



# Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

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# Cork County Council



## Cork County Development Plan Review

### **Section 11(4) Chief Executive's Report**

Volume One: Chief Executive's Key Issues and Recommendations

28<sup>th</sup> August 2020





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## Section One: Introduction

### Overview of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a description of the CDP Review Pre-Draft Public Consultation undertaken for the review of the Cork County Development Plan and preparation of a new County Development Plan to come into effect in June 2022.

This report should be read in conjunction with the CDP Review Public Consultation Document **“Your Home Your Future Your Views”** and the accompanying **Background Documents** published on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

**Volume One Chief Executive’s Key Issues and Recommendations** consists of two sections:

**Section 1:** Provides an introduction and overview of the report, describes the consultation that was undertaken during the Section 11 Pre-Draft Public Consultation phase of the review and details the legislative background and requirements for the report. Requirements in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Directive Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are also outlined.

**Section 2:** Provides a detailed discussion of the key emerging issues raised during the consultation and sets out the Chief Executive’s opinion and his recommendations on the policies to be included in the draft plan.

This report forms part of the statutory procedure for the preparation of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 and is being submitted to the Elected Members of Cork County Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020 for their consideration on or before the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

This report shall be published on the Cork County Council website as soon as practical following its preparation.

**Volume Two “Appendices”** consists of a series of 10 Appendices. Volume Two includes lists of the Names of the Interested Party who made a submission, Unique Reference Number, PPU Summary of Submission, Issues Raised and the Chief Executive’s Opinion on each submission. In order to facilitate binding and readability Volume Two has been split into two parts Volume Two A and Volume 2 B. The Volume Two Appendices are listed A to J, as follows;

- Appendix A Submission from the Office of the Planning Regulator (Volume Two A).
- Appendix B Submission from the Southern Regional Assembly (Volume Two A).
- Appendix C All Valid Submissions Under Section 11(4) (A-Z) (Volume Two A and Volume Two B).
- Appendix D Full List of Submitters by Interested Party (A-Z) (Volume Two B).
- Appendix E Issues raised at Public Consultation Events (Volume Two B).



Appendix F List of Submissions received which included a request or proposal for zoning of land for any purpose. (Volume Two B).

Appendix G List of Prescribed Authorities and Other Bodies notified of commencement of Development Plan Review. (Volume Two B).

Appendix H List of Environmental Authorities (Volume Two B).

Appendix I Submissions from Environmental Authorities on SEA Draft Scoping Report (Volume Two B).

Appendix J List of Special Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) (Volume Two B).

### Pre-Draft Public Consultation

The Pre-Draft Public Consultation stage for the review of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 took place from 12<sup>th</sup> of March to the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020. Due to the requirements of the Covid 19 Emergency Measures the public consultation period was extended by 8 weeks.

The Pre-Draft Public Consultation Stage was advertised through a number of media on 4 separate occasions over the 16-week consultation period due to the extension of the statutory planning periods to comply with the requirements of the Covid 19 Emergency Measures:

- Advertisements were placed in a number of Newspapers circulating locally;
- A notice was placed on the Cork County Council website;
- Notification was issued through Cork County Council's twitter feed;
- Notification was issued through Cork County Council's Facebook account;
- Notification was sent to all members of the PPN and
- Prescribed authorities were notified.

### Public Consultation Events

Due to the requirements of the Covid 19 Emergency Measures the planned series of 8 Public Consultation Events, one in each Municipal District, had to be cancelled. Instead 2 Public Consultation Events by appointment only were held in County Hall on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June in order to provide an opportunity for members of the public to learn about the review process, to highlight some of the strategic issues facing the county and facilitate feedback from the public about issues they felt should be taken into account in the preparation of the draft Development Plan.

A report on the issues raised at the Public Consultation Events is included in Volume Two B Appendix E. Many of the issues raised are addressed in Section 2 of this report and will be considered in more detail in the preparation of the draft plan.

The Section 11 Public Consultation Document "Your Home, Your Future, Your Views" was prepared in order to highlight some of the key issues that need to be considered and to promote and support public involvement in the process of making the Plan. The Plan needs to reflect the needs and ambitions of all communities across the county so it is important that we know how people would like to see the county develop.



The Public Consultation Document was accompanied by a series of Background Documents providing more detailed information on some of the main topics to be covered in the plan. The following background documents are available and can be downloaded from [www.corkcocodevplan.com](http://www.corkcocodevplan.com) :

1. Approach to County Development Plan Review
2. Population and Housing
3. Rural Housing
4. Settlements and Placemaking
5. Urban Capacity Study
6. Economy and Employment
7. Water Services
8. Transport and Mobility
9. Energy
10. Heritage
11. SEA Scoping Report

The preparation of the Public Consultation Document and accompanying Background Documents was notified in the public advertisements and the Public Consultation Document was made available for download from the County Development Plan review web page and for sale from the Planning Policy Unit. It was also available at the Councils public offices in County Hall, Annabella, Mallow and Norton House, Skibbereen as well as all Public Libraries in the County.

Submissions were invited from the public during the consultation period and could be made electronically (via the Co Council's Website) or sent via post. A total of 614 submissions were received of which 6 were duplicates, giving a figure for unique submissions of **608**. A list of the persons and organisations that made submissions is included in Volume Two B Appendix D.

Elected Members and the public should note that Section 11(4)(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act requires that the issues raised by submissions "relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose" shall not be referred to in this report. A list of submissions that are affected is included in Volume Two B Appendix F.

### **Legal Background to the Chief Executive's Report**

Section 11(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires that the Chief Executive prepare a report on the submissions and observations received during the Pre-Draft Public Consultation period and on matters arising out of the consultations made during this phase. The Act requires that the Chief Executive's Report shall:

- (a) List the persons or bodies who made submission or observations as well as any persons or bodies consulted by the authority,



(b) Summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of land for any purpose.

(c) Give the opinion of the Chief Executive to the issues raised, taking account of:

- The proper planning and sustainable development of the area,
- The statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and
- Any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government,
- State the Chief Executive's recommendation on the policies to be included in the draft development plan,
- Summarise the issues raised, and recommendations made by the Southern Regional Assembly and outline the recommendations of the Chief Executive in relation to the manner in which those issues and recommendations should be addressed in the draft development plan.

### Next Steps

- Under the provisions of Section 11(4) (c) to (f) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the Section 11(4) Chief Executive's Report will be submitted to the Members of Cork County Council on **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020** for their consideration.
- Following consideration of the report the Members of the planning authority, may issue directions to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the draft development plan, and any such directions shall be strategic in nature, consistent with the draft core strategy, and shall take account of the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government, and the Chief Executive shall comply with any such directions.
- Section 12 (18) of the Act defines statutory obligations – “statutory obligations’ includes, in relation to a local authority, the obligation to ensure that the development plan is consistent with—
  - (a) the national and regional development objectives specified in—
    - (i) the National Planning Framework, and
    - (ii) the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and
  - (b) specific planning policy requirements specified in guidelines under subsection (1) of section 28.”
- In issuing directions, the Members shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the plan relates.
- Any directions shall be issued not later than 10 weeks after the submission of the report i.e. **by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020**.



- In accordance with Section 5(a) of the Act, the Chief Executive shall, not later than 12 weeks following the receipt of any directions, prepare a draft development plan and submit it to the members of the planning authority for their consideration.

### New Approach to Statutory Planning

The next Cork County Development Plan 2022 will be different from the current County Development Plan in two key areas:

- It will relate to the new administrative boundary of the county, post the extension of the City boundary.
- The Cork County Development Plan 2022 will include all the settlements of the County, replacing the current Municipal District Local Area Plans adopted in 2017 and the Development Plans of former Town Council Towns of Clonakilty, Cobh, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton, Skibbereen and Youghal. **This means that the more detailed policy objectives for the settlements, including, zoning will now form part of the County Development Plan.**
- The new Plan will have seven Volumes:
  - Volume One: County At Large.
  - Volume Two: Heritage and Amenity.
  - Volume Three: North Cork (Fermoy MD and Kanturk Mallow MD).
  - Volume Four: South Cork (Carrigaline MD, Cobh MD, East Cork MD and Macroom MD).
  - Volume Five: West Cork (Bandon Kinsale MD and West Cork MD).
  - Volume Six: Environmental Reports (SEA/HDA/SFRA)
  - Volume Seven: Map browser

A key benefit of including all the settlements in the County Development Plan is that it allows for strategic issues and their local implications to be considered in the same process.

### Planning Policy Context

The Policy context and framework by which statutory plans are prepared has been transformed since the adoption of the Cork County Development Plan, 2014. The National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, the Office of the Planning Regulator and the use of Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) has changed radically the way that future will be prepared. Also, the imminent arrival of new Draft Guidelines on County Development Plans and Guidelines on the preparation of Housing Need Demand Assessment/Housing Strategies will have a significant impact on all aspects of plan preparation the putting together of the Core Strategy.

**Project Ireland 2040** which comprises of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018-2027 was published in February 2018. The objectives of the **National Planning Framework** are-

- To establish a broad national plan for the Government in relation to the strategic planning and sustainable development of urban and rural areas,
- To secure balanced regional development by maximising the potential of the regions, and support proper planning and sustainable development, and
- To secure the co-ordination of regional spatial and economic strategies and city and county development plans.



This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland up to 2040.

The **National Development Plan** sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the National Planning Framework.

**Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region** came into effect at the end of January 2020. The RSES sets out a 12-year strategic development framework for the Southern Region. It establishes a broad framework for development and the way in which our society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve and works towards a broad vision for the Region's future identifying key priorities for investment. The RSES also identifies the overall framework for development including: Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for the Cork Metropolitan Area, Key Towns, smaller towns, villages and rural areas. The overarching purpose of the RSES is to support the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040.

Section 28(1) of the Principle Act states that the Minister may, at any time, issue **Guidelines** to planning authorities regarding any of their functions under this Act and planning authorities shall have regard to those guidelines in the performance of their functions.

Subsection 1C states that without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), guidelines under that sub section may contain **Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs)** with which planning authorities, regional assemblies and the Board shall, in the performance of their functions, comply. A list of current, including draft, SPPRs is set out in Volume 2B Appendix J.

The Draft Development Plan is required to show how it is consistent with the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and any Specific Planning Policy Requirements.

The **Office of the Planning Regulator** was set up under the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018. The Office of the Planning Regulator has a range of functions, including:

- independent assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning, including the zoning decisions of local authority members in local area and development plans;

In performing its functions, OPR will take into account the objective of contributing to proper planning and sustainable development and the optimal functioning of planning under the Planning and Development Act, as amended.



## Requirement for Environmental Assessment

As part of the Review process, the potential for Environmental impacts must be considered and the practice for achieving this is through the carrying out of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitats Directive Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Background document No. 11 contains the Draft SEA Scoping Report and contains detail of the baseline data that will be used in the Environmental Report. A number of submissions were received in relation to the content of the draft Scoping report as follows:

- Availability of GSI data to assist in the preparation of the County Development Plan.
- There is an inadequate baseline for assessing impacts on biodiversity and this should be acknowledged in the Scoping and Environmental Reports.
- The obligations of the Habitats Directive and Regulations in relation to habitats and species apply.
- The Scoping and Environmental Reports should acknowledge the probability that biodiversity is in decline.
- Restoration of favourable conservation status of both Natura sites and network to which they are connected should be included in Section 7.0.
- Under section 8.1 include objective to halt biodiversity loss and enable major scale restoration.
- Table 7.1 'Biodiversity Constraints & Opportunities' should be extended to specifically address Annex 1 habitats
- Table 8.1 'SEA Objectives & Targets' should have an additional target 'No loss of Annex 1 habitats' Reference: Article 10 Habitats Directive.
- In order to promote transparency and accountability, a dedicated website should publish all established metrics, baselines and quantifiable objectives of the plan and include regular updates on progress.
- Monitoring systems should be implemented in such a way that the public has easy access to them and can assess the progress in the relevant areas during the lifetime of the plan.
- The plan should have a definitive section / policy on the protection and assessment of known and potential terrestrial and underwater cultural heritage.
- Regard should be had to the Department's published policies on archaeological assessment of large-scale development and protection of town defences.
- Key nature conservation issues raised include:
  - Development in the Beara peninsula relying on water from Glenbeg Lake (water abstraction affecting the freshwater pearl mussel in the Owenagappul River).
  - Development in the freshwater catchment of the Munster Blackwater cSAC (wastewater discharges affecting freshwater pearl mussel).
  - Development in Dunmanway near the Bandon River cSAC (wastewater discharges affecting freshwater pearl mussel).
  - Windfarm renewals in the Stacks and Mullaghareirk Mountains SPA (compensation requirement for hen harrier habitat and its assessment).
  - Great Island Channel – wastewater discharge (Carrigtwohill)



- Motorway development and barn owls.
- Greenways, blueways & tourist trails – assessment & biosecurity.
- Siting of housing close to rivers and wetlands.
- Air quality can be improved by reducing traffic in town centres and thoroughfares, imposing bans on smoky coal and the burning of plastics and other dangerous material. Monitoring of air quality is needed in Bandon.

These issues will be considered in finalising the Scoping Report and changes will be made, where appropriate.

#### Habitats Directive Assessment

In accordance with requirements under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and Section 177 of Part XAB of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the impacts of the policies and objectives of all statutory land use plans on designated sites must be assessed as an integral part of the process of making a land use plan and a Habitats Directive Assessment will be carried out for the Draft Plan.

#### Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

It is intended to carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the CDP and the submissions received in relation to flooding will inform this assessment. Issues raised in relation to flooding are dealt with in Key Issue: Water Services later in this report.



## Section Two: Chief Executive's Key Issues and Recommendations

### Introduction

This section of the report addresses in detail the key issues arising from the submissions that result in recommendations for the policies to be included in the Draft Plan. The main topics addressed are as follows:

- **Population and Core Strategy**
- **Housing Density and Placemaking**
- **Rural Housing**
- **Town Centres and Retail**
- **Economy and Employment**
- **Water Services**
- **Transport and Mobility**
- **Community**
- **Energy**
- **Marine Spatial Planning**
- **Green Infrastructure**
- **Built Heritage**
- **Tourism**
- **Biodiversity and Natural Heritage**
- **Climate Change**
- **North Cork (Fermoy MD and Kanturk Mallow MD).**
- **South Cork (Carrigaline MD, Cobh MD, East Cork MD and Macroom MD).**
- **West Cork (Bandon Kinsale MD and West Cork MD).**





## Key Issue 1: Population and Core Strategy

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents and Government Policy

#### Core Strategy

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out a quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the planning authority for the period of the development plan and in so doing to demonstrate that the development plan and its objectives are consistent with the population targets set out in National and Regional Policy. For this County Development Plan Review process, the population for Cork County for the period of the next County Development Plan takes its starting point from Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework and its associated Implementation Roadmap. These documents, in conjunction with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region<sup>1</sup> adopted and published in January of this year, provide the population targets for Cork County as a whole to the key horizon years of 2026, 2031 and ultimately to 2040. The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040 which was finalised in January 2020 will provide the transport framework for the future development of the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Another critical requirement of the overall strategy for the County is the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas in particular, by having regard to the need to reduce energy demand and anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and also by addressing the necessity of adapting to climate change.

Although not expressly required under section 10(2A) of the Planning and Development Acts, other important component land uses of the Core Strategy include retail, employment zones and amenity and community facilities. These topics, along with the environment and climate change are dealt with separately in other sections of this report.

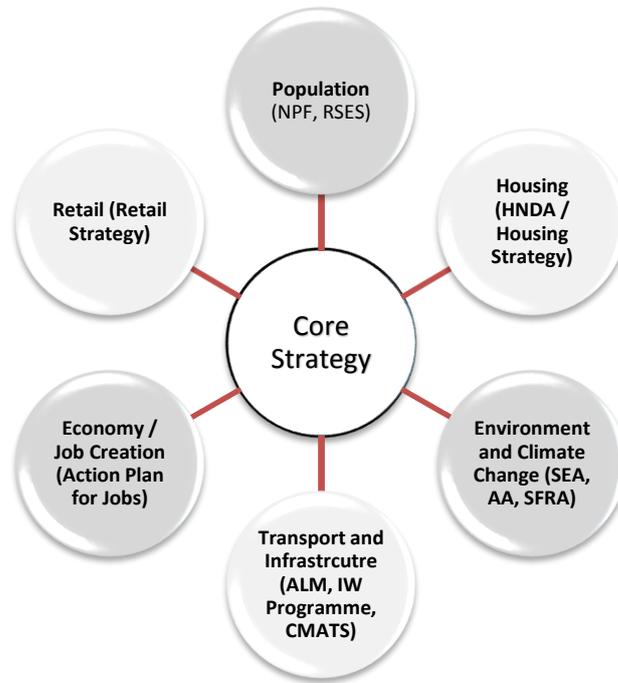
This section of the Chief Executives report sets out the key issues relating to the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, gives an overview of the principal issues which have emerged from the submissions, and provides a context for the preparation of the Core Strategy, key components of which include:

1. Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment
2. Active Land Management
3. Urban and Settlement Capacity, and
4. Headroom.

<sup>1</sup> The Regional Spatial and Economy Strategy for the Southern Region also includes the Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.



It also gives an estimated high-level indication of the population, household and unit targets for the County and the implications that this, and other factors including the Council's obligation to fulfilling the objectives the National Planning Framework, will have on the current land supply.



*Figure 1: Components of the Core Strategy with some of the policy inputs*

## 1. Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment

In accordance with Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, each new Development Plan must contain a Housing Strategy that relates to the period of the plan. The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to ensure that the overall supply of housing is sufficient to meet the needs of the existing and future population of the County. Cork County and City Councils are required to prepare a Joint Housing Strategy.

The NPF has also introduced the requirement for a 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' (HNDA) which is to be undertaken for each local authority area to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. It is intended that the HNDA will assist Local Authorities in developing long term strategic views of housing need across all tenures, provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform overall national housing policy and inform policies about the proportion of affordable and social housing and the different types of houses, required. The Housing Strategy and HNDA will deal with the whole county including both urban and rural areas and their housing needs.



The County and City Councils have jointly commissioned a team of consultants who have commenced the preparation of a Joint Housing Strategy / HNDA. Work commenced in July 2020 and is due to be completed by the end of the year.

The housing strategy will identify the proportion of social and affordable housing required over the plan period and will also make reference to specific housing requirements, including those for an ageing population, student housing, renewal/ upgrade and replacement of existing stock, smaller families, and that adult children are living at home longer, with resultant requirements for additional housing responses.

It is intended that following consultation with all relevant stakeholders, and co-operation with the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, that the draft HNDA / Housing Strategy will inform the draft Core Strategy, and this will, in turn, inform housing policy for the County.

The Department is currently preparing new Guidelines on Development Plan preparation to include further guidance on Core Strategies and new guidelines on Housing Need Demand Assessment and the Council has been advised that these Guidelines are "imminent".

## 2. Active Land Management

Active land management is multifaceted but chief in its remit is the management and delivery of zoned lands to ensure those lands come into active use; ensuring that social, environmental and economic considerations are appropriately integrated into land identification and delivery and, ensuring an adequate volume of appropriate lands are identified to ensure the availability of an appropriate supply of serviced/serviceable zoned lands to serve existing and future housing demand. Since the last County Development Plan was adopted, the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015 was introduced which requires Planning Authorities to take measures regarding vacant or idle sites in development and local area plans including the establishment of a Vacant Site Register and collection of a Vacant Site Levy where zoned land remains undeveloped / vacant or idle.

In an effort to co-ordinate land use zoning, infrastructure and services, the National Planning Framework includes a number of specific objectives which set out a new two-tier approach to land zoning: Tier 1 which is Serviced Zoned Land and Tier 2 which is Serviceable Zoned Land. All residentially zoned land will be categorised in this way in the new plan. The NPF indicates that if land does not fall into Tier 1 or Tier 2, then it should not be zoned for development or included within a Development Plan Core Strategy. Where land is zoned and remains undeveloped over time, it may be included in the Vacant Site Register and be liable for the Vacant Site Levy.

Tier 1 comprises lands that are able to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development. These lands will generally be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a



settlement or contiguous to existing developed lands. Inclusion in Tier 1 will generally require the lands to be within the footprint of or spatially sequential within the identified settlement.

Tier 2 zoning comprises lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have potential to become fully serviced within the life of the plan i.e. the lands are currently constrained due to the need to deliver some or all development services required to support new development, i.e. road or footpath access including lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage, water supply and/or additional service capacity. These lands may be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement, or contiguous to existing developed lands or to tier 1 zoned lands, where required to fulfil the spatially sequential approach to the location of the new development within the identified settlement.

It is important to note that while the infrastructural capacity of a site is an important consideration the location of the site relative to the core of the settlement is also given a high priority in the NPF. It is also clear that the role of Active Land Management is integral to achieving the proposed population for the county and particularly in providing a roadmap for the development of sites in Tier 2 by setting out their infrastructural assessment which must be aligned with the approved infrastructural investment programme(s) or be based on a written commitment by the relevant delivery agency(ies) to provide the identified infrastructure within a specified timescale (i.e. within the lifetime of the plan). There is also an opportunity for Cork County Council to commit to the delivery of the required and identified infrastructure in its own infrastructural investment programme (i.e. Budgeted Capital Programme) in order to support certain lands for zoning.

### 3. Urban and Settlement Capacity

The Core Strategy of the new Plan will allocate population and housing across the settlement hierarchy of the County in accordance with the settlement typology of the RSES:

- i. Metropolitan Area (including Carrigaline, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Midleton, Monard SDZ and Passage West).
- ii. Key Towns of Mallow and Clonakilty.
- iii. Towns and Villages with populations over 1,500.
- iv. Rural including villages with populations of less than 1,500 and the countryside.
- v. Networks (groupings on towns / villages).

The current settlement network will need to be reviewed in order to reflect the new approaches taken in the NPF and RSES. The forthcoming Development Plan Guidelines will also need to be considered in the review of the settlement network.



In reflecting a greater desire by Government as well as many key stakeholders, to encourage more city, town and village centre renewal, the NPF also introduced significant infill/brownfield targets for residential development within existing settlement 'footprints'<sup>2</sup>. This requires projected population growth to be planned in accordance with NPF National Policy Objectives 3a, b and c.

Of note is NPO 3c which states that at least 30% of the overall growth is to be accommodated in infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements. It is intended that these targets will be reflected in the Core Strategy of the Draft County Development Plan. This means that the extent of zonings on peripheral greenfield development sites will need to be critically evaluated with regard to their compatibility with the renewal and regeneration targets set out in the NPF.

A key factor influencing the amount of zoned land required is the assumptions made regarding the density at which the land should be developed. Density is discussed further in the section dealing with the Topic 'Housing Density and Placemaking'. That section also refers to the Urban Capacity Studies carried out by Cork County Council for the nine former Town Council Towns and Bantry.

#### 4. Headroom

Further to paragraph 4.14 of the 2007 Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, in previous plans, Cork County Council has made provision for 50% more zoned land than is required to meet demand during the six-year lifetime of a Development Plan i.e. enough land for a further three years. The published NPF/NDP national average baseline population projection accounts for a 25% 'headroom' allowance for additional population growth in every County pro-rata, for each Census year and related intercensal period. The transitional projections based on the methodology described above and in Appendix 2, add a further 25%, over and above the population projected to 2026 in the NPF. Cumulatively, this means provision for 50% more growth than is required to 2026 has effectively been accounted for at a national level. It also means that there is limited further requirement for 'headroom' for population growth to be incorporated into statutory Development Plans in most cases.

Scope for headroom, not exceeding 25%, can be considered to 2026 in those counties where population growth is projected to be at or above the national average baseline (i.e. Cork (City and County)<sup>3</sup>). It is important to note that the allocation of this additional 25% accelerant to 2026 (or 11,250 people) may be applied where it is **justified in compliance with the objectives of the NPF and RSES for the Southern Regional Assembly, especially in the achievement of compact growth targets**. This additional 25% allocation **has not been applied** to the following high-level targets. It is intended to apply this additional level of growth to certain settlements where justified in accordance with the objectives of the NPF and RSES.

<sup>2</sup> Footprints, generally refers to about 800m from the settlement core, equivalent to about a 10 minute walk.

<sup>3</sup> For reference other Counties with this arrangement include: Dublin (all four local authorities), Galway (City and County), Kildare, Limerick, Louth, Meath, Sligo, Waterford, Westmeath, and Wicklow



**Draft Core Strategy – high level targets**

The following table sets out at a high level the total County Cork targets which are identified in the NPF and RSES for the Southern Region.

<b>Table 1.1: Summary of the growth planned for Cork to 2040</b>					
	<b>Population based on Census 2016</b>	<b>Population Target 2026</b>	<b>Population Target 2031</b>	<b>Population Target 2040</b>	<b>2016- 2040 Population Increase</b>
<b>Total Cork County</b>	<b>332,015</b>	<b>377,000</b>	<b>398,000</b>	<b>436,000</b>	<b>104,000</b>

Source: [www.southernassembly.ie](http://www.southernassembly.ie)

NOTE [The figures in this table are rounded to the nearest 500 as set out in the Implementation Roadmap and the RSES]

This roughly, translates into the following population growth to the horizon years in the National Planning Framework, 2026, 2031 and 2040.

<b>Horizon Year</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2040</b>
<b>Source: RSES Growth Appendix 1 (+ footnote)</b>	<b>45,000 (Population Growth)</b>						
	<b>66,000 (Population Growth)</b>						
	<b>104,000 (Population Growth)</b>						

One of the principal aims of planning policy for the Cork region, originating in CASP and renewed more recently in the RSES, is the need to support the continued growth of the Cork Metropolitan area which has its own Cork MASP (Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan) through the coordinated development of both the County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area and the City Council area. The population growth identified for this area is ring-fenced, so, taking the County part of the Cork MASP Area, (i.e. the County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area) it is clear that the overall County MASP area will grow by about 20,000 people to 2026, and about 30,000 people to 2031. The Remainder of the County will grow by 25,000 to 2026 and 36,000 to 2031.



