake this fundamental role that helps to bring out all the development opportunities which exist in the various Hubs.
- o **Local Business Leadership.** Experience in a number of Hubs over the past few years has shown conclusively that local private interests can respond quickly and creatively to opportunities which emerge. Apart from having committed

individual local entrepreneurs, the local Chambers of Commerce can play significant supportive roles.

- o **Local Community Leadership.** Strong community support on projects and initiatives which represent clear gains for the Hubs would certainly be helpful in moving forward the overall growth of the Hubs.

6.3 Plans and Programmes

Strong and committed local support needs to be translated into appropriate plans and programmes. In particular, the following are seen as being of critical importance.

- o **Vision.** A clear overview of what role the Hubs should play and what impact development will have on the Hub in the foreseeable future (e.g. by 2020) is important as it provides a broad picture of what all the various actions should ultimately be striving towards achieving. While such a vision should be inspirational and visionary, it must nevertheless have a reasonable chance of being achieved. The outline of Hubs provided in the NSS (see section 3 above) provides a basis for developing such a vision in the case of each Hub.
- o **Policies.** The visions for the future need to be translated into sound policies which factor in not only the idealised longer-term future underpinning the vision, but also current realities and emerging trends. Policies should be developed which cover a range of development and planning issues.
- o **Plans.** Town (and, where appropriate, County) Development Plans need to reflect the Hub status and the visions/policies which will enable the Hubs to perform their roles as outlined in the NSS. Standard best practice indicates that higher-level plans provide the basis or context for lower-level plans. However, particular emphasis on finding creative approaches to stimulating Hub development and which are expressed in the next round of Hub Development Plans (see Table 1), may require a review of policies in County Development Plans. Whether or not such a review is necessary, it is important that there is seamless alignment between Hub and County Development Plans.
- o **Implementation Programmes.** It is critically important that each Hub has at least a short-term implementation programme (e.g. up to say 5 years into the future). Such a programme would indicate priority projects, key targets, key performance areas, critical success factors and appropriate monitoring and review arrangements. It should also give realistic consideration to staffing,

financial and other resource issues. The programme should, where possible, facilitate the attainment of some 'quick wins' to gain initial momentum.

6.4 Resources

Committed leadership and the best plans and programmes can result in little meaningful impact without certain key resources being available and appropriately used.

- o **Funds.** Broadly, four sources of capital funding can be identified to drive Hub growth.
 - ◆ *Development contributions*, made in terms of sections 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Such funds are generated within the Hubs and also at the County level. Obviously, the funds generated within the Hub towns would need to be allocated towards developing the Hubs themselves. However, in many cases, the Hubs in effect extend out into their environs areas and thus a proportion of the contribution funds generated by the County Councils needs to be allocated to contribute to Hub development. The proportion should reflect the priority given in the NSS to the Hubs.
 - ◆ *National funds*. Numerous funding sources exist at national level to support local development, including of course Hub development. In order to support Hub growth on an accelerated basis, a number of key requirements emerge for central Government Departments and Agencies. Firstly, the need to give an additional level of priority to Hubs, and secondly, to ensure that there is adequate integration between allocations across the range of sectors.
 - ◆ *European Union funding*. The EU has a number of programmes which can be used to support appropriate local development. Such programmes are not limited to areas along the border with Northern Ireland.
 - ◆ *Private sector funding*. Experience in Hubs to date has shown that the private sector can respond vigorously and quickly when development opportunities are opened up. It is necessary for the public sector to create an environment in which private sector investors are confident to make investments.

An important point regarding the funding of Hub development is that all of the above sources need to be vigorously pursued.

- o **Human Resources.** The allocation of sufficient staff at Hub, and also at County, level is essential to ensure that plans and programmes are implemented

vigorously and coherently. Obviously, the numbers and levels required will differ between the Hubs, due both to the scale of the towns and the relative states of progress (e.g. at planning, implementation or monitoring phases). However, the critical points which need to be emphasised are that regular reviews are necessary to determine staffing needs, and that appropriate commitment and determination (i.e. leadership) should be in place at senior levels to ensure that sufficient priority be given to meeting the Hubs' staffing requirements.

- o **Information.** Traditionally, information was not seen as being a critical factor which drives town growth. However, in recent times there is a increasing realisation that information/knowledge is one of the critical factors of production underpinning economic growth and impinging on successful public sector delivery. The evolving role and importance of information is such that it is increasingly seen as a vital commodity across virtually all aspects of town, city and country growth.

In the case of the Hubs, it is necessary to establish effective systems to collate and manage at least the necessary basic critical information. Some of the types of information which, if properly organised, could support Hub growth include:

- o residents' needs and views on a variety of development related issues;
- o factors related to local economic development (including shifting regional, national, European and global factors) which impact on enterprise opportunities;
- o evolving plans, budgets, funding opportunities and policies of the many Government bodies which can impact on local growth;
- o land use, infrastructure and other issues related to planning and physical development;
- o an informative and up-to-date Internet portal with a high level of functionality; and
- o implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines and supporting County and Hub implementation programmes.

The ICT systems which need to be put in place to find, collect, view, transform, analyse and output, even the limited sets of priority information listed above, are not straightforward and require dedicated commitment if they are to be an effective, accurate and dynamic adjunct to Hub growth.

6.5 National Support

Support from national Departments and their Agencies is essential if accelerated Hub growth is to take place. Key areas in which such support is required include:

- o *Funding allocations.* In this regard, integrated and timely delivery of funds on a priority basis to Hubs is critical. Inclusion of Hub requirements into the NDP 2007–2013 and into rolling multi-annual capital envelopes are seen as being of particular importance.
- o *Delivery on major national programmes.* In particular, Transport 21, broadband roll-out and enterprise support are of particular importance.
- o *Policy frameworks.* National policies should support Hub development, where appropriate.
- o *Monitoring System.* Hub issues need to be clearly tracked through a DoEHLG NSS implementation monitoring system.
- o *Support Structures.* Various structures exist to implement the NSS, such as the DoEHLG's co-ordinated NSS Inter-Departmental Steering Committee (IDSC), RPG National Steering Committee, meetings with the CCMA etc. Hub issues should be raised and discussed in these forums.

Whilst the activities of virtually all Government Departments and many of their associated agencies will impact on Hub growth, it is possible to identify four **key Departments**, namely:

- o *Environment, Heritage and Local Government.* Many DoEHLG functions have a very direct impact on Hubs, including local authority matters, NSS implementation, planning, housing, heritage, water and wastewater, urban and village development and fire services. Internal Departmental co-ordination structures that exist would need to fully take Hubs issues into account.
- o *Enterprise, Trade and Employment.* This Department and its various agencies, in particular Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland, have very important roles to play.
- o *Transport.* Delivery of *Transport 21* and other transport-related initiatives are essential in order to provide the necessary regional level support that can unlock development within Hubs.
- o *Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.* Broadband is probably the key issue that relates to this Department's mandate. Every Hub identifies the widespread and effective availability of broadband as being of special strategic importance, given the structural economic changes that are taking place.

7.1 Introduction

In the previous section, some of the drivers for Hub development were identified and briefly discussed. Funding is one of these critical drivers; given the recent commencement of the NDP 2007–2013, it is therefore appropriate to deal in more detail with the investment issue.

At the outset, it is appropriate to consider the changing role of the public sector relative to the private sector. In the past, responsibility for the provision of almost all communal services was seen as resting with the public authorities. However, in recent years, a shift has occurred with the private sector being seen as the main service provider in a widening range of fields. Examples include bus transport, broadband services, waste collection and disposal, information dissemination etc. Thus, past certainties regarding public service provision have been replaced by a more complex service delivery system, where roles and responsibilities are less clear cut.

7.2 Priority Investment Areas

Based on the survey of Hubs undertaken in late 2005, it is possible to identify what appear to be the main areas that require specific capital investment. In this context, 'highest priority', 'high priority' and 'priority' categories are set out below. This type of categorisation provides a broad generalised framework for considering capital investments. However, it will in practice need to be adjusted in the case of each particular Hub to take local requirements into account.

The 'highest priority' areas are seen as being of fundamental importance without which accelerated growth in the Hubs would not be possible. Investment in the 'high priority' areas is seen as essential if accelerated growth is to occur, whilst investment in the 'priority' areas is seen as necessary in order to meet existing and future growth needs.

(a) "Highest Priority" Local Capital Investment Areas

The following areas may be identified:

- o **Water and Wastewater.** Almost all Hubs identify the need to invest in this area, to deal with current issues and to support sustained accelerated growth. Three aspects in particular need investment, namely:
 - ◆ treatment plants,

- ◆ distribution and collection networks, and
 - ◆ conservation measures.
- o **Roads.** Local Hubs' road investment would need to be focussed into four key areas:
- ◆ within the central areas,
 - ◆ in the surrounds of central areas,
 - ◆ around key larger land parcels which are currently undeveloped or under-developed. These parcels should be of a scale which would mean that their development would have a significant impact on overall town growth, and
 - ◆ as by-passes or relief roads.

(b) “High Priority” Local Investment Areas

The following areas may be identified:

- o **Education.** The capital investments in this sector fall into two main categories:
- Primary and secondary facilities, the quality and availability of which have a major influence on the attractiveness of Hubs as places for people to live and work.
 - Third-level facilities. Investments in this area would assist in keeping existing younger residents in the Hubs. It would also facilitate on-going adult education and re-training and so support local enterprise development. In an increasingly knowledge-based economic environment, R&D investment has a very important role to play, particularly where such investment can result in commercially viable products or services.
- o **Health.** The NSS vision for the Hubs (section 3) indicates that they should have a local or regional hospital. In addition to this basic requirement, the important issue is what range of services are provided at these hospitals. A wider range of quality services appropriate to the size and nature of their catchment areas is deemed important from a quality of life perspective. Furthermore, the range and quality of health facilities is one of the factors taken into consideration in enterprise investment location decisions.
- o **Broadband.** Broadband is the platform on which information is disseminated and shared. In this information society age, broadband availability will not be a luxury but a pre-condition for continued and accelerated economic and social development.

(c) “Priority” Local Investment Areas

The following areas may be identified:

- o **Environment Quality Improvements**, aimed at creating or upgrading urban parks or walkways, developing pedestrian areas in central locations, landscaping etc., are regarded as being of significant importance.
- o **Land Purchase**. Purchase and release of key land parcels can unlock private sector investment, and therefore foster both residential and economic expansion.

(d) Regional/sub-Regional Priorities

In addition to these investments within the Hub towns and their environs, the Hub authorities frequently refer to the need for investment to take place in their wider sub-regions. In particular, mention is made of the following issues requiring investment:

- o **Airports**. Increasingly, airports are seen as important regional drivers of growth. In particular, they facilitate tourism and are becoming ever more important for enterprises which target global markets.
- o **National Roads**. Hub authorities are very aware of the possible benefits which improved road access to nearby Gateways and other significant areas can perform for their towns. Reference is made in particular to construction of town/village by-passes and to general upgrading along the routes leading to the Hubs from Dublin and nearby Gateways. Transport 21 and targeted investment of non-national road funding would go a long way to meeting the needs expressed by Hub authorities.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations set out below draw on the analysis and findings discussed in earlier sections. If implemented effectively and in a timely manner, these recommendations would contribute significantly towards enabling the Hubs to play the roles set out for them in the NSS.

8.1 Governance of Hubs Authorities

The discussion set out above has indicated that governance and leadership issues are critically important in driving and championing Hub growth into the future. The

following governance/leadership-orientated recommendations can help to develop a coherent and systematic approach across the Hubs.

(a) Each Hub should establish a **Hub Development Committee** (HDC). The main aims of the Committee would be:

- to prepare a Project Implementation Programme (PIP),
- to co-ordinate implementation of the programme,
- to undertake an annual review of the programme, and
- to receive reports and other input from the Hub Development Officer.

In the case of linked Hubs, it is particularly important that the HDC comprises representatives from both Hubs.

(b) Each Hub should nominate a **Hub Development Officer** to be responsible for dealing with Hub development matters on a full-time, or near full-time, basis. The main duties of the Officer would be:

- to prepare draft PIPs and annual reviews for submission to the HDC,
- to undertake day-to-day co-ordination of the PIP and report to the HDC,
- to undertake or facilitate such research/investigations as are necessary and appropriate from time to time,
- to act generally as a contact point for dealings with DoEHLG and other central Departments and Agencies,
- to represent, where appropriate, the Hub on various fora, and
- to ensure the Hub portal is developed and regularly updated.

(c) Representatives from all the Hubs should meet on an annual basis to review development issues.

8.2 Hub Project Implementation Programmes (PIPs)

The Project Implementation Programme (PIP) is seen as the key instrument to drive Hub growth and development. The PIP should have the following characteristics:

- it should be project- and programme-orientated;
- it should have a short- to medium-term focus (i.e. up to 5 years);
- it should indicate broad priorities and key areas of focus;
- it should clearly allocate responsibilities for actions/tasks;
- it should identify priority activities/tasks which need to be undertaken;
- it should set targets and provide a basis for monitoring progress;
- it should provide at least indicative costs for projects and programmes, and an indication of phasing etc.; and
- it should be updated on an annual rolling basis.