<b>Table 1.2: Summary of the Population Growth planned for Cork County 2016-2031</b>					
	<b>Population based on Census 2016*</b>	<b>Population Target 2026</b>	<b>Population Increase 2016-2026</b>	<b>Population Target 2031</b>	<b>Population Increase 2016-2031</b>
<b>County Metropolitan Cork Area (Cork County 'MASP')</b>	94,553	114,553	20,000	124,553	30,000
<b>Remainder of County</b>	237,462	262,463	25,000	273,462	36,000
<b>Total County</b>	<b>332,015</b>	<b>377,016</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>398,015</b>	<b>66,000</b>

Source: [www.southernassembly.ie](http://www.southernassembly.ie) and CCC breakdown of County Metro Population in 2016

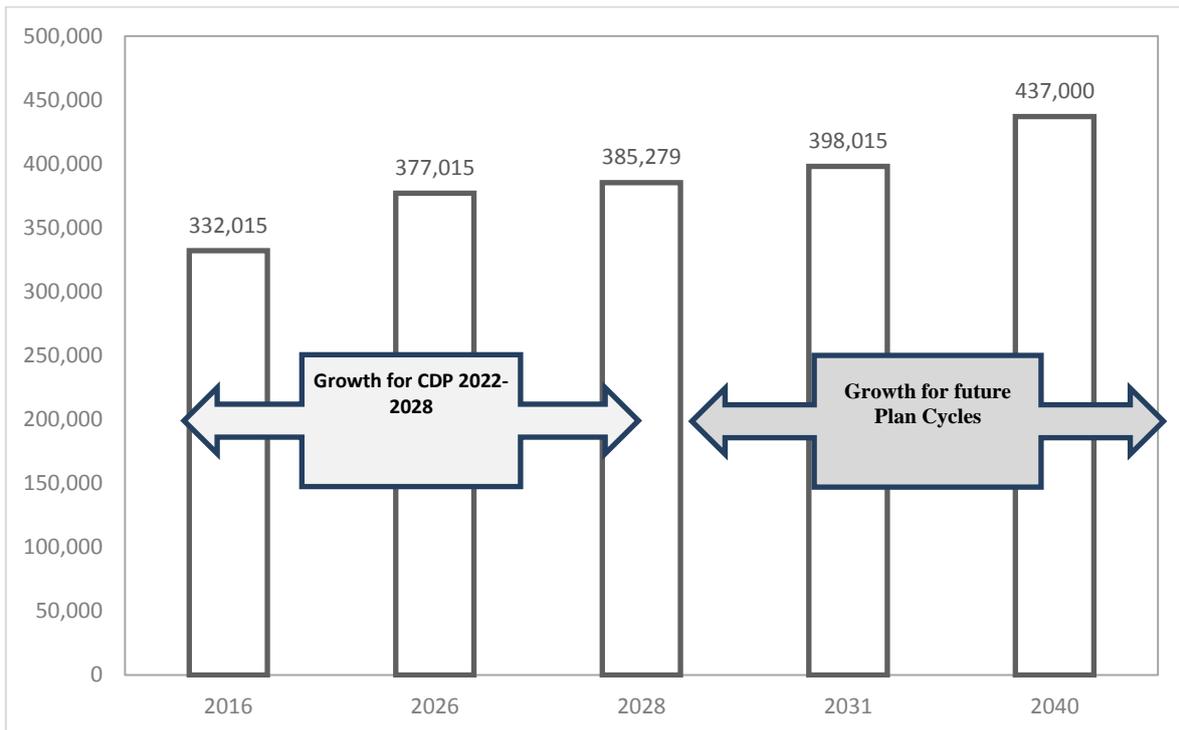
The Population and Housing background paper, published alongside the Section 11 Public Consultation Document, set out the historical trends in population, households and housing growth in Cork up to the last Census in 2016. It also sets out the various assumptions that would be taken regarding the determination of household size in particular as it has an important impact on the housing unit requirement for a given horizon year. It also made reference to the availability of zoned and serviced land for housing, in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans covering the County and the nine former Town Council Town Development Plans.

As part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, it will be important to estimate a population baseline, by calculating the approximate population of the County to 2020. This is done by interpolating the annual average growth rate for the County from the period of the last census 2011 to 2016. Following this, the balance of the ring-fenced targets for the County Metropolitan Cork Area and the Remainder of the County (as detailed in Table 1.2) are inputted to give the target for the period of the Plan to 2028. The Remainder of the County figure will need to be allocated across the three Strategic Planning Areas, (the Greater Cork Ring, West Cork and North Cork).



At this stage, it is important to note that the broad population targets **are set** and the County Development Plan must show how the overall targets for the County and the Cork MASP for the period of the plan 2022- 2028, align with those set out in the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Regional Assembly. Growth to 2031 and 2040 will be allocated by evidence-based assessments in future cycles.

### Key Population targets arising from the NPF and RSES and Cork County Development Plans



It is also important to note that the translation from population into households and finally new units required is only possible following a number of assumptions regarding household size, and vacancy / obsolescence rate.

In order to illustrate a possible scenario for the County for the draft County Development Plan and for the purposes of this report, an estimate of average household size and potential vacancy rates for the plan period have been used based on the best available data from the CSO and Geodirectory. However, **it is important to note that these assumptions will be tested during the preparation of the Joint Housing Strategy and the Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) so that the Core Strategy provides a robust, evidence base for the future unit requirement for the County for the period of the plan. The figures used in the following table are based on best available information and may be subject to some degree of change following the preparation of the Draft Housing Strategy and HNDA.**



<b>Table 1.3: Summary of the Draft Proposed Population, Household, and New Units Required for Cork County 2020-2028</b>					
	<b>Population based on Census 2016</b>	<b>Estimated Population at 2020</b>	<b>Estimated Population at 2028 (Plan Period)</b>	<b>Estimate Household at 2028 (Plan Period)</b>	<b>Provisional Estimate of New Units Required for the Plan Period (at 4% Vacancy)</b>
<b>County Metropolitan</b>	94,553	97,809	118,189	9,334*	9,707*
<b>Remainder of County</b>	237,462	245,639	267,090	12,305*	12,798*
<b>Total County</b>	<b>332,015</b>	<b>343,448</b>	<b>385,279</b>	<b>21,639*</b>	<b>22,505*</b>

\*May be subject to change following the preparation of the Draft Housing Strategy / Housing Needs Demand Assessment

It is intended that as the residential capacity audits are prepared for each (main) settlement that the quantum of greenfield and brownfield land will be finely balanced to achieve the objectives of the NPF, RSES for the Southern Regional Assembly and this will be balanced with the historical growth trends, and the availability of infrastructure, especially water services capacity and environmental considerations in each main town.

**The County Development Plan 2014 (as varied), and the Local Area Plans 2017 make provision, via zoned residential land and village growth, for the delivery of approximately 59,000 units within the new county administrative boundary to 2022<sup>4</sup>. The delivery of the housing targets in Table 1.3 over the life of the next County Development Plan 2022-2028 will require considerably less land than is currently zoned for residential development across the County.**

In line with government policy, 30% of the units allocated to settlements will need to be delivered within the existing footprint of our settlements. The amount of greenfield land needed to deliver the balance depends on what assumptions are made about density. As discussed later in this report, the majority of the zoned land in the county is identified for relatively low density development of 12-25 units per hectare, and the new plan will need to promote increased densities in many areas, in line with government policy, meaning that generally speaking, less land will be required to provide the same number of units.

<sup>4</sup> CDP Variation No 1 makes provision for 74,815 units within the 'old county' administrative area. Excluding the settlements (towns and villages) that moved the City the number is 59,145, although this includes some allowance for rural areas within the area now transferred to the City. CDP Variation No 1 also used a vacancy rate of 10%, while calculations in Table 1.3 above use 4%. Source: GeoView Residential Buildings Report Q4 2019 (page 8, Issue 12) based on Geodirectory Data.



## Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

The submissions highlight the need for the Plan, and particularly the Core Strategy, to be consistent with the National Policy Objectives of the NPF and the Regional Policy Objectives of the RSES, including the MASP. The importance of the Metropolitan Area as the engine for economic and population growth for the County and the need to focus development in the MASP area on regeneration, consolidation and infrastructure led growth of the metropolitan towns is particularly highlighted. The important role of the Key Towns of Mallow and Clonakilty and the need to resolve the significant infrastructural constraints impacting on both towns, through a collaborative approach with other stakeholders, is also referenced. The role of placemaking and the need to actively prioritise the regeneration of rural towns and villages is also highlighted, as is the need to ensure that the Core Strategy is implementable with a tiered approach to zoning.

Greater alignment between where people live and work to reduce the need to travel and facilitate active travel, the need for jobs led growth, the development of strategic employment locations and building economic resilience are considered critical to the Core Strategy. An integrated landuse and transportation approach is seen as critical to the achievement of compact settlements and alignment with CMATS is seen as necessary to align with the RSES.

Other concerns raised in submissions, particularly those at a more strategic or countywide level raise issues around the importance of the delivery of infrastructure to enable development; the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of zoned developable land and of calculating its capacity. It is suggested in many of the submissions that the Council must take a lead role on this if housing and population targets are to be met during the life of the Plan.

The submissions also raised the issue of the distribution of population growth in the county with calls for both a suggested maximum of 10% of the County's projected population growth to be targeted to villages and rural areas, and also on the other hand, many submissions arguing that post COVID-19 that there is an important role for rural areas to play. Several submissions also call for a review of the settlement network of the County following the boundary change last year while another submission suggests that the Council should focus on really strengthening one town per Municipal District. Other submissions highlight the need for climate change, protecting biodiversity and the environment to be at the heart of the Core Strategy deliberations.

There were a number of submissions which queried the importance of the changing nature of society, particularly in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the implications that has brought to bear not just in terms of people working from home but also in terms of density, urban design, place making, walking and cycling and amenity spaces. It is argued that these more recent trends may affect people's preferences going forward, may vary with demographics and impact on market demand in some areas.

Many submissions argue that brownfield sites should be acquired and used for extra capacity with derelict properties automatically coming into the ownership of the local authority, if the land or property owner express no interest in a derelict site. It is also suggested that the unilateral



allocation of 30% growth to be allocated in all urban areas in the County is not appropriate and that there are constraints to bringing infill/ brownfield sites forward to the market and that the CDP should assume no more than 50% of potential units identified in the Urban Capacity Study will be brought forward during the lifetime of the forthcoming development plan. It is also noted in the submission from the Office of the Planning Regulator that settlements of 1,500 or more population outside of the Key Towns and MASP should not have population growth of more than 30%.

Many submissions request that a review of the quantum, status and suitability of greenfield land is carried out to test the availability of short, medium and long term residential and industrial development and that this should inform a road map for re-establishing Cork as the location of choice both in regional and also national terms.

The submissions relating to housing and special housing requirements suggested that the Plan needs to include comprehensive prevention and early intervention measures including, rapid rehousing for people who are newly homeless and a Housing First / Housing Led type approach for those long term homeless, access to affordable housing / Social Housing as necessary, adequate support for people once housed including housing support, clinical support and supports towards community reintegration, as necessary. It is also suggested that that the allocation of just a small fraction of the 3,000 units to be provided yearly for people who are experiencing or at risk of long term homelessness together with housing supports, clinical supports and supports towards social integration will be sufficient to achieve this major social goal.

Other submissions highlight the need for the Universal Design approach to be embedded into the development plan policies, particularly in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities and older persons, but also for its broader applicability across the wider population.

There are also requests for the new County Development Plan to meet and surpass the Re-Building Ireland targets for Social Housing Build, Acquisition and Leasing Delivery, and the targets of any successor schemes. It is noted that there is a requirement for a balanced policy driven plan, based on sound, equitable, and inclusive policies catering for all housing and community needs. Many submissions point to the need for the Council to take a more active role in the delivery of social housing and the need for more social housing.

Many submissions seek a new and better vision for the County that captures more of the transition that the county needs to make to develop in a sustainable way, and suggest that issues like 'competitiveness' are a function for commercial enterprises and have no place in a development plan. The need for meaningful community engagement and investment in social enterprises is also seen as critical to the development of sustainable, healthy and socially engaged communities.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

Having regard to the ambitious growth targets provided for in the NPF/RSES, and the evolving position arising from the revised Local Government Arrangements in Cork, it is considered the development of new strategic planning and economic development structures will need careful attention and consideration during the preparation of the Draft Plan to help ensure the delivery of "a whole of Cork" response to the challenges posed and opportunities arising from the new planning policy and infrastructure delivery landscape.



The Government's plan, Rebuilding Ireland-Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness aims to double the annual level of residential construction, while making the best use of the existing housing stock and laying the foundations for a more vibrant and responsive private rented sector. Under each of the five pillars housing will be required to cater for existing and changing population requirements, such as social and affordable housing, student housing, renewal/ upgrade and replacement of existing stock, smaller families, an ageing population, and that adult children are living at home longer, with resultant requirements for additional housing responses.

The housing policy response which will form the corner stone of both the Core Strategy and the County Development Plan itself will be informed by the work currently underway as part of the Housing Strategy and the Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA). In making this County Development Plan, the County Council have a key role to play in co-ordinating and facilitating the delivery of enough serviced housing land to meet current and future needs for a diverse group of people in a currently dysfunctional housing market.

The Council will continue to actively undertake a leadership role to progress and secure the Development Plan and Housing Strategy policies and objectives. In providing this leadership role, the Council will foster a collaborative approach with citizens, stakeholders, sectoral interests, and adjoining authorities to achieve collective support and successful implementation of the Plan. The Council are fully aware that successful implementation of a significant number of the policies and objectives of the Plan will necessitate on-going collaboration and a shared ambition across a range of agencies and stakeholders.

The NPF targets for the delivery of housing raise a significant challenge in terms of the current housing market, the issue of viability and impacts of the NPF which is acting as a disruptor. Measures to bring the required number of sites to the market are limited at local authority level at present. This needs to be clearly recognised and additional stimulus measures and resources provided to ensure such constraints are addressed. This matter will be explored further during the preparation of the draft plan and the Council will continue to work with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and all other stakeholders in order to address these challenges.

As noted at the outset, the County Council are obliged to make this plan so that it is consistent with the population and jobs targets set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework, its Associated Roadmap and the RSES and the County Council have no legal power to independently change or redistribute them. At a sub-county level there are two main high-level figures, the Cork MASP and the Remainder of the County and these figures must be consistent with the higher order plans.

The preparation of the settlement chapters of the plan will pay close attention to the available capacity within the Main Towns to cater for all development to ensure that as a Municipal District, or perhaps at a Strategic Planning Area level, the relevant targets are achievable. Based on past performance these targets seem wholly achievable, and it is considered reasonable to expect that the future rates of growth within the new county area can be achieved in the period to 2040, provided they are supported with the necessary investment in infrastructure needed to facilitate development.



It will be crucially important that the new approaches to the zoning of land as outlined in the NPF and the RSES provide a robust land supply to cater for a currently estimated 385,279 population requiring about 22,505 additional units over the plan period (to 2028). This will require a land supply which will in the first instance aim to deliver the lands in Tier One (as defined in the NPF) as the existing ready to go infrastructure and also set the foundations for a focused effort to underpin the infrastructure which can be achieved over the lifetime of the plan to deliver the remaining units. At this point in the review it should be noted that it is very likely that some lands will not be required for residential use in this plan cycle, and while infrastructure is a key determining factor it will be balanced with the other high level criteria including placemaking, environmental issues and ensuring that the Council meets its requirements in relation to compact urban growth.

**The critical issue in securing the required level of development in the coming decade concerns the delivery of essential transport and water services infrastructure rather than the identification of additional land and the bringing to market of these lands.**

Cork County Council has a strong track record in supporting growth in our towns and villages which is highlighted in the strong population growth in our Census Settlements as shown in Table 1.4. This shows that our towns and villages have performed much more strongly than other towns and villages in the Southern Region. In order to continue to achieve strong growth across our settlement network we will need the ongoing support of the key infrastructure stakeholders IW, NTA and TII. Cork County Council welcome the recent IW Initiative under the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme which will provide funding to upgrade water services infrastructure for towns and villages across the County. The Council also welcomes the strong support for our towns and villages in the Town Centres First Policy set out in the recently published Programme for Government and will endeavour to work with all stakeholders to ensure strong implementation of this policy.

**Table 1.4 Growth Trends in Census Settlements**

Census Town Population	Cork County			Southern Region		
	No of towns	Total Persons and % of Total census town population	Growth/Decline Trends 2011-2016	No of towns	Persons and % of Total census town population	Growth/Decline Trends 2011-2016
10,000+	4	53,525 / 32.2%	100% growing Growth rate 5.5%	16	583,235 or 61%	87% growing 13% declining
5,000 to 9,999	6	37,709 / 22.7%	100% growing Growth rate 4.3%	15	109,271 or 11%	80% growing 20% declining
1,000-4,999	18	40,535 / 24.4%	78%growing * 22% declining* Growth rate 3.6%*	70	149,129 or 16%	77% growing 23% declining
500-999	26	18,190/ 11%	85% growing 15% declining Growth rate 9.6%	94	60,050 or 6%	67% growing 33% declining
Less than 500	56	16,097/ 9.7%	73% growing 27 % declining Growth rate 8.2%	201	56,350 or 6%	54% growing 46% declining

*\*Four towns in this category recorded a decline in population. In three cases (Clonakilty, Macroom and Bantry), the recorded decline is due to a change to the census boundary. When the same geographic boundaries are used for 2011 and 2016 there was actually an increase in population. Millstreet was the fourth town to record a small decline of 19 persons.*



RSES objectives RPO 3 and RPO 26 refer to the need to 'identify settlements which can play a role at a sub-regional level to drive the development of their areas'. The review of the settlement network will include consideration of how best to strengthen the network including identifying additional higher growth towns and looking at potential of clusters of towns which can complement each other where the infrastructure capacity is available or planned to act as engines of growth for their surrounding hinterlands.

The draft plan will need to consider a sustainable policy response to the need to encourage housing development in the smaller towns and villages where there is a demand but limited housing development taking place due to infrastructural deficits or market reasons. See also Rural Housing.

In County Metropolitan Cork the Monard SDZ is identified in the NPF as a key future growth enabler for Cork. The Monard SDZ's role in delivering successfully the required population growth targets for Metropolitan Cork is a significant opportunity but delivery will be challenging. In order to overcome these challenges, the Council will require the support of other key infrastructure stakeholders in order to deliver on the vision for the Monard SDZ.

The Core Strategy will also reflect the importance of jobs led growth set around developing the future potential of Cork Harbour, the Strategic Employment Areas, Key Towns, County Towns, Villages and Rural Areas. The Core Strategy will support a spatial jobs strategy which will show how both population and jobs growth will be delivered over the plan period and beyond. This will also assist in supporting the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure and tackling climate change.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) Accordingly, the Draft Plan will incorporate an evidence based Core Strategy that will accord with the provisions set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Regional Assembly and current Core Strategy Guidelines (2010) and any new Guidelines that may emerge between now and the publication of the Draft Plan. The population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner. It should be noted that since the publication of the NPF, NPF Roadmap and the RSES there has been considerable change in many areas as a consequence of the pandemic (remote working etc) which may lead to new development trends which were not a factor when current national and regional frameworks and strategies were prepared. Therefore, it is important that these potential emerging trends are recognised, and their implications considered carefully in preparing the draft plan.
- b) It is recommended that the Draft Plan will include policies and objectives to promote and support all of the relevant National Policy Outcomes as contained in the National Planning Framework, especially in relation to 'Compact Growth, Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, Sustainable Mobility, and Transition to low carbon and climate-resilient society'.



- c) It is recommended that the Settlement Strategy for the County will be reviewed having regard to the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, current Core Strategy Guidelines (2010), any emerging Guidelines and will accord with the Settlement Hierarchy as indicated in the RSES by supporting the development of the
- Metropolitan Area (Carrigaline, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Midleton, Monard SDZ and Passage West).
  - Key Towns of Mallow and Clonakilty.
  - Towns and Villages with populations over 1,500.
  - Rural including villages with populations of less than 1,500 and the countryside.
  - Networks (groupings on towns / villages).
  - Wider changes.

The settlement network review will have regard to emerging policy guidelines around County Development Plans/Core Strategies and the future roles of existing settlements below Key Town level will be given careful consideration including an enhanced role for Bantry as highlighted in the RSES.

- d) It is also recommended that the policies regarding Active Land Management form a central role in the determination of the Core Strategy in line with government guidance and in particular:
- **National Policy Objective 72a** which requires that 'Planning authorities will be required to apply a standardised, tiered approach to differentiate between i) zoned land that is serviced and ii) zoned land that is serviceable within the life of the plan.'
  - **National Policy Objective 72b** which requires that 'When considering zoning lands for development purposes that require investment in service infrastructure, planning authorities will make a reasonable estimate of the full cost of delivery of the specified services and prepare a report, detailing the estimated cost at draft and final plan stages.' The Council will continue working with other stakeholders to provide estimates of the infrastructure costs for inclusion in the draft plan.
  - **National Policy Objective 72c** which requires that 'When considering zoning land for development purposes that cannot be serviced within the life of the relevant plan, such lands should not be zoned for development.'

In the absence of National Guidelines on how to implement these requirements the draft plan will have to carefully consider how best to frame the draft core strategy to ensure that there is an adequate supply of zoned serviced land available to meet the population and housing targets.

- e) It is recommended that the Draft Plan will consider appropriate measure to meet the requirements of **National Policy Objective 3c** of the National Planning Framework which relates to requiring at least 30% of future homes that are targeted in settlements will be located within the existing built-up footprint of these settlements in an effort address compact development and reduce any potential for unsustainable urban sprawl. Regeneration/Opportunity sites will also be identified in the Draft Plan. Guidance on how to deliver the 30% is still awaited. Therefore, in preparing the Draft Plan the Council will



consider a range of options including infill sites, brownfield land, reuse/redevelopment of existing buildings, greenfield residentially zoned and greenfield not residentially zoned sites which could deliver compact growth.

- f) Rural places make a significant contribution towards regional and national development in economic, social and environmental terms and the draft plan will set out policies and objectives to further support rural areas in this role.
- g) It is recommended that the Draft Plan will set out policies and objectives to drive the re-development of Brownfield/infill sites as 'Opportunity Sites' to be identified, with emphasis on place making. In addition, the Council will, when appropriate, apply for funding under various funding streams to facilitate the regeneration of town/village centres. The Council will continue to advocate for additional funding and activation measures to deliver on the targets that will be set out in the draft plan.
- h) The draft Core Strategy will also set out the allocation of jobs across the County with the aim of delivery sustainable jobs led population growth and building on the County's strong employment assets.



## Key Issue 2: Housing Density and Placemaking

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The Background Document relating to Settlements and Placemaking looks in detail at the issues of density, placemaking and understanding the urban structure of the county. These are now essential tools in the delivery of compact growth and ensuring at least 30% of future growth is assigned to the built-up envelop of existing settlements. This requires an increased emphasis on a policy shift towards regeneration and the devising of policies to encourage a greater proportion of housing delivery within urban sites and within the existing building stock.

#### Housing Density

Housing Density is a key element in securing compact growth and more efficient use of land across the settlement network. The Background Document provided a detailed analysis of the existing density policy and application of density standards across the network of Settlements within the Local Area Plan zoning regime. The Document suggested that there is a need to review the existing approach to density in the County Development Plan to better reflect current government policy.

Key issues for the Plan Review included:

- How does the Plan deliver a tailored approach to settlements with populations above /below the 5,000-person threshold, and those with high quality public transport provision? This may require a different set of density standards for locations identified for significant growth under the NPF and RSES (i.e. Metropolitan Cork, Key Towns of Mallow and Clonakilty) and the rest of the County.
- The use of density to create a clear urban structure. This would involve promoting a tiered approach to density within settlements – i.e. density should be higher at the core and declines as one moves to the suburbs and the edge to achieve a clear urban hierarchy.
- How do we achieve higher density standards generally on centrally located sites within all our towns? Do we need a multi- pronged approach including more High and Medium A category zonings and Living over the Shop Initiatives etc?
- Within High Quality Public Transport Corridors, what shape should our new density approach take? The guidelines indicate a minimum of 50/ha within 500m of a bus stop or 1km of a train station.
- Zoning land in appropriate locations that delivers a greater mix of uses which generates more vibrant, sustainable development and supports sustainable travel.

The Consultation Document goes on to suggest a revised approach to Density is needed and may consider the following issues:

- Adjusting the density range upwards in the Medium A category.



- Encourage higher density along high quality public transport corridors to deliver integrated land-use and transportation development. This could include lands which may be currently zoned town centre or existing built up area.
- Within each Strategic Planning Area, review the quantum and distribution of land zoned for Medium A and Medium B Density development, having regard to the size of the settlement and the location of the lands / suitability for development. The guidelines would indicate that Medium B Density (15-25/ha) should be applied in more limited circumstances than currently provided for by the LAPs.
- All the Main Settlements within the County have land identified as “existing built up area”. This typically includes land that has already been built on for a variety of uses, but may also include pockets of greenfield land, under-utilise land, vacant premises suitable for redevelopment, infill sites etc. Consideration could be given to identifying significant sites for specific zoning as part of the overall approach to delivering compact growth and higher density residential development within the core of the towns and guidelines to ensure new development contributes to the built environment.
- Consideration could also be given to prioritising the redevelopment of central brownfield sites and backland development which link to the core as an essential part of the sequencing of future development. These can help create new streets or urban quarters within our settlement network, improving the overall vitality and attractiveness of our settlements.
- Under the NPF, at least 30% of new housing units are to be developed within the built envelope of our towns. This focus on urban renewal/ regeneration and tackling vacancy will support the delivery of higher densities within our urban settlements and a tailored urban design response to its urban context.
- Intensification of uses in some areas and promoting more mixed-use development also needs to be considered.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions:

A number of different viewpoints on the future approach to housing density have emerged as follows:

- Current flexible approach to density taken in the current CDP is supported and requests that it be carried forward into the new Plan
- The application of high and medium density in Cork is not the same as Dublin as we do not have the frequency or level of public transport needed to sustain the application of higher densities.
- Argues for a flexible response to density, with higher density objectives focussed within Metropolitan Cork. Outside public transport corridors, densities of 30-50 units/ ha should be considered. Demographics, viability and market demand also need to be considered.
- The differing approach to the application of density standards by CCC and An Bord Pleanála has resulted in uncertainty in the planning process for applicants.
- Careful consideration is needed in selecting what sites / areas are to be zoned for high density.



- Viability is a prerequisite for the delivery of residential units, apartments are currently less viable in Cork as build cost is currently marginally higher than the sale value and exceeds that of conventional housing.
- High density zoning requirement in the new County Development Plan needs to be an indicative threshold with some degree of flexibility to reflect national guidance, a proposal's viability, and allow for the specific local circumstances of a site to be taken into account.
- It needs to be clear that increased densities do not mean increased apartment living.
- Town centre densification and the consolidation of existing built up areas that are walking and cycling distance to all local services and amenities should be the main priority of the plan.
- Increased building height and density should only proceed where infrastructure and services are in place.

### Government Policy

Since the last County Development Plan a number of new policy documents and Guidelines have been published to help deliver more focussed, high quality and higher density development in the right locations that can help shift our reliance on unsustainable travel and deliver more climate resilient and adaptable places.

#### *National Planning Framework*

The National Planning Framework (NPF) makes provision for population growth of an additional 340,000 - 380,000 people in the Southern Region. The majority of the region's growth has been allocated to the Cork City and County which equates to an additional 226,620 people or 60% of the Region's growth.

The NPF's sets out ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) or priorities to guide future development. These will be implemented through the Investment priorities detailed in the National Development Plan. Compact Growth is one of these future planning priorities. NPF requires a major new policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements, rather than the continual expansion and sprawl of settlements out into the countryside. The target is for at least 30% of all new housing to be delivered within the built-up footprint of existing settlements, including infill and/or brownfield sites. The rest of our homes will continue to be delivered at the edge of settlements and in rural areas.

This requires a policy response to ensure new development in urban areas responds to its local context appropriately, delivers a range of densities to support local services, promotes sustainable travel modes and helps to optimise the existing building stock and tackle vacancy and under-utilised land. The NPF acknowledges the need for a range of strategies to achieve more balanced and sustainable growth and that a tailored approach is needed to best position settlements for their new roles. In particular the NPF highlights the need to:

- Encourage population and employment growth in towns of all sizes that are strong employment and services centres, where there is potential for sustainable growth;
- Need to identify new roles and functions for smaller urban centres experiencing decline, and improve their local infrastructure and amenities;



- Where areas have already experienced rapid expansion, need to facilitate investment to address any deficits in amenities, services, sustainable transport links or employment opportunities to serve existing populations;
- A renewed emphasis on achieving urban infill / brownfield development;
- Targeting regeneration and rejuvenation.

*Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)*

These Guidelines set out a two tiered approach to density. The Guidelines advocate the highest densities in settlements over 5,000 population, and along high quality public transport routes, and advocate lower densities in settlements with populations in the range of 400 – 5000 population. It indicates that, within cities and larger towns (towns with 5,000 or more people), the following are appropriate locations for higher densities:

- City & Town Centres
- 'Brownfield' sites (within city & town centres)
- Public transport corridors
- Inner suburban/infill
- Institutional lands
- Outer suburban/'Greenfield' sites

Within County Cork, the following locations have a population of 5,000 or more people and fall to be considered under this aspect of the guidelines:

- Mallow
- Bandon
- Carrigaline
- Cobh
- Fermoy
- Midleton
- Passage West
- Youghal
- Kinsale
- Carrigtwohill

In addition, a number of settlements, although their current population is less than 5,000, may grow to a population in excess of that figure over the lifetime of the plan. Therefore, although not formally falling under the remit of this section of the Guidelines, it is considered that some consideration needs to be given to their application in these locations. These locations could include are:

- Clonakilty
- Bantry
- Monard



Public Transport Corridors The main considerations identified in the guidelines are:

- The State seeks to maximise the return on its investment in public transport services by encouraging sustainable development, including higher densities in these corridors.
- The phasing of major residential development in tandem with new public transport infrastructure should be considered.
- Walking distances from stations and bus stops should be used to define these corridors. Increased densities should be promoted as follows:

Bus stop	400/500m
Light Rail/Rail Station	1,000m

- Public transport capacity (e.g. the peak hour service frequency) should be taken into account.
- In general, minimum net densities of 50 dwellings/ha should be applied within these corridors with the highest densities being applied at rail stations/bus stops and decreasing with distance away from these points.
- Minimum densities should be specified in local area plans and maximum, rather than minimum, parking standards should reflect proximity to public transport facilities.

Outer Suburban/'Greenfield' sites: The main considerations identified in the guidelines are:

- This category includes open lands on the periphery of cities and larger towns requiring the development of new infrastructure and social facilities etc.
- The greatest efficiency in land use within this category will be achieved by providing net residential densities in the range of 35-50 dwellings/ha (involving a variety of house types where possible) and such densities should be encouraged.
- Development at net densities less than 30 dwellings should generally be discouraged.

Provision for Lower Densities in Limited Cases: To facilitate a choice of housing types within areas, limited provision may be made for lower density schemes, provided that within a neighbourhood or district as a whole, average densities achieve any minimum standards recommended above.

### *Government Policy – Small Towns & Larger Villages*

The government intends these policies to apply to towns and villages of less than 5,000 but more than 400 persons and the main issues are:

- Development should be plan led.
- New development should contribute to compact towns and villages.
- Higher densities are appropriate in certain locations including:
  1. Locations close to gateways and Hubs designated under the NSS that are served by planned or existing high-quality public transport corridors.
  2. Locations where higher densities contribute to the enhancement of the town or village.



- Lower densities can be acceptable where they offer an alternative to urban generated housing.
- The scale of new development should be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

Government Policy advocates the delivery of compact growth and the application of higher densities in order to encourage more efficient land use and infrastructure investment patterns and particularly to create conditions more favourable to the increased use of public transport.

In County Cork there has been some important public investment in transport infrastructure, especially the delivery of the Cork Suburban Rail Network, which currently links Cork with the Metropolitan Towns of Cobh, Carrigtwohill and Midleton, and, in future, is intended to serve Monard Strategic Development Zone. Also, there have been significant improvements to the bus service in parts of Metropolitan Cork with future planned investment and public transport improvements under CMATS.

The challenge for the new County Development Plan is to develop policies for housing density that can respect the Governments wish to deliver a sound return on infrastructure investment, particularly in relation to public transport, provide flexibility for developers to adapt to new market conditions post Covid-19 pandemic and broaden the range of house types that can be built on zoned land so that, in future, more households will be attracted to locate in the County's towns. It should be noted that housing densities across the county will vary and that different approaches will be required in different areas.

The Ministerial Guidelines issued under s 28 of the Act indicate that higher densities are potentially applicable in three categories of location found within County Cork:

- i. Town Centres
- ii. Public Transport Corridors
- iii. Outer Suburban/'Greenfield' Sites

So far as **Town Centres** are concerned, none of the submissions received have suggested that higher densities are not generally appropriate. Indeed, the Government's advice is that there should be no upper limit on the number of dwellings that may be provided on town centre sites, subject to certain safeguards. The Urban Capacity Study has identified various opportunities within the existing building stock and within the Existing Built Up Area where interventions can deliver increased densities at the heart of our towns. A number of submissions support this evidence-based approach.

With regard to **Public Transport Corridors**, the criteria set out in the Ministerial Guidelines issued under S28 of the Act suggest that a number of locations within the Metropolitan area of County Cork have the potential to accommodate higher densities on the basis of their proximity to public transport services. The main location where higher densities could be considered on public transport grounds are those parts of Metropolitan Cork where bus services achieve a 15 min frequency in peak hours (e.g. Carrigaline and some adjoining areas). CMATS has provided an updated public transport strategy for Metropolitan Cork based on Transport Orientated Development and assumes the application of high densities close to existing or planned railway stations or bus stops.



Although there has been significant public investment in rail infrastructure in the corridor between Cork and Midleton/Cobh (including Carrigtwohill) the current peak hour service frequency on many parts of this route is only 30mins, with an hourly service outside peak hours. Also, all the public transport serving these locations is inter-urban in its nature and none of these locations currently benefit from any significant public transport services within their own urban area. Therefore, the application of higher densities in these areas will be challenging and require careful consideration.

The **Outer Suburban/'Greenfield' Sites** category includes relatively large scale development proposals on the edge of large towns (where the County Council's practice in the past has been to prepare masterplans or other site-specific plans to address detailed site planning and density issues) and where significant new infrastructure is required and the main locations with the potential to fall within this category are:

Carrigaline (Shannon Park)  
Carrigtwohill (Land North of the Railway)  
Cobh  
Mallow  
Midleton (Waterrock)

The Ministerial Guidelines suggest that average net densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings/hectare should be encouraged and net densities of less than 30 dwellings/hectare should be discouraged and that these densities can be achieved whilst also achieving the construction of a variety of house types.

Several submissions have raised concerns that the proposed changes in density will not meet market demands and will therefore not be viable. It is highlighted that the issue of viability needs to be a factor in considering new policy approaches to density. Site costs and construction costs in Dublin and Cork are not the same. The issue of viability is dictated by a combination of hard costs (Material costs/ labour) and soft costs (VAT, local authority contributions etc). These are complex and multifaceted issues which will be acknowledged as part of the Plan Review process. In addition, while planning and density policy should be used to influence and change market demands, it is a fact that cultural, lifestyle and placemaking differences across the country are also factors that need to be considered as important influencers of housing density and market choice.

Some submissions suggest that unrealistically high-density objectives in towns may increase the development pressure in rural locations instead of having the desired impact of promoting compact development. Several submissions have requested that densities should respond to the site context and be assessed against the qualitative standards in the current Guidelines, focussing on creating a quality-built environment with innovative design solutions. Some submissions have advocated that brownfield locations should be prioritised over edge of town greenfield sites.

The delivery of compact growth could involve the development of **both** greenfield and brownfield lands depending on their location and whether they are contiguous to the town centre.

In order to address these issues, the following broad approach is suggested as part of the Plan Review:

- There is a need to consider how the County Development Plan density thresholds can be adjusted having regard to Government Guidelines. This might entail some adjustment



to the High Density and Medium Density thresholds in the forthcoming Plan. To provide a locally tailored response to the different scales and geographical locations of Settlements in Cork, a tiered density response is advocated as per the Guidelines.

- The successful implementation of national policy on density across the county however is very much dependent on a similar level of public transport service provision for growth towns which are outside of County Metropolitan Cork and, application of similar level of densities to those required to be achieved in County Metropolitan Cork may not be appropriate until such time as sustainable transport provision can support same.
- In order to deliver compact growth and direct residential units to areas in the existing built envelope of our urban centres, there will be a new focus on identifying suitable lands and areas within town centres where higher density development can be achieved and better usage of the existing building stock can be encouraged.
- Analysis of density in Cork County towns highlights that all our historic towns are high density in nature which have been achieved either by the “Living Over the Shop” accommodation or via 2-3 storey terraced housing designed within a perimeter block layout. This will inform part of the response to high density delivery in town centres.
- The issue of viability will be acknowledged as part of the Plan Review process.
- The requirement to deliver at least 30% of new housing units within the built footprint of settlements on brownfield land/ existing built up areas and the potential proposed adjustments to the density thresholds will result in the need for less greenfield land within the settlement network. The Draft Plan will consider a range of options to deliver on this target.
- The approach to car parking requirements for infill, brownfield, town centre developments will need to be carefully considered to ensure that it is not a constraint on the delivery of such developments. The resolving of this issue is strongly linked in part to the need to deliver sustainable transport options across the whole settlement network.

## Placemaking

Placemaking is not a new concept but the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial Economic Strategy have placed a renewed emphasis on its importance as a key tool to deliver functional and attractive settlements, designed to the human scale. Successful places are designed, built and managed with an attention to quality and puts the human experience at the heart of the design process. At its essence, it is about the layout, design and management of the built environment and public realm, how the buildings and spaces relate to each other and ensuring that places are attractive and enticing, thereby strengthening the connection between people and the places they live, supporting a greater sense of ownership, community values and activity. How future development is planned is intrinsically linked to peoples’ quality of life and therefore, the Plan Review will provide a set of policy objectives and design guidance to ensure new development contributes positively to the built environment.

National planning policy places a strong emphasises on developing sustainable communities and Placemaking and the development of sustainable communities are mutually supportive. The renewed focus on compact growth requires a shift in the way we plan our urban centres and demands a more tailored approach to placemaking and the planning and delivery of development



building on the significant progress made to date. On its own, just zoning land for development, is not enough to ensure the delivery of attractive successful places that people will choose to live in. The Development Plan will need to consider what additional criteria can help deliver quality development that reinforces the uniqueness of Cork's diverse places.

The Background Document outlined that successful Placemaking has three main components:

- Harnesses the unique characteristics of each place;
- Improves the quality of life for all;
- Results in sustainable, well-designed homes and communities.

Since the last Plan a new set of National Guidelines has been produced to encourage increased building heights and densities in urban areas (The Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights, 2018). These policies now take precedence over any conflicting policies and objectives of development plans, local area plans and strategic development zone planning schemes.

The main provisions include a presumption in favour of buildings of increased heights of at least 6 storeys at street level within our existing town/ city cores and other urban areas with good public transport accessibility. A strong focus on brownfield land and redeveloping existing under-utilised sites is recommended. Consideration of general building heights of at least 3-4 storeys, coupled with appropriate density in locations outside city and town centres, including suburban locations is also provided for.

General support for increased building heights is also coupled with a need to provide for a balance of uses within our urban areas, rather than focussing on just one or two uses. Mechanisms such as phasing should be considered to manage the redevelopment of a site block with the necessary supporting services (such as shops/ community facilities, education facilities etc.).

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

- Growth of compact settlements must be aligned with infrastructure and facilities that enhances the unique identity and quality of life offer of different places.
- The need for closer alignment between where people live and work is fully supported by RSES objectives. Successful placemaking will require higher densities to increase activity, support local services and support sustainable mobility.
- The RSES supports 10 Minute Towns as a concept and notes urban communities will need sufficient densities to realise the potential of a 10-Minute Town and its benefits for placemaking.
- Local Transport Plans are also important in the delivery of a 10 Minute Town.
- Very few settlements in the county have a building height greater than 3 or 4 storeys.
- Any development higher than 3 storeys should include a requirement for a light/ shadow study.
- Several submissions advocate making towns more attractive by improving the housing stock and providing interventions that promote walking, cycling, age and disability friendly.



- Road safety, traffic speeds and connectivity are raised in a number of submissions relating to lower order settlements.
- The Plan should encourage cost effective housing, address vacancy, encourage more attractive high-density development in urban areas and deliver housing for specialised needs (sheltered housing/ refugees) close to town centres?
- Policy relating to the design of the public realm is encouraged along with pedestrianisation/ priority measures in several settlements.
- A number of submissions advocate that the Council adopts a tree policy for the protection and enhancement of tree provision in the County.
- Sustainable travel modes improve liveability so greenways and blueways are an important element in the Plan Review process.
- Actively prioritise the regeneration and rejuvenation of rural villages and towns through the development of a programme for 'new homes in small towns and villages' and investment in town and village renewal.
- Restates the Government's intention to deliver at least 30% of all new homes targeted in settlements within the existing built-up footprint through infill development and use of brownfield sites and that these will be identified in the core strategy.
- Council needs to make a commitment to use its CPO powers in order to get around the issue of title which it notes is often a complicating factor in many brownfield sites
- Planning policy needs to prioritise brownfield lands over greenfield edge of centre sites.
- Brownfield lands in towns which are currently under-utilised and suitable for densification and redevelopment should be considered in the future planning framework of County Towns.
- The use of the phrase "streets for people" is advocated which puts the human experience at the heart of the policy approach. The Plan should acknowledge the importance of quality public realm, usable and accessible meeting places, green spaces and on-street seating. The Plan should endeavour for every town centre to have a public realm strategy.
- New residential developments should provide for filtered permeability, i.e. provide for walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle access while restricting or discouraging private car through trips.
- All non-residential development proposals should be subject to maximum parking standards;
- In locations where the highest intensity of development occurs, an approach that caps car parking on an area-wide basis should be applied – of relevance to the larger urban areas.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

The National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial Economic Strategic for the Southern Region all highlight the importance of placemaking in the role of planning for future development at a local level. It is noted and strongly supported at a regional level under RPO 31 (RSES Southern Region). It advocates that growth of compact settlements must be delivered in tandem with infrastructure and facilities that enhances the unique identity and quality of life offer of different places. The Placemaking Chapter will incorporate these issues into the forthcoming County Development Plan



Review process along with strategies that allow for the closer alignment between where people live and work.

Successful placemaking will require sustainable higher densities to increase activity, support local services and support sustainable mobility. The Plan Review will include policy supports that align with the RSES 10 Minute Towns concept. The application of densities to zoned land will accordingly need to be sufficient to realise the potential of a 10-Minute Town and its benefits for placemaking. The Plan Review will consider the appropriateness of preparing Local Transport Plans to encourage movement and permeability at a local level in the delivery of a 10 Minute Town.

There will be a renewed focus on regeneration, infill development and brownfield lands as part of the delivery mechanism to deliver more compact and sustainable settlements. New policies and activation measures that have government support are required to encourage better use of the existing building stock (e.g. reutilisation of vacant mixed use premises in town centres as solely residential or renewed mix use premises, supporting infill development and prioritising the development of regeneration and/or opportunity sites will form part of the new urban policy suite.

The Plan will include additional guidance to ensure development respects and contributes to Cork County's unique sense of place. There is an acknowledgement that brownfield lands and densification of existing settlements requires a complex and often diverse multi-agency response. The Plan will consider mechanisms that can help incentivise development in these locations by providing additional guidance or by reviewing planning policy standards/car parking standards/contributions that may be an impediment to development. The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders to resolve issues of title in areas with long standing vacancy/ dereliction will be considered as part of the Council's focus on delivering town centre regeneration, however, it must be recognised that such powers are less efficient to progressing redevelopments than on a willing partnership basis.

The quality of the public realm together with the network of permeable streets and spaces are integral to the function and desirability to be in a place. The function and design of the public realm along with the desire to provide more permeable networks of green modes will be an integral part of the future Placemaking Chapter.

Parking standards have a major impact on the functionality of a place. The Plan Review will for the first time provide a consistent approach to parking standards across the entire County. The existing policy approach will be reviewed having regard to the points raised by Statutory consultees and the desire to balance the needs of different users of the built environment.

The issue of building height and the mixture and sequencing of uses are intrinsically linked to Placemaking and the delivery of viable and vibrant places. In light of the new Guidelines, the Plan Review will need to consider policies and objectives relating to the following:

- A positive disposition towards appropriate assessment criteria that will enable proper consideration of development proposals of increased building heights linked to the achievement of a greater density of development (where existing urban form presents appropriate opportunity).
- Make provisions for actively planning to bring about increased density and height of development within the footprint of our developing sustainable mobility corridors and networks (Metropolitan settlements subject to CMATS).



- Identification and policy support for specific geographic locations or areas where increased building height may be desirable. However, there is a need to recognise that in many towns across the County, 4 to 6 storey buildings, envisaged in the guidelines would not be appropriate given the existing streetscapes and may also not be viable.
- Locations deemed suitable for a comprehensive redevelopment (e.g. may include clusters of taller buildings as a new urban district and which are in excess of 2 ha should be accompanied by appropriate master planning exercises and local planning frameworks to deal with movement, public realm, design and other issues dealt with at a neighbourhood scale rather than at individual site scale.
- Within historic environments, consider whether increased building heights are an appropriate typology or not.
- Careful consideration will be given to providing proper guidance to assess the impacts of high buildings on the visual and architectural character of our towns.

The NTA as part of the response to COVID 19 has allocated over €0.5m for schemes ranging from to pedestrian crossings, footpath/cycleway enhancement/widening, pedestrianisation of streets, conversion of parking spaces to parklets, new plazas, etc. in towns outside Metropolitan Cork. This welcome initiative is very important as it recognises the importance of supporting sustainable travel initiatives across the County. This kind of investment is required to support the move from use of the car to other more sustainable travel modes in particular walking and cycling. The Council will continue to work with other infrastructure stakeholders to expand such initiatives into the future as a key element of improving our public realm and the attractiveness of our town centres.

### Urban Capacity Study

The Urban Capacity Study provided an evidence-based set of urban indicators on land-use, building condition, vacancy, retail data and identification of infill/ opportunity/ regeneration sites within the built envelope of 10 County Towns. The survey of over 3,500 buildings has provided an insight into local issues and opportunities along with a detailed understanding of the urban structure of our historic town centres. The research will inform placemaking policy and land use zoning choices within the settlement network.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions:

A number of submissions have made reference to the Urban Capacity Study and its findings:

- A request is made that the Urban Capacity Study be extended to all towns within the county;
- That units allocated to infill/ brownfield land is evidence-led as per the Urban Capacity Study and should assume no more than 50% of potential units identified as part of the Study;
- The Plan needs to consider how the Urban Capacity Study figures should inform the core strategy, having regard to difficulties delivering infill and brownfield sites.
- TII commends the Urban Capacity Study and advises it should be supplemented with Area Based Transport Assessments and local transport plans.



## Government Policy

The National Planning Framework requires Development Plans to allocate at least 30% of future housing growth to the existing built up envelope of settlements and deliver more compact forms of growth. The data gathered as part of the Urban Capacity Study will inform the application of core strategy figures at a local level and places regeneration and densification of our existing settlements at the forefront of the Plan Review process.

## Chief Executive's Opinion

The National Planning Framework requires Development Plans to allocate at least 30% of future housing growth to the existing built up envelope of settlements. The data gathered as part of the Urban Capacity Study will inform the application of core strategy figures at a local level.

The Study has also provided a deeper understanding on the existing urban structure of Cork County's historic town centres. Evidence has highlighted that the existing design and layout of the historic streetscape and building stock allow for a flexible mixture of uses via a second door access and are an excellent example of high-density development. Policies to protect the existing urban structure and promotes new development that contributes positively to the existing urban environment will be an integral part of the Plan Review Process.

## Chief Executive's Recommendation

### Housing Density

- a) The preparation of the Draft Plan will include consideration of how best to increase densities where considered appropriate while having regard to key considerations such as delivery of compact growth, compliance with national guidelines, availability of high-quality public transport, provision of affordable housing and housing viability.

Key issues to be considered will include:

- The need to align the County Development Plan density thresholds with Government Guidelines so some adjustment to the High Density and Medium Density thresholds will be considered in the plan review. A locally tailored response to the different scales and geographical locations of Settlements in Cork may require a tiered density response as advocated in the Sustainable Residential Density Guidelines.
- In order to deliver compact growth and direct residential units to areas on the existing built envelope of our urban centres, there will be a new focus on identifying suitable lands and areas within town centres where higher density development can be achieved and better usage of the existing building stock can be encouraged.
- Analysis of density in Cork County towns highlights that all of our historic towns are high density in nature which have been achieved in a range of different ways.
- The issue of viability will be acknowledged as part of the Plan Review process.
- The requirement to deliver at least 30% of new housing units on brownfield land and the proposed adjustments to the density thresholds will result in the need for less greenfield land within the settlement network.



## Placemaking

- b) Given the importance given to Placemaking in delivering compact growth and high-quality urban environments it is proposed to have a specific chapter on Placemaking in the Plan which will emphasise its importance across the entire settlement network. New strategic policy will be rooted in the urban design and unique characteristics of Cork County's diverse settlement network.

The Plan will also consider mechanisms to provide additional guidance during the Plan period as a means to deliver appropriate architectural responses and suitable land uses on complex and/or priority sites within the County.

## Urban Capacity Study

- c) The preparation of the Draft Plan will carefully consider how best to include the key learnings from the study and how these can be applied more widely across the settlement network.

It will also inform the selection of sites for housing within the existing built up area of the settlements surveyed that can contribute to the 30% core strategy allocation.



## Key Issue 3: Rural Housing

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

As outlined in the public consultation document, the current rural housing policy, as set out in the County Development Plan 2014, was prepared in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005, which seeks to discourage urban generated rural housing while facilitating rural generated rural housing. Updated rural housing guidelines are awaited to reflect the European Court of Justice Ruling in the 'Flemish Decree' case and how most appropriately to implement rural housing policy as set out in the National Planning Framework.

The background document on Rural Housing was also prepared providing an overview of the Council's current rural housing policy and the main provisions of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005, Circular Letter PL2/2017 and the rural housing provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The background document also outlined a number of policy issues that have been subject to further clarification since the adoption of the 2014 Plan that need to be included in the Draft Plan:

- The interpretation of Nearby landholding in Objective RCI 4-1 – Metropolitan Greenbelt.
- Clarification in relation to Returning Emigrants RCI 4-2, RCI 4-3, RCI 4-4, and RCI 4-5.
- Build First Home – RCI 4-1, RCI 4-2, RCI 4-3, RCI 4-4, and RCI 4-5.

The background document also identified some emerging issues for the review to consider including:

- Replacement of Rural Dwellings and Refurbishment of Derelict Dwellings in the Countryside – RCI 8-1: This policy will be reviewed in the draft plan to clarify the policy objectives and develop a more robust policy to encourage the reuse and redevelopment of derelict properties.
- Full Time Farmers: Large numbers of farmers are not full-time farmers due to the need to supplement their income. Part time farming is provided for in 4 of the 6 rural area types, there are two exceptions to this, the Metropolitan Cork Greenbelt and rural areas under strong urban influence and Town Greenbelts. Meeting farmer's housing needs whether full time or part time will be given further consideration in the preparation of the draft plan;
- Infill Development – Issues in relation to this and ribbon development will be considered further;
- Other Locations & Village Nuclei; In the absence of water services or meaningful public transport services for many of the smaller settlements, and the principles of the NPF and the RSES, the sustainability of the current settlement network, and its relationship with the rural housing policy, needs to be considered as part of the review of the CDP.

The Background Document also included some analysis of CSO data on one-off houses granted planning permission annually for each county and indicates a steady rise in the no. of unit's granted



permission between 2013 and 2018.<sup>5</sup> An analysis of the Geodirectory residential postal delivery point for each of the six rural housing areas for the period 2012-2017 was also undertaken. The data indicates that the majority of the growth that took place between the period 2012 to 2017 occurred in the Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence at approximately 51%, with the Metropolitan greenbelt accounting for approx. 32% of overall growth. The Tourism and Rural Diversification Area accommodated 17% growth in the same period.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

It is considered that the current rural housing policy is too restrictive, particularly in relation to the criteria used to determine a person's eligibility for consideration for an individual dwelling, with some submissions making specific reference to being refused planning permission.

The need to have an involvement in farming or the requirement to have a prior residency in a rural area are cited as examples of policies that are too restrictive. A number of submissions expressed the view that the council should adopt a positive approach to allowing family members construct houses on family owned lands in rural areas while others indicate that the 'desire', rather than the 'need', of people to live in a rural area should be accommodated.

Some submissions suggest that people who reside in villages should be allowed to build in the rural area around a village if there is no site within the village. Issues around affordability of housing, competition for sites for second homes / holiday homes and the costs of making a planning application were also mentioned. The lack of infrastructure in villages, particularly water services, is also highlighted as a constraint on people's ability to develop sites in villages.

Other submissions note that a 'local's only' policy conflicts with EU principle of work, movement, and habitation freedom and has not strengthened rural communities, that the Council is under delivering on its total housing targets and the number of single rural dwellings granted is too high and is unsustainable.

Some submissions suggest that no more than 10% of future population growth should be allocated to villages and rural areas and the main focus should be on strengthening the towns. In contrast other submissions suggest the potential for increased demand for rural living (smaller towns, villages and countryside) in the future in response to Covid 19, and noted the potential challenges faced by the local authority in addressing the requirements of the Flemish Decree and catering for the housing needs of those with social or economic need to live in the countryside.

Submissions also highlight difficulties in moving between rural area types depending on where land within the ownership of families is located relative to the family home. Furthermore, the need for a more fine grained approach to the definition of rural area types was considered necessary, allowing for more local variations to be identified. The overall size of the North and East Cork Strong Rural Area is referenced as an example in a submission.

A number of submissions also requested that the needs of farmers both part-time and full-time should be reflected across all 6 rural housing types.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the CSO figure for single dwellings granted also includes single dwellings granted within the boundary of settlements.



A number of submissions expressed support for additional GB 1-2 areas in the county and for GB-12 areas being allowed to provide lower density residential options (multiple house schemes). It was also suggested that the forthcoming draft plan should use a criteria-based approach to identify GB 1-2 lands under the headings of deliverability, accessibility and consolidation.

A number of submissions were received relating to the topic of rural employment and enterprise highlighting a range of issues in relation to the provision of new rurally based business & employment generating enterprises, and also the challenges with respect to long established uses in rural areas, particularly in greenbelt locations. In this regard, a submission requested that the council provide a clear approach to home-based business and provide further clarity on how applications that are proposing a rural business are to be assessed.