8.3 Role of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

The Department has overall responsibility for NSS implementation and thus a responsibility to support and promote Hub growth and development. In order to perform this function effectively, the following recommendations are made:

- o The Department should factor Hubs' investment needs into the NDP 2007-2013 and into its own rolling 5-year capital envelopes.
- o It should input, from a broad strategic perspective, into the Hubs' Project Implementation Programmes.
- o The Department should ensure that Hubs issues feature regularly in discussions of the NSS Inter-Departmental Steering Committee (IDSC) and in other relevant fora.
- o It should undertake research projects and other forms of analysis and investigation dealing with cross-cutting Hub issues.
- o The Department should monitor Hubs development and give appropriate consideration to the annual reports produced by the Hubs.
- o The Department should facilitate the establishment and support the operation of a Hubs Network (see below).

8.4 Role of Other Departments and Agencies

Supporting Hubs growth in ways which enable them to fulfil the roles set out in the NSS requires input and commitment from a wide range of Government Departments and Agencies. It is recommended that an informal Hubs Network be established, involving, in particular, key officials from DoEHLG and the Departments of Transport, Enterprise, Trade and Employment (including Forfás), and Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. The Network would mainly operate on an *ad hoc* basis through email communication, but may organise face-to-face meetings from time to time to deal with specific issues where considered necessary.

APPENDIX (A)

CASTLEBAR / BALLINA

NSS COMMENT ON CASTELBAR / BALLINA

These centres are strategically located in the West and in relation to the broader areas that they relate to. The centres also contain complementary functions and capabilities that point towards a capacity to develop and energise wider areas through integrated and co-ordinated development. Castlebar has important healthcare, education (through the Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology) retailing and administrative functions, while Ballina has important employment and tourism functions and a substantial capacity for development. With enhanced physical links between these centres in terms of transport and communications, Castlebar-Ballina will perform an important spatial function in the NSS context.

Castlebar, Ballina and Tuam, as hubs, will perform important roles within the national structure at the regional and county level. Critical factors will include improvements in regional accessibility through advanced communications infrastructure, by road and public transport and through the regional airport at Knock. These critical factors also include the enhanced townscape and local services necessary to underpin capacity for development.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO D_oEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o Ballina Town Council and Castlebar Town Council together with Mayo County Council are the main actors in the promotion of the hub. The County Manager and the Directors of Service for the Areas (Area Managers who are also Town Managers) identify and co-ordinate actions to promote the hub at executive level. In the medium term it is intended to broaden the participation and input by way of one of the Council Special Policy Committees.
- o Mayo County Council and Ballina Town Council prepared a joint development plan, the Ballina & Environs Development Plan 2003-2009.
- o Mayo County Council and Castlebar Town Council are in the process of preparing a joint development plan for Castlebar & Environs

Q2 – Does the current Development Plan take its Hub designation

Forward

- o Yes Mayo County Development Plan 2003-2009 makes specific reference to the Castlebar/Ballina linked hub.

Development Framework Objective DF-1.1.

To promote and facilitate the growth of the combined towns of Ballina, Castlebar as a linked sub-regional development hub in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy, building on their

individual and complementary strengths and potential development roles and to ensure that the necessary physical and social infrastructure supports and linkages are developed. (p19)

3.1.1 THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.

Ballina/Castlebar/Westport Development Hub.

DF-DH 1 *It is an objective of the Council to further the concept of a regional Development Hub focussed on the joint strengths of Ballina/Castlebar/Westport towns through the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region.*

DF-DH 2 *It is an objective of the Council to seek close co-operation and consultation with the three Town Councils to promote and create a regional role for the towns of Ballina and Castlebar combined as a linked development hub and Westport in its complementary/partnership role as major tourist/recreational and industrial centre in the county.*

DF-DH 3 *It is an objective of the Council to protect and strengthen the urban function of each of the three towns of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport individually by developing compact urban form.*

DF-DH 4 *It is an objective of the Council to prioritise transport, energy, and major public infrastructure projects that will give effect to the development of Ballina/Castlebar/Westport as a development hub as indicated in the Development Framework.*

DF-DH 5 *It is an objective of the Council to promote and facilitate the provision of a high level of social, community and recreational facilities to enhance the quality of life in these towns.*

DF-DH 6 *It is an objective of the Council that where any residential land, zoned or unzoned, is serviced by a public sewer, it is the intention of this Council that that land should be developed to its maximum potential bearing in mind the substantial investment in the public service infrastructure. (p26)*

- o Ballina & Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 makes specific reference to the Castlebar/Ballina linked hub.

The towns of Castlebar/Ballina are identified as a single development “Hub”, the lower level of identified growth centres.

In this regard, it is an objective of the plan to:

- *build on the National Spatial Strategy*
- *establish links with Castlebar in light of the National Spatial Strategy. (p8)*

- o Castlebar Town Development Plan 2004 does not make specific reference to the Castlebar/Ballina linked hub. The statutory process for making the Castlebar Town Development Plan 2004 began in 2000 before the NSS Castlebar/Ballina linked hub was identified. It was not possible to incorporate changes to the plan which would have given recognition to the Linked Hub. Castlebar Town Development Plan 2004 is currently under review and the necessary policies to bring the Linked Hub forward will be included.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o Ballina urban population
 - o (5 years) 13,700 +3100 over 2006
 - o (10 years) 16,800 +6300 over 2006

The current Ballina & Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 has circa 282 Ha zoned as residential, only 90 Ha is required over the next 7 years. The review of this plan due to commence in the near future will ensure there is sufficient residential land zoned to meet the population growth.

- o Castlebar urban population
 - o (5 years) 16,700 +4100 over 2006
 - o (10 years) 21,000 +8300 over 2006

Castlebar Town Development Plan 2004 has circa 356 Ha zoned as residential, only 180 Ha is required over the next 7 years. The review of this plan currently under review will ensure there is sufficient residential land zoned to meet the population growth.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o New development plans for both Castlebar and Ballina will ensure that sufficient lands (in addition to lands in the current plan) to accommodate anticipated future growth are zoned,

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002

- o Link and relief roads constructed.
- o Substantial housing development.
- o Additional retail and commercial development with a resultant increase in employment.
- o Car parks provided by public and private sector.
- o New library and library extension.
- o New museum.
- o Planned marina development.

Q6 – Progress on Major Infrastructure in Recent Years

- o Castlebar and Ballina and environs waste water treatment plants in planning(Ballina) and under construction(Castlebar).
- o Civic Amenity Site provided in Ballina.

- o New early morning train service planned.
- o Plans advanced for N26 improvements and Newport road, Castlebar.
- o Technology park planned for Ballina.
- o Technology Park under construction in Castlebar.
- o Plans advanced for additional sporting facilities.
- o New swimming pool planned for Castlebar.
- o Lough Lannagh Holiday Village provided in Castlebar.
- o Castlebar Town Council facilitated the expansion of the tennis facilities through a land swap.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- o Lack of funding for road construction/improvement projects.
- o Need to improve transport links (rail/air).
- o Lack of industrial development and investment.
- o Broadband width improvements required.

Q8 – Main short, medium and longer term Infrastructure Requirements

- o Main Drainage Schemes.
- o Natural gas supply.
- o Increase Broadband width.
- o Improved road network into and out of towns and county.
- o Additional rail links.
- o Need public transport connections between the hub towns and the airport
- o Require a constant high voltage energy supply.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o Main Drainage Schemes.
- o Natural Gas Supply.

- o Increase Broadband width.
- o Improved road network into and out of towns and county.
- o Additional rail links.
- o Need public transport connections between the hub towns and the airport
- o Require a constant high voltage energy supply.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Arts centre and marina in Ballina.
- o Funding for sports facilities in Castlebar e.g. additional all weather playing pitches, swimming pool, tennis courts.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o Give consideration as a site for decentralisation.
- o Need for additional industrial investment.

APPENDIX (B)

CAVAN

NSS COMMENT ON CAVAN

Cavan is strategically located on the N3 route some 70 miles north of Dublin. It is situated midway between the Sligo and Dundalk Gateways and is formally linked to the latter along with Monaghan under the NSS. Cavan also commands a strategic position serving a large, predominantly rural hinterland, yet is very well positioned to capitalise on the cross-Border dimension with good road links to significant towns such as Enniskillen in Northern Ireland. Cavan performs important administrative, retailing and employment functions for its substantial catchment area.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o An Implementation Group is in place comprising senior Cavan Local Authority staff to ensure a proactive approach to the continued sustained growth of the Town. The focus of this group in the policy area has been centred on the preparation over the past twelve months of:
 - o A transportation study for the Town area
 - o A Design framework guideline for the central Town area and,
 - o An integrated framework plan to update the current development plan.
- o All issues related to the Hub development are generally channelled through the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic, Rural Development and Planning.
- o An interagency enterprise group has been established under the auspices of the County Development Board. This includes senior personnel from IDA, EI, Cavan CEB, FAS, Trade Unions, Business and Local Authority interests. The purpose is to deliver on the priority actions identified in the CDB Strategy most of which are fundamental to hub development.
- o Ongoing structured dialogue takes place with major employers including the Quinn Group.
- o The local Cavan Chamber of Commerce is being currently re-established under the behind the scenes leadership of the local authority. It is envisaged that this group will add to the debate, dynamic and thinking in the town.
- o A review is taking place of the current Town Boundary. The extension, if approved by Central Government, will improve the perception and operation of the town as an efficient unit.

- o The County Manager has engaged with the Cavan Institute to set up an industrial/business sub group to specifically link post second level education availability to local emerging needs.
- o Recently changed tourism structures now facilitate the input of the major hotels and amenities in the town into ongoing strategic planning and product development.

Q2 – Does the Current Development Plan take its Hub Designation Forward?

- o The current Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan is in the process of Variation commencement to take account of updated requirements and opportunities.
- o Work is complete on the preparation of an Integrated Development Framework Plan for the Town and Environs. This plan sets out a broad vision for the development of the area up to 2020, and:
 - o Integrates existing and proposed land uses,
 - o Provides measures to reinvigorate the Town Centre,
 - o Provides a basis for integrating development with sustainable transport modes, and
 - o Places strong emphasis on quality of life issues.

The Framework Plan alongside the Transportation Study and Cavan Urban Design framework will be the basis on which the formal review of the Town and Environs Development Plan will be carried out. It is intended to ensure that the varied plan will deliver the development of Cavan as a Hub town in a self sustaining manner, with residential growth being balanced by appropriate employment and service growth, while protecting amenity and heritage.

- o A **Transport Study** has been completed by consultants as part of the Framework Plan.
- o Initial non-statutory public consultation is complete on the Integrated Framework Plan, Cavan Urban Design Framework and Cavan Transportation Study.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o 2007 – 10,000 estimated.
- o 2010 – 12,000 estimated.
- o 2015 – 15,000 estimated.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o There is sufficient land zoned to cater for the short term housing needs of the Cavan and Environs population having regard to Q3 above.
- o The medium to longer-term needs are being reviewed in the variation of the development plan.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o Residential development has been particularly strong since 2002. A Serviced Land Initiative has been a major factor in bringing about the increased levels of residential development.
- o Considerable amounts of retail and commercial development have occurred. The designation of Cavan as a Hub has underpinned and expanded confidence in the private sector.
- o Some key developments are:
 - o About 1,500 housing units have been given planning permission.
 - o Two substantial retail parks have been completed.
 - o Quinn Direct Financial Services Centre is complete and employs approximately 600 people.
 - o Work is complete on the construction of the new Cavan Institute with an enrolment of approximately 1,200 students. Links with other third-level institutions are being developed. Courses at the Institute are capable of being tailored to meet specific local needs.
 - o The Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre is now fully operational and is a key driver of business training and development in the County.
 - o Decentralisation of the Department of Communications, Marine, and Natural Resources to Cavan has commenced and on completion will provide a further significant boost to private investment. Some staff have already relocated to Cavan in temporary accommodation. A site for their new accommodation has been purchased by the OPW.
- o The second phase of the Cavan Town by-pass is now complete and has enabled much better traffic management.
- o An assessment of water and wastewater plants was undertaken and plans are being advanced to augment water services where necessary. It is reasonably predicted that this scheme will be prioritised in the Water Services Investment Programme.
- o The County Council operates a modern landfill facility on the outskirts of Cavan Town. The facility has an approved capacity of 90,000 tonnes *per annum*. The Council owns approximately 40 ha of land adjacent to the facility which is suitable for the development of, among other uses, a fully integrated waste management facility.
- o Regarding other infrastructure, developments have taken place such as:
 - o The Cavan Crystal Hotel, a modern hotel with 85 bedrooms and a leisure centre.
 - o Work is also complete on a Radisson SAS 158-bedroom hotel and wellness complex on the grounds of the Farnham Estate just outside the Town which opened in 2006.