The potential opportunities and challenges with respect to recent trends of Remote Working and impacts on rural areas was also raised in several submissions. The potential to revitalise small rural communities and encourage the establishment of decentralised business hubs also benefitting scattered settlement patterns is highlighted. E-Working or a home-based economic activity due to advanced technology and the benefits in terms of time and commuting costs were considered an incentive for rural areas in some submissions. It is requested that these small-scale home-based applications in rural areas should be considered positively by Cork County Council.

A range of additional issues highlighted in the submissions are as follows;

- Clarifications of the rural housing policy text as set out in Section 2.7 of the Background Paper are welcomed;
- Further text in relation to ribbon development is considered necessary;
- Increases in Development Charges for rural dwellers is discouraged as they cannot access the same level of amenities and services as people living in urban areas;
- Clarification regarding the replacement dwelling policy is requested to allow greater flexibility in terms of relocating the position of the house within the site;
- Traditional rural housing cluster developments should be accepted;
- Promotion of sustainable house design is requested - indigenous landscaping & biodiversity, and siting of new development appropriate to rural areas.

## Government Policy

### Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines published in 2005 seek to support housing development patterns in rural areas that are sustainable, and to this end the guidelines state that, policies and practices of Planning Authorities should seek to:

- Ensure that the needs of rural communities are identified in the development plan process and that policies are put in place to ensure that the type and scale of development in rural areas, at appropriate locations, necessary to sustain rural communities, is accommodated.
- Manage pressure for overspill development from urban areas in the rural areas closest to the main cities and towns such as the gateways, hubs and other large towns.



The guidelines state that an important task in addressing these aims is identifying the future needs of rural communities and setting out policies for acceptable development in the development plan. The guidelines require Planning Authorities to support the following overarching policy objectives:

- (a) Support development needed to sustain and renew established rural communities;
- (b) Ensure that the planning system guides development to the right locations in rural areas thereby protecting natural and man-made assets in those areas;
- (c) Analyse the different types of economic, social and physical circumstances of different types of rural areas and to tailor planning policies to respond to these differing local circumstances;
- (d) Closely monitor development, population, economic and other trends in rural areas – take a more analytical based and plan led approach in order to respond to these issues and identify areas at risk from population decline and areas where significant individual housing activity may be occurring.

The guidelines state that it is 'vitaly important that a process of research and analysis be carried out into population and development trends in rural areas' before planning authorities draft the written statement of the development plan which should include the identification of the location and extent of 'Rural Area Types', to include: Areas under Strong Urban Influence, Stronger Rural Areas, Structurally Weak Areas and Areas with clustered settlement patterns. This approach was followed in the preparation of the County Development Plan 2014.

#### Circular Letter PL 2/2017 – Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines / Local Needs Criteria

The Department issued the above circular in May 2017 in response to the Flemish Decree case by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 2013. Further to the ECJ judgement, the European Commission expressed concerns, with regard to the requirements incorporated in local authority development plans that persons wishing to apply for planning permission for a house in designated rural areas should fulfil a prior minimum residency requirement in the rural area in question, or have familial ties to that specific rural area. Such requirements are considered to be an unjustified restriction on fundamental freedoms under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular the freedom of movement of citizens. The circular noted that requirements that planning applicants have occupational or employment related ties to the rural area in question are not considered problematical as such criteria are non-discriminatory between locals and non-locals.

Local Authorities were advised to defer amending their rural housing policy/local housing need criteria pending the publication of the new guidelines in order to avoid planning authorities adopting different approaches on the matter in the interim. However, these Guidelines have not been published to date. The Department Circular also stated that the new National Planning Framework (NPF) will further assist in informing the revision of the 2005 Guidelines in terms of outlining the overall policy approach for development in Rural Ireland reflecting on the inter-relationships between urban and rural locations including access to employment, housing, services and recreation.

#### National Planning Framework (NPF)

The NPF acknowledges that there are many examples of vibrant rural communities across Ireland in towns and villages, as well as within the open countryside and on our islands, while also acknowledging the challenges being faced by rural communities. The role of rural towns as local



drivers for their surrounding area, supporting homes, jobs, clusters of services and transport hubs is recognised. The NPF recognises that changing settlement patterns have resulted in increased building vacancy within many towns and villages, adversely impacting on the vitality of these settlements. NPF objectives seek to strengthen and diversify rural towns to be a focus for local housing and employment growth, based on regeneration and development of vacant and derelict sites and utilising new technology and digital connectivity. The decline of villages also needs to be tackled by sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.

The National Planning Framework recognises that there is a continuing need for housing provision for people to live and work in Ireland's countryside. It states that careful planning is required to manage demand in our most accessible countryside around cities and towns, focusing on the elements required to support the sustainable growth of rural economies and rural communities. The NPF specifies that in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under influence, and other rural areas. This is achieved by monitoring trends particularly in relation to population and economic growth or decline, to ensure a plan led approach can be adopted to respond to these trends and challenges.

The following are the National Policy Objectives relating to Rural Housing in the NPF;

*National Policy Objective NPO 15:* Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

*National Policy Objective NPO 19:* Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- (a) In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- (b) In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

*National Policy Objective NPO 20:* Project the need for single housing in the countryside through the local authority's overall Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) tool and County Development Plan core strategy processes.

The provisions of the National Planning Framework take account of the ECJ Judgement and requirements of the EU Treaty regarding the freedom of movement of citizens by avoiding the inclusion of criteria that could be considered discriminatory i.e. criteria requiring a local / family connection to the area or a period of prior residency in an area.



Regional Spatial and Economy Strategy (RSES)

The RSES defines Rural Areas as settlements and surrounding rural areas with a population of less than 1,500. The RSES reflects the position of the NPF, that our countryside “is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities.” The NPF and RSES make a distinction between areas under urban influence, i.e. those within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and rural areas outside these catchments where a more flexible approach to rural housing will apply. RSES indicates that the Core Strategy of each County Development Plan should identify areas under strong urban influence in the hinterlands of settlements and set an appropriate rural housing policy response to avoid ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas, support revitalised towns and villages, achieve sustainable compact growth targets and protect the rural resource for rural communities, including people with an established local connection to the area.

RPO 27 addresses the issue of urban-generated housing to restrict the development of rural housing based on clearly defined eligibility criteria. This facilitates the needs of rural communities, whilst controlling pressures for urban-influenced housing demand. The RSES recognises the critical role of rural transport services in providing social and economic connectivity between small villages/rural areas and larger towns. Chapter 6 Connectivity outlines the objectives of the RSES for the provision of rural public transport services to meet the needs of rural communities and support the role of towns and their rural catchments.

RSES objective RPO 27

To support rural economies and rural communities through implementing a sustainable rural housing policy in the Region which provides a distinction between areas under urban influence and other rural areas through the implementation of National Policy Objective 19 regarding Local Authority County Development Plan Core Strategies.

Local authorities shall:

- a. Include policies for the protection of the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements as a key priority within Development plans;
- b. Have regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements; Core Strategies shall identify areas under urban influence and set the appropriate sustainable rural housing policy response which facilitates the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic, social or local exceptional need to live in a rural area and sitting, environmental and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans;
- c. Have regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements, in rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the sustainable provision of single housing in the countryside based on sitting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans;
- d. Provide for flexibility in zoning and density requirements to ensure that rural villages provide attractive easily developed options for housing.

In making provision for local exceptional need in RPO 27, the RSES goes beyond the provisions of the NPF and may conflict with the ECJ Judgement.



The RSES also includes an objective to support the reuse/refurbishment of existing disused and derelict rural dwellings for residential purposes, community or commercial uses and encourage new uses for disused/derelict farm buildings including residential where appropriate, subject to normal planning consideration and compatibility with environmental and heritage protection.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

The Council recognises that supporting sustainable rural communities requires a holistic approach, one which recognises the functional relationship between networks of strong rural towns and villages and their hinterlands. Cork County has a strong rural base with strong rural communities and the continued viability of those communities is a key consideration for the draft plan. The draft plan will seek to support these rural communities by ensuring that rural housing provision is catered for in a sustainable manner.

It is recognised that there is a continuing requirement to meet the housing needs of rural communities and to recognise the diverse range of rural areas in the county, their unique challenges and to tailor the appropriate policy approach to reflect this diversity whilst at the same time protecting the rural environment and meeting other strategic policy objectives .

The draft plan will need to reflect the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and will include an evidence-based Core Strategy informed by the Housing Need Demand Assessment and the Housing Strategy.

The Draft Core Strategy must include figures for rural houses. The Draft Core Strategy will be informed by the preparation of a Joint Housing Strategy including a Housing Need Demand Assessment which will consider rural housing needs over the plan period.

The current County Development Plan policy on rural housing is consistent with the requirements of the 2005 Rural Housing Guidelines. Careful consideration will need to be given to how best to proceed in light of the policies set out in the NPF and in the absence of new rural housing guidelines which have taken account of recent ECJ judgements. It would also be useful to seek clarification from the Department on the continue relevance of the instruction in Circular PL2/2017 of awaiting new guidelines before updating our rural housing policies in light of the NPF and the ECJ Judgement.

Issues raised around the operation and implementation of the current policy over the last 6 years along with issues raised in the submissions will also be considered further in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan will continue to promote policies which support the sustainable development of rural areas and diversification of the rural economy. The issues raised in relation to the existing RCI 4-7 policy on Full-time based Business in rural areas are noted and will merit further consideration having regard to the overall rural development strategy of the draft plan. Furthermore, the draft plan will continue to recognise the requirements of long-established uses as set out in the 2014 CDP, subject to normal planning and sustainable development consideration and other statutory guidelines.

The issues raised in relation to lack of housing options in rural villages, the role of GB 1-2 housing areas and the potential for rural cluster type development will be considered further in the draft



plan having regard to their role / function as set out in a Settlement Hierarchy and Core Strategy. The potential for initiatives to provide alternative to one-off housing which can assist in the delivery of sustainable communities will be considered further as part of the draft development plan.

The draft plan will continue to support sustainable energy efficient rural house design, appropriate siting in the landscape and the protection and management of existing networks of woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character.

### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

It is recommended that the preparation of the draft CDP should consider the following:

- a) Project the need for single housing in the countryside, through the Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) and core strategy processes.
- b) Consider carefully how best to proceed in the absence of new rural housing guidelines that could give policy guidance on how best to proceed having regard to the ECJ Judgement and the NPF/RSES policies.
- c) Have regard to any emerging rural housing policy during the preparation of the draft plan-
- d) Consider how best to provide clearer policy guidance in relation to issues identified in the Section 2.7 of S11 Background document No 3. (replacement dwellings, full time farmers, build first home, returning emigrants, nearby landholding, infill/ribbon development).



## Key Issue 4: Town Centres and Retail

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

Town centres are at the heart of our communities and play a vital role in developing our county to its full potential. Cork has a collection of some of the strongest, most colourful and vibrant towns/villages in the country. All fulfil an important service, commercial and social role for their hinterlands while many are synonymous as tourist destinations of national and international renown. Town centres are dynamic environments and it is important that they reinvent themselves in order to ensure they continue to be attractive. New expectations are being created in terms of value, service, entertainment and experience.

The retail sector is a key element of the economy in terms of employment, economic activity and maintaining the vitality of our towns. Advances in online retailing and other new and evolving retail forms continue to change the retail landscape and challenge town centres. The County Development Plan needs to provide guidance on the pattern of retail development appropriate for the years ahead. The key aim should be to provide efficient and sustainable retail facilities. Over the coming months a retail strategy will be prepared which will inform the draft Cork County Development Plan.

### Summary of the context for Retail/Town Centres

Echoing the vision set out in Chapter 7 of the current Cork County Development Plan 2014 the last number of years has seen a reinterpretation of the role of the town centre with a renewed focus on public realm improvement, the availability of new funding streams, town centre management, enhanced business supports, etc. Although challenging the Covid 19 pandemic has brought the focus on our town centres to the forefront and highlighted the need to make them more people focused, to look at enhancing and making better use of our footpaths and public spaces to allow for the safe movement and interaction of people

Project ACT has seen the initiation of formalised town teams for each town across Cork County Council's eight Municipal Districts with the support of Elected Members and mirrors the proposals in the current County Development Plan 2014. These town teams have a targeted focus of rebuilding the economy and community life in each area.

Just some recent initiatives/guidance documents in Ireland published since the last plan include:

- Town Centre Living Initiative – Department of Rural and Community Development, May 2020
- Creating Places for People – the RIAI Town and Village Toolkit – RIAI/Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2020
- A Framework for Town Centre Renewal – The Retail Consultation Forum

### A Joint Retail Strategy

Cork County Council in conjunction with Cork City Council are beginning a process to prepare a Joint Retail Study and Joint Retail Strategy for the Cork Metropolitan Area for inclusion in their respective



Development Plans. A joint steering group will oversee the project, which will be administered by Cork City Council.

The policy guidance emerging from the Study and Strategy will also be used to inform retail and town centre policies for the settlements outside of Metropolitan Cork as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

The current Joint Retail Study and Strategy for Cork City and Cork County was completed in 2013. The nature and scale of retailing in Ireland and internationally has undergone major changes since then, driven by economic factors but also by changes within the industry itself. Changing consumer behaviour, increased online shopping, and rationalisation within the retail sector are impacting on how retailers operate and engage with their customers. These scenarios create both opportunities and threats for the future of retailing in Metropolitan Cork.

The challenge for the retail study and strategy is to maximise the opportunities to sustain the future viability and vibrancy of the retail centre hierarchy set out in RSES, with Cork City Centre as a Level 1 Centre, followed by the large metropolitan towns and the district centres as Level 2 centres and the smaller towns, neighbourhoods centres villages and local centres as Levels 3, 4, and 5 centres. The study and strategy will need to take account of the context of the profound changes occurring within the retail sector which may require a reimagining of the role and function of our Town Centres.

The Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, April 2012) provide a framework to guide local authorities in preparing retail strategies for incorporation into City and County Development Plans. However, these Guidelines capture a picture of retailing in Ireland in a defined time period and it is necessary to further explore the constantly evolving nature of retail and how it impacts our cities and towns as retail destinations.

The retail study will provide the evidence base for a joint retail strategy for the Cork Metropolitan Area for incorporation into the respective development plans up to the year 2028 and the period covered by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy/Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and associated population targets up to 2031.

### Retail Outlet Centre

The current Cork County Development Plan and Joint Retail Strategy/Study does not provide any specific guidance on retail outlet centres. In order to address this matter Cork County Council commissioned consultants to prepare a Study on the Requirement for Retail Outlet Centres in the Cork Metropolitan Area. (Initially this was a joint study with Cork City Council, however they withdrew from the process after the Inception Meeting with the consultants). This study was then used to support the preparation of Variation No.2 Retail Outlet Centres of the Cork County Development Plan, 2014. This Variation provided a policy framework at a strategic level for a more detailed consideration as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. The Variation was adopted in January 2020. However, the Variation was the subject of a Section 31 Draft Ministerial Direction requesting that Cork County Council not proceed with the Variation. In response to this Draft Direction Cork County Council stated that on planning policy and legal grounds it would not be appropriate to comply with the Draft Direction. The Section 31 process has not been completed to date and a final decision is currently awaited. The Council continues to be of the



opinion that it has followed appropriate planning assessment and process to date on this matter and will continue to bring further clarity to the opportunity for a retail outlet centre in the draft development plan.

### Summary of Principal Issues raised in the submissions

The merits/demerits of town centre locations for modern convenience retail developments and implications of development outside of town centres were raised in a number of submissions.

A number of submissions raised questions in relation to challenges in providing for additional convenience retail floorspace noting that with the requirements of modern retailers a town centre location may not always be a viable option and edge of centre sites may have to be considered. A number of towns were specifically mentioned in the submissions.

One submission noted that a balance must be struck between the overarching 'town centre first' policy impetus, and the practical difficulties of its application at the local level for new stores (particularly of a neighbourhood scale). It outlined that examples already exist in the county where the location of stores outside of the town centre has not resulted in negative impacts on the vitality and viability of towns.

Submissions requested flexible land use zoning objectives that will allow sites to be brought forward for convenience retail development as over prescription can deter potential investment in towns and villages.

The proposal to have Little Island/Eastgate to be designated as a Level 3 Retail Centre or 'Metropolitan Town' in the Retail Strategy/Development Plan was also raised in the submissions.

There was a clear emphasis in those submissions received in relation to town centres that that there was a need to ensure that our town centres into the future need to be liveable, vibrant, resilient and fit for the digital age. The Town Centres First Policy as set out in the new programme for government is advocated as the model to achieve this. Community led regeneration should be at the forefront of town centre renewal. Submissions sought the inclusion of policies/proposals within the plan which would improve the public realm and town centre accessibility, encourage more housing within town centres (particularly for older people) and prioritise the development of brownfield/under used sites as well as a number of other more settlement specific suggestions.

A number of submissions raised concerns regarding out of town retailing, including the recent variation to support a retail outlet centre and the impact that would have on existing town centres and encouraging people to use their cars more.

### Government Policy

Ministerial Guidelines issued under S.28 of the Act in April 2012 – 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' outline 5 key policy objectives which must guide planning authorities in addressing their development planning and management functions, namely:

1. Ensuring that retail development is plan-led;
2. Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development;



3. Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations;
4. Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy; and
5. Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

#### National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework sets out an ambition to deliver more compact and sustainable growth with a focus very much on creating attractive and vibrant places which encourage more town centre living. Re-energising town centres through investment in housing, facilities and public realm is at the heart of this. The National Strategic Outcomes of relevance for town centres include NSO 1 – Compact Growth and NSO 7 – Enhanced Amenity and Heritage.

#### Town Centres First

The new Government in their Programme for Government 2020 'Our Shared Future' is proposing to initiate a Town Centres First policy, modelled on the scheme developed by the Scottish Government, and informed by a Town Centre First pilot project. It proposes to implement a strategic approach to town centre regeneration by utilising existing buildings and unused lands for new development and promote residential occupancy in rural towns and villages using the National Planning Framework as our template.

#### Chief Executive's Opinion

The general thrust of Government Policy (Retail Guidelines 2012) is to ensure that the vitality and viability of town centres is promoted and supported with the sequential approach to retail development as a key component of this. The guidelines also require that retail development must follow the settlement hierarchy of the State and retail development should be appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement or part of the settlement in which it is located as designated by the NPF, relevant regional strategies and development plan core strategies.

The guidelines require Development Plans and their supporting analysis to adopt a vigorous approach to investigate, activate and assist in resolution of impediments to development opportunities in city and town centres. It is envisaged that the Draft Plan will provide further guidance in this area and broad-based guidance appropriate for the principal settlements in line with their status within the settlement hierarchy. The strategy set out will be informed by the preparation of a joint retail study/strategy.

The promotion of town centre vitality is one of the 5 key policy objectives of the Retail Planning Guidelines. As with the previous plan, policies in the next plan will need to ensure new retail development, wherever possible supports the role of town centres as the principle location for shopping activity. In line with the latest guidance and thinking (particularly the governments Town Centre First Policy) it is also the intention of the Draft Plan to include policy and objectives which encourage regeneration, environmental (public realm), transport and accessibility improvements in town centres generally in order to make them more appropriate for today's needs. In particular the objectives are likely to further encourage the concept of a greater holistic management of town centres.



The Council are currently awaiting a decision from the Minister on the Draft Ministerial Direction to Variation No.2 (ROC). In view of the progress made by the Council on the matter of a retail outlet centre and the adopted current policy of the Council, the City Council and County Council are progressing their joint retail strategy without reference to the matter on an agreed basis. In light of this Cork County Council will now accordingly provide a more detailed policy response for the N25 sub catchment which was identified as the most suitable location for such a facility in the County Metropolitan Area.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) Review the retail network for the County having regard to the NPF/RSES and the outcome of the Joint Retail Strategy/Study once finalised.
- b) The objectives to be included in the Draft Plan will be very much aligned with the key policy objectives set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines and will seek to:
  - i. ensure new retail development, wherever possible supports the role of town centres as the principle location for shopping activities;
  - ii. ensure that the continuing vitality and viability of town centres is maintained and enhanced; and
  - iii. ensure provision in the plan for retail activities appropriate to meet the needs of the population targets for 2022.
- c) On foot of the submissions received additional clarity will be brought to text and objectives in the Draft Plan.
- d) Provide more detailed policy and zoning guidance for the provision of a retail outlet centre within the N25 sub catchment.

There were a number of specific issues raised in relation to individual towns. Many of these were not of a strategic nature and will be most appropriately dealt with at individual settlement level in the plan.





## Key Issue 5: Economy and Employment

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The Public Consultation Document and Background Document outline the diverse nature of the economy of the county and the distribution of jobs across urban and rural areas and industrial sectors. The challenges posed by the NPF/ RSES strategy for employment led growth, greater alignment between where people live and work and the need to reduce reliance on private car transport are all discussed, together with the opportunities offered by diversification, technology, and the move to a low carbon, bio and circular economy. The need for strong net inward migration to fill many of the expected new jobs is also outlined.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Many submissions raise issues of relevance to economy and employment. At a strategic level the submissions highlight the need to align the drivers for economic growth with the principles of the RSES settlement strategy (with Metropolitan Cork as a primary driver for economic and population growth) and that *“opportunities for economic growth across the region will be achieved by supporting synergies between talent and place, building on identified assets to strengthen enterprise ecosystems and providing quality jobs, re-intensifying employment in existing urban areas, complemented in the right locations and diversifying local and rural economies”*.

The need for the plan to reflect the five key principles that underline the RSES economic strategy (Smart Specialisation, Clustering and Place-making for Enterprise development, Knowledge Diffusion & Capacity Building) in order to ensure greater economic resilience, and the use of the RESE guiding principles to help identify locations for strategic economic development is also referenced.

In addition, and with particular relevance to the current distribution of the employment land supply across the four Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs), and the estimates of future jobs by SPA as outlined in Background Document No 6, the importance of future growth being jobs lead is highlighted. In this regard the need to review the suitability of the current employment land supply, the need for additional industrial lands in prime locations and the need to protect existing key employment locations while also promoting development in new locations is also highlighted. The importance of place-making for enterprise growth is also referenced.

A number of submissions highlight the need for greater alignment between where people work and live in order to reduce the need to travel and facilitate a greater proportion of trips to work by active and sustainable modes and consequently assist the local authority in achieving its own obligations in terms of climate action under Section 10(2)(n) of the Act.

In contrast to this, a submission from the IDA highlights the potential negative impact on their landholdings, and their ability to attract industry, of a new approach / review of employment zonings which places more emphasis on employment growth aligned to settlements with water services capacity and high quality public transport, or encourages compact growth and more mixed use patterns of development to reduce the need to travel , as many IDA sites are located in areas where there is a lack of public transport and an over reliance on the private car as a means of travel.



Other submissions note that a major factor in Cork's success in attracting manufacturing FDI has been the availability of high quality serviced lands in strategic city environ locations, in particular, Ringaskiddy, Little Island and Carrigtwohill and it is suggested that a strategic review be undertaken of how the plan can specifically support the future growth of the manufacturing sectors and in particular the established clusters of life science, ICT and food technology in the greater Cork region. A review of the quantum, status and suitability of greenfield lands available for short, medium and long term industrial development should be undertaken to inform a road map for re-establishing Cork as the location of choice for high tech manufacturing. It is also requested that the development plan address the challenges facing rural based SME's, and that a holistic approach is required to address these issues. In overall terms, strengthened digital and transport connectivity (including the efficient movement of freight) are areas that need further investment to underpin the key economic drivers.

Submissions received also highlight the need for the adoption of a flexible approach to policy and objectives which will direct the development of enterprise and industry. The requirements of the logistics and distribution facilities sector were referenced in this regard. The preferred locations within the county are discussed and it is suggested that the new CDP should permit this type of development to be directed towards Key Villages that are accessible, support and sustain employment and have sufficient supply of appropriately serviced lands. Key villages such as Watergrasshill, that are strategically located on the national road network, are highlighted to illustrate this point. It is suggested that proposals should be considered based on their planning merits such as; Connectivity to strategic networks, Suitability of Employment Lands, Availability of Infrastructure, Sustainability of proposal.

Submissions reference Cork Harbour as an economic driver (RSES objective Cork MASP PO3) and note the proposal to prepare a Strategic Integrated Framework for Cork Harbour under RPO79 and the opportunity for the development plan to build on its unique strengths whilst protecting the natural habitats through the specific planning framework initiative.

Several submissions also highlighted the potential for remote working opportunities which could be provided in each settlement. It is requested that support hubs should include facilities for education and training delivery to support the business and enterprises within the area/region. Overall, submissions highlight the need for greater support for digital business/ innovation hubs in rural towns which would support SMEs, social enterprise and those who don't have the space to work from home.

Finally, the retention and improvement of connectivity to ensure Cork is an attractive location for future industry and the ongoing need for investment in water services, roads and broadband infrastructure is referenced in many submissions.

#### Rural Economy/Agriculture & Farm Diversification

A broad range of issues were highlighted in the submissions received relating to rural development. There were requests that rural development issues should be given greater emphasis in the development plan in order to reflect the diverse nature of rural areas across the county, including the need for a specific rural chapter in the plan. Several submissions highlighted the importance of



tourism, farming and fishing to the local economy of towns and villages and other rural areas in the county. In this regard submissions argue that the lack of housing and infrastructure is affecting the economic prospects of the rural villages.

The diversification of the rural economy reflected in (NPO21) through tourism, the agri-food sector and the extractive industries (NPO22 and NPO23), was highlighted. The identification of potential to build on the networks identified in the Section 3.4 of the RSES and the policy objectives in section 4.5 rural development was also mentioned in the context of supporting rural development in the county. Furthermore, the alignment between where people live and work, is highlighted is an important consideration for rural locations, which can be achieved between improved rural enterprise and the regeneration of rural towns and villages and improvements to broadband infrastructure.

Rural innovation is a theme supported across of number of submissions underpinning the viability of rural towns, villages, and rural areas to ensure economic resilience and job creation. The importance of digital infrastructure and smart technologies is highlighted, and it is requested that initiatives to be delivered through the Council's Digital Strategy 2020 should be supported in the draft plan. The need for focussed measures promoting Smart Towns/Villages/Communities using innovative solutions to improve their resilience, building on local strengths and opportunities is highlighted.

The potential for rural areas to provide new energy sources, innovation in food production and provision of natural resources is also discussed across a number of submissions and as part of a broader approach to the transition to a low carbon economy. The need for specialist incubation centres supported by the Rural Development Funds and the rollout of the National Broadband Plan is also referenced.

The need for measures to support opportunities for successful and sustainable Gaeltacht areas, where the language, the economy, the community and the environment are intertwined for sustainable economic growth is outlined in a submission from Údarás na Gaeltachta. Other submissions seek support for the development of renewable gas in rural areas, noting that the development of renewable gas production could provide significant economic benefits to the agriculture sector and rural economy.

Other submissions highlight that it is not sustainable to continue with monoculture farming methods given the ongoing loss of biodiversity. Alternative methods such human intensive farming and horticulture, environmental restoration, eco-tourism and community support services are considered necessary. The potential for greater job creation through circular economic initiatives, which also help build community resilience are also outlined. A submission noted that the horticultural sector is underdeveloped, and that Cork is already well placed to further develop in this area, with excellent producers, great farmers markets and innovative and skilled people.

Several submissions discuss the economic role of tourism and suggest that the draft plan should provide further initiatives to support opportunities and expand the tourism economy. In this regard, there is strong support for Fáilte Ireland's tourist routes, and the need to pursue other facilities such as marinas and other accommodation facilities such as camping/glamping etc. Concerns were also raised about the over reliance of some parts of the economy of the county on tourism, and the need



to develop other economic sectors and consider decentralisation of some uses to towns like Bantry, including possibly some Council functions.

The importance of the agricultural sector to the economy and rural communities is highlighted in another submission which seek the Council's continued support for established agri-employment uses and their expansion, while also supporting the redevelopment of brownfield sites in recognition of their potential to support regeneration of towns and villages.

A number of submissions in relation to businesses located in rural areas, and greenbelts in particular have sought a positive strengthening of existing Objectives EE 9-1, ECON 4-4 and RCI 5-6 which deal with business development in rural areas, industrial uses and long established uses located within greenbelt areas.

### Forestry/Fishing & Aquaculture

Submissions highlighted that marine tourism and fishing play a major role in local economies. It was noted that these industries need to be nurtured to ensure their survival and further development as they are considered sustainable businesses. The need to support aquaculture, commercial fisheries and related enterprises within the County is also referenced and Bantry was cited in particular in this regard. It also highlighted the potential of alternative sites for this type of development, such as quarries where a beneficial use of worked out lands can be achieved. It was noted that in order to support rural communities, it will be necessary to allow diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, and that a less prescriptive approach to zoning objectives should be taken.

While it is National Government Policy to substantially increase forest cover in the years ahead in recent years the planting programme has been the lowest in over 60 years and one submission is seeking support for the revitalisation of farm forestry, noting the potential of the bio-economy to promote the efficient use of renewable resources while supporting economic development and employment. In particular support is requested in the construction of forest roads and the use of the public road network.

A submission received requested support for the adoption of a partnership approach between island communities and the Council in the development, implementation, and review of plans and developments affecting the islands, and prioritise the maintenance of small fishing piers to support small-scale fishing which employs clusters of families around the Cork coast.

### Mineral Extraction

In relation to the minerals sector, submissions highlight the NPF recognition of the need to protect important reserves of aggregates and minerals from development that might prejudice their utilisation. Submissions reference the document 'Essential Aggregates – Providing for Ireland's Needs to 2040' and request that the draft plan outline the economic value and significance of the aggregate and mineral sector to the local, regional and national economy and protect the operations of working quarries and proven aggregate resources

### **Government Policy**

Key aspects of Government Policy in relation to Economy and Employment are outlined in Background Document No 6 Economy and Employment.



The National Planning Framework (NPF) seeks to facilitate a shift towards Ireland's regions by adopting a long-term framework that sets out how Ireland can move away from the current, 'business as usual' pattern of development in order to achieve 'regional parity'.

In the Southern Region, the NPF is planning for up to 380,000 additional people. Cork City and County have been allocated up to 60% of this growth, representing a very significant vote of confidence in the ability of the county as a whole to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of the country and the region. The NPF has also set a target of an additional 225,000 jobs in the Southern Region to 2040. The pattern of urban growth targeted in the NPF is population and employment led, with the strategy recognising that enterprise development is drawn to urban locations by market forces such as agglomeration, migration and specialisation that depend on factors such as scale, accessibility, innovation supported by higher education institutions and quality of life. The NPF outlines the need to identify locations at an urban scale where enterprises can access competitively priced development land, utilities and commercial properties to the highest standards.

The critical links between the quality of urban place-making and business investment / job creation are also referenced. The strategy requires that regional and local authorities identify and quantify locations for strategic employment in the main cities, and where suitable in urban and rural areas generally and outlines the criteria to be considered in selecting such locations.

In rural areas creating the environment to support job creation is seen as a key enabler to rejuvenating rural towns and villages, sustaining vibrant rural communities and reversing population decline. The need to enhance the competitiveness of the rural economy is highlighted through measures such as: supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability: enhancing the importance of tourism development ; supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism; delivery of the National Broadband Plan; and coordination of investment, research and innovation.

A key component of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region is to strengthen the settlement structure of the region, capitalising on the strength of the 3 cities and metropolitan areas, and of the network of towns, while also revitalising rural areas by repurposing the towns and villages. The RSES recognises that the Cork Metropolitan Area is the principle complementary location to Dublin with a strong international role and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region, needing accelerated urban focused growth to achieve its role and fulfil its potential. Like the NPF, the economic strategy of the RSES requires employment development to follow the settlement hierarchy to deliver the greatest geographical alignment between future population and jobs growth, to align with public transport investment, public transport nodal points and focus on regeneration, consolidation and infrastructure led growth of the city and suburbs, existing hierarchy of metropolitan towns and the metropolitan area's strategic employment locations. In the wider county area, the RSES has identified Mallow and Clonakilty as key towns and has identified further town networks, including the North Cork Agri-



Food Network, West Cork Marine Network and the Cork Ring Network, to support growth and economic development.

The economic strategy of the RSES is focused on Smart Specialisation, Clustering and Place-making for Enterprise development, Knowledge Diffusion & Capacity Building in order to ensure greater economic resilience. The RSES acknowledges that rural areas, depending on their assets, remoteness and population density have different needs requiring customised solutions. Like the NPF, a key message of the RSES is that rural areas need diversification and innovativeness to ensure economic resilience and job creation. The RSES seeks to expedite the completion of infrastructure including high-quality broadband and mobile communication services to all rural locations, water and wastewater facilities for the growth of settlements, sustainable energy supply, enhanced transport connectivity including rural public transport services and greenway walking and pedestrian corridors between settlements.

*Enterprise 2025 Renewed*, Ireland's national enterprise strategy, recognises that the world of work is changing, the world of business investment is changing and the way of doing business globally is changing. Jobs are constantly evolving as technologies in the workplace are adopted – some jobs will be replaced by new ones while others will be redefined. The need to continually adapt, increase the productive capacity of the workforce, build resilience and accelerate the pace at which change is implemented is seen as key to continued prosperity. Enterprise 2025 also recognises the need to plan for a more sustainable future in the context of climate change and shifting demographics and acknowledges the imperative that sustainability is driving behavioural change, technological development and policy as world economies seek to transition to low carbon, bio and circular economies. Ireland also needs to respond to the challenges of mitigating our emissions and adapting to the effects of a changing climate.

*Future Jobs Ireland 2019*, is a Government initiative which seeks to build and prepare the economy for the jobs of the future and focuses on five pillars in the areas of: embracing innovation and technological change; improving SME productivity; enhancing skills and developing and attracting talent; increasing participation in the labour force; and transitioning to a low carbon economy.

The Government's *Action Plan for Rural Development (Realising our Rural Potential)* published in 2017 uses the CEDRA<sup>6</sup> definition of rural Ireland as "all areas located beyond the administrative boundaries of the five largest cities". This definition means that rural Ireland encompasses large, medium and small towns, villages and the open countryside. The Action Plan identifies five key pillars to support rural development as follows: Supporting Sustainable Communities; Supporting Enterprise and Employment; Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential; Fostering Culture and Creativity in rural communities; and Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

A common theme throughout all current national policy and initiatives is the need to move away from the 'business as usual approach' and to recognise the vulnerabilities facing our national and local economy and prosperity in light of the climate change and local and international changes that are afoot in terms of Brexit, international tax developments, US policies, technological change and

<sup>6</sup> Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas



most recently, the Covid 19 pandemic. We need to consider how best to position Cork and the southern region nationally and internationally to enhance our resilience and our ability to compete, attract and sustain sustainable investment into the future.

The need to attract and retain high quality jobs that will allow for better standards of living, and sustainable jobs that will be less vulnerable to future loss is also critical. Our ability to compete with other locations in offering the full range of quality of life attributes in order to attract and retain employees to Cork will also be important in our success at securing investment in job creation.

Government policy points to the need to broaden the base of the economy, use innovation to drive growth and build on our locational distinctiveness with place making strategies that acknowledge the reality of what attracts companies to invest in an area i.e. access to skills, talent, higher education and a combination of factors, such as innovation capacity, infrastructure investments, competitive services and amenities, property solutions, housing, quality of life, access to trade and markets etc.

The need to plan for a more sustainable future in the context of climate change, shifting demographics, technological development and the transition to low carbon, bio and circular economies is also very real.

The policies and objectives of the County Development Plan offers an opportunity to best position the County in land use planning terms to respond to the challenges ahead. The plan will need to be aligned with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF, RSES and CMATS in order to ensure that Cork secures its share of the national investment budget and successfully delivers the employment and population growth allocated to it. To this end the land use strategies and investment priorities of the CDP need to align with those of the National Development Plan and the state agencies that are responsible for the delivery of essential infrastructure.

The Core Strategy of the Draft Plan will seek to allocate population growth in line with the provisions of the NPF and RSES, strengthening the settlement network and main centres of employment while also revitalising rural areas by repurposing towns and villages. The current CDP seeks to support the diverse nature of the urban and rural economies of the county and this will continue in the new Plan, with appropriately updated robust policies to support the continued sustainable development of the economy of the county and the availability of land for employment use.

Both the Background Document and the submissions have raised issues about the current employment hierarchy and employment land supply and whether they represent the optimum approach for the future in terms of attracting and sustaining investment. The RSES also requires that the economic strategy of the plan supports the settlement typology of the RSES. The employment hierarchy of the county will need to be reviewed in this context. Co-ordination of policies across themes and settlements is needed to ensure population and jobs growth is underpinned, in a timely manner, by investment in supporting infrastructure and amenities, housing and placemaking etc. to enhance quality of life.



For the past 50 years, Cork County Council has been planning for and activating the potential of the Cork Harbour economy.

The Cork Harbour area of County Metropolitan Cork is a spatial entity consisting of 5no. County Metropolitan Towns (Cobh, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Passage West and Carrigaline), as well as 4 no. Strategic Employment Locations (Ringaskiddy, Little Island, Carrigtwohill and Whitegate/Aghada). The Harbour area consists of two distinct Harbour Clusters – the Rail Based Cluster of Cobh – Midleton – Carrigtwohill – Little Island, and, the Cluster of Passage West – Ringaskiddy – Carrigaline.

Collectively, the Harbour area has been the fastest growing area within Cork, with 77% population growth since 1991 (compared to 42% for Cork overall during the same period).

The Harbour area consists of 71,910 population and 29,171 jobs overall. Its employment base includes many of the World's leading pharmaceutical companies and the harbour economy has a proven global reach, providing an international economic gateway to Cork and the Southern Region. Some of the key economic statistics for the Cork Harbour area include:

- Population: 71,910
- Resident Workers: 30,897
- Labour Force Participation Rate: 63.7%
- Third level education: 37.2%
- Commerce / professional services / manufacturing employment: 65%
- GDP per capita: €62,638
- Cork Harbour GDP: €4.5bn
- Critically, the Cork Harbour area performs above the national average in all the above metrics.

Additionally, it is assessed that the Cork Harbour economy has the potential to at least double its economic output to 2040, including (based on the growth targets provided for by the NPF / RSES), an additional 35,000 population and 21,000 jobs.

The Cork Harbour area is considered a critical regional and national spatial asset.

At a strategic level the draft plan will consider the future role of our Strategic Employment Areas and consider how best to position them for future development. In order to achieve this, aim the Council will continue to work with the IDA and other stakeholders to identify future opportunities for employment development and include additional policy and zoning objectives as appropriate. Therefore, the draft plan will consider the potential for additional strategic locations/lands which will help to achieve the wider population and jobs targets for the county in a sustainable manner.

The Council recognises that Digital Strategies are critical for the towns and rural areas in promoting and guiding new economic opportunities and the Council's Digital Strategy the will seek to harness the roll out and delivery of high capacity ICT infrastructure and high-speed broadband to improve "relational proximity", where peripheral locations can interact more successfully with larger urban centres and the metropolitan area.



The Local Economic and Community Plan sets out high level goals, objectives and actions to promote and support local economic and community development within the county.

**Chief Executive's Recommendations:**

- a) The Draft Plan will consider how best to address the role of Metropolitan Cork as a primary driver of economic and population growth and align where possible growth in the Metropolitan Towns / Strategic Employment locations with public transport investment, public transport nodal points and with a focus on regeneration and consolidation in the first instance; and recognise the importance of the Key Towns of Mallow and Clonakilty as drivers of economic activity; the critical employment role of the other Towns, Villages, Rural Areas and Networks.
- b) The Draft Plan will aim as far as practicable, for a greater alignment of where people live and work to reduce the need to travel and support greater modal shift to sustainable modes of travel. Opportunities for smart working (home /hub or hybrid) will also be considered.
- c) The preparation of the Draft Plan will involve a review of the employment hierarchy having regard to the settlement network emerging from the preparation of the draft plan Core Strategy. The Draft Plan will consider how best to ensure that sufficient land is available at appropriate locations to support the range of future employment needs of the county, and strategic employment development. Co-ordination of policies across themes and settlements is needed to ensure population and jobs growth is underpinned by the necessary investment in supporting infrastructure and amenities, housing etc. to enhance quality of life.
- d) The Draft Plan will recognise the strategically important role of Cork Harbour for both population and jobs growth and its future potential as an engine of growth for Metropolitan Cork, the Southern Region, Nationally and Internationally as a major attractor of investment.
- e) The Draft Plan will set out policies and objectives to support and develop the rural economy to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.
- f) The Draft Plan will consider how best to deliver urban placemaking in key employment centres to support investment and job creation and provide policy guidance in relation to Data Centres.





## Key Issue 6: Water Services

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The Public Consultation Document highlights the importance of water to our economic and physical wellbeing and the threat posed by a continuation in the decline of water quality in recent years. There is significant room for improvement and investment in water services infrastructure will help to reverse this decline and limit any adverse effects of human activity on the environment.

An analysis of the water services infrastructure available in each settlement is provided in the document and highlights the scale of the investment required to facilitate the growth targets set out in the NPF and RSES. Only 30% of settlements in the county have adequate water supply capacity to fully facilitate future growth, while only 15% of settlements have adequate wastewater capacity. Well over half of all settlements have no existing wastewater capacity.

The challenges of environmental issues including the assimilative capacity of receiving waters, sensitive ecological catchments, sustainable abstraction rates, and impacts on protected species are expanded on.

Key issues identified include:

- Protection of existing water sources
- Treated water storage needs
- Continuation of rehabilitation schemes to minimize leakage.
- Operational compliance issues in meeting Emission Limit Value (ELV) limits in some settlements like Midleton, Charleville and Dunmanway.
- Assimilative capacity of receiving water courses.
- Surcharges in wastewater treatment plants after heavy rainfall.
- The role of SuDS in managing runoff of surface water.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Support for the implementation of aligned investment plans to deliver the settlement strategy and objectives of the RSES and Cork MASP was raised by both the OPR and Irish Water. The importance of alignment between growth and existing and planned infrastructure featured in submissions generally.

The OPR submission states that any strategy for the prioritisation of provision of water/wastewater infrastructure be based on the growth strategy objectives under the NPF and the RSES, and existing infrastructural and/or environmental capacity constraints. The need to work closely with Irish Water, including through plan consultation processes, to achieve timely delivery of water services and protection of the water resource is raised.

The need to follow the policy direction set out in Section 8.1 of the RSES is advocated by Irish Water.



The OPR submission stresses that the Core strategy must be implementable particularly with regard to the required tiered approach to zoning and in considering current infrastructural deficiencies and the submission from Irish Water indicates their willingness to assist in the identifying of adequately serviced land in accordance with the requirements of the NPF. See also Key Issue 2: Population and Core Strategy of this report.

Inland Fisheries Ireland's submission highlights the need to protect the aquatic environment and requests that in order to protect receiving waters, sufficient treatment capacity should be available and a robust assessment of the adequacy of wastewater treatment capacity is essential. It goes on to state that where adequate capacity does not exist then planning permission should be refused or conditions attached to prevent connection until the plant is upgraded. A similar sentiment is echoed in a number of other submissions.

The significant capacity constraints for water services in the RSES key towns of Clonakilty (water supply) and Mallow (wastewater treatment) are discussed in a number of submissions. It is suggested in the Southern Regional Assembly submission that greater emphasis on strengthened services, facilities and economic roles in some Key Towns may be required perhaps where significant growth cannot be justified.

Support for sequential development and compact growth in order to make best use of existing water services is advocated in a number of submissions.

The prioritising of the regeneration and rejuvenation of rural villages and towns through investment in town and village renewal and supporting water services infrastructure is a theme that emerges in submissions.

Other issues raised include:

- Residential development that requires the provision of private wastewater treatment facilities should be refused.
- Single house septic tanks and treatment plants should be strongly discouraged.
- Set up sewage works for every town and managing them effectively so that only effluent of good quality reaches the waterways and sea.

#### Surface Water and Flooding

The approach to surface water management is discussed in a number of submissions including the requirements for adequate and separate storm water infrastructure. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), constructed wetlands are suggested in submissions as good practice approaches to this issue.

The link between climate change and flooding emerges strongly in submissions and it is advocated that there are benefits to biodiversity, water quality and amenity from natural water retention measures or nature-based solutions.

The OPW submission states that the Plan should adopt the approach set out in the Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management as well as having full regard to proposed and ongoing flood relief schemes and that there is a need to consider climate change impacts. A number of submissions question the accuracy of the flood mapping in the existing local area plans.



## Waste

The opportunities presented for social enterprises based on recycling schemes in support of the principles of the Circular Economy were raised in a number of submissions. The broader opportunities offered by the Circular Economy were raised in numerous submissions and advocated was that the Circular economy principles be embraced in designing of developments as this will improve resilience, sustainability and quality of life in our communities. Also raised was the potential for allotments or community gardens to aid in the reduction of food waste, along with promotion of farmers markets and local food production.

The need to plan for processing of waste and recycling was highlighted in submissions, with one submission calling for a public recycle litter bin policy for all towns in the County. Plastic waste in particular was raised as a major problem, including its impact on the ocean and the need to provide for better sorting and it's recycling locally. The principle of Zero Waste and the need for a Zero Waste policy that could create economic opportunities was a theme that was raised in submissions.

The Southern Region Waste Management Office submission requests that the most recent waste policy be reflected in the Plan and this is echoed in a further submission requesting alignment with current policy.

Other waste issues raised include; sustainable and environmentally sound use of biosolids, the need for a reserve/ contingency landfill while protecting Bottlehill and the potential role of hydrogen in diversifying the County's energy systems.

## **Government Policy**

Policy guidance from Government is contained in the Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018) which informed regional guidance of the RSES for the Southern Region (2020). In addition, Ministerial guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Acts will inform the preparation of the draft plan. The National Planning Framework includes a number of specific objectives which set out a new two-tier approach to land zoning: Tier 1 which is Serviced Zoned Land and Tier 2 which is Serviceable Zoned Land.

The Draft Guidelines on Water Services 2018 emphasise the importance of Planning Authorities ascertaining the current position with regard to water services when preparing a plan. The Guidelines indicate that "the quantum, location and distribution of new development must have regard to the capacity of public water services and make efficient use of, and maximise the capacity of, existing and planned water services infrastructure. The guidelines further indicate that where the provision or upgrade of water services infrastructure is a critical determinant for development, the planning authority should seek to establish, in consultation with Irish Water, the key delivery requirements and whether the capacity constraints are likely to be addressed within the life time of the plan. The Guidelines recommend that, in preparing plans, Planning Authorities clearly identify the phasing of development to the provision of appropriate water services infrastructure.

Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009) detail comprehensive mechanisms for incorporating flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. New flood risk mapping is expected to be made available by the Office of Public Works later this year and will inform the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Plan.



The National waste policy 'A Resource Opportunity, Waste Management Policy in Ireland', the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020 and regional waste policy in the form of the Southern Region Waste Management Plan (SRWMP) 2015-2021 are all relevant government policy in relation to waste.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

The need for, and importance of, the delivery of investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in tandem with growth was a compelling point across a spectrum of submissions and is echoed in national policy, which seeks the alignment of investment in supporting water services infrastructure with the Core Strategy, as already outlined.

Detailed analysis has been done on the infrastructure position in all settlements in the County through the development of a Water Services Capacity Register and this will be updated as information becomes available and will inform the preparation of the Core Strategy. It will be a key tenet to make the best use of existing water services infrastructure and this will be achieved through implementing the principles of compact growth and sequential development.

The Council are in a continuous dialogue with Irish Water in relation to the servicing needs of our towns and villages. Some ongoing activity includes the Future Options Assessment exercise as part of the National Water Resource Plan and the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme. As the outcome of these schemes and programmes evolve, this data will inform the growth strategy for the County and clarify the options available for addressing deficits.

Infrastructural deficiencies in the RSES Key Towns of Clonakilty and Mallow are rightly highlighted and the Council are actively considering ways to address these deficiencies. It is expected that a preferred option for addressing the water supply issue in Clonakilty will emerge in the later part of the year as part of the Future Options Assessment exercise of the National Water Resource Plan. In relation to Mallow, a collaborative approach is required to resolve the issue of wastewater discharges impacting on the Freshwater Pearl Mussel and the Council have engaged in dialogue with the governing Department, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Irish Water. A clear pathway to resolving issues in both these towns will be required if growth is to be accommodated in the next plan period.

The Council are committed to implementing the Guidelines in relation to Flood Risk Management and in tandem with consideration of wider issues such as biodiversity and water quality, consideration will be given at settlement level to the potential for nature based solutions and natural water retention measures as part of the consideration of green infrastructure provision and protection. Updated mapping based on a number of CFRAM studies due to be released by the Office of Public Works later this year will improve the accuracy of existing flood risk maps and will be utilised in the new Plan and the associated Strategic Flood Assessment that will be carried out.

The most up to date policy in relation to Waste will be reflected in the draft plan. The potential for economic activity arising from the Circular Economy will need to be explored as part of the Economy section of the Plan.



### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) In collaboration with Irish Water, Cork County Council will seek to establish the water services requirements for each settlement and a water services investment programme for the county, based on an order of priority that reflects the Core Strategy for the County.
- b) Any determination in relation to the capacity of water services infrastructure, potential for growth and the tiering of land will be carried on the basis of the best available data.
- c) It is intended that discussions with relevant stakeholders in relation to infrastructure deficits in the Key Towns of Clonakilty and Mallow will be accelerated in order to provide sufficient clarity on the actions or pathway required to facilitate growth in these settlements in the lifetime of the next Plan.
- d) It is proposed that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment undertaken as part of the plan utilise the latest flood risk mapping available from the OPW.
- e) The Plan will give consideration to waste as a resource and the potential for innovative business solutions and opportunities that are in line with the principles of the Circular Economy as advocated in the NPF.





## Key Issue 7: Transport and Mobility

### Summary of the main issues set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

As highlighted in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document, transport impacts on most of the population on a daily basis.

Transport patterns have been significantly shaped by population distribution and investment in infrastructure provision. The last census showed a high level of use of the private car in Cork County. In 2016 82% of commuters travelling to work in the County were using a private car.

Our transport policy must be strongly integrated with land use planning in order to reduce the need to travel, promote and optimise sustainable travel opportunities and increase accessibility. We need to achieve greater connections and cohesion between where people live, work, go to school/college, access services, socially interact and recreate. We need to implement the Avoid-Shift-Improve approach to reduce trip length or reduce the need to travel, to shift to alternative modes to improve trip efficiency, and to optimise transport infrastructure.

Our transport policy needs to improve quality of life, economic competitiveness, connectivity and accessibility, social inclusion, and assist our transition to a low carbon society.

The NPF National Strategic Outcomes of compact growth, enhanced regional accessibility, strengthened rural economies, sustainable mobility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society are of relevance and our transport policy must align with these objectives.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

#### Integration of land use and transport policy

There is broad support in many submissions for the overriding principle outlined in the CDP Public Consultation Background Document No. 8, Transport and Mobility, of aligning land use and transport policies. There is also support of the Avoid-Shift-Improve principle. A reduction of the need to travel and/ or an increase in sustainable travel are objectives shared by most of the submissions relating to transport. In the majority of submissions this is framed in the context of climate change and concerns regarding the impact of the private car on greenhouse gas emissions, or in the context of health and well-being, or both. A number of submissions also raise the issue of accessibility, connectivity and social inclusion. Specific issues emerging from these principles, raised by a number of submissions, are detailed below.

#### Compact growth

Submissions outline the benefit of compact growth in settlements, sequential development of settlements and increased densities at locations benefitting from a public transport link in terms of promoting modal shift from the use of the private car to public transport and active travel modes. Reference is made to the East Cork rail corridor and the need to maximise the number of people living in proximity to this sustainable travel opportunity. The NTA highlights the need to deliver maximum population density within walking/cycling distance of town/neighbourhood centres and



public transport and other services and requests that trip intensive developments to be primarily focused into central locations in urban areas.

Submissions propose the facilitation of the 10-minute town/neighbourhood concept whereby a range of services would be within a 10-minute walking/cycling/public transport journey of one's home. The SRA submission notes that urban communities will need sufficient densities to realise the potential of a 10-Minute Town and its benefits for placemaking.

The NTA submits that urban-generated development in rural areas needs to be managed in such a way so as to safeguard the integrity of rural areas and to support the accommodation of urban-generated development within urban areas.

#### Permeability and Connectivity

Submissions seek permeability within settlements through the provision of safe and attractive routes to encourage active travel. Pedestrian/cycle permeability is requested for both new and existing developments. Connectivity between transport modes and filtered permeability within settlements is also sought. A number of submissions support regional/ inter urban connectivity also.

#### Preparation of local transport plans, particularly for larger settlements, key towns in particular.

Submissions from the SRA and the NTA call for the preparation of Local Transport Plans in particular for key towns (Mallow and Clonakilty), with the NTA also calling for area-based transport assessments.

#### Public Transport

As referenced above under Compact Growth, submissions ask that existing or proposed public transport opportunities be maximised, particularly in the case of rail travel. Support for the Local Link Rural Transport programme is also called for and there are a number of proposals to rebrand and expand the Local Link service.

#### Rural Transport

The NTA submits that the rural economy and the rural social fabric should be supported through the provision of better local connectivity and connectivity to services and commercial activities located in cities and towns, and that the CDP should acknowledge the role rural transport services, such as Local Link, can perform in providing for social and economic connectivity between small villages/rural areas and larger towns. As referenced above, a submission proposes rebranding Local Link and it also proposes extending dedicated commuting routes from towns to the city, and provision of night time services, with a view to broadening its demographic and growing passenger numbers. It suggests trialling a specific route from Kinsale. Another submission calls for development of Local Link to serve schools also.