- A new public library headquarters building and arts centre has been completed.
- The town is now served with Broadband facilities through a Metropolitan Area Network and take up has been positive in comparison to other similar towns.
- IDA Ireland has developed a 16 ha industrial site on the town's Dublin road. Works have commenced at its entrance on the construction of a new roundabout to assist in traffic management. Additional lands have been purchased adjacent to the IDA Park in order to facilitate future industrial/enterprise development.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- The main opportunities and constraints are identified in the Framework Plan. Quality of life issues are emphasised.
- Specific targeting of Hubs regarding employment and inward investment will be necessary to achieve sustainable growth.
- Cavan is:
 - well located on the transport route from Dublin to Enniskillen and Donegal;
 - a gateway to and from Northern Ireland with potential for expansion of cross border trade; and
 - strategically located on an east west link between Dundalk and Sligo.
- In the long term, the upgrading/provision of regional transport corridors will be necessary to develop Cavan to its full potential.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term infrastructure requirements

- **Short term**
 - Upgrade the water and wastewater schemes serving the Town.
 - The need to upgrade/provide the regional road links is of critical importance as mentioned above. In this context the need for a significant improvement of a link east to Dundalk through Carrickmacross and west to Sligo is key to enable connectivity to our nearest Gateways.
 - A number of key distributor roads need to be developed to unlock the development potential of significant tracts of land in and around the Town and to improve access from the Environs to the Town Centre. Residential development in recent years has been towards the edges of the urban envelope, mainly because of deficiencies in road infrastructure around the town centre.
 - The completion of the M3 motorway in County Meath (see below)
 - The provision of recreational, social, tourism, cultural, health and educational facilities
 - The development of linkages to ports and airports including Greenore Port and St. Angelo Airport, Enniskillen
 - The extension of large diameter natural gas pipeline to Cavan

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o The construction of the M3 motorway and by-passes at Virginia and Belturbet are urgently required in order to significantly reduce travel times to Dublin and into Northern Ireland but to also improve road safety. These will improve the attractiveness of Cavan as an investment destination.
- o The medium- to long-term provision of a rail link from Cavan to Dublin
- o Accelerated investment in innovation, R&D, social inclusion and entrepreneurship.
- o The development of infrastructural and other complementary linkages between Cavan and Monaghan/Dundalk in the context of the NSS.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Creating walking and cycling links between the various natural amenities in and around the Town.
- o Ensuring availability of funding from the NDP to underpin the necessary upgrading of key urban infrastructure in the town to match the growing population in the area of social inclusion, cultural activities and general urban regeneration.
- o Investment in waterways including Belturbet to Lough Oughter.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o Improving connectivity between the outer parts of the Town and the Central Area is an important requirement.
- o Connectivity to other cities and towns through the regional road system is essential to ensure improving employment opportunities are created.
- o Some form of co-financing arrangement for Hub towns could be considered which would focus on accelerated investment and/or providing investment in areas which are not covered by the current normal infrastructure programmes.
- o Any future tax incentive scheme should consider a provision whereby any private sector investment in certain types of local infrastructure would attract some form of tax relief (as with multi-storey car parks as in previous schemes, cultural, educational, health etc.).
- o Regeneration of the Town Centre is critical and a Section 23-type scheme may be the driver to allow this to happen.

APPENDIX (C) ENNIS

NSS COMMENT ON ENNIS

Ennis is closely related in economic and other terms with the Mid West and Limerick and Shannon particularly. Its development, which is founded on a large and growing population base, its location on the national roads and rail networks adjacent to Shannon Airport and its capacity for growth all suggest a nationally strategic role, as part of improving interaction and sharing of strengths between the western gateways. Ennis is also strategic regionally and locally as a hub within its own catchment in terms of transport, retailing, employment, education and administrative functions.

Limerick-Shannon will be supported by Ennis as a hub, taking advantage of the latter's relationship with the Limerick-Shannon gateway and its strategic location between Limerick and Galway.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DóEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o **Ennis Town Council** as Planning Authority takes a pro-active role in relation to the promotion of Ennis as a hub town. The Council's promotional policies are reflected in the budgetary provision for various activities and initiatives.
- o **Social and Economic Development Municipal Policy Committee.** The primary purpose and focus of the Committee is on enhancing the policy formulation role of the Council. The Committee is representative of the following sectors:
 - o Development/Construction.
 - o Business/Commercial.
 - o Trade Union.
 - o Environmental/Conservation/Culture.
 - o Community/Voluntary/Disadvantaged.
- o Representatives of these sectors work with the Elected Members of Ennis Town Council on the Municipal Policy Committee which comprises eleven members (6 Elected Members and 5 from the Sectoral Interests).
- o The Committee was established by the Council in early 2006. Given the involvement of public representatives and the broad sectoral representation on the Committee, the Committee is well placed to discuss the policy issues surrounding the development of Ennis as a hub town. Furthermore, the Committee can draw on other external expertise where appropriate and relevant.
- o The deliberations of the Committee and reports of the Committee Meetings are considered by the full Council as part of the policy formulation process.

- o **Industry Ennis** has been in existence for the last two years with the objective of promoting Ennis as a location for inward investment/foreign direct investment and mobile Irish industry. Industry Ennis is representative of Ennis Town Council, Shannon Development, IDA, FÁS, Clare Chamber of Industry, Ennis Chamber of Commerce, and the County Enterprise Board. Industry Ennis has been effective and has been involved in the creation of in excess of 300 jobs, primarily in the IT sector.
- o **Promote Ennis** has been established to promote the town as a tourist destination in its own right. The group is comprised of Town Council Officials, Ennis Chamber, hoteliers, local businesses and Glór Irish Music Centre. The group has successfully completed promotional campaigns including the production of a brochure and the development of a website – www.visitennis.ie

Q2 – Does the current Development Plan take its Hub designation forward?

- o Yes, Ennis and Environs Development Plan (the Plan) 2003 at paragraph 2.1.5. The Plan states that the NSS is likely to have only limited impact in the short term, with greater impacts of implementation being experienced by Ennis and its Environs during the next plan period beyond 2009.

The following objectives of the development plan reflect its status as a hub town:

- o Road infrastructure safeguards are in place.
- o Construction of Ennis by-pass completed and opened in January 2007 and western relief road under way.
- o Establishment of Information Age Park under way.
- o Permission granted to Iarnród Éireann and Bus Éireann to upgrade railway and bus station to improve facilities and services to travelling public.
- o Implementation of the recommendations of the Ennis Main Drainage Flood study through investment in flood protection measures and through the development control process.
- o Enhancement of the historic core/town centre to make it a more attractive place for business and leisure.
- o Zoning of sufficient land for residential development and open space.
- o It is stated policy in the Ennis & Environs Development Plan to make provision for third-level educational facilities.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o Anticipated populations

2002 -	26,170.
2011 -	30,770.
2020 -	40,000.
- o The County Clare Housing Strategy and the Plan have allowed for this growth and land is zoned accordingly.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o Sufficient land has been zoned for the scale of population increase envisaged.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o A report “Manager’s Report on Progress” which was presented to Clare County Council and Ennis Town Council in March 2005 outlined what has happened in the Hub.
- o In addition to the above, most of the hotels in the area have availed of tax incentives resulting in permission being granted for extension to existing hotels and two new hotels.
- o Pre-planning enquiries have been made in respect of lands zoned commercial in the environs area which will be accessible once the by-pass is in place.
- o Pre-planning enquiries have been made in respect of lands zoned residential in the RDAs. (See housing land availability return 2005).
- o The consolidation of the retail core has taken place in the town centre by the granting of permission for in-fill sites.

Q6 – Progress on Major Infrastructure in Recent Years

- o Iarnród Éireann has already upgraded the railway between Ennis and Limerick and has introduced new rolling stock provided a service of 7 trains each way, seven days a week. It has also provided additional parking at the railway station. Work has also commenced on the Ennis/Athenry line.
 - o Glór - Venue for the Arts – ACCESS funding has been sought for an extension to this facility.
 - o Lees Road Sports and Amenity Park - including playing pitches and forest walks. An all-weather running track will be constructed in 2007.
 - o Development of water based activity at Ballyalla Lake is under consideration at present.
 - o 66 houses and 24 apartments proposed to be constructed by the Council. 68 units were recently completed.
 - o Completion and opening of section B of inner relief road (Temple Gate roundabout to Francis Street). Planning for completion of section E (final section).
 - o Further amenity spaces are required to be provided in the RDAs to serve the houses currently under construction. Amenity provision is lagging behind housing development.
 - o Construction of a dedicated skateboard park is to commence in April 2007.
 - o Extension to municipal leisure centre required.
 - o Provision of additional playing pitches and playgrounds is required to meeting population growth.
 - o Pitch upgrade completed at Tim Smythe Park – further development planned.
 - o By-pass under construction – Eastern by-pass opened in January 2007.
 - o Northern Inner Relief Road (NIRR) at planning stage.
 - o Shanaway Road – Golf course, GAA development, hotel and residential.
 - o New County Council Headquarters under construction at present.

- New Main drainage scheme to proceed – including 50,000 PE treatment plant.
- New water treatment plant to be completed within 2 years.
- New trunk water mains infrastructure being provided in association with by-pass to double quantity of treated water available to Ennis in the medium term.
- Planning process for flood relief scheme underway – construction to get underway within 18 months.
- Entire market area to be upgraded – planning process completed.
- Rail facility at Clarecastle and the Information Age Park.
- New Library/Library Headquarters in the planning process.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- The N18 Ennis eastern by-pass and N85 southern Ennis by-pass due for completion in 2007 provides substantial opportunities to open up land zoned for commercial/industrial development to the east of the town.
 - Development of retail is constrained by lack of available sites. Status of Town Centre as an architectural conservation area with many historic buildings lining narrow streets is a constraint on sites for re-development for retail use. This, however, provides an opportunity to pedestrianise the area, as narrow streets lend themselves to pedestrianisation.
 - The opening of the Ennis by-pass will remove all through traffic and provide opportunity for improvement/enhancement of the physical environment of town centre e.g. traffic management, streetscape works.
 - Decline in manufacturing base, resulting in vacant units in industrial estate. There has been an on-going absence of Foreign Direct Investment in the Ennis Area.
 - Lack of water treatment facility is an impediment to development of the town and its environs. A new water treatment plant which is included in the Water Services Investment Programme will be provided as a Design Build Operate project within two years.
 - Historical legacy of proliferation of inappropriate land uses on edge of centre which would be better located in an industrial estate are prejudicing the proper development and expansion of the town centre. Development Guidelines have been drawn up for the Cornmarket area in order to encourage its re-development. Some heavy retail outlets have relocated to industrial parks and the outcome of some current planning applications should lead to further progress in this regard.
 - Lack of multi-storey parking facilities on the edge of town is prejudicing the pedestrianisation of the town centre.

- o Existing open spaces and parks require further investment in order to make them more accessible and user-friendly.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

- o **Short Term:** WWTP at Clarecastle, water treatment facilities, Completion of Gort Road Link (NIRR), flood relief scheme, improvements at Ennis railway station, Completion of by-pass, Development of Library facility, Completion of inner relief road. The following infrastructural projects have been costed at €19.05m. and are required in the short term:

Inner Relief Road	€2.1m
Drumcliffe Road Upgrading	€2.2m
Drumbiggle Road Upgrading	€1.0m
Market Area Upgrading	€2.5m
Northern Inner Relief Road (to IAPI entrance)	€1.6m
Friar's Walk Carpark/Francis St. Carpark link	€0.65m
Library development:	€9.0m
TOTAL:	€19.05m

All of these projects will be completed within 5 years.

- o **Medium Term:** Double the treated water capacity available for Ennis and Environs - first phase of required infrastructure already in place. Other roads projects including:

Water based amenity/sports:	€5.0m
Western Relief Road:	€5.5m
Northern Inner Relief Road (Phase 2)	€4.9m
Clonroad/Quin Road Link	€5.0m
TOTAL	€20.4m

- o **Long Term:** Improved rail connection to Shannon and further relief road development.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o Continued improvement of the N18 northwards towards Galway.
- o The Crusheen/Gort by-pass is currently at planning stage.
- o Development of the Western Rail Corridor linking Cork and Sligo and re-instating passenger services north of Ennis is seen as a key issue in the west of Ireland.
- o A site has been identified for third-level educational facilities at the Information Age Park, Gort Road, Ennis.
- o Arising from the review of the progress of the Plan referred to in 5 above, a Variation which includes a proposal to zone land at Clarecastle station (now closed) for a 100-space park and ride facility has been carried out. This is on the

southern edge of the Hub on the Ennis-Limerick line and it is estimated that when the N18/N85 by-pass roads and associated link roads are complete in 2008, approximately 15,000 people will live within 10 minutes' drive of the new station. Parking facilities at Ennis Station, shared with Bus Éireann are restricted.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Need for strong investment drive into the town through IDA/SD and the development of a rich economy to give Ennis identity and vision. Support for infrastructure development of key county towns to enable them to received spin-off effects of growth of Hub (see answers to Qs. 6 and 7).
- o Further tourism marketing investment is required in Ennis to consolidate the town's accommodation base as a gateway to Clare's many tourist attractions and to establish Ennis as a tourism destination in its own right. Low-cost airlines flying into Shannon create tourism potential that Ennis can capitalise on.
- o The on-going maintenance of waste management facilities and recycling facilities to meet the highest technical standards is required to meet demand.
- o It is critically important that utility services, i.e. gas, electricity, and public transport services, etc. are provided to meet expanding demand in the context of developing industrial/commercial zoned land in Ennis and its Environs.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o Investment in local roads urgently required.
- o From a local infrastructure point of view, source(s) of investment to facilitate appropriate enhancement/development of the roads network is the single biggest imponderable going forward.