#### Active Travel

A number of submissions call for increased and enhanced active travel infrastructure provision with a particular emphasis on the provision of greenway /segregated walkways to facilitate commuting and recreation and on greenway standards. Concern regarding conflict between pedestrian use and cyclist uses of routes was raised. A significant number of submissions were received in relation to the implementation of the Lee to Sea Greenway (see below) and specific additional greenways were proposed. There are also submissions that call for the facilitation of and promotion of cycling on our existing local road network with particular routes being proposed. It is suggested that supporting



measures such as the creation of awareness of designated cycle routes, signage, and reduced speed limits at certain points, could be implemented. Submissions call for enhanced permeability and more attractive public realm to promote active travel within settlements.

### Safety

Safety is an issue that is raised in submissions also with concerns being raised regarding road safety. There is a proposal to facilitate safe cycling to the town centre and school in Bandon through revised speed limits and changes to traffic flow. Submissions raise road safety concerns regarding access to the school in Glounthaune also. Other submissions make reference to safety and active travel to schools also and one references the need to locate schools in the centre of settlements.

The submission from the TII set out two processes, Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA), which work to improve the safety performance of new roads and existing roads that require modifications due to projects or proposals. Both have consequences for the design and layout of any project. The submission recommends that the Plan include reference to these standards. The Council are also requested to reference the NRA/TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014) in the Draft Development Plan relating to development proposals with implications for the national road network. Thresholds advised in the NRA/TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014), including sub-threshold TTA requirements, relate specifically to development proposals affecting national roads.

### Lee to Sea Greenway

A number of submissions were received in relation to the Lee to Sea Greenway. Some of these have identical content and these request that the CDP identify the most suitable and feasible route for the Lee to Sea Strategic Greenway and illustrate this within the Core Strategy Map; that it support and safeguard the Lee to Sea Strategic Greenway through objectives and policies in 2 specific phases (Phase 1 Passage West to Crosshaven (submitted that many sections already exist and simply need upgrading), and Phase 2 (Inniscarra Dam to Ballincollig Regional Park); and that it create an Action Plan for phasing, funding and associated delivery. They also state that the Lee to Sea Greenway is supported in CMATS and the Southern RSES Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan. A number of submissions also highlight the economic (including tourism), health, well-being and environmental benefits of the proposed greenway.

A smaller number of submissions highlight concerns regarding the appropriateness of the Passage West to Raffeen section of the proposed greenway citing concerns regarding safety on a designated Sli Na Slainte route arising from conflict between pedestrian and cyclist uses. Some submissions propose that part of the greenway could be accommodated on the new section of the N28. An additional submission cites safety concerns due to the unsuitability of the R610 for use by cyclists and coastal proximity.

### Parking and EV charging

Parking is an issue that is primarily raised in the context of promoting sustainable travel. There are proposals for consideration of car parking caps within higher density areas and maximum parking standards elsewhere. Another submission calls for all non residential developments to be subject to maximum car parking standards and for consideration, where the highest intensity of development occurs, of an approach that caps car parking on an area-wide basis. There is also a submission calling for adequate car parking within residential estates.



Park and Ride and Park and Pool locations are called for to promote more sustainable travel and ease congestion. Additional EV charging provision is also called for and a submission calls for guidance regarding any future requirements for developments to provide EV charge points.

The NTA submit that cycle parking at trip origins and destinations is cited as a key factor in determining mode choice, and that it should be appropriately designed into the urban realm and new developments at an early stage to ensure that adequate facilities are provided. The submission points to Standards for Cycle Parking and Associated Cycling Facilities for New Developments document issued by Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council in 2018 which includes comprehensive guidance on the design of cycle parking. Adequate bicycle storage and bicycle parking facilities are called for in other submissions also.

### Social Inclusion

The issue of sustainable transport and connectivity to achieve social inclusion has been raised. It is also requested that the plan be cognisant of the rights of persons with disabilities.

### CMATS

Alignment with CMATS is a requirement through Southern RSES RPO 164, Cork MASP Objective 7 and 8. Support for the implementation of CMATS generally, and for specific provisions of that strategy, such as the Lee to Sea Greenway, is called for in a number of submissions with the NTA submitting that CMATS should be fully incorporated into the Development Plan and that complementary land use policies and development standards are included to enable the delivery of CMATS' objectives.

### Road Upgrades

Support for the NDP road improvement programme is called for in some submissions (including the need to protect corridors of National Development Plan road schemes, and specifically the M20 scheme). The upgrading of the R624 to Cobh and the N25 between Carrigtwohill and Midleton are referenced in submissions as key economic enablers, with the R624 upgrade being requested for safety reasons also. Delivery of the M28, the Northern Ring Road and other projects is requested. There is also objection to proposed investment in road projects (specifically the M20 and Northern Ring Road), with investment in active travel infrastructure being preferred. In addition, there is a request that new roads be multimodal.

### Other issues

Protection of strategic function of national road network is broadly requested and a number of more specific points re raised in relation to this request.

TII's motorway service area policy should be reflected in the CDP. TII's policy in relation to signage and noise should be reflected in the CDP.

It is requested that residential, retail, and employment objectives should promote the design for sustainable transportation requirements at the earliest stages.

Support for the strategic roles of Port of Cork and Cork Airport is requested.

Implementation of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets is requested.

A submission seeks support for use of compressed natural gas as a transport fuel.



## Government Policy

As set out in other sections of this document, much of the policy guidance from Government is contained in the Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018) which informed regional guidance of the RSES for the Southern Region (2020). In addition, Ministerial guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Acts will inform the preparation of the draft plan.

Current policy regarding sustainable travel is set out in Government policy document 'Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future - A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020'. This policy is currently being reviewed by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (information, analysis and discussion papers across different areas of sustainable mobility supported a public consultation process held from Nov 2019 to Feb 2020). The new policy is to be closely aligned with the national strategic outcomes of Project Ireland 2040 and will support the actions in the Climate Action Plan to reduce emissions in the transport sector.

Transport Investment is outlined in DTTAS' 'Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport' (SIFLT). SIFLT will be shortly superseded by 'Planning Land Use and Transport Outcomes' (PLUTO, working title) to ensure a consistency of approach with Project Ireland 2040 National Strategic Outcomes.

Government policy is to closely align land use planning and transport. As referenced in our public consultation background document, the National Planning Framework outcomes of compact growth, enhanced regional accessibility, strengthened rural economies, sustainable mobility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society are of relevance.

## Chief Executive's Opinion

A key issue for the new County Development Plan is achieving modal shift from use of the private car. The plan will need to implement the Avoid-Shift-Improve approach to achieving modal shift. This represents a significant challenge for the county which planning policy must meet for economic, social and environmental reasons in particular climate change. In 2018 transport accounted for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland. Key to meeting this challenge is a closer integration between transport and land use planning and the implementation of policies that will achieve compact growth. The plan will need, especially, a closer alignment between where people live and work.

One key element of this is to achieve higher densities within walking/cycling distance of public transport nodes and settlement centres as per government guidelines (Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines). Another element is to meet the NPF target of 30% of all new residential development within the existing footprint of the settlement. The Key Issue: Housing Density and Placemaking in this volume discusses these issues in more detail.

This approach needs to be complemented by permeability and connectivity. Settlements need high quality, inclusive, pedestrian/cycle routes to maximise the active travel opportunity that compact growth will offer. Connectivity between settlements is also a consideration for the new plan. The new plan will continue to support the implementation of DMURS standards. Planning our growth in



a manner that supports public transport investment, supports national road investment plans and protects the strategic capacity of our roads is an important factor in achieving inter urban connectivity. The plan must also support high quality international connectivity.

Cork is a significantly rural county and rural transport is inherently challenging. Public transport opportunities are fewer in rural areas. Outside of settlements perceptions of road safety may deter active travel. The plan will need to continue to support the Local Link rural transport programme and will also need to increase the potential for active travel in rural areas.

The new county development plan needs to ensure that sustainable transport can become an attractive and realistic choice. This will have health, wellbeing, social inclusion and environmental benefits and it will also facilitate more efficient use of the road network for the movement of services, people and goods. The Plan will promote regional sustainable travel policy and objectives including the 10-minute settlement concept. The Council's seeks to ensure application of DEMURS standards which also supports active travel.

The Lee to Sea Greenway is identified as a transport priority for Metropolitan Cork in the RSES. It describes it as an east-west greenway through the city centre, connecting major employment/ education hubs to large commuter towns like Ballincollig and Carrigaline and it is specifically supported in Southern RSES Cork MASP objectives 8i and 17c. It is supported in CMATS which identifies the 'flagship Lee to Sea Greenway from Ballincollig to Crosshaven' as short to medium term deliverable. Separately, CMATS also identifies the completion of secondary and greenway cycle network as a long-term deliverable and lists 'Inniscarra Rd.' within the secondary cycle network. The plan will support the provision of infrastructure to facilitate active travel generally and, in the case of the Lee to Sea Greenway, will continue to liaise with the Council's Traffic and Transport section, the Carrigaline Municipal District team to identify the most effective way to proceed.

The plan will support the National Development Plan road investment programme and the transport priorities for the County outlined in the Southern RSES. The new plan will support CMATS and optimise its benefits and alignment with this strategy is a requirement of the Southern RSES (RPO 164, Cork MASP Objectives 7 and 8).

The current plan sets out maximum car parking standards and minimum cycle parking standards. This approach remains in line with more recent government guidance (Design Standards for New Apartments, 2018) however in addition, these guidelines require that in urban locations served by public transport or close to town centres or employment areas, car parking provision should be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated in certain circumstances.

In order to promote cycling, safe, secure and convenient bicycle parking and storage is required in settlement centres, at areas of employment, at public transport nodes, at areas of recreation, and at our homes. Government guidance in Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas requires that adequate bicycle storage provision needs to be made within, or close to, the dwelling and that cycle parking should be sheltered and secure, and should be located no less conveniently than car parking relative to the dwelling units (if not provided within the dwelling itself). The NTAs National Cycle Manual underscores that the availability of appropriate bicycle parking facilities at either end of a trip will heavily influence the decision to travel by bicycle in the first instance.



The plan will also need to consider electric vehicle charging provision in new developments and the potential to offer this within our public realm to support the growth of EVs at the rate envisaged in the government's Climate Action Plan (2019). Consideration will also be given to appropriate support of CNG refuelling stations.

The reference in submissions from the SRA, TII and the NTA to the need for the preparation of local transport plans, and/or area-based transport assessments is noted. While the County Development Plan will integrate land use and transport planning, primarily through the determination of appropriate population growth targets for settlements and appropriate zonings in consideration of existing or planned sustainable transport opportunities, and the preparation of local transport plans where appropriate will be considered.

The plan will support the protection of the strategic function of national roads.

In alignment with National and Regional policy (NPF and Southern RSES) the plan will support the strategic roles of Port of Cork and Cork Airport. In the context of drivers of growth in the Southern region the RSES lists the Port of Cork and Cork Airport among strategic assets supported. Southern RSES objectives RPO 142, 143 and 144 and MASP policy objectives 13, which is specific to the Port of Cork, and 14, which is specific to Cork Airport, are of particular relevance and will be supported by the new plan.

The NTA, as part of the response to COVID 19, has allocated over €0.5m for schemes ranging from pedestrian crossings, footpath/cycleway enhancement/widening, pedestrianisation of streets, conversion of parking spaces to parklets, new plazas, etc. in towns outside Metropolitan Cork. This welcome initiative is very important as it recognises the importance of supporting sustainable travel initiatives across the County. This kind of investment is required to support the move from use of the car to other more sustainable travel modes in particular walking and cycling. The Council will continue to work with other infrastructure stakeholders to expand such initiatives into the future.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) The draft plan will provide strong policy support for the delivery of integrated transport and spatial planning and that this will also be reflected in the Core Strategy of the plan as appropriate.
- b) The allocation of population and jobs growth in the Core Strategy of the draft plan be prepared with regard to maximising sustainable transport opportunities and minimising travel.
- c) Existing policies and objectives in relation to Transport and Mobility will be updated, including a review of parking standards.
- d) The Draft Plan will aim to align with NPF and RSES policies to achieve enhanced regional accessibility, sustainable mobility and high quality international connectivity.
- e) The draft plan will continue to support the strategic function of national roads.
- f) Draft plan will continue to support role of Port of Cork and Cork Airport, in alignment with objectives of the RSES for the Southern Region.





## Key Issue 8: Community

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The main provisions set out in Section 11 Public Consultation Document were relating to Healthcare, our Ageing Population, Childcare/Early Learning Centres and Education Facilities.

While having one of the youngest population in Europe, the share of the population aged 65 and over in Ireland is projected to increase by 59% by 2031, while people aged 85 and over is projected to increase by 97%. Persons 65+ account for 13.8% of the County's overall population in 2016 compared to 13.4% nationally and equates to the 2nd highest number in the state. One implication of an ageing population related to health infrastructure and how older age cohorts are the highest users of most health and social care services.

The National Planning Framework and Slaintecare (HSE) continue to focus on moving towards more primary healthcare and away from hospital based care, providing increased infrastructure capacity in the community e.g. primary care centres and community care beds (respite and short stay, etc.).

According to ESRI projections the numbers of people aged under 15 set to decline slightly, by around 10% in 2040, but will continue to increase until the early 2020's. This means that the continued provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, parks and sports grounds, remains necessary and will need to be maintained at similar levels for the foreseeable future. However, with the population projections indicating a reduction in the number of school age children over time, alternative uses could be considered at the design and development stage, possibly with facilities that would dually cater for lifetime learning, especially in post primary schools.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

#### Childcare and Education

##### Location and Provision of Childcare and Educational Facilities

- Issues expressed related, in general, to education, adequacy of infrastructure, delivery of infrastructure and facilities, and the needs of specific areas and for specific groups.
- Need to support the provision of additional and enhanced educational facilities in communities that come under the Council's remit, particularly in line with the projected population growth.
- Requests to facilitate the site designated for school delivery to be capable of coming forward for alternative forms of development based on adjoining land uses/zonings, patterns of development and where school requirements do not warrant reservation of sites.
- Notes that the areas and themes within the current plan have been presented separately, however, many themes are interrelated and co-dependent in their aspirations and will need to be considered in this way if they are to be developed properly.
- Where the provision of Education and Training Facilities are being considered for smaller, rural settlements, that Cork County Council consider the possibilities for the designation of suitable areas for education and training development that are located or aligned within a



“cluster” of rural settlements, rather than solely focusing on the current model where most education facilities are located within, or on the outskirts, of the larger urban areas.

- Notes sustainable travel methods should be availed of and connected to educational facilities where possible.
- Cork County Council should consider potential synergies with adjacent public (and commercial) facilities in the proposed siting of schools or vice versa, particularly opportunities to locate schools adjacent to open space or recreation amenities, childcare provision and/or other community facilities.
- Where a designated school site forms part of a wider development it is critical that the granting of permission for that wider development be contingent upon the provision of infrastructure and services to the school site as part of that development and such infrastructure and services must be specified to the standard which is required for any future school provision at that location.

#### Policy pertaining to Educational and Community Facilities

- Need for strategic integrated policies for the development of inclusive communities and providing opportunities for people to be active and engaged in communities.
- Suggests that Youth be given a specific theme or focus in the overall plan.
- Notes arts and cultural activities have a role in community development, and further projects of such should be identified in the forthcoming plan.
- States the CDP must be designed to respond to challenging economic and societal circumstances, as a result of Covid 19.
- States it is critical that the CDP leads and manages the development process throughout Cork.
- Support and ensure the viability of employment such as e-business and home-working, and its future development in the forthcoming plan.
- Include provision for the development of appropriate Adult and Community education and Training facilities within the settlement areas, to support the viability of these communities and promote priority areas such as homeworking, micro enterprise
- The Department of Education and Skills requests that Cork County Council would actively facilitate the principle of permitting schools, both permanent and temporary in as many zoning categories as possible.
- Explicit support for the provision of school accommodation, including the development of new schools and the expansion or alteration of existing ones is required.
- An equivalent objective to the current objective (ZU 3-3) be included in the new Plan. Given the 30% requirement for brownfield development in the National Planning Framework (NPF), it is critical that explicit provision for school development to meet that projected population growth be made in Existing Built Up Areas.
- References to how the inclusion of buffer zones and land use designations that support education development adjacent to existing and established schools (where required to facilitate potential future expansion) will be critical in meeting school accommodation requirements arising in Existing Built Up Areas and how in some instances, such provision may present the only viable solution for the provision of school places to meet the needs of the local community.



- Support for urban-design schools, as per the DES guidelines, in established areas would be welcomed and in particular, measures to facilitate reduced requirements for onsite parking and set-down and to support access to off-site public amenities and facilities is essential to achieving the delivery of schools in the urban carbon-neutral model promoted in the NPF.
- Notes it is critical in the context of challenges experienced by the Department, that any school sites required to meet current needs or planned population growth, as may be identified by the Department of Education and Skills, should be explicitly supported by means of an appropriate zoning provision and/or by a Specific Local Objective on the subject site in the relevant Plan.
- Similarly, that the proposed development of sites which have already been identified by the Department for school provision to meet immediate school place requirements should also be explicitly supported by means of an appropriate zoning and/or by a Specific Local Objective on the subject sites in the relevant Plan.
- That the capacity of existing schools and any planned schools, as published by the Department, be considered as “supporting infrastructure and facilities” and given high priority in Cork County Council’s assessment of the suitability of specific lands for residential development.

#### Recreation and Amenity

##### Policy pertaining to recreation and amenities

- Inclusion of more objectives pertaining to sport and local facilities in the forthcoming plan.
- Retaining/Acknowledgement/Enhancement/Expansion of GAA and Sporting Clubs in the draft plan.
- Provision for walkways and public amenity areas in numerous settlements. Their importance in the community was highlighted as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Inclusion of more cultural and arts facilities and amenities in towns and villages within the County.

##### Development of community services

- Submissions referenced the need to increase provision of social infrastructure, recreation and sport.
- Requests that the adequate sports service and provision for the protection and growth of same are put in place that have the capacity to grow in tandem with the population before any additional houses are built.

#### Healthcare Facilities

##### Provision and location of Healthcare facilities in the Development Plan

- Notes a lack of hospital provision/healthcare facilities in the CDP.
- Issues regarding the location of Healthcare Facilities in towns and villages.

#### Planning for Ageing

##### Residential Accommodation for Older People

- Requests to review policy to reflect older people’s needs and mix of housing types, and an increase provision for residential care/accommodation for older people.
- Identified new housing types for older people to broaden from the nursing home type model, for example housing models such as the ‘Green House Project’



- Asks that future planning policies strive to create a residential care model which is based on a communally orientated facility, where residents are given an improved quality of life, with a greater sense of self-worth, and social inclusion through a more intimate, 'homelike' family unit.
- Issues regarding the location and provision of housing for older people.
- Requests the current CDP be updated to reflect the lack of locations/opportunities within town/village centres for nursing homes and allow for out of centre development.
- Requests amendments to the policy on Residential Care Accommodation in paragraph 5.7.14 of the CDP 2014.
- Notes an integral housing policy would help to reduce the incidence of older people requiring nursing home provision and would also encourage the elderly to move to accommodation better suited to their needs, within the community.
- Requests alternative public or private development of a series of alternative residential facilities for older people to be located strategically throughout Cork.
- States there should be a focus on identifying areas in the county that would facilitate investment in "hubs" and activities for the ageing population
- States the plan should attempt to make provision to support and foster links between young and older people in communities.

#### Inclusion in the Planning Process

- It notes, regarding people with disabilities, additional needs and older people, the consideration of their needs in planning and the provision and delivery of services, necessitates specific consultation and inclusion.

#### Government Policy

Since the last County Development Plan a number of new policy documents and Guidelines have been published to help deliver and improve social and community facilities in the County.

The NPF recognises the role of social infrastructural provision in the enhancement of quality of life and the interrelationship between settlement size and the level of infrastructure that can be supported. Cork County Council is committed to strengthening the settlement structure of the County which will in turn help support additional service provision.

Both the NPF and the Regional Development Strategy for Ireland provide a basis for long-term co-ordination on infrastructure development, which includes social and community infrastructure and will inform the forthcoming development plan.

There are numerous policies and objectives detailed in Guidelines which need to be elevated to a statutory status within the CDP. The review of the plan is set to be strongly in line with the following policies from the NPF and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES):

- RPO 177 from the NPF: *Childcare, Education, and Health Services: It is an objective to improve access to quality childcare, education, and health services through initiatives and projects under the National Development Plan, alignment with Healthy Ireland and support development of outreach and community services for an expanding and ageing population.*



- **RPO 185: New School Facilities:** *To support a planned approach to location of school facilities in accordance with the DoHPLG Guidance document The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, such that both proposed locations and existing schools are accessible by cycling/walking from the main catchment areas and accessible by public transport with appropriate safe facilities within reasonable access of public transport and active travel modes. Local authorities should also consider measures that could improve sustainable accessibility to existing school facilities by cycling/walking accessibility or public transport. Local authorities should ensure that a robust site selection process is followed in the selection of new school locations taking into account proximity to community developments such as community centres, playing fields, libraries etc. so that the possibility of sharing facilities can be maximised. New educational development/infrastructure should be informed by anticipation of demand for student capacity and Local authorities should ensure that decision-making is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.*
- **RPO 182: Ageing Population:** *It is an objective to support Smart Ageing and National Positive Ageing policies and An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy and ensure that local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing population. Local authorities should ensure that the development of housing, transport, accessibility and leisure facilities/infrastructure is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment of potential impacts from such development.*

The forthcoming plan will support on-going collaboration with regional stakeholders to ensure that social infrastructure such as education, lifelong learning and skills, healthy cities, health infrastructure and community facilities are provided. Social inclusion and regeneration of disadvantaged areas are supported.

It is imperative to provide additional investment in the schools sector to keep pace with demographic demand and to manage increasing building and site costs so that new and refurbished schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas can meet demographic growth and the diverse needs of local populations.

This remit to sustain local and community development in Ireland is based on a set of core values covering social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity, local and community development. The RSES supports the role of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), the Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and other community partnerships in their roles to ensure regional policy responses are meaningful and flexible to cater for the needs of local communities.

The RSES supports the development of Age-Friendly communities including support for Independent Living and Community Facilities as part of Smart Ageing Policy and implementation through Local Community Development Committees and in Local Economic and Community Plans.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

There is a need to respond to the shift in patterns of education, work and healthcare as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic in order to ensure that Cork County remains a great place to live, learn and work safely and sustainably.

The challenge for the new County Development Plan is to develop policies for social and community infrastructure to enforce the established and encouraged community resilience needed in



settlements throughout the county, particularly during and post the Covid 19 pandemic where community resilience is imperative. The Draft plan will include policies to support community resilience within settlements. The importance of community is also addressed in the Settlements and Placemaking section of this document.

Several submissions have raised issues regarding planning for ageing and educational facilities within the county. The live, work, learn social and community infrastructure within towns and villages has been altered in recent times, with the inclusion of remote learning and working becoming an important part of people's lives within the county, nationally and globally. The draft development plan will formulate specific policy measures that will include a current reflection of the times we live, learn and work in.

The isolation and events which occurred during the lockdown since March 2020 resulting from Covid 19 requires a review for planning for ageing and various models of accommodation for older people with consideration to be given to the shift in the added need to protect, include and plan for the ageing population in our towns and villages to ensure a safe, serviced and inclusive community for our older population in Cork County.

The role of recreation and amenities in towns, villages and communities has been heightened as a result of the pandemic, and thus their inclusion and development will be imperative to the success of the forthcoming plan.

The National Planning Framework and Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region all highlight the importance of social and community infrastructure and facilities at local level. These principles will be carried into the forthcoming plan.

In general, there were no submissions which raised objections to the suggested approach in the S11 Consultation Document.

### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

- a) Accordingly, it is recommended that the Draft Plan will review and include policies and objectives to promote and support all the relevant National Policy Objectives as contained in the National Planning Framework and within RSES in relation to education, childcare, health care, planning for ageing and social and community infrastructure.



## Key Issue 9: Energy

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

Climate Change is one of the most pressing issues facing the planet and has impacts on habitats, species, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, water quality, water safety, infrastructure, food risk and people. The transition to clean energy is essential to address climate change. Ireland is facing a significant challenge to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels for transport, heating and electricity production. We have a considerable way to go to meet our renewable energy targets for the future.

Since the adoption of the Cork County Development Plan 2014, a number of new policy documents, funding proposals, targets and guidelines have been published to tackle issues that are contributing to Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. The key issues to be reviewed in the forthcoming plan include the following:

- The need to update policies and objectives of the plan as appropriate to reflect national policies, including the actions and targets in the Climate Action Plan and the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), to support the transitioning to a low carbon economy.
- How the plan can support appropriately located renewable energy developments and energy efficiency generally in all sectors of the economy, whilst balancing the need for new development with the needs of local communities, the protection of the environmental, cultural and heritage assets of the county and the needs of other sectors and land uses such as tourism.
- The need to support improvements to the transmission network including electricity transmission grid, gas infrastructure, the storage and distribution network and international energy interconnection infrastructure (e.g. the Celtic Interconnector project between Ireland and France). The Plan also needs to safeguard strategic energy corridors from encroachment by other developments that could compromise the delivery of energy networks.
- How can the plan support the sustainable development of renewable energy generation and demand centres such as data centres, to spatially suitable locations to ensure efficient use of the existing transmission network?
- The need to clarify / update or provide new guidance in relation to:
  - Cork Wind Energy Strategy (National Wind Energy Guidelines yet to be finalised).
  - Solar energy, bioenergy and battery storage.
  - Support the delivery of charging points for electric cars in new development.
- The importance of Cork Harbour and Whitegate Energy Hub to continue to be acknowledged in the County Development Plan.
- To ensure that the strategic development requirements of ports of regional significance and smaller harbours are recognised.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Several submissions express strong dissatisfaction with the current Wind Energy Strategy for the County and stress the importance of reviewing it in the short term so an updated strategy can be included in the Draft Plan. There has been contrasting opinions regarding onshore wind farm



developments. Many expressed concern at the scale of onshore wind turbines, the lack of adequate community consultation, proximity to dwellings, over concentration of wind farms in certain parts of the county, their impact on humans in relation to noise and shadow flicker effect, their impact on the landscape, tourism, ecology and the development impact on roads. It is considered by many that the current strategy does not offer enough protection to areas of scenic beauty or areas rich in biodiversity or with locally significant habitats or species.

Other submissions stress that need to review the strategy considering the ambitious targets in the National Climate Action Plan which effectively mean there is a need to double the current installed capacity of wind energy nationally over the next ten years. Several submissions argue that variables like wind speed and grid connections need to be reconsidered as these are constraints for a developer to resolve rather than issues that should determine the locational acceptability of a wind farm. Advances in turbine technology etc. lessen the wind speed constraint and grid connections can be resolved if there is a critical mass of approved development in an area. It is considered that issues like landscape character and scenic routes also need to be reassessed and a more nuanced approach adopted in high value landscape areas. More guidance is also needed on how development in such areas is assessed. The wind energy strategy also needs to be better aligned with existing wind farm development. The anticipated outcome of such reviews is that the areas of the county where windfarms would be considered acceptable in principle would be expanded to ensure enough land is available to meet the targets of the Climate Action Plan.