APPENDIX (D)

KILKENNY

NSS COMMENT ON KILKENNY

Kilkenny is a centre with a substantial population base, a highly successful tourism sector, improving accessibility due to its location on the national road and rail networks, with links to an international seaport, and its strategic location in the southern parts of the Midlands between Dublin and Waterford. Kilkenny also has substantial development capacity in terms of land and water services and is a centre with both the critical mass and distance from Dublin to be capable of successfully sustaining itself in employment terms, thereby resisting the tendency towards commuter-driven development.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o The Borough and County Councils are currently using existing structures to promote the development of the Hub. A new post of Senior Planner has been created and the existing structures of both Local Authorities are being examined to ensure a strong link between Development Plan policy and objectives, Development Management and investment priorities.
- o The Councils are considering establishing a dedicated Steering Group or Groups which would focus on developing the town with its Hub status.

Q2 – Does the Current Development Plan take its Hub Designation Forward?

- o The current plan was adopted in July 2002, i.e. before the publication of the NSS. However, it did anticipate the emergence of the NSS and the Hub designation. The Plan makes provision of sufficient zoned land to enable the City to meet the NSS targets.
- o The **Retail Strategy** was prepared in 2001 and incorporated into the 2002 Development Plan, cognisant of the emerging NSS. The Strategy was revised in 2005 and in this instance fully took into account the NSS and the South-East Regional Planning Guidelines which were adopted in 2004.
- o The revision of the current Development Plan is underway and there will be a revision of policies and objectives to ensure that Hub designation is promoted/brought forward, e.g. population targets will be revised in line with the most up to date information which will feed into the provision of sufficient zoned land to enable the City meet its NSS targets. The retail strategy is also being updated as part of the review to ensure the City is positioned to take full account of a dynamic retail sector.

- o **Western Environs Local Area Plan (LAP).** The NSS encourages local authorities to have phased zoning and serviced land banks to enable growth to take place. An area of land on the western side of the City was identified as the most appropriate area to accommodate the bulk of new residential development. A LAP for this area was adopted by the Borough Council and the County Council in May 2004. Consultants have prepared detailed designs for the area and a CPO has been published to acquire the necessary lands for a new road. The Local Authority anticipates confirmation of the CPO later this year with construction work being commenced before the end of 2007.
- o A development contribution scheme has been made for the area and a Serviced Land Initiative application has been submitted. Essential road and sanitary infrastructure needed to facilitate the early development of the area has been identified. Already 76 housing units have been constructed in the area and planning applications for a further 556 units have been granted in 2006, some of which are under construction.
- o **Loughmacask LAP.** It is intended to develop the Loughmacask area of the City in tandem with development of the western area mentioned above. This will provide for the longer-term growth of the City and provide choice to residents. The western area is seen as the main short- and medium-term growth area and development at Loughmacask will not be allowed to undermine development of the priority western area. Consultants have been appointed to undertake a Draft Local Area Plan which will be ready in Spring 2007. A Serviced Land Initiative proposal has been submitted to the Department.
- o **City Centre LAP.** A LAP was commenced in late 2004 and adopted in July 2005. The Plan provides a framework for the on-going vitality of the Central Area and strikes a balance between the need to protect the architectural and archaeological heritage of the area and the need to create appropriate conditions for modern living. Eleven sites were identified in the LAP for urban design recommendations and initiatives across both the public and private sectors. "The Parade" Rose Inn Street and Canal Square area adjacent to the Kilkenny Castle is a flagship project for the existing City centre which has architectural/urban design and land use objectives within the LAP. This project has been spearheaded by the Local Authorities and has gone through a Part 8 process and is currently being prepared for tendering with work expected to commence during the summer of 2007. The estimated cost of the project is in excess of €4m (see response to Q5 - Public Investment)
- o **Kilkenny Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study.** An open space, sports and recreation study was undertaken and adopted as a variation to the County Development Plan in 2002. As a result of the study, a Parks Department was established within the Kilkenny County Council and this has been responsible for developing two playgrounds and two playing pitches in the City with further proposals for additional playgrounds and playing pitches being developed. One

of the playgrounds is provided through RAPID funding. Further proposals for additional playgrounds and playing pitches are being developed.

- o A **sports partnership** has been established under the auspices of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and a sports co-ordinator appointed. A strategic plan for the development of sport and recreation in the City and Environs has been prepared. A significant number of programmes have commenced on the ground.
- o The appointment of a second landscape architect with the County Council has resulted in the preparation of a **riverside linear park plan**. The first phase of implementation will cost over €1.1m and was completed in 2006. Phase 2 will be undertaken in 2007.
- o The Kilkenny County Development Plan states an objective to prepare a Kilkenny Tourism Plan in association with other relevant bodies. A '**Tourism Marketing Development Strategy for Kilkenny 2006 – 2011**' has been prepared. The agencies involved are firmly committed to implementation and monitoring and regular review.
- o New Swimming Pool /Leisure Complex under construction (see also response to Q5 – Public Investment).

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o The population of Kilkenny City & Environs grew from 18,970 in 1996 to 20,740 in 2002 and 22,500 in 2006 (based on the preliminary results of the 2006 census). This is an 8.6% increase in 4 years between 2002 and 2006. Assuming the trend continues in the short term, it is anticipated that the population of the City & Environs will reach 27,000 by 2010.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o Under the current Development Plan there is sufficient residential zoned land to cater for the NSS target population of 30,000 by 2020. In the review underway at present sufficient zoned land will be provided to cater for revised population targets.
- o Adequate amounts of non-residential land have been zoned to cater for a population of this size.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o **Private Investment.**
 - o A Kilkenny Integrated Area Plan was approved by the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal under the 1999 Urban Renewal Scheme. A number of mixed-use developments have come on stream under this scheme since 2002, the largest of which is a commercial development of 19,329 sq. metres. This development is located adjacent to the existing railway

station in the City and is currently under construction and is due to open in September 2007. The IAP is a vital element of the overall strategic planning for Kilkenny.

- Two retail parks have been constructed and Glanbia has invested in a new research and development facility in the City.
- A new neighbourhood centre has been developed on the eastern side of the City at Newpark to service that neighbourhood area.
- Four new hotels have been completed in 2005 & 2006 expanding the tourism offer of the City.

○ **Public Investment.**

- Construction has commenced on the ring road extension and is due for completion in 2007.
- A variation to the 2002 City and Environs Development Plan was adopted in October 2004 which revises and extends an earlier inner relief road scheme. Consultants have been appointed to prepare detailed designs and to progress it through the planning process. An EIS may be required. This is an integral part of the overall land use and transportation strategy for the City & Environs.
- Provision is made for a €6.2m investment in the City's wastewater treatment plant to cater for growth. Consultants have been appointed to progress the design. €5.7m has been allocated for the construction of a sludge treatment centre. Revised costings for these projects have been submitted to the Department.
- The Kilkenny Broadband Network is complete and the Fibre Optic Network was opened by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural resources in September 2004. A contract to construct a Municipal Area Network has been awarded at a cost of €3.5m. The local authority is involved with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in promoting uptake of broadband.
- The City achieved gold medal status regarding environmental activities. It has performed well in the Tidy Towns competition in recent years.
- The River Nore Drainage scheme has been completed and has successfully eliminated flooding from the city centre.
- An investment of €4 m is being made to deliver significant improvements to the public realm on "The Parade", Rose Inn Street and Canal Square abutting Kilkenny Castle, a major National Tourist attraction.
- Construction has started on a new swimming pool and leisure facility for the City and Environs, involving a total investment in excess of €16m. This will be completed in 2008.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

○ **Development Issues**

- A plan-led approach has been taken in recent years (see responses to Q1 above).
- Continue to develop the retail offer. At present a planning application is under consideration for the redevelopment of the old Kilkenny Mart site at

an edge of centre site in the City. The design and layout of the proposed scheme has been heavily influenced by the Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan as this was one of eleven sites identified for urban design and land use recommendations.

- Expand and generate employment across a wide range of activities in order to avoid over-concentration and reliance on any one sector.
- Develop a creditable third-level education facility linked to a university for the South East Region which will foster research, innovation and employment growth.

○ **Development Constraints**

- Delivery of essential infrastructure such as roads and water services is lagging behind the pace of development leading to localised bottlenecks in certain parts of the City and Environs (e.g. inner relief road, water supply and treatment plant).
- Lack of a third-level education facility linked to a university in the South East.
- The planning system places a constraint on development because infrastructure projects can take a considerable amount of time.
- The expansion of the Serviced Land Initiative to cover other infrastructure besides water services (e.g. roads) would be beneficial and lead to quicker release of land for development purposes.

○ **Development Opportunities**

- Significant areas for development exist in or nearby the Central Area. They are identified in the City Centre LAP.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

○ **Short Term**

- Provision of the Inner Relief Road is essential. This would unlock development potentials in the Centre and enable housing developments and a significant hotel to proceed.
- Provision of a more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly City Centre, in particular through the pedestrianisation of the High Street which is the main shopping street in Kilkenny.
- Upgrading of the City and Environs water supply.
- Upgrading of the wastewater treatment works including sludge treatment.
- Development of commuter rail services between Kilkenny, Dublin, Waterford and Carlow.
- Completion of Riverside Walk, Swimming Pool and Cultural Facilities.

○ **Medium Term**

- Provision of a public transport service for the City and Environs.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o Development of a high-quality dual carriageway roadway to link Waterford City with Dublin via Kilkenny and Carlow – construction has commenced.
- o Continued development of improved rail transport services within the region and with other regions and Gateways.
- o Development of improved public and private bus transport within the regions and with other regions and Gateways.
- o Completion of the N25 Waterford City by-pass and Outer Ring Road.
- o Development of the New Ross by-pass.
- o Development of the Mooncoin by-pass.
- o Development of the Regional road (R600) linking Kilkenny to New Ross and Wexford. This is seen as an important inter-hub connection.
- o Upgrading of the N77/N78 to link with the M8/N8 Dublin-Cork motorway. The 43 km section between Cullahill and Cashel is currently under construction.
- o Development of waste infrastructure regionally through full implementation of the Regional Waste Management Plan.
- o Developing the innovation potential in the region through development of a University of the South-East, supported by continued investment in established third-level institutions, focusing on strengthening academic-industrial linkages and the further development of educational outreach facilities throughout the region in the Hubs.
- o Development of the full potential of the South-East Regional Airport, Waterford, through extension of the existing runway, improved transport linkages between the airport, Waterford City and the region and facilities for additional operators offering services from this location.
- o Development of water services infrastructure.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o New leisure complex– currently under construction.
- o County museum.
- o Development of a regional linear park along the river Nore.
- o Sports facilities and playgrounds to facilitate modern leisure pursuits e.g. bowling alleys, multiplex cinemas and leisure complexes.
- o Innovation Fund Private/Public Sectors.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o Transparent investment prioritisation for Hubs and Gateways.
- o Need to take a targeted approach in order to drive development.
- o Structurally weaker regions which have under-performed in the past (e.g. the South East Region) should be targeted for investment.

APPENDIX (E)

TRALEE / KILLARNEY

NSS COMMENT ON TRALEE / KILLARNEY

Tralee and Killarney are adjacent urban centres that have complementary strengths. Tralee is a town with a substantial population base, location on the national road and rail networks, a developing tourism base, substantial water services and land for development and important employment, retailing and administrative functions. Killarney is a nationally strategic tourism centre with important retailing and employment functions and is also on the national road and rail networks. Through integrated and co-ordinated development, these strengths can be combined, resulting in enhanced critical mass and enhanced potential for development in a regional and local sense which can energise the wider County Kerry area.

As Hub towns, Tralee, Killarney and Mallow will perform important roles within the national structure at the regional and county level. Improvements in regional accessibility through roads, advanced communications infrastructure, public transport links, enhanced physical qualities and townscapes and improved local services and capacity for development will be critical supporting factors.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o Kerry County Council has put in place a Management Structure to oversee the promotion and development of the linked Hub. It is the responsibility of the Structure to:
 - o develop an inclusive shared vision for the future role of the linked Hub,
 - o identify barriers to achieving the vision, and
 - o formulate policies to ensure that the linked Hub can achieve its role in promoting more balanced regional development in accordance with the NSS and RPGs.