Several submissions included objections to a proposed wind farm development on Musher Mountain. Other submissions note the advantages of offshore wind energy development as a replacement for onshore development.

At a strategic level submissions stressed the importance of reinforcing the electricity transmission and distribution network and protecting strategic energy corridors, the importance of solar energy in meeting our renewable energy targets, and the need to develop renewable energy to secure energy supply and combat climate change. Opportunities for the Plan to support decarbonisation across a range of sectors such as agriculture, residential heat and transport etc. were also highlighted. The need for the draft plan to be consistent with the NPF, RSES and any other national plans or policies including the renewable energy targets from the Climate Action Plan, and the updated 5GW target for offshore wind, are also noted.

Other submissions highlight the potential opportunities for an LNG terminal in Cork, carbon capture and storage, and the development of local community energy projects including anaerobic digesters.

The need to bring a strategic spatial focus to the development of data centres was also highlighted so their future energy needs can be properly planned for and delivered was also highlighted.

### Government Policy

The background Energy Document No. 9 gives a comprehensive overview of the key items of legislation and policies at European, National and Regional Level relevant to climate change, energy and renewable energy. The Government has set out a vision for Ireland's transformation to renewable energy systems to move to lower emission fuels and towards a lower reliance on fossil fuels. The goal is to significantly increase renewable energy generation and is reflected in the



national policy framework set out in the 2015 Energy White Paper, Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 identifies the nature and scale of the challenge to tackle climate disruption. It outlines the current state of play across key sectors including Electricity, Transport, Built Environment, Industry and Agriculture and charts a course towards ambitious decarbonisation targets. The key aims include:

- Consistent development of a Green Procurement Strategy.
- Targets of 50% Energy Efficiency and 30% greenhouse gas emissions reduction.
- A trajectory for the price of carbon to create incentives which help avoid locking in carbon intensive technologies.
- The realisation of the principle underpinning Project Ireland 2040 for compact, connected, and sustainable development.
- Competitive funding rounds to promote research and innovation to meet the climate challenge.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) contains several priorities for policy in the energy sector including:

- Commitments around decarbonising the energy system;
- Increasing renewable energy and reinforcement of the distribution and transmission network to facilitate planned economic growth,
- Strengthen energy security and to support an island population of up to 8 million people.

National Strategic Outcome 8 of the NPF aims to 'Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society' and sets out the new requirements and policy emphasis relevant to Energy including; new energy systems and transmission grids for a more distributed and more renewables focused energy generation system, acknowledges that State-owned commercial enterprises are significant players in the energy market, promotion of renewable energy and green energy, promotion of a national smart grid plan and smart energy systems, the electrification of transport fleets, development of onshore and offshore renewable energy, reinforce the distribution and transmission network, connect Ireland to the EU electricity grid system via interconnection and to advance carbon capture and storage. Overall aim is to deliver 40% of our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020 with a strategic aim to increase renewable deployment in line with EU targets and national policy objectives out to 2030 and beyond.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region supports the NPF's objective to Transition to Sustainable Energy. To achieve this goal a wide range of responses across the public and private sectors and in communities to change how we use energy at home, in work and how we travel. RSES outlines several policies throughout to support this transition.

In December 2019, the Government published the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines following the lengthy process to review of the 2006 guidelines. The guidelines are intended to ensure there is a consistent approach throughout the country in the identification of suitable locations for wind energy development and the treatment of planning applications for wind energy developments. This review of the Guidelines has been undertaken to reflect technological



developments in the wind energy sector and to strike a balance between the concerns of local communities and the need to invest in indigenous energy projects.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

Energy generation and energy related activity in Cork is likely to change significantly over the coming years as the move to a low carbon economy increases. The County Development Plan needs to continue to support investment in sustainable energy production in Cork to meet local and national needs and to support jobs and investment. It will be necessary to update climate change, energy and renewable energy objectives in the Draft Cork CDP in order to accommodate this move to a low carbon economy while also ensuring the protection of local communities and environmental assets. The Plan will need to be consistent with the NPF, RSES and any other national policies /guidelines on climate and energy etc.

Rural areas have significantly contributed to the energy needs of the county and energy production. The NPF highlights the strong role rural areas play in securing a sustainable renewable energy supply. Innovative and novel renewable solutions have been delivered in rural areas over the last number of years, particularly from solar, wind and biomass energy sources. The location of future national renewable energy generation will, for the most part, need to be accommodated on large tracts of land in a rural setting, while also continuing to protect the integrity of the environment and respecting the needs of people who live in rural areas.

The Council welcomes the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2019) and looks forward to their finalisation. Cork has been identified as one of the best located counties in Ireland in terms of onshore wind energy. The number of wind farms in the county, and their output has increased by 100% since 2012. At the end of 2019, there were 38 commissioned wind farms in County Cork with total output of 603 MW, which equates to approximately 15.4% of the Republic of Ireland's overall wind energy of 3908 MW. Further development proposals currently in the planning process could potentially deliver an additional wind energy capacity of 200MW. Submissions suggest that Government targets on renewal energy effectively mean there is a need to double the current installed capacity of wind energy nationally over the next ten years. Cork has a key role to play in meeting this target and the plan review will consider the most appropriate approach to ensure the Council is best equipped to assess energy proposals in the years ahead and balance the resource needs of different land use sectors, and the needs of local communities.

The Energy Chapter of the Plan will be updated as appropriate to reflect developments in the energy sector and including guidance in relation to wind and solar energy and other technologies including energy storage, combined heat and power, bioenergy, offshore energy, LNG and carbon capture and storage.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) The Energy Chapter of the Draft Plan be reviewed and updated, in so far as is practicable, to include policies and objectives consistent with the energy requirements of the NPF, RSES, Climate Action Plan and other relevant policies, guidelines and best practice guides.
- b) The Council will carefully consider the Draft Wind Energy Guidelines published in December 2019 with a view to considering any updates to the current policy that balances the need to protect local communities and help meet our national renewable energy targets.



- c) The Draft Plan will continue to support the safe, secure and reliable development of the strategic energy infrastructure of the County and the security of future supplies/ capacity via the electricity transmission and distribution networks, and gas networks, and to ensure that future land use polices do not inhibit the progression of strategic projects, including the Celtic Interconnector.
- d) The Draft Plan will be updated to include guidance in relation to onshore and offshore wind, solar energy, bioenergy and other technologies including energy storage, combined heat and power, LNG and carbon capture and storage.





## Key Issue 10: Marine Spatial Planning

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a new way of looking at how we use the marine area and how best to balance the different demands for using the sea, including the need to protect the marine environment. It's about planning when and where human activities take place at sea and ensuring these activities are as efficient and sustainable as possible. Marine planning will contribute to the effective management of marine activities. It will enable the Government to set a clear direction for managing our seas, to clarify objectives and priorities, and to direct decision makers, users and stakeholders towards more strategic and efficient use of marine resources. It will inform decisions about the current and future development of the marine area, aiming to integrate the needs of different users of the marine environment.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) is responsible for implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) on behalf of the government, with input from other departments and agencies, which aim to deliver a sustainable, planned and holistic approach to regulating Ireland's marine resources and to date, Cork County Council has contributed to each and every stage of the process.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

A number of the submissions related specifically to the Cork Harbour area, requesting that the Draft County Development plan would recognise that Cork Harbour offers an opportunity for transport which could provide relief to road congestion and a greater range of sustainable options and that the plan should include policies to support appropriate proposals for improving water transport, including a suggestion that the plan should make the Cross River Ferry publicly subsidised. One submission requests that the new County Development Plan (CDP) would have a stated aim of producing a Special Local Area Plan for Cork Harbour.

The submissions also suggested a number of measures which could be taken when zoning for development in coastal areas, to (i) ensure that a strip of land along the water's edge is kept in public ownership such that it can perform as public amenity this allows for accessibility to the water in a general sense but that access to the water needs to be enhanced with slipways, marinas and pontoons with parking provision for boat trailers and enhancing the waterside amenity is critical by providing seating and to (ii) to ensure that visual screening from the water is regarded with the same importance as zoning from the land and that this would include a visual mitigation that would work for all industrially zoned sites.

There were calls for the protection, of the marine environment through Marine Protection Areas, and also to elevate and promote areas such as the Napoleonic landscape of Cork from the mouth of Cork Harbour to the Ballincollig Gun Powder Mills, including Spike Island firstly to government and to the OPW for inclusion on Ireland's tentative list so that it can be nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List. It is also suggested that sewage works are set up for every coastal town and that these need to be managed effectively so that only effluent of good quality reaches the waterways and sea.



## Government Policy

Ireland is moving towards the adoption of its first National Marine Planning Framework by next March (2021). Marine Spatial Planning embodies how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas. Maritime planning will apply from the High-Water Mark in Ireland's coastal waters, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zone and in designated parts of the continental shelf. It is anticipated that the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) will sit at the top of the hierarchy of plans at regional or local level for the marine area.

Post adoption of the NMPF, it is intended that the current Interdepartmental Group and an external Stakeholder Advisory Groups currently tasked with the plan's preparation will be repurposed to become implementation bodies to ensure that the NMPF and its main proposals are given top-level commitment. It is the County Council's intention to engage with these groups at the earliest opportunity.

The government also recently approved the General Scheme of the Marine Planning and Development Management (MPDM) Bill in December 2019. It is intended that this Bill will amend the existing Foreshore Act and create a new regulatory area and a new single state consent regime for the entire maritime area. At this stage it is not clear how Local Authorities will be supported in the fulfilment of their obligations emanating from the Bill or from the NMPF and the Council have raised this issue with the Department.

## Chief Executive's Opinion

Following on from Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework, which outlined a clear hierarchy for both terrestrial planning policy and maritime policy at national, regional and local level, the draft NMPF does not seem yet to give clear guidance on future regional and sub regional approaches. This issue has been raised by the Council in our submission to the Marine Spatial Unit (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government), as a local authority it would be important to have more detailed guidance on the future development of Sub-National Planning. The concern is that the absence of sub-National Planning could put Ireland at a disadvantage against other countries that have developed a regional approach and/or put certain Irish regions at a disadvantage against other Irish regions.

In addition, the implementation section of the plan should include details as to how Local Authorities will be supported in the fulfilment of their obligations emanating from this plan and legislation arising from the Marine Planning and Development Bill. Cork County Council will require in house specialists in several fields relating to the marine environment (including ecology, fisheries, marine engineering and planning) to ensure that they can properly fulfil their obligations relating to developing local marine spatial plans and consenting marine based activities. This issue was also raised as part of a comprehensive submission by the Council on the draft NMPF and the County Development Plan will include, were relevant and supportive the policies and objectives of the final, adopted NMPF.

While the NMPF when adopted will shape policy in the maritime area at a high level it is important that the draft County Development plan policy and objectives continue to facilitate island communities to thrive in a healthy, harmonious environment, bring them opportunities to develop their economic activities and encourages sustainable living. Indeed, it is the Council's intention that



future policy and strategy should also prioritise the interconnectivity between the islands and mainland to protect island populations and ensure living standards do not decline.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published an Islands Policy Consultation Paper in November 2019 in advance of shaping National Policy for the Future Development and Sustainability of Communities on the Offshore Islands of Ireland. The seven populated offshore islands in County Cork work through an inter-agency program to address issues affecting island living and it is intended that the County Development Plan would continue to recognise and support this agency and also by supporting policies and proposals contributing to access, communications, energy self-sufficiency or sustainability of rural coastal and/or island communities.

#### Role of Cork Harbour

Cork Harbour is an area of significance in the Marine Spatial Planning space, as it is a location that plays a vital role nationally in terms of energy supply, as well as offering significant potential for expansion of tidal, wave and wind energy, both offshore and onshore. There are also broader marine and terrestrial considerations within and around Cork Harbour relating to defence, research, port infrastructure and operation, industry, and the related clusters of companies that support Cork's energy industry. It is noted that the draft NMPF suggests that future development in Cork Harbour will need to take cognisance of the unique requirements of the Naval Service and that the Naval Service should also strive to develop a sustainability policy in line with the Lower Cork Harbour.

Cork County Council aims to protect its natural environment through the principles of responsible stewardship and to facilitate sustainable growth within the parameters of environmental protection. Chief amongst its responsibilities are those to its coastal and island communities. There is a balance to be achieved between the promotion of the natural and built environment and the Council have suggested that the department consider the preparation of guidelines in respect of land use development management and foreshore licencing to assist with statutory planning and foreshore processes which would also allow different agencies take a collaborative approach. In addition, guidelines should also address Forward Planning Policy, particularly regarding the preparation of sub-regional and local marine plans.

The County Council have engaged a firm of International Planning and Economic Consultants to examine the future potential of Cork Harbour in anticipation of Cork being a first mover in the sub-regional and local marine plan making and the County Development Plan will make provision for any relevant policies and objectives arising from this initiative. It is also anticipated that a similar scoping exercise will be undertaken for Bantry, providing an update to the award winning Bantry Bay Charter. See also Population and Core Strategy and Economy.

The promotion of Cork Harbour's unique built and environmental heritage is discussed in the heritage section of this report.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

- a) It is recommended that the Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework National Policy Outcomes 'Realising Our Island and Marine Potential' are included in the County Development Plan, in particular NPO 38 and 39 (which relate to taking account of and integrating relevant maritime spatial planning issues and supporting the sustainable growth



and development of the maritime economy, investing in the seafood sector and Fishery Harbour Centre, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands).

- b) It is recommended that following the adoption of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) that the County Development Plan would include measures necessary to secure the objectives of same, to ensure consistency and alignment between high-level plans such as the National Marine Planning Framework, regional based approaches to maritime spatial planning and localised coastal management plans and local integrated coastal zone management plans.
- c) In addition, it is recommended that RPO 30 as adopted in the RSES for the Southern Region is included in the County Development Plan, as the 'West Cork Marine Network, a network based on the N71 West Cork to South Kerry Corridor across settlements of Clonakilty as the Key Town with Skibbereen, Bantry, Schull and Castletownbere, leveraging significant marine economy, tourism, food and beverage, digital and other assets with strategic transport connections to the Cork Metropolitan Area'.
- d) Following the recommended actions and outputs from the Cork Harbour Study, the County Development Plan will consider an appropriate policy approach to guiding future development in Cork Harbour. It is also recommended to support the potential of a local integrated coastal zone management plan for Bantry Bay between all of the relevant stakeholders.
- e) It is also recommended to action the following objective contained in the RSES (RPO 78) which supports the sustainable development of the potential of the marine environment, foster opportunities for innovation in the maritime economy and drive forward the Region as a first mover under marine spatial planning while preserving the environmental and ecological conservation status of our marine natural resource. It is anticipated, as encouraged in the RSES that close interaction between higher education, state agencies, and enterprise will position Cork as the leader in this field.



## Key Issue 11: Green Infrastructure

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

Green Infrastructure is a relatively recent concept in planning and involves the identification, protection, management and development of green corridors and spaces which can serve a number of functions and provide a range of benefits including the protection of water quality, protection against flood risk, protection against rising sea levels, provision of recreational spaces and protection of biodiversity. Green infrastructure resources can include nature conservation areas, farmland, urban parks, green belts and linkages such as greenways which could include paths, trails and cycleways. These assets can be both public and private, with or without public accessibility, in urban or rural areas. Green Infrastructure is about 'joined up' thinking; it is an integrated approach to planning and links land-use, landscape, services, ecology, heritage and transportation. It also leads to the effective integration of biodiversity and spatial planning.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

#### Importance of Green Infrastructure Concept

Many submissions raised issues with relevance to the topic of green infrastructure. There was widespread recognition of the importance of green infrastructure (including ecosystem services) and its multifunctional role particularly for providing for nature/biodiversity as well as its amenity function which facilitates our own health and well-being, etc. Well-being associated with the ability to access the outdoors, green space, nature was a theme through several the submissions.

Some submissions proposed that green infrastructure planning should be a key concept of the Development Plan, informing actions and strategy around economic development and placemaking. The importance of green infrastructure as part of our overall tourism package was also recognised with several general and more specific suggestions for the creation of greenways, blueways and other countywide green infrastructure.

The need to have a strategy to upgrade and enhance existing green infrastructure and develop new green infrastructure was raised in many submissions but particularly in relation to settlements. The delivery of compact growth needs to ensure there is a sufficient and well considered hierarchy of amenities including green space to aid biodiversity and contribute to wellbeing.

Other submissions highlighted the need to prioritise the protection and management of our natural heritage/green infrastructure. Repurposing of our existing green infrastructure/open spaces to encourage biodiversity and access to nature was also raised. The need to adopt the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and have an overall tree policy to optimise the counties tree resource and have a strategic approach towards tree planting were discussed in several submissions.

The importance of rivers is highlighted in a number of submissions including seeking the sustainable use of rivers as amenity features. It was noted that Blue Corridors can provide many benefits including more effective management of urban flood risk; improved access, additional and more useable public open space, and improved biodiversity.



There were calls from the Southern Regional Assembly submission as well as from other submissions to expand the Green Infrastructure concept to include both Green and Blue infrastructure as well as including Nature-Based Solutions.

#### Developing a Green Infrastructure Network

The concept of developing ecological corridors/green infrastructure networks was raised in a number of submissions with such corridors sustaining biodiversity, contributing to the management of flood risk and water flow.

There were many submissions which called on the draft plan to map green infrastructure resources both at county and settlement level with the objective to highlight existing green infrastructure and enhance interconnection of and permeability between the main green spaces.

#### Nature Based Solutions

The role of Green Infrastructure in providing Nature Based Solutions as opposed to more traditional engineered solutions was highlighted throughout many submissions. Natural Flood Management techniques were advocated as the preferred approach to flood relief schemes and management of storm water through initiatives such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). This can provide the potential to enhance the biodiversity of watercourses whilst managing the riparian zones to reduce flood risk.

#### Role in Climate Change

The role of green infrastructure in helping to address the impacts of climate change such as through flood prevention, carbon capture, enhancing biodiversity, facilitating recreation and active travel, etc was highlighted in many submissions.

#### Other

One specific community submission sought the creation of a large regional park on the Eastern side of Middleton.

#### **Government Policy**

Both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region recognise that Green infrastructure planning should be a key element of Development Plans.

The National Planning Framework sets out a series of goals expressed as 10 overall National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs). Green Infrastructure is a theme applicable through many of the 10 NSOs but in particular is directly applicable to the following:

NSO 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage

NSO 8. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society

NSO 9. Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources

A number of National Policy Objectives in the NPF particularly those in Chapter 9 'Realising our Sustainable Future' – Environmental and Sustainability Goals directly reference green infrastructure.



One of the overarching aims of Chapter 9 is Green Infrastructure planning i.e. protecting and valuing our important and vulnerable habitats, landscapes, natural heritage and green spaces.

Of relevance are the following National Policy Objectives:

*National Policy Objective 58 - Integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory and land use plans.*

This section of the NPF notes that Green infrastructure planning will inform the preparation of regional and metropolitan strategies and city and county development plans by:

- Assisting in accommodating growth and expansion, while retaining the intrinsic value of natural places and natural assets;
- Providing increased certainty in planning by proactively addressing relevant environmental issues;
- Encouraging more collaborative approaches to plan-making by enabling examination of the interactions between future development requirements and the capacity of receiving areas; and
- Ensuring that sufficient and well planned green spaces, commensurate in scale to long-term development requirements, are designated in statutory plans.

*National Policy Objective 62 - Identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas.*

*National Policy Objective 64 - Improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions.*

*National Policy Objective 57 – Integrating sustainable water management solutions.*

Within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region RPO 124 Green Infrastructure promotes the concept of connecting corridors for the movement of wildlife. It encourages retention and creation of features of biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas and recognises the necessity of protecting such corridors. RPO 124 requires that Green Infrastructure shall be integrated into the preparation of land use plans which will include identifying green infrastructure and strengthening this network. It further states that all plans shall protect, enhance, provide and manage GI in an integrated and coherent manner addressing the themes of biodiversity protection, water management and climate action. RPO 122 promotes the integration of sustainable water management solutions.

RPO 200 supports investment in and provision of new public parks, green space corridors and other public open spaces in tandem with projected population growth to create green healthy settlements and requires that local authorities identify the potential location of new parks (both local and regional scale)



### Chief Executive's Opinion

The National Planning Framework seeks to make our cities, towns and villages the places where many more people choose to live, work and visit. For this to come to fruition our towns and villages needs to be more attractive, vibrant and liveable places, offering a quality of life package that more people are willing to choose in the years ahead. The NPF places a strong emphasis on compact growth, placemaking and the development of sustainable communities highlighting the need to plan effectively for the provision of green infrastructure as we continue to invest in and strengthen our settlements.

Many of the green infrastructure assets in our towns are already protected by existing open space zonings. Other areas, such as areas of biodiversity/habitat value, river corridors and some areas at risk of flooding, which have the potential to form part of a green infrastructure network in the future, are not currently reserved for that purpose. In 2018, Cork County Council completed a habitat mapping exercise for all main towns in the County which identified local biodiversity areas within each town many of which represent key green infrastructure.

Given the scale of the County it is unlikely to be practical or feasible to record and map each individual element of the counties Green Infrastructure. There may however be opportunities to represent this graphically/visually. The draft plan will seek to identify and recognise key elements of green infrastructure at a Countywide level and include policies to strengthen and enhance such resources. At a settlement level where more detailed information is available the possibility to map and identify key green infrastructure and to examine the potential for interconnectivity between such features can potentially be explored. This will be given further consideration during the preparation of the draft plan.

The draft plan will consider appropriate policies to support strengthening and delivery of enhanced green infrastructure and biodiversity taking into account the issues raised in the submissions.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) Recognising the multifunctional benefits of green infrastructure, it is recommended that the new plan will incorporate and mainstream green infrastructure as a key concept in the plan within wider policies for example placemaking, climate change and in relation to more specific land use proposals in the plan. The plan will also recognise the concept of Blue Infrastructure as an integral element of Green Infrastructure.
- b) The draft plan will seek to identify and recognise key elements of green infrastructure at a Countywide level and include policies to strengthen and enhance such resources.
- c) At a settlement level the Draft Plan will seek to further develop the concept of ecological/green space corridors or networks identifying existing and possible future green infrastructure and highlighting the potential for interconnectivity between such features.
- d) The draft plan will seek to encourage green infrastructure/nature-based solutions as an alternative to more traditional engineered solutions where feasible, recognising the potential multifunctional benefits of such forms of infrastructure.



- e) It is recommended that relevant National Policy Outcomes are reflected in the County Development Plan, NPO 58 (which relates to the need for integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory and land use plans).
- f) In addition, it is recommended that the requirements of RPO 124 Green Infrastructure as adopted in the RSES for the Southern Region are included in the County Development Plan which requires that Green Infrastructure shall be integrated into the preparation of land use plans which will include identifying green infrastructure and strengthening this network as well as the requirement to protect, enhance, provide and manage GI in an integrated and coherent manner addressing the themes of biodiversity protection, water management and climate action.
- g) It is also recommended to include policies and objectives which promote the integration of sustainable water management solutions such as Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS).





## Key Issue 12: Built Heritage

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The main provisions of the background document was to set out the recent changes in the Built heritage designations in County Cork due to the City Boundary extension and to outline the process for bringing the Record of Protected Structures and Designated Architectural Conservation Areas from the nine Town Council Development Plans into the new County Development Plan.

#### Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

Volume Two: Heritage and Amenity of the current Cork County Development Plan 2014 contained 1,407 structures on the Record of Protected Structures in County Cork. A total of 82 records on the current County Development Plan Record of Protected Structures have transferred to Cork City Council and the list can be viewed on the Cork CDP website at [www.corkcocodevplan.com](http://www.corkcocodevplan.com) and associated Map browser. Therefore, there are currently 1,325 records on the County Development Plan Record of Protected Structures on foot of the City boundary extension.

The County Development Plan 2022 will include all the settlements of the County, replacing the current Municipal District Local Area Plans adopted in 2017 and the Development Plans of the former Town Council Towns of Clonakilty, Cobh, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton, Skibbereen and Youghal.

As part of the County Development Plan Review the current County Development Plan Record of Protected Structures will be updated to include the Record of Protected Structures list from each of the current nine Town Council Development Plans. Therefore, the Draft Cork County Development Plan will have an amalgamated Record of Protected Structures containing up to 2,818 entries (1,325 from current CDP RPS and 1,493 from the current 9 Town Development Plans RPS's). All the additions will be mapped and be available to view on the Draft CDP Map browser.

It is the intention of the Planning Authority during the County Development Plan Review to consider changes to the Records of Protected Structures.

#### Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA)

There were 44 no. Architectural Conservation Areas in County Cork as outlined in Volume 2, Chapter 2 of the Cork CDP 2014 and mapped in Volume 4 browser of CDP 2014. The details are provided in the Background Document. Three Architectural Conservation Areas transferred to Cork City Council as part of the boundary extension including one in Blarney and two in Douglas.

There are currently 9 former Town Councils Town Development Plans with 33 Architectural Conservation Areas. It is the intention of the Planning Authority as part of the County Development Plan Review to include the 33 Architectural Conservation Areas currently located in the 9 former Town Council Towns and to review and consolidate these Architectural Conservation Areas where appropriate (Fermoy and Clonakilty) and map them so that they can be viewed as part of the Draft County Development Plan Review Map browser.



## Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

There were a number of submissions received pertaining to both built heritage and linguistics. They can be summarised as follows:

### Built Heritage/ Archaeology

- The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht state that policies are required in the County Development Plan to address the potential terrestrial and underwater archaeology within the maritime environment.
- Several amendments to the RPS are requested – both additions and deletions.
- A package of incentives and stimuli are required to activate town centre regeneration and avoid dereliction within historic town cores.
- The importance of the historic environment to placemaking and attracting tourism to our towns, villages and rural areas is highlighted.
- A greater role is needed in the use of enforcement powers and the Derelict Sites Act regarding at risk buildings on the NIAH that have not yet become a protected structure.
- There is a need to expand the Record of Protected Structures which should be informed by the NIAH.
- The importance of further guidance, the rehabilitation of buildings, signage and street furniture in Architectural Conservation Areas is advocated.
- A request is made for World Heritage Status for the Napoleonic landscape of Cork extending from Cork Harbour to the Powder Mills in Ballincollig, including 11 military fortifications/ installations.

### Linguistics

- The important role of the County Council in the promotion of the Gaeltacht under planning policies, in the management of investment and administration by the Council during the planning process.
- A request was made for the plan to support a Museum of Irish Language and Gaelic Revival in the Gaeltacht Area of Beal Atha'n Ghaorthaidh to provide an important tourism resource in the Gaeltacht area and support the protection of the Irish Language.

## Government Policy

Heritage policy extends across a diverse number of themes as it includes our countryside, rivers, lakes, woodlands, seas and offshore islands, our ancient sites, villages and townscapes and the buildings within them. Heritage is also our history, language, folklore, customs and traditions. It is those special elements of our landscape that make us feel connected to our home place. Protection of our heritage contained in several documents which are detailed below.

Key aspects of heritage are protected by legislation, and by policies and objectives in the County Development Plan, the Cork County Heritage Plan (2005) and the Cork County Biodiversity Action Plan 2008.

The County Development Plan includes the Record of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and policies, objectives and text to protect archaeological sites and architectural heritage.

## Chief Executive's Opinion

As part of this review of the County Development Plan the Record of Protected Structures and Designated Architectural Conservation Areas from the nine Town Council Development Plans will be



included in the new County Development Plan and the wider policies for the protection of our natural and built heritage will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Submissions raised regarding the addition of NIAH buildings/ structures to the RPS will be considered as part of the Plan Review process.

The County Development Plan Review will update archaeological policy as per the recommendations of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to address the potential terrestrial and underwater archaeology within the maritime environment of County Cork.

The Plan Review acknowledges the overlaps which are prevalent between the themes of heritage/ regeneration and town centre uses. It is intended that a greater degree of policy co-ordination is necessary as these are all mutually supportive and an integral part of Placemaking in County Cork.

The protection of our linguistic heritage is also an important matter for the County Development Plan Review, given the County has two Gaeltacht areas (Múscraí and Cléire). These areas are given statutory designation as Language Planning Areas, as defined under the Gaeltacht Act 2012. The purpose of the language planning process, under the Gaeltacht Act, is to strengthen the Irish Language as a community and family language in the relevant areas.

The Plan Review process will outline the important role of the County Council in the promotion of the Gaeltacht under planning policies, in the management of investment and administration by the Council during the planning process. Updated policy referencing the Gaeltacht will be provided, including Appropriate Recognition for the Gaeltacht, Municipal Districts and also in relation to Baile Mhic Íre / Baile Bhúirne with supporting policies in relation to community facilities, employment and economic activity and preservation of heritage, culture and language.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

#### Built Heritage:

- a) It is recommended that to expand the policy, objectives and text of the Plan relating to Built Heritage to highlight synergies with Settlements and Placemaking, Tourism and Town Centres and Retailing and sites/ historic landscapes of significance within the County.
- b) To update the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas to include those of the 9 former Town Councils.
- c) To review requests for additions and deletions to the Record of Protected Structures.
- d) Consider policy strategies, fiscal incentives and intervention mechanisms to safeguard buildings at risk within the County.

#### Linguistics:

- e) It is recommended to update and expand the policy, objectives and text of the Plan relating to County Cork's two Gaeltacht areas.
- f) To highlight synergies between the unique characteristics in Gaeltacht areas under Settlements and Placemaking Chapter.





## Key Issue 13: Tourism

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

Tourism is a significant part of the economy of Cork in terms of jobs supported, revenue generated and the brand recognition it creates, which in turn supports markets abroad for Cork / Irish goods and services. The Council recognises Cork has a wide range of tourism assets in urban and rural areas providing many different experiences. The public consultation document acknowledges the need to continue investing in infrastructure to support tourism to help benefit communities in Cork.

The review of the County Development Plan intends to consider how to best support the sustainable development of tourism across the county.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

At a strategic level the submissions highlight that tourism is a particularly important activity and spatial land use in its own right, and that the new plan should seek to manage all land uses and economic drivers – of which tourism is but one, in a more inclusive, strategic and spatial manner to maximise the efficient use of resources and the achievement of greater outcomes for society at large. In this regard the submissions stress the importance of retaining the dedicated tourism chapter in the forthcoming development plan and highlights the importance of including more tourism related maps in the plan in support of tourism as a land use e.g. Tourism Asset and Amenities Maps (detailing the location of centres /attractions, facilities, walking routes, transport links etc.); sensitive environments where development must be appropriate to the sensitivity of the receiving environment; areas of unrealised tourism potential where policies support the development of the sector, etc.

While the submissions acknowledge the economic importance of the sector to the region, county and local communities, one submission also raises the concern that there can be too much reliance on tourism for jobs and economic activity in some parts of the county, while others make suggestions for the development of new tourism products / markets/ activities. All submissions acknowledge the importance of the natural environment, landscape and heritage as a resource for tourism and the need to manage and protect them. The tourism sector does not directly own or manage the tourism assets which underpin the sector and therefore there is a need for a high level of policy cross compliance and consideration of costs and benefits across sectors in the development of policy.

Many submissions, for example, argue that the concentration of wind farms in some areas of the county and the consequential perceived negative impacts on the environment, is detrimental to the development of tourism in those areas and deprives communities of the ability to develop new tourism businesses in those areas and can impact on existing ones. Concerns are also expressed about the potential negative impacts of solar farms on the landscape. Many submissions in this regard request that the Council proceed to develop a new Renewable Energy Strategy so the interactions between the energy sector, the environment, communities, tourism and other sectors of the economy can be reviewed.



In a county the size of Cork many locations are competing with each other for limited and finite resources. Submissions acknowledge the need for investment in public services to tackle legacies, support planned population and employment growth, enhance connectivity, revitalise urban areas through placemaking etc., and provide new vitality to the larger county towns and villages in support of the tourism product. The importance of an attractive public realm and public transport services to tourism is also recognised.

The importance of Tourism in coastal areas and around the marine environment needs to be recognised and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the marine environment, the sense of place and culture that make Ireland authentic and attractive to visitors needs to be protected and promoted. Any future development should be considered in this context and is key to the sustainability of the tourism sector. Achieving and maintaining good environmental status of marine waters is also crucial to the tourism product in coastal areas. Impacts on climate change on coastal tourism and need for land to sea infrastructure to facilitate engagement with the water are also highlighted as important. Submissions also point to the need to review scenic routes as some are not suited to vehicles and are not used by the public.

The strong interdependency between heritage and tourism is recognised in the submissions. Development of a strong heritage policy with tourism as a priority sector within it, would help to ensure that the interests of both sectors are recognised and would also enhance and promote cooperation between stakeholders. The need for continuous monitoring of the environmental effects of tourism on sensitive areas and sites is also recognised and Bord Fáilte have developed a strategy for environmental surveying and monitoring to support this and are currently developing guidelines on general high-level site management and habitat specific site management guidelines.

A number of submissions support the development of coastal paths or greenway / cycleways along the entire coastline and along particular routes. It is considered that the development of these routes could bring significant economic benefits to rural communities. Identification of the tourism potential of specific areas like the Seven Heads Peninsula, Courtmacsherry village, Kinsale Environs, Garrettstown/Garrylucas/Ballinspittle, Oysterhaven etc., and strong policies around coastal tourism are also sought.

Other submissions highlight the potential for more cultural tourism initiatives and facilities including a Museum of the Irish Language and a West Cork Museum. The importance of sustainable travel between locations, the need to list and map rights of way and the potential use of big open data for tourism and heritage management in areas of County Cork are other issues that arose across submissions.

### Government Policy

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority is seeking to ensure the expertise of the Authority and Cork County Council are shared and represented in the forthcoming plan. The Government has identified a number of goals to create a vibrant tourism sector for Ireland. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport seeks to achieve these goals through the following frameworks and plans which include; *People, Place and Policy- Growing Tourism to 2025*, *Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021* and *The Sustainable Tourism Working Group Report*.

The goals outlined in the *People, Place and Policy- Growing Tourism to 2025* are:



- tourism revenue in Ireland to reach €5 billion;
- employment in tourism to be 250,000 employees and;
- The visits in Ireland to be at 10 million annually.

People and Place remain as Ireland's biggest assets in terms of our ability to attract visitors. There are three types of experiences that appeal to visitors, the Culturally Curious, the Great Escapers and the Social Energisers. The aim is to provide attractions that can provide and enhance these experiences.

Realising our Rural Potential Action Plan for Rural Development (2017) identifies the government's plans to support sustainable and vibrant communities by maximising rural tourism and recreation and to also support additional employment and infrastructure to contribute to economic growth in rural communities.

The National Policy Objective 22 from the National Planning Framework (NPF) highlights the need for sustainable and activity based tourism by;

*Facilitating tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.*

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region, recognises the significant share Cork has of Ireland's premier tourism resources- both natural and man-made. The Region hosts the three main tourism areas developed by Fáilte Ireland: The Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and Ireland's Ancient East as well as the Munster Vales brand. These brands provide a framework for local areas to develop and capitalise on their tourism assets. Regional Policy objectives, RPO 53 and RPO 54, refer to how the southern region can maximise tourism potential.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

Cork County Council recognises the importance of successfully managing the tourism sector for the economy and local communities in Cork. It creates much needed revenue and employment within the county and therefore, it is important to have appropriate policy and objectives to protect the key assets County Cork has to offer. The Council further recognises the importance of the natural environment, landscape and heritage as a resource for tourism and the need to manage and protect them.

The current plan recognises the wide range of tourist attractions in the county. Sustainable Tourism and Activity Tourism have become very popular in recent years and promoting this type of tourism is a priority for Cork County Council. Fáilte Ireland has placed significant emphasis on incorporating the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East brands into the tourism policies of the new county development plan. Walkways, cycle ways, blueways and greenways are all crucial to sustainable tourism and there is ample of opportunities to promote this form of tourism in County Cork.

Cork City and County Council launched a jointly commissioned 5-year strategy in 2015, Growing Tourism in Cork- A collective Strategy. "Pure Cork" is a joint initiative with Cork City and County Councils, launched in 2016, to brand Cork as a tourist destination. It is supported by Fáilte Ireland



and the objective is to maximise the economic return from tourism within Cork and to promote the city and county as a “famous for” and “must visit” destination. Cork has been voted as one of Europe’s top 15 destinations in European Best Destinations 2020.

Fáilte Ireland highlights that there is a fundamental link between tourism and many other sectors which will need to be acknowledged in the draft plan. It is a priority of the Council to have robust policies and objectives within the draft plan to ensure sustainable tourism is maintained.

The current plan lists a number of the tourism assets County Cork has to offer within the tourism chapter. It is an aim in the forthcoming plan to expand on this to reflect the growing tourism industry within the county in recent years.

### Chief Executive’s Recommendation

It is recommended to include the following in the draft county development plan:

- a) To retain the dedicated Tourism Chapter in the new Plan and to update the policies and objectives of the chapter to reflect recent developments, trends and areas of new policy guidance.
- b) Acknowledge the importance of the natural environment, landscape and heritage as a resource for tourism and include strong policies in the plan to protect these assets. Ensure the link between tourism and other sectors of the plan is recognised and ensure that policies and objectives are consistent and supportive across sectors.
- c) Provide an updated list of the top current and potential tourist attractions in the county, and a link to the Councils new interactive tourism map.
- d) To recognise the importance of the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland’s Ancient East as significant tourism brands and to encourage the expansion of the brands where appropriate.
- e) Include policies to support the development of greenways, blueways, walkways and cycle ways across the county in order to encourage sustainable activity tourism.



## Key Issue 14: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The biodiversity of our County includes our native plant and animal species, and the places (habitats and ecosystems) where they live. Our key biodiversity areas comprise over 100 sites across the County protected by European and Irish legislation because they support rare, threatened or nationally important species, but it also comprises ecosystems, species and habitats that are not specifically protected by legislation.

The protection of our biodiversity matters for ethical, environmental and economic reasons and in particular for climate change reasons. Biodiversity is affected by climate change and it also contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation through the role of ecosystems in the global carbon cycle.

Healthy functioning ecosystems clean our water, purify our air, maintain our soils, provide us with food, medicines and fuel, and they help to regulate our climate. A healthy environment provides attractive spaces for people to visit, live in, and work in.

Biodiversity is threatened globally and locally by the ever increasing demands of people for space, fuel, food and other resources, and increasingly by the impacts of climate change. Loss or damage to sites and places of biodiversity value caused by changes in land use practices and pressure for development, disturbance of places used by wild animals and birds for sheltering, feeding or breeding, and pollution of watercourses all affect the extent and quality of our natural environment. A report on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland, published by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2019 found 46% of habitats demonstrating ongoing declining trends.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

There is significant overlap between the concepts of biodiversity, climate change and green infrastructure and this overlap is reflected in submissions. There is also overlap, albeit to a lesser extent, with submissions relating to other issues such as energy, settlements and place making, transport and mobility. See references to biodiversity under these key issues also in this report.

Submissions relating to biodiversity are unanimous in highlighting the importance of the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. A number of submissions, link biodiversity to climate change and request that biodiversity and climate change be at the core of policies in the County Development Plan.

Submissions also point to the role of biodiversity in creating vibrant and healthy communities and the social and economic (including tourism) benefits of this. Many submissions highlight the role that local communities, and local knowledge, can play in protecting biodiversity and they seek greater consultation between the local authority and local communities. There are calls for Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be explicit aims of the plan.

Other issues raised by submissions are listed below.



Areas protected by legislation and habitats/species outside of these areas

Many submissions highlight the need to protect species and habitats generally and the need to be proactive and ambitious in protecting nature. They point to the need to protect those biodiversity areas protected by legislation through adequately enforcing that legislation and also to the need to protect additional areas. They propose the restoration of depleted areas, which would include a process of engagement with communities. Some submissions, such as those relating to the Tracton area, Clogheen Marsh, the Gearagh, and Commogue Marsh, identify biodiversity sites for which they seek protection or point to specific green infrastructure opportunities. Submissions request the promotion of rewilding and ask that pathways to the restoration of wildlife, high-environmental quality landscapes & natural processes be identified, generating new opportunities, including economic opportunities.

Monitoring

Submissions emphasise the need for monitoring of biodiversity loss and protection and highlight the need for monitoring of effectiveness of policies also.

Green Infrastructure

Multiple submissions call for a strategic approach to the protection, expansion, enhancement and connection of green areas due to their importance for wellbeing, tourism potential, and active travel opportunity. Specific opportunities are identified in Carrigaline, Cobh, and Skibbereen. Green spaces are called for in our towns to create attractive, healthy towns.

Energy

Multiple submissions call for measures to reduce energy consumption - including by increasing the opportunity for active travel. They also seek greater use of renewable energy, but some also raise concerns regarding wind energy and its potential impacts on landscape and habitat and seek identification of suitable sites for renewable energy production with consideration of ecological sensitivity. Concern regarding lack of guidance relating to wind energy is raised in one submission which also seeks a community benefit from wind energy projects. One submission submits that EV charging points should be provided at every public car park, and recreational area.

Landscape

As well as raising concern regarding wind farm impacts on landscape (mentioned above) concerns regarding industrial development on the landscape are raised. A review Cork County Council's landscaping policy is also sought.

Trees and Hedgerows

A significant number of submissions relate to trees and hedgerows. There are requests for a tree strategy, a tree replacement programme, planting of native trees, protection of trees and use of tree protection orders, a sustainable forestry policy which encourages nature and wildlife, planting of more broadleaf forestry, and the appointment of a Tree Officer. A number of submissions seek retention and strengthening of hedgerows.

Water Management

Submissions call for nature-based solutions to water management seeking watercourses and floodplains as habitats for wildlife and use of the riparian zones to reduce flood risk. They also raise



the issue of the need to address wastewater treatment of settlements as a matter of priority. The Water Framework Directive requires that 100% of the EU's freshwater and coastal ecosystems are in good health by 2027.

#### Awareness and knowledge

The need to increase awareness of the value of biodiversity and the value of the green economy is highlighted in submissions. The issue of increasing awareness of policy and environmental legislation within the farming community and among landowners in combination with greater enforcement is raised. The need to protect areas of semi/natural habitat from agricultural improvement is also raised. A submission states that the Council should lead by example regarding protection of biodiversity. Several submissions seek an expansion of the knowledge base in relation to biodiversity through employment of biologists and/or ecologists in local authorities.

#### All Ireland Pollinator Plan

Several submissions call for the Council to adopt the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.

#### Community

It was submitted that community resilience must be developed by focusing on nature and by supporting and empowering local business including ecotourism. Several submissions highlighted that the Council should be increasingly proactive in consulting with the needs of communities and need to collaborate with local communities to achieve biodiversity protection. Community gardens and allotments and farmer's markets are supported in submissions.

#### Rural Development

A submission seeks a greater focus on rural development in the plan which would include a just transition to a low carbon economy. Another seeks promotion of the concept of Smart Villages and a vision for rural areas to include new energy sources, innovation in food production and provision of natural resources.

#### Maritime Cork

Submissions refer to opportunities offered by the potential of Maritime Cork. A holistic ecological approach to maritime development is sought and it is suggested that there needs to be a focus on protecting the marine environment and creating bio-reserves to facilitate its recovery – protection of Lough Hyne and Cork Harbour is referenced. Screening of aquaculture developments by ecologists is sought to ensure the marine environment is not put at risk. Policies for protection and restoration of Cork Harbour/Cork's islands are sought as is the designation of part of the West Cork coast as a marine protection area. Consideration of tourism revenue generated by west Cork's coast needs is requested in assessing marine ventures proposals. The capacity of kelp and eelgrass to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> is referenced.

#### Pollution

There is a call for a reduction of pollution of the rivers, sea, land and air.

#### Other issues

As well as the recurring themes listed above a number of other points were raised in biodiversity submissions including proposals for the following:



- Cessation of use of environmentally damaging pesticides and herbicides.
- Elimination of invasive species.
- Improved waste management and end to the use of plastic and improve recycling.
- Redrafting of the County Biodiversity Plan.
- Implementation of the list of actions in the County Cork Biodiversity Action Plan 2009-2014
- Facilitation of greater public access to uplands of the County.
- Provision of more public allotments.
- Address the lack of anaerobic digester facilities.
- Need for greater enforcement of planning conditions.
- Development of ecology friendly housing.
- Inclusion of biodiversity proposals in development proposals.
- Use of independent ecological assessors.
- Prioritisation of brownfield redevelopment.
- Management of public lands for biodiversity.
- Inclusion of biodiversity in new developments.

### Government Policy

The National Biodiversity Action Plan, 2017-2021, sets the policy context for biodiversity with which the County Development Plan must align. In line with the action plan, protection of biodiversity must be mainstreamed into decision making across all sectors and the knowledge base for conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity must be strengthened. We must conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside and in the marine environment. We must improve the management of protected areas and species. Cork County Council also needs to build awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystems services.

As referenced elsewhere in this document, much of the policy guidance from Government is contained in the Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018) with which regional policy in the RSES for the Southern Region (2020) aligns. In addition, Ministerial guidelines issued under section 28; and Ministerial policy directives issued under section 29 of the Planning and Development Acts will inform the preparation of the draft plan. Of relevance are the following National Policy Objectives:

*National Policy Objective 58: Integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans.*

*National Policy Objective 59: Enhance the conservation status and improve the management of protected areas and protected species by: Implementing relevant EU Directives to protect Ireland's environment and wildlife; Integrating policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity in statutory development plans; Developing and utilising licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites; Continued research, survey programmes and monitoring of habitats and species.*

*National Policy Objective 60: Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.*



*National Policy Objective 62: Identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas.*

### Chief Executive's Opinion

The promotion of biodiversity in both rural areas and within our settlements is fundamental to a healthy environment and a strong economy and to the well-being of our citizens. Biodiversity is intrinsically linked to climate change.

Specific habitats and species are afforded legal protection in the County within designated sites including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Ramsar sites. The Habitats and Birds Directives provide protection to specified species. Securing the protection of such sites and species must be continued and enhanced and, as importantly, must be monitored.

Most of our existing biodiversity occurs in ordinary landscapes outside of these protected areas. There is significant potential to increase biodiversity in these urban and rural areas. Such areas include rivers, lakes, streams, natural/semi natural grasslands, hedgerows, woodlands, parkland, coastal and marine habitats. Where appropriate, we need to enhance ecological connectivity of such areas. Covid 19 has highlighted the value of local access to nature and local biodiversity in supporting a sense of well-being.

Biodiversity and natural heritage protection is needed for our quality of life, to create attractive, vibrant environments to live in, work in, and enjoy. Biodiversity also has a role in carbon capture and is necessary for both climate mitigation and adaptation.

The County Development Plan will have a role in creating greater awareness of biodiversity and its diverse benefits. This will assist in bringing about better integration of biodiversity into economic and development decisions. The development plan will promote biodiversity of protected areas and other areas within the landscape through the promotion and integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services. The protection of biodiversity will be a crucial part of the development plan's response to climate change. In addition, the role it can also play in flood management, will be recognised in the plan. The protection of biodiversity may also provide natural amenities and opportunity for active travel. Support will be given to restoring biodiversity where adverse effects on the environment have been suffered.

The preparation of the plan supports an evidenced based approach to the protection of biodiversity. The development of Environmental Sensitivity Mapping facilitates environmental assessment of sites to assist in the determination of site suitability for development and to identify specific environmental protection measures that may be required.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) The draft Plan will recognise and support the crucial role that biodiversity plays in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- b) The preparation of the draft Plan will include a review of all relevant policies of the current plan.



- c) The draft Plan will continue to include effective policies and objectives to protect and enhance biodiversity including both legally protected areas and other areas. The draft plan will contain robust and clear policies and objectives to protect biodiversity that may be effectively monitored.
- d) The draft County Development Plan will consider how best to support the promotion and integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services.
- e) The draft plan will continue to support the implementation of the Cork County Biodiversity Action Plan (2009) and any updated plan.



## Key Issue 15: Climate Change

### Summary of the main proposals set out in the Section 11 Public Consultation Document and Background Documents

The impact and threat of climate change is becoming increasingly evident, creating significant global economic, environmental and social impacts.

The Government's Climate Action Plan published in 2019 highlights the requirement for a transformational shift of our economies and societies towards climate resilience and sustainable development and a profound change in the systems and practices which support our lifestyle. It supports the adoption of a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050 at EU level.

In alignment with the NPF the new County Development Plan must deliver compact, connected, sustainable growth that must meet our needs for power, heat, travel, land use and other resources in a greatly more efficient and sustainable way.

The concepts of climate change and biodiversity are strongly interconnected. Biodiversity is affected by climate change and it also contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation through the role of ecosystems in the global carbon cycle. See Key issue 14: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage.

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Climate change considerations permeate many development plan issues and overlap perhaps most significantly with Transport, Energy, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure. There were a number of submissions which addressed some or all of these themes. See discussions under these headings elsewhere in this report also.

Where a submitter selected to make a submission under the 'climate change' heading the key issues raised are set out in the following paragraphs. Most of the submissions related to mitigation measures - greenhouse gas emission reduction and biodiversity enhancement – a number also related to adaptation measures and resilience.

The OPR welcomes the acknowledgement in the public consultation document of climate change as one of the key issues to be addressed in the development plan and it states that the plan will need to provide sufficient clarity and certainty in terms of the measures proposed under section 10(2)(n) of the Planning and Development Act. The SRA also welcomes the direction of change signalled in the consultation document and recommends support for the initiatives of the Climate Action Regional Offices.

### Climate change to be central to the development plan

There is acknowledgment in many of the submissions received that climate change is a key issue to be addressed in the development plan and that it must be a core consideration throughout the entire plan. Submissions call for robust policies, and monitoring of same, in relation to climate change and there is also a call for a transparent climate change evaluation of all development proposals. Given the significance and urgency of the challenge to address climate change, submissions demand a more ambitious approach in the new plan.



### Reduction in Greenhouses gas emissions

As expected, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is common to many of the climate change submissions. In this regard, most submissions seek greater use of renewable energy, greater energy efficiency and more sustainable travel – see below and see discussions of these topics in the relevant section of this document. A number of submissions seek more sustainable agricultural practices.

### Economic benefit

Submissions list the positive economic benefits to be derived from climate action measures. Those listed include lower fuel costs, creation of jobs and business opportunities associated with energy/waste reduction projects; benefit derived from farmers markets; economic benefit of healthier population; tourism benefit derived from attraction of a cleaner environment with active travel opportunities; etc. One submission sets out a funding model proposal for mobilisation of business for a greener economy and another proposes the promotion of synergies between business and not for profit sectors. A submission also calls for community economic resilience in the context of climate change.

### Compact growth and attractive town centres

A number of submissions are supportive of the delivery of compact growth as a climate change mitigation measure. This receives support in submissions made in relation to Transport and is supported more indirectly in submissions made in relation to climate change where people seek an increase in sustainable transport. One submission calls for promotion of upper floor uses of buildings in our towns and the creation of more attractive town centres through maintenance and protection of architectural heritage and enhanced public realm.

### Energy

Submissions propose various models for the promotion of renewable energy generally and are supportive of the potential of offshore wind, wave, solar, community energy, and biomass. Note that some submissions received in relation to biodiversity also support renewable energy but raise concern regarding impact of wind energy (see Biodiversity issue in this report). Energy efficiency in buildings is also called for. One submission proposes an assessment of future energy needs of the County.

### Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

The protection and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure is called for in several submissions in the context of nature-based solutions to flood risk management, the contribution of enhanced biodiversity to climate change mitigation and the contribution of active travel to climate change mitigation.

### Sustainable Transport

As mentioned above, many of the submissions made specifically in relation to climate change echo the proposals made in the submissions made under the Transport and Mobility topic. These submissions call for a range of measures to promote active travel and public transport use and to reduce the need to travel.



## Waste

The SRA recommends an emphasis on proposals for smart and innovative approaches to waste management, promotion of the circular economy and opportunities in Biomass (topics seen in other submissions made in relation to biodiversity). Waste reduction is also raised in other submissions.

## Other Issues

Other issues raised in climate change submissions include the following:

- Water management and the need to maintain clean waterways
- Air quality
- Ecological oversight of developments
- Climate resilient buildings
- Support remote working – broadband
- Support EU Smart Village initiative
- Need to build climate resilient buildings

## **Government Policy**

As set out in other sections of this document, much of the policy guidance from Government is contained in the Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018). Regional policy is set out in the RSES for the Southern Region (2020) aligns with this. In addition, Ministerial guidelines issued under section 28; and Ministerial policy directives issued under section 29 of the Planning and Development Acts will inform the preparation of the draft plan.

The National Planning Framework outcome of a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society is particularly relevant as is National Planning Objective 54 to reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The Government's Climate Action Plan (2019) which supports the adoption of a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050 at EU level is of and direct relevance to the County Development Plan.

Planning Legislation requires that Development Plans contain objectives for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to

- (i) reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources,
  - (ii) reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and
  - (iii) address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development;
- having regard to location, layout and design of new development.

## **Chief Executive's Opinion**

The impact and threat of climate change is becoming increasingly evident, creating significant global economic, environmental and social impacts. Climate change is the most serious threat to life and



the environment. The development plan needs to set out a pathway to help achieve decarbonisation, resource efficiency and resilience.

Government policy, reflected in the National Planning Framework and the Climate Action Plan, requires the preparation of a new County Development Plan that achieves a reduced carbon footprint. It must deliver compact, connected, sustainable growth that must meet our needs for power, heat, travel, land use and other resources in a greatly more efficient and sustainable way. A key element of the Development Plan's climate change mitigation measures will be strong integration of land use and transport policies, particularly a stronger alignment between where people work and live. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is also critical to addressing climate change and the draft plan will afford greater protection to biodiversity for climate change as well as social and economic reasons. See also sections on Core Strategy, Transport, Energy, and