- o The Structure has a Political Steering Group and a Working Group which will receive input on issues such as land use planning, RPGs as well as enterprise, infrastructure, needs, cultural and social issues.

Q2 – Does the Current Development Plan take its Hub Designation Forward?

- o Yes, the County Development Plan 2003-09, the Tralee and Killarney Town Plans 2003-09 all reflect the linked Hub status.

- o The overall strategy of the County Development Plan recognises the Hub status and its role of achieving the development of the areas potential and critical mass and linkages. The strategy is reflected in individual objectives throughout the Plan.

- o The County Plan also recognises the need for more detailed land use planned for the linked Hub reflecting its unique status and the towns' complementary roles. Thus the Council has appointed consultants to prepare draft plans for the Towns and their Environs.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o The population of the Electoral Areas of Tralee and Killarney are expected to grow as set out below:
 - o 2002 – 70,500
 - o 2006 – 76,300
 - o 2011 – 80,900
 - o 2016 – 83,800
 - o 2021 – 85,500

- o Of the 15,000 growth over from 2002 to 2021, about 11,000 is expected to occur in the linked Hubs.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o The Kerry County Plan does not zone any land outside of the Town boundaries.

- o Residential zoned land up to 2009
 - o Killarney – 118 ha.
 - o Tralee – 227 ha.

- o 70% of the residential growth in the Electoral Areas is expected to occur in the Town areas which gives a projected housing demand of 3,302 dwellings. At a density of 25 dwellings per hectare, the anticipated growth would require 132 ha in both Towns. This level of provision needs to be considered in the light of:
 - o affordability issues,
 - o the need to provide housing choice, and
 - o the reluctance of some landowners to make their land available for development.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o Tralee
 - o The Town Centre is undergoing a major redevelopment arising from the Council making available some of its lands for private development as opportunity sites. The private sector development is taking place in the context of the ambitious Tralee Town Centre Pedestrianisation Plan.
 - o Private sector Town Centre projects involve retail, apartments and restaurants.
 - o Public sector Town Centre projects include pedestrianisation and other works.
 - o Cinema, offices, tennis village and hotel.
 - o Retail park expansion with a hotel incorporating a leisure centre, bar and restaurant.

- Office development, student apartment complexes.
- Major housing development on a 33-acre site.
- Continued development of the Institute of Technology Tralee/Kerry Technology Park with provision for a nursing school (300 students) and enterprise units. New playing pitches currently under construction.
- Killarney
 - A substantial amount of development has taken place since 2002, most of which is private sector driven. In particular, development in the tourism sector has occurred, but also retail and residential development.
 - A 20-year Killarney Urban Master Plan is being developed which will guide economic, social and physical development.
 - *Public developments.*
 - ◆ Swimming pool and leisure centre.
 - ◆ Playgrounds and adventure area under construction.
 - ◆ Location for a new Town Hall and offices has been agreed and advertisement for expressions of interest has taken place.
 - ◆ Purchase of a factory and site by the Council and plans for the development of this property are currently being put in place.
 - ◆ Council has sold a site for the re-location of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.
 - *Housing.*
 - ◆ A public housing estate comprising 92 units was completed in 2003.
 - ◆ Development of 60 social and affordable houses is envisaged.
 - ◆ Purchase by Council of 10 private houses in 2005.
 - ◆ Council has acquired two sites (6 and 9.8 acres) and has yet to decide on the future use of these lands.
 - *Private Commercial.*
 - ◆ Re-development of a hotel site to include a new retail pedestrian street, hotel, restaurants and bar.
 - ◆ Re-development of a Coca Cola plant site to include a retail pedestrian street, 60 apartments and a restaurant.
 - ◆ A number of hotel upgrades or developments and other related facilities, including a conference centre.

Q6 – Recent Major Infrastructure Improvements in Recent Years

- Tralee
 - *Roads and Transport*
 - ◆ Major upgrading of the Tralee entrance from Dublin/Cork.
 - ◆ Northern Relief Road under construction.
 - ◆ Upgrading of streets/footpaths in the Town.
 - *Housing*
 - ◆ Tralee Council has a housing programme of 125 units per annum and with voluntary housing agencies will allocate more than 200 units in 2005.
 - *Sporting/Cultural*
 - ◆ €4.5m upgrade of a sports complex.

- ◆ Major upgrade of a running track on Council land.
- ◆ Two hotel/leisure complexes opened in 2005 and another one due in 2006.
- ◆ Tennis village under construction.
- ◆ 8-screen cinema under construction.
- ◆ New theatre complex planned for 2006.
- ◆ Council has made available a site for multi-purpose arena.
- *Water and Sewerage*
 - ◆ Adequate capacity exists.
 - ◆ Continuous improvement to the networks and to water conservation.
- *Public Transport*
 - ◆ Early morning train service from Killarney to Dublin needs to be extended to Tralee.
 - ◆ Planning permission granted for a bus terminal.
 - ◆ Local private bus service needs investment.
- Killarney
 - *Road Improvements*
 - ◆ Minor improvements are ongoing, including the provision of an improved inner circulation route.
 - *Water Services*
 - ◆ The capacity of the treatment plant has been increased from 42,000 PE to 51,000 PE, which should contribute towards meeting the future population growth in the town.
 - *Public Transport*
 - ◆ A very successful early morning train service to Dublin has been introduced.
 - ◆ A new community bus service to be introduced, serving the estates in Killarney and the Town Centre.
 - *Housing*
 - ◆ 92 houses completed in 2003, Part VIII completed for 60 social and affordable houses, 6 apartments completed in 2003.
 - *Social/cultural/sports Facilities.*
 - ◆ Public swimming pool being developed as part of a large indoor sports complex.
 - ◆ Various GAA clubs have developed facilities around the town.
 - ◆ Venue for youth projects developed.
 - ◆ Counselling centre developed.
 - *Planning*
 - ◆ Three Area Action Plans are being prepared for lands that were incorporated into the Borough and are as yet unzoned. This will result in over 400 ha of land being made available for residential and commercial development over the next 20 years.
- Transport

- A number of significant improvements in the national primary road network in the wider sub-region have been made and progress is being made regarding others:
 - ◆ Ballycarthy-Tralee – 3km completed in 2005.
 - ◆ Gortatlea-Farranfore – 4km scheduled to open in December 2005.
 - ◆ Tralee by-pass / Tralee-Bealagrellagh – approximately 11km. Proposed to commence land acquisition before the end of 2005.
 - ◆ Farranfore-Killarney – approximately 26km. Preferred route published in December 2003. Preliminary design on-going.
- Water Services
 - Farranfore collection network and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- Advantages and Opportunities
 - Quality of environment throughout the County. This has led to the development of significant expertise in the tourism industry.
 - IT services sector. The Tralee Institute of Technology is seen as a major asset in attracting inward investment in both established industry and in R&D.
 - International airport at the centre of the linked Hub.
- Constraints
 - Peripherality is a significant difficulty, which can be alleviated through:
 - ◆ Continued improvements to transport linkages (roads and rail) into the County.
 - ◆ Continued improvement of the broadband networks throughout the County. The success of various indigenous IT companies indicates the importance of this requirement.
 - ◆ Improved transport connectivity (road and rail) between Tralee, Killarney and Farranfore. Improved bus connectivity between the rail stations in Tralee and Killarney with important local destinations (e.g. ITT in Tralee, local authority offices etc.) is necessary. Co-ordination of the public transport service with scheduled work, education and leisure activities will promote usage.
 - ◆ Existing traffic congestion hinders strengthening of the retail core in Tralee, and further development is likely to exacerbate the problem. Completion of the Tralee by-pass and ring road will contribute significantly to reducing this problem as much of the traffic passes through the central area.
 - ◆ The time taken to get approvals for water and wastewater schemes is a constraint on the timely delivery of these schemes.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

- Transportation

- N22 Tralee by-pass / Tralee-Bealagrellagh – 11km. The by-pass and ring roads are necessary in order to re-inforce Tralee as the highest order retail location within the linked Hub and to build the necessary critical mass which will make retail investment here attractive. This will relieve congestion in the central area which is a significant impediment to continued expansion in this prime location.
 - N22 Farranfore-Killarney – 26km.
 - N21 by-passes – need to complete the Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West and Adare by-passes in order to capitalise on the full value of expenditure to date in Kerry.
 - N22 to Cork – completion of work on this route to Ballincollig is urgent if the interconnectivity between the Cork Gateway and Tralee/Killarney is to be capitalised on.
 - Improvement of the Killarney-Mallow road would improve linkage between these Hubs.
 - Servicing the airport with co-ordinated public transport links for the efficient operation of the linked Hub.
- Water Services
 - Three priority water supply schemes are identified (Central Regional: Scart Reservoir, Central Regional Treatment, North Ardfert Source Protection).
 - Two major priority sewerage schemes are identified (Killarney Main Drainage, Castleisland SS Stage 2).
 - Various priority village schemes (Milltown SS, Fieries SS, Barraduff SS, Kilcummin SS and Beaufort SS) as well as other schemes are identified.
- Kerry Airport
 - The airport is seen as one of the major infrastructural assets and is vital to the continued development of the linked Hub.
 - The airport is nearing capacity. In Spring 2005, the airport was turned down by a major airline for at least four continental routes because of its inability to handle two large aircraft simultaneously. These routes would have created an additional about 400,000 passengers *per annum*. A number of other airlines have indicated a willingness to consider expansion if the capacity of the arrivals hall, departures lounge and check-in areas were increased. Such expansion would require the construction of a new fire station. In order to handle two large aircraft, additional apron space would be needed.
 - In order to provide for a business park and to allow for future expansion of airline businesses, additional road access would be required.
- Institute of Technology Tralee
 - The Institute has 2,500 full-time students and a further 1,000 students involved in its Lifelong Learning Programme. It has a remit to undertake research and development and consultancy work in order to further economic development in the region. It has a Business Incubation Centre

funded by Enterprise Ireland. It shares its campus with Shannon Development's Kerry Technology Park.

- o The Institute has a long-term development plan which would involve consolidating its activities in the North Campus. The plan also involves development/expansion of a library and information resource centre, the business incubation centre, a multi-purpose health and leisure facility, a cultural activities building, sports academy, student service facilities, engineering and science building and administration building.
- o Given the critical role of the Institute, it is necessary to fund these expansion plans.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o On-going improvement of the physical linkages between the Tralee and Killarney. Ribbon development along the Farranfore-Killarney route and the current geometry of the road has reduced carrying capacity.
- o The Tralee/Killarney to Cork link is a vital access route and should be a priority for both Cork and Kerry County Councils.
- o The continued upgrading of the Tralee to Limerick route will complete the linkages between the linked Hub and the Gateways and will provide a significant hinterland from which to draw resources and build economic strength.
- o High levels of broadband connectivity is essential to support technology and services sector development.
- o A list of critical infrastructure is set out below
 - o Continued upgrading of the N21 Tralee / Limerick.
 - o Continued upgrading of the Tralee / Farranfore N22.
 - o Farranfore by-pass / Farranfore-Killarney / Killarney by-pass N22.
 - o Killarney / Ballincollig N22 link to Cork Gateway.
 - o Killarney ring road and relief road.
 - o Tralee ring road and relief road.
 - o High level broadband communications infrastructure.
 - o Upgrading internal rail links and rail links to the national Gateways.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Continued upgrading of public amenities.
- o Public sports centres which can compete with private facilities that may not be affordable to large sections of the community.
- o Continued investment in the Health Service and co-ordinated delivery of health, childcare and social facilities. Increased support for the provision of childcare facilities by the private sector.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o There is a pressing need for targeted intervention by the enterprise agencies to secure employment opportunities to underpin the projected population forecasts.

APPENDIX (F) MALLOW

NSS COMMENT ON MALLOW

Mallow occupies a strategic spatial position at the meeting point of the Cork – Limerick and Tralee – Waterford/Rosslare road and rail routes. Mallow's location outside the suburbs of Cork coupled to its function as a hub will strengthen Cork – Limerick interaction and energise its own catchment within north Cork, an area undergoing structural economic change driven by falling farm-based employment. It is a large town with a good population base, a substantial capacity for development in water services and land terms and has developing public transport links to Cork.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o The Mallow Area Development Partnership was established in late 2002 with the intention of having a co-ordinated approach of all local bodies/agencies towards a long-term development strategy for Mallow Town. The Partnership which meets monthly was initially made up of representatives from:
 - o Cork County Council.
 - o Mallow Town Council.
 - o Mallow Chamber.
 - o North Cork Enterprise Board.
 - o Rapid.
 - o Iarnród Éireann.

- o The partnership has commissioned a number of reports including a significant study, entitled *Demographic and Economic Development Strategy for Mallow – 2020* which was launched by Mary Harney TD, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment in April 2003. An update of this report has been completed and was recently launched by the partnership. The study identified the need to establish a Partnership Group and the provision of the following:
 - o development of a Business Technology Park;
 - o decentralisation of Government Offices; and
 - o the need to address the infrastructure deficit.

- o The monthly Partnership meetings act as a steering committee towards development of the town in line with the Hub Town Status concept.

- o In order to recognise the importance of the Hub to the development of the County, the County Development Board included the “Mallow Hub” as one of its priority action areas in its strategic plan for the 2006-2008 period. Arising from this, the structures of Mallow Development Partnership have been strengthened with the inclusion of representatives from the Education, Health, Gardaí, Bus

Éireann, Local Action Groups, Fáilte Ireland South West, County Sports Partnership, Enterprise Ireland and IDA sectors. Commencing in March, 2007, the Partnership will act as a Hub Steering Committee with six Working Groups focussing on the following areas:

1. Infrastructure and Transport
2. Education
3. Health
4. Heritage Tourism & Environment
5. Recreation, Youth & Community Development
6. Business/Economic Development

Each of these Working Groups will develop their work programmes on foot of the strategic objectives for the Hub that have been set out in the Draft Mallow Special Local Area Plan being drawn up jointly by Cork County Council and Mallow Town Council. It is envisaged that the work programmes will have a medium term focus of 5 years with specific achievable tasks being targeted for the period 2007-2008.

Q2 – Does the current Development Plan take its Hub designation Forward?

- o The town of Mallow lies within the administrative areas of two planning authorities, Mallow Town Council, who is responsible for the town centre and its more immediate surroundings, and Cork County Council, who is responsible for periphery of the built-up area, the town's green belt setting and the network of rural villages that make up the town's hinterland.

Mallow is also part of the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) that was adopted as a non-statutory strategic plan by the County, City and Town Councils in 2001 to provide a shared vision and strategic planning framework up to the year 2020 for Cork and its hinterland. The plan was adopted before Mallow's designation as a 'Hub' but CASP designated the town as a 'Ring' town noting its potential to accommodate major growth. The town's hinterland is part of the area of the North and West Cork Strategic Plan adopted in January 2002.

- o The Mallow Development Plan, adopted by the Town Council in April 2004, takes forward the Hub Town designation up to the year 2010.
- o The Cork County Development Plan 2003 was substantially completed prior to the designation. In September 2005, Cork County Council adopted a local area plan for the Mallow Electoral Area and this plan is now the sole plan where zoning issues for the town's environs and its rural hinterland are addressed. The plan's time horizon is up to 2011.
- o Precisely because of its Hub Town Status, the Town and County Councils have now prepared a joint Special Local Area Plan for Mallow. The plan:

- Sets out a vision or strategy for the town as a whole that is shared by the two planning authorities and will inform both authorities development plans in future years.
 - Includes a fully integrated set of land use proposals reflecting the designation of the town as a 'Hub'.
 - Identifies the key infrastructure requirements necessary for the town to develop successfully as a 'Hub'.
 - Identifies any long-term environmental or other constraints that may affect the pattern of growth in the town.
 - Adopt a horizon year of 2020 with formal reviews at least every six years.
- An 'Issues' document was published in October 2005 and a preliminary draft plan in Autumn 2006. The formal statutory process for the Plan commenced with the publication of the statutory Draft Special Local Area Plan on 4th December, 2006. It is expected that the statutory process leading to the adoption of the Plan will be complete by mid 2007.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- These issues are addressed in detail in the Draft Special Local Area Plan that the two planning authorities have prepared. The proposed plan identifies any long-term constraints that might affect the potential for growth so that the town will be able to respond to changes in the pace of economic investment and activity that will inevitably occur during its lifetime. Within the overall parameters set in the National Spatial Strategy, and subject to the constraints that the plan identifies, provision has been made to facilitate strong population growth in the town.
- In recent years, population projections for Mallow have been produced from a number of sources including CASP, the County Development Plan 2003, the Mallow Town Development Plan 2004 and the South-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2004.
- The town's Chamber of Commerce commissioned Goodbody Economic Consultants in 2003 to prepare a Demographic and Economic Development Strategy that includes some detailed population estimates. This has recently been reviewed in 2005 and predicts a hinterland population of 36,000 by the year 2020 and an urban population of 20,000 by 2020.
- The 2006 Preliminary Census results indicate a population of 29,737 for the Mallow Electoral Area. The town's population is 11,195 and this includes Mallow South Urban, Mallow North Urban and Mallow Rural District Electoral Divisions (DEDs). The current population of the hinterland area is 18,542. The Special Local Area Plan (SLAP) has established the amount and type of housing required to cater for the future population growth of the town.
- Based on current building rates and trends continuing up to 2020, the population will grow to 17,800 approximately. However, the Draft Special Local Area Plan adopts a strategy for the town to ensure that its future growth outperform a mere

extrapolation of past trends in response to its designation as a “Hub” town. Therefore, the strategy in the Draft Plan aims to ensure that a shortage of available lands does not restrict the towns potential to grow to 20,000 or beyond and potentially up to 30,000 eventually.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o The County Council’s last major review of land supply in Mallow was carried out as part of the preparation of the County Development Plan 2003. Mallow Town Council carried out a similar review for its area as part of the preparation of the Town Development Plan 2004. These plans have considerable zoned land banks which will meet a significant proportion of the projected population increase.
- o The Draft Special Local Area Plan however carried out a review of land availability for all key sectors including housing, employment, retail and recreation. The plan’s proposals take this into account and secure an appropriate level of supply to reflect the strategy for the town up to the year 2020.
- o In order to meet the projected population growth, the Draft Plan makes provision for additional zoned lands to accommodate a population of up to 30,000. If population is to grow to this figure, an additional, 9,600 dwellings approximately will be required. The Draft Special Local Area Plan therefore makes provision for additional zoned residential lands to accommodate up to 4,500-5,000 houses. This additional land, together with the land already zoned in the Mallow Town Development Plan, 2004 and the Mallow Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2005 will provide the capacity to meet population growth to 30,000.
- o The Draft Plan also addresses the land use requirements to support the projected population growth. In particular it makes provision for significant additional zoned land to support employment growth of 10,000 new jobs, with a particular focus on Business and Technology, Logistics and Distribution, Engineering and Food Processing and Tourism. The Plan also makes specific provision in its zoning objectives for provision of neighbourhood centres to support additional zoned residential lands, educational facilities and community and recreation needs.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o Approximately 200 apartments are currently under construction and approximately 970 houses are either under construction or completed.
 - o 30,820m² - Retail/Commercial under construction nearing completion
 - o Retail/Commercial under consideration:
 - 11,000 m² Retail Warehousing.
 - 13,500 m² Retail.
 - 4,000 m² Office.
 - 4,000m² Leisure.
- o While population growth from 2002-2006 has been 3.71% as against the national average rate of 1.97%, further growth has been constrained considerably due to

significant infrastructural deficiencies. At present, planning applications for approximately an additional 1,200 dwellings are at different stages of the planning process pending the delivery of Phase 1 of the Mallow/Ballyvinitter Water Supply Scheme and the Spa Glen Serviced Land Initiative. These however are at advanced stages of design and should ensure that these infrastructural deficiencies will be dealt with over the next 18 months.

Q6 – Progress on Major Infrastructure in Recent Years

- o **Sanitary Services Scheme.** A major upgrading of the Sewerage Treatment Plant, which doubled capacity to a population equivalent of 18,000 and also caters for phosphorus removal, is complete.
- o **Sewerage Network.** Consultants have been engaged to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the existing sewerage network in the Town and to examine network extensions, where necessary, to service zoned land. The lack of sanitary service facilities is limiting development, particularly at the outskirts of the town.
- o **Water Supply.** A new regional water supply scheme is currently at Design Stage - Phase I of which is expected to commence in late 2007/early 2008. It is essential that funding is made available for the entire scheme so that zoned lands can be serviced.
- o **Roads.** Under the auspices of the NRA, CPO's have been confirmed since mid 2006 for the N72 Northern Relief Road. If sufficient funding were made available, construction work could commence in late 2007 and works completed in 2009. However, an allocation of €100,000 only was made for 2007 by the NRA. This road will relieve the town centre from through traffic using the N72 and N73 routes and is essential to remove unnecessary through traffic from the town centre, thereby enhancing the development environment for business and residential use.
- o The NRA are also about to engage consultants to undertake a Constraints Study and Route Options assessment for the N20 which is the strategic route corridor from Cork-Limerick, by-passing Mallow.
- o **Flood Relief Scheme.** A major flood relief scheme has been designed and has passed the exhibition stage. The estimated project cost is €34m and Phase I of the scheme i.e. Mallow North Scheme has been completed with an approximate cost of €3m. The Tender Pre-qualification Process for Phase II has now been complete and a shortlisting of Tenders has been drawn up. These Tenders will be issued and are due back in mid April. It is anticipated Construction Start Date will be in June, 2007.
- o **Transport.** Train frequency between Cork and Mallow has improved to hourly and the introduction of new rolling stock from the end of 2005 enables the phased introduction of an hourly Cork-Dublin service. New rolling stock is

understood to have been ordered to facilitate an upgrading of the Mallow-Killarney-Tralee service in the coming years.

The Government's commitment to the development of the Cork Suburban Rail Network will result in additional commuter services operating to Cork by 2008. Traffic at the Roundabout at the junction of N20 and N72 is nearing saturation level. Any further major developments in the vicinity will require new infrastructure.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

o Roads

- o* The properly planned provision of road infrastructure is crucial to the successful development of Mallow as a 'Hub' town. The design and construction of the northern relief road is critical to relieving the town centre of through traffic using the N72 and N73 routes. The fact that all existing traffic must go through the Town Centre is having a significant detrimental impact on the commercial life of the Town.
- o* However, the N20 Cork-Limerick national primary route is likely to require reconstruction or re-routing during the life-time of the proposed Special Local Area Plan. The route presently carries a mixture of through traffic and local traffic and serious congestion is already occurring at some junctions.
- o* As indicated above, the NRA is to undertake a Constraints Study and Route Options assessment for the strategic Cork-Limerick N20 which is likely to result in the town being by-passed either to the west or east. This would be of significant benefit to the Town.
- o* Through the proposed Special Local Area Plan, the Town and County Councils are attempting to set out an agreed medium- to long-term land use strategy for the town. It may be difficult to achieve this with an appropriate degree of certainty until a strategic decision is made on the future route of the N20 through the town.
- o* Also, the non-national road position in the town will require significant investment if Mallow is to develop successfully as a Hub. The existing road network is unlikely to offer a satisfactory means for movement around the town given the scale of growth proposed. Major investment will be required to facilitate traffic movements within the town that avoid the town centre. The existing bridge over the River Blackwater, linking the northern and southern halves of the town and serving the main shopping area is relatively narrow, has only rudimentary facilities for pedestrians and the road layout or junction arrangements at its approaches are unlikely to be appropriate for the scale of growth envisaged. Aside from the N20 route option, at least one additional river crossing will be required to the east of the town and a possible second one to improve traffic flows within the Town Centre core and improve linkages from the west.

o Education.

- o* For the town to thrive as a 'Hub' significant investment will be required to extend the range of third level education opportunities available in the town.

As present facilities are limited, most intending students having to either travel on a daily basis or leave home and move to Cork or Limerick. It is considered that the lack of opportunity in the town is a factor that encourages younger people from Mallow and its hinterland to migrate away from the town. If the town is to succeed in attracting new major employment investment as envisaged in the National Spatial Strategy, then it must be able to offer adequate third-level facilities to retain a greater proportion of its younger population and provide a vital training resource for employers.

o *Health*

- o The existing hospital in the town is located outside the main built up area and is served by a poor access road that passes under a narrow single track bridge under the Cork-Dublin railway line. Given the scale of growth envisaged for the town, facilities at the hospital will require investment to keep pace with demand. The Draft Special Local Area Plan provides opportunities for satisfactory improvements to the access and ensures that the General Hospital can extend to continue to provide high level and quality services.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

- o Primary and secondary education facilities and third-level outreach are required in the medium to long term.
- o In the medium-term the by-passing of the Town by the N20 would be required.
- o In the short-term, an upgrading extension of the sewerage network in the Town is necessary to facilitate development of zoned lands at the outskirts of the town. Consultants are currently examining and assessing the network and it is imperative that funding be made available to enable the upgrading of the network to take place.
- o The commencement of the N72 Northern by-pass is absolutely essential to the town and is an immediate infrastructural requirement.
- o The completion of Phase 1 of the Mallow/Ballyvinitter Water Supply Scheme within the next 18 months is also a critical infrastructural need.
- o Medium-term, the phase 2 of this RWSS is required.
- o Completion of the Spa Glen Serviced Land Initiative in 2007 is critical.
- o Medium-term further enhancement of the Waste Water Treatment Plant beyond 18,000 p.c. will be required.
- o Development of an integrated Bus/Rail facility to further enhance public transport community opportunities.

- o Provision of new pedestrian bridge(s) as part of the proposed recreational river corridor along the Blackwater.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o The upgrading of the N20 to dual-carriageway grade-separated standard throughout.
- o The completion of road widening on the N72 between Mallow and Lombardstown.
- o The upgrading of the N73 route from Mallow to Mitchelstown and the N72 to Fermoy to improve road links to the N8 dual-carriageway and Dublin.
- o The provision of regular through rail services on the Cork-Mallow-Limerick route and the Cork-Killarney route.
- o To provide connecting bus services from Kent Station, Cork to Cork Airport
- o The extension of Bus Éireann services on the Limerick-Mallow-Cork route to operate to and from Cork Airport.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Needs for additional open space for recreation facilities.
- o Provision of additional schools.
- o Provision of a number of hotels and major integrated tourism products.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o Periodic conference or seminar to promote improved contact amongst 'Hub' towns to facilitate shared experience/initiatives.
- o Improved links with Dept of Trade and Enterprise to promote the development of 'Hub' towns' economic development strategies.

APPENDIX (G) MONAGHAN

NSS COMMENT ON MONAGHAN

Monaghan is spatially strategic in the border context on the Dublin - Derry axis. Positioned on the N2 Dublin-Derry road, it is proximate to the Dundalk Gateway and has improving interaction with substantial urban centres in Northern Ireland such as Armagh. Monaghan performs important employment, retailing and administrative functions in the region and has substantial capacity for development in terms of land and water services.

Sligo, Letterkenny and Dundalk as gateways will be supported by Monaghan and Cavan as Hubs. Monaghan can build on its strategic location between Dublin and Derry on the N2, its links to Armagh and its capacity for growth.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o Monaghan County Council is promoting Monaghan as a Hub in accordance with the NSS and RPGs.

Q2 – Does the Current Development Plan take its Hub Designation Forward?

- o The County and Monaghan Town Development Plans are currently being reviewed, for imminent adoption.
- o The aims, policies and zoning objectives contained within the Draft Plan promotes the development of Monaghan Town in line with its designation as a hub in the NSS.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o Monaghan Town (ED) grew from 5,628 in 1996 to 5,717 in 2002 (an increase of 1.6%). By 2006 the population had grown to 6,250 an increase of 9.3 %. At this rate, the population would grow to 6,831 by 2010 and by 2014 it would be 7,466. This is not considered to be a realistic growth scenario because:
 - o The actual population of Monaghan urban area is higher as development extends beyond the ED.
 - o Improved road linkages should make Monaghan Town more accessible and a more attractive location for residential and commercial development. Indeed, the town has recently experienced a significant increase in residential and commercial development.
 - o Anecdotal evidence suggests that the demand for residential development far exceeds the supply.
 - o Zoning of substantial amounts of residential land on the fringes of the Town in the new Development Plan should stimulate further development.

- In the past much residential development has occurred as one-off houses in the rural environs of the Town. The application of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines through the County Development Plan will mean that development will be directed into the Hub.
- The NSS envisages that Monaghan would grow to have a population of 15,000 – 20,000 by 2020. The Planning Authority anticipates that a more modest growth is likely.
- The Housing Strategy prepared in 2001 is currently being reviewed and its publication is imminent.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- The Draft Monaghan County and Town Development Plan proposes zoning approximately 229 hectares of land for residential use. If developed in its entirety it is anticipated that this could accommodate approximately 7,650 residential units with a potential population of 23,715. This can clearly accommodate the anticipated population growth of the hub over the life of the plan.

The amount of land proposed to be zoned in the draft development plan for other uses is consistent with the anticipated population increase and associated demand.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- Developments in the Town and elsewhere which impact on the Town include
 - Completion of the Town by-pass (N2).
 - Completion of the Carrickmacross by-pass completed (N2).
 - Commencement of the Castleblayney by-pass (due for completion by summer 2007).
 - Significant increase in residential development.
 - Re-development and proposed re-development of town centre backlands under the Urban Renewal Scheme, involving expenditure in excess of €30m.
 - Imminent commencement of €20 million retail, office and residential development scheme within town centre.
 - Construction of a swimming pool.
 - Completion of a major retail warehouse and industrial park on the Cbones Road.
 - Completion of the Broadband Metropolitan Area Network.
 - Completion of the North East Town Serviced Land Initiative (SLI).
 - Approval to proceed with the Coolshannagh/Ballalbany/Monaghan SLI.
 - Approval to the preliminary report of the Monaghan Town Drainage Scheme.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- o Constraints / Issues
 - o Lack of co-ordinated effort between the main players responsible for developing Monaghan Town as a Hub, namely, Monaghan County Council, Border Regional Authority, IDA, Health Services Executive, private sector etc.
 - o Despite sharing 108 miles of border with Northern Ireland (the largest share of all the southern counties) there is limited cross-border co-operation. This restricts Monaghan's ability to capitalise on the Town's strategic location in the border area.
 - o Need for improved road connection to M1, Armagh, Dungannon and Enniskillen.
 - o Lack of incentives for developers / employers to locate in Monaghan (e.g. special tax designation in the Hub).
 - o Limited population growth that restricts Monaghan's ability to achieve sufficient scale and critical mass to attract significant investment and development opportunities.
 - o Large numbers of one-off rural dwellings which limits urban population growth.
 - o Limited tourism development infrastructure/product.
 - o Traditional rural based society in transition.

- o Main development opportunities:
 - o Strategic location on east/west and north/south routes.
 - o Strategic location in the border area.
 - o Potential tourism development/product.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

- o Short term
 - o Completion of Monaghan Town main drainage scheme.

- o Medium term
 - o Servicing of housing and industrial / employment lands.
 - o Establishment of flagship tourism infrastructure / products (e.g. Ulster Canal).

- o Long term
 - o Construction of inner and outer relief roads.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o Upgrading of N53 to provide direct access to the M1.

- o Upgrading of N54 and N12 (east/west link).

- o Construction of the Monaghan/Emyvale by-pass (Phase II).

- o Development of strategic link roads through the County, with particular emphasis on providing cross border access to development centres in Armagh, Dungannon, Omagh and Enniskillen.
- o Development of public transport network/linkages.
- o Development of serviced industrial and employment land.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Provision of third-level education facility and links to other third-level providers so as to maximise educational attainment in the Town/County.
- o Development of health care and community facilities to make the Town more competitive and a more attractive place to live.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o None.

APPENDIX (H)

TUAM

NSS COMMENT ON TUAM

The town of Tuam is positioned to both assist in building links and interactions between the existing Gateway of Galway City and the new Gateway at Sligo and to energise its own substantial catchment area in County Galway. Tuam can perform this role through its position in the area's urban structure in terms of population, strategic location on the N17 and regional road networks as well as energy and communication links, its substantial capacity for development and local employment and service functions.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o The Planning and Sustainable Development Strategy Policy Committee (SPC) is currently in place. It is through this SPC that planning policy is made.
- o It is intended to work with the Planning Strategic Policy Committee to promote and develop issues and ideas for Tuam as the Hub town.
- o Policy and development issues for Tuam as a Hub will be brought before Tuam Town Council, Tuam Area Committee and Galway County Council.

Q2 – Does the current Development Plan take its Hub Designation Forward?

- o As the County Development Plan was produced before the National Spatial Strategy was published, a variation to the Development Plan has been prepared incorporating a comprehensive statement on Tuam as the Hub town in the County, and taking forward its designation as such under the NSS.
- o A Local Area Plan for Tuam has been made, also taking account of Tuam as a Hub town within the Strategy and its role within Galway County and the region.
- o A County Spatial Strategy is being prepared which will reflect Tuam as a Hub town and as the principal town within the area of North Galway.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o Population growth figures for the County and Tuam hub town have been revised, indicating a population of approximately 10,000 people living within the Tuam LAP Area over the next four and a half years.
- o This may well be surpassed if the opportunities arising from its Hub status are optimised and population growth identified in the NSS is realised.

- o The town of Tuam has the capacity to realise a population of 15,000-20,000 over a 15-20 year period.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o The recently adopted Local Area Plan for Tuam (2005-2011) has provided sufficient zoned lands in Tuam to cater for future population increases.
- o Taking account of the projected population growth and the continued decline in household sizes, the minimum land requirement for residential development for the duration of the Plan is 60 hectares.
- o This Plan has zoned approximately 180 Hectares, having regard to its newly designated Hub status, the possibility of some lands not becoming available for development, and so as to provide for density, flexibility and choice.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o Since November 2002, 342 residential units have been granted planning permission along with a major mixed-use town centre development.
- o Approximately 21 medium- to large-scale commercial developments have also been granted planning permission along with a community swimming pool.
- o The mixed-use town centre development is being built within the urban renewal area and includes retail car parking and apartments.
- o Up to €31m of expenditure relating to the urban renewal scheme in the town centre has been spent, with 7 schemes either completed or nearing completion.
- o The new swimming pool in the Palace Grounds is also completed.

Q6 – Progress on Major Infrastructure in Recent Years

- o *Water and Wastewater*
 - o Tuam has provided a modern waste water treatment facility to cater for existing and expanding needs.
 - o Water improvements have been undertaken and there is adequate water supply to the town to cater for existing and future needs.
 - o The continual improvements to the water and wastewater systems have positioned Tuam so that the expanding demands can be met.
 - o Upgrade work on the existing water and wastewater networks within the town are needed urgently.
- o *Roads*
 - o The NRA has provided a new by-pass road line around the town of Tuam. This road is being prepared for CPO and will be progressed quickly.
 - o Objectives have been included in the newly adopted Local Area Plan for further road improvements and these need to be progressed and

implemented to ensure the Hub town grows to cater for the region and its hinterland.

- First phase of a traffic management plan has been put in place and includes parking arrangements and metering. Additional phases will include pedestrianisation, off-street parking and the provision of through routes.
- Transport 21 announced proposed improvements on a phased basis for the opening of the Western Rail Corridor. The provision of the new rail station along with the rail line will help to link Tuam with Claremorris to the North and Athenry and Galway to the South. This needs to progress quickly.
- *Sport and Community Facilities*
 - Additional sporting facilities along with a play area and community facilities are in planning and seeking funding for zoned lands. Planning permission has been granted for improvements to Tuam Football Stadium.
- *Housing*
 - Over 85 social and affordable houses have been built in Tuam since November 2002 and over 90 voluntary, affordable and social houses are currently under construction.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- There is a clear need to focus on implementation. A separate implementation group should be assembled to undertake this.
- The retail core of Tuam has been strengthened under the urban renewal scheme. However, there remain uses within the core Tuam centre that could be relocated such as the Mart and Builders Providers Yard. An extension of the urban renewal scheme for this purpose would help in this area.
- Urban enhancement schemes with funding would also greatly benefit Tuam.
- The objectives under Amenity and Recreation, Town Centre and Urban Renewal as outlined in the new Local Area Plan need to be delivered. This will tap into the element of Cultural Tourism and Conservation along with the historical significance of Tuam.
- The provision of the by-pass route would help traffic flow in and around the town as traffic congestion is a real issue in the town.
- Adequate lands are zoned and serviced within the town for industrial/enterprise.
- Incubation or starter units should be considered to encourage industrial /enterprise as this is an area for improvement which can bring balanced development in and around the Hub.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

Short/Medium

- Improvements to water network within the town.
- Deliver on objectives for amenity, town centre and urban renewal within the town.
- Provide extensions to the service land initiatives for industrial sites.
- Deliver on the by-pass route.
- Provide the rail station and western rail line to Athenry and Galway.
- Deliver on broadband for the town.
- Provide sport and play facilities.
- Provide travel centre/multi-modal centre adjacent to rail station for bus and passenger movement.
- Provide inner relief roads.
- New library and civic centre funding.

Longer Term

- Provide gas pipeline connection.
- Connect Tuam along Atlantic Corridor by Road and Rail.
- Rail line from Tuam to Athenry and north to Claremorris.

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- The key infrastructural issues for Tuam as a Hub within the region could be summarised under the word **connectivity**.
 - Tuam needs to be connected by the new N17 motorway north to Sligo and south to the N6 along the Atlantic Corridor.
 - Connect up the Western Rail Corridor quickly to Athenry and Claremorris and provide commuter rail to Galway City as the gateway.
 - Connect Tuam to the other Hubs/Gateways in the region including Castlebar/Ballina and Athlone.
 - Provide gas pipeline connection.
 - Deliver broadband connection faster than is happening.
 - Provide travel centre adjacent to rail station with good bus connections to the region and locality. This would conform with our County Spatial Strategy.
- Rural transport system should be provided to service the locality. This would ensure connection of North East Galway, North West Galway and South Mayo with public transport (bus to rail) from local area to Hubs and on to the Gateway.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- Key social/cultural infrastructural requirements are:
 - Broadband.
 - Health facilities.
 - Nursing homes.
 - Amenity areas – funding to acquire zoned amenity land.
 - Theatre.
 - Ambulance depot.

- Level of hospital facilities.
- Funding for the new library and civic centre being planned by Galway County Council.
- New courthouse facility.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- The hinterland of Tuam is traditionally a strong agricultural area and must be developed.
- The relocation and improvement to the mart facilities would complement this.
- Tuam has also had an association with light engineering facilities and the development of a network of serviced land must be a priority.
- The provision of Broadband would be essential to Tuam's growth.
- Food markets and food production of high quality would complement and enhance the agricultural area around Tuam and should be examined.
- Proposals to develop an economic corridor in the Oranmore and Athenry area mean that logistics centres and outreach facilities will be critical in Tuam. Need to conform with our County Spatial Strategy to develop Tuam as a hub linked to this corridor. Consequently, improved serviced sites will be necessary in Tuam.
- Greater focus on the plans, policies and objectives already in place is needed. The implementation of the plans policies and objectives would be greatly helped by the formation of an implementation group.

APPENDIX (I) WEXFORD

NSS COMMENT ON WEXFORD

Wexford is strategically located in the South-East, close to Rosslare Port and on the national road and rail networks. These strengths are also combined with its substantial capacity for development and Wexford's various employment, retailing, services and administrative functions. Wexford as a hub has an important spatial role in establishing a "triangle of strength", based around Waterford as the region's Gateway and Kilkenny as another Hub along with Wexford. This area will substantially strengthen and energise the South-East and ensure it plays a full part in achieving the Government's objective for balanced regional development.

In the South-East region (Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South, Waterford and Wexford), critical mass will be enhanced through Waterford performing as a gateway, supported by Kilkenny and Wexford as Hubs – with these three together forming a nationally strategic 'growth triangle'.

Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford can drive regional growth by providing a large and skilled population base, substantial capacity for additional residential and employment related functions and an improving transport network.

HUB AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO DoEHLG QUESTIONS

Q1 – Mechanisms to Promote Development

- o RPG recognises County Towns as critical elements for:
 - o achieving more balanced regional development, and
 - o acting as a focus for strengthening their local areas.

- o Hub population target is 25,000 – 30,000 by 2020.

- o Extension of Wexford Borough boundary to incorporate environs is seen as a key statement of support for the development of Wexford as a Hub. This also to reflect citizen perception and citizen affinity with Wexford Town

- o New Development Plan will be drawn up starting in 2006 and due for completion in 2007.

- o Wexford Town Traffic Management plan implemented in 2004.

- o Wexford Retail Strategy, conducted in 2004, reviewed in 2006 as part of the County Development Plan 2007-2013.

- o Wexford Town Metropolitan Area Network has been completed.

- o Wexford Town third-level Campus established in 2002 and full-time enrolment has increase from 215 to 340 in 2006/2007. There are a further 250 part-time students.
- o Business development envisaged.
- o Wexford main drainage system has spare capacity of about 6,000PE. Wexford Town water supply facility was upgraded in 2003 and supplies Wexford Town and environs.
- o Wexford County Development Board has initiated an Inter-Agency Service Plan which indicates and agrees the main infrastructural, social, cultural and economic requirements for Wexford to 2020. A Wexford Social Inclusion plan is also being developed.
- o A Hub Implementation Team was established in October 2006 initially composed of Wexford County Council, Wexford Borough Council, Chamber of Commerce and Co. Wexford Tourism.
- o A Strategic Investment Plan (SIP 2006-2010) was conducted in 2007 by the Hub Implementation Team which aims to chart current investment and guide future public sector investment by indicating areas of required investment so as to maximise their impact on the delivery of the emerging spatial strategies of the region and maximise effect of funds already spent.
- o The Plan indicated four cross cutting priority spatial investment themes in areas where investment is required:
 - o Access
 - o Culture
 - o Quality of Life
 - o Critical Mass

Q2 – Does the current Development Plan take its Hub Designation Forward?

- o The current plan for Wexford and Environs was made in 2002 and while some recognition of the future development potential of the area was stated, it was completed prior to the NSS designation of Hub status. The new Plan for the area will be completed in 2007 and will reflect the changes in economic and social profile of the Town along with the Hub Status, together with the investment priorities for the future as set out in the Strategic Investment Plan.

Q3 – Future Envisaged Population Growth and Housing Land Availability

- o Wexford Town and Environs.
 - o 2002 – 17,235 (26,800 in Wexford Electoral District (ED) outside of the Town and its Environs).
 - o 2005 – 19,900 (estimate).
 - o 2010 – 22,500.
 - o 2015 – 25,400.
 - o 2020 – 27,200.

Q4 – Land Zoned to Accommodate Anticipated Future Growth

- o The areas of land that can accommodate residential development in the current Development Plan are set out below. This will be updated in the new Development Plan to be completed in 2007.

Zoning	Area of Land Remaining (ha)	As a % of Total
Low-density Residential	82.63	37.2
Medium-density Residential	85.46	38.4
Provide and protect	36.5	16.4
Mixed Use (AAP)	17.82	8.0
Total	222.41	100.0

- o The 220 ha can, at adopted density standards, accommodate about 24,000 bed spaces or about 8,000 three bedroom housing units.

Q5 – What has happened since the launch of the NSS in 2002?

- o Employment
 - o Live Register numbers decreased marginally from 2,685 in November 2002 to 2,639 in February 2007. However, 2006 Preliminary Census results show a population in the county of 131,615, an increase of 15,100 in 4 years.
 - o Current large developments in all sectors will boost employment, particularly the hospitality and retail sectors.
 - o Waters Technology has expanded and PFPS International is considering expansion which would entail about 250 jobs.
- o Housing
 - o Since 2002, there have been about 800 planning applications in the Town and Environs area which involve about 3,500 housing units.
- o Retail
 - o Wexford is described as a 'third tier' settlement in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2000. Taking the pace of retail expansion in recent years into account, the Wexford Retail Strategy 2005 considers that Wexford could become a 'second tier' settlement.
 - o A large number of stores have made major investments since 2002.
 - o Two retail parks have been created on the outskirts of town and have major national tenants.
 - o Further new developments by national stores are completed (Tesco) and under construction (Lidl).
 - o A mixed development which will become the largest shopping centre in the South East has been granted planning permission.
- o Commercial and Hospitality

- Most of the hospitality establishments have completed refurbishments since 2002.
- New tourist centre completed.
- Cultural and Leisure
 - The annual world famous Wexford Opera Festival generates much energy and investment. Approval for a €25m development to become the focus for the festival is under construction.
 - The refurbishment of the Arts Centre to promote community and public art is awaiting approval.
 - A new €6m library is proposed for a town centre site.
- Industrial
 - Various factories undertaking upgrading works or considering expansion.
 - Upgrading of the IDA's Drinagh Business Park has taken place.

Q6 – Progress on Major Infrastructure in Recent Years

- Water Services Schemes
 - Scheme with a capacity of 12 000m³ per day was commissioned in 2003 which provides for the needs of the Town and Environs and south Wexford.
 - Water conservation projects have reduced unaccounted water loss and with new infrastructure means that 3.000m³/day is available to meet future needs.
- Road Improvement Schemes
 - Many improvements since 2002.
 - ☞ Inner relief road being constructed at present.
 - ☞ 4 secondary one way schemes completed.
 - ☞ Pay and display machines replaced disc parking.
 - Parking spaces
 - ☞ 420 public spaces become available since 2002
 - ☞ 1050 private parking spaces have been granted planning permission.
- Sporting and Cultural
 - Application for €6m to refurbish the town swimming pool and leisure centre has been lodged.
 - Application for major County Library based in Wexford Town is under review.
- Waste Management
 - Joint Management Plan was agreed between the 6 authorities in the South East region.
 - In 2004, the Wexford local authorities integrated the entire refuse collection system in the County to create a more efficient system.

- An EPA license has been granted for a landfill site which will be operational in 2007.
- 12 Bring Centres in Wexford Town.
- A doorstep dry recycling scheme is in operation which results in about 4,000 tons of dry recycling material *per annum*.
- About 7,000 households have compost recycling at present.
- Plans are in place for a Recycling centre in Wexford Town.

Q7 – Main Development Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- Main Constraints
 - The unstable future for the third-level education institution.
 - Lack of completion of the Euroroute.
 - Building of the access road to the Rosslare Port.
 - Access by road, rail and air to the rest of the country.
 - Lack of value-added modern industry.
 - Traffic Congestion at access routes

- Opportunities
 - The increase of skills and investment in the Town due to large numbers migrating into the Town.
 - Proximity to Rosslare Europort.
 - Management of the Europort to maximise development opportunities.
 - A strong tourism and services centre.
 - Proximity to the Waterford Gateway and to Dublin.
 - Inclusion within the 'Triangle of Strength' including Waterford and Kilkenny.

Q8 – Main short-, medium- and longer-term Infrastructure Requirements

- Short Term
 - Upgrading of the public bus services.
 - Maintain water supply with spare capacity.
 - Upgrading of the Wexford main drainage scheme.
 - Complete the Inner relief road.
 - Improve road access through the N30 and N11 routes.
 - Continue the Urban Renewal Programme (roads and pavements on the Main Street and Quay).
 - Provision of public parks.

- Medium Term
 - Amalgamation of all public transport systems into a public ticketing system, including rail and bus services.
 - Complete the by-passes of Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross.
 - Complete a new bus and rail terminal in Wexford Town.
 - Continue with the Urban Renewal Programme.
 - Continue the RAPID programme.

- o Long Term
 - o Expansion to the water supply and waste treatment plants, depending on population growth.
 - o A new Bridge crossing to relieve traffic congestion

Q9 – Key Development Issues regarding the Hub in a Regional or Sub-regional Context

- o Transport Infrastructure
 - o Upgrade road and rail links with Waterford.
 - o Upgrade the regional airport new Waterford and the road links to it.
 - o Integration of existing public transport systems (road and rail) through an inclusive ticketing system.
- o Motorway Links
 - o Access road links between Waterford and Wexford.
 - o Inter-regional road links between Hubs (the link to Kilkenny is unsatisfactory).
 - o Motorway connecting the western and eastern sides of Ireland.
 - o Completion of the Dublin-Rosslare motorway with by-passes at Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross.
- o Structures Required
 - o Creation of an autonomous and independent Port Authority for Rosslare with the ability to oversee development of all transport access to/into the Port.
 - o Establish public transport links (bus and rail).
- o Education
 - o Creation of a University in the South East.
 - o Secure the future of the third-level institution in Wexford.
- o Broadband
 - o Improved links between the South East Hubs and the Waterford Gateway.

Q10 – Other Key Infrastructure Requirements

- o Health
 - o Maintenance and development of resourced hospital in Wexford Town with the necessary services.
 - o Integration of psychiatric and medical services.
 - o Upgrading of the community care services in the Town.
- o Social Development
 - o Continuation of RAPID.

Q11 – Any Other Issues

- o Considerable private sector funding is being invested in retail, leisure and tourism infrastructure in Wexford Town. It is essential that public sector funding is made available to support this development where public bodies have responsibilities.

- o The County Development Board and the Wexford Local Authorities are fully aware of the current developments and opportunities in Wexford and Environs. The responsibilities of Wexford Town as a Hub and County Town are recognised and in this regard the social, economic, infrastructural and cultural requirements of the Town and its Environs up to 2020 will be of key importance.
- o If the Hub is to develop properly, the social, educational and recreational needs will need to be met in a structured and fast-track way.
- o Consideration should be given to the creation of a dedicated Hubs fund.

APPENDIX 2

National Spatial Strategy

Questionnaire on Development Progress and Issues in the NSS Hubs

Question 1

What mechanisms are currently in place or planned to promote the development of the Hub? (e.g. steering committees, implementation groups.)

Question 2

Does the current development plan for the hub reflect and take forward its designation as such under the National Spatial Strategy? In the case of 'linked' hubs has a planning framework for development been put in place or is one envisaged.

Question 3

What is the scale of population growth envisaged in the hub or linked hubs over the next (a) five years (b) ten years? Have estimates been made of the amount and type of housing required to cater for the scale of population growth?

Question 4

Has sufficient land been zoned to cater for the scale of population increase envisaged?

Question 5

Please provide a summary of what has happened in the hub in development terms both in the public and private sector since the launch of the National Spatial Strategy in November 28 2002? Examples would include developments in the areas of employment, housing, retail, and commercial/industrial activity.

Question 6

What progress on major infrastructure improvements has been made in recent years? E.g. new water services schemes, road improvements, public transport, housing, social, and cultural/sports facilities and to what extent will these improvements cater for the scale of growth envisage in the hub

Question 7

What are the main development issues, main development opportunities and constraints facing the continued development of the Hub as set out in the National Spatial Strategy? - E.g. - need to focus on implementation, need to improve housing output, need to strengthen retail core?

Question 8

What are the main short, medium and longer term future infrastructure requirements in the Hub, for example in the areas of water services, servicing of housing lands, local transport including public transport etc and are there specific

examples of such infrastructure being essential to unlocking development potential – e.g. Serviced Land Initiative type investment.

Question 9

What are the key infrastructural issues in relation to the development of the Hub in a regional or sub-regional context such as connections to gateways by main road/public transport networks, regional innovation capacity?

Question 10

Please provide details of other key infrastructure to which access will be required to support the advancement of the Hub - e.g. social, cultural facilities and amenities.

Question 11

Are there any other specific issues that you wish to raise in relation to the future development of the Hub as envisaged under the NSS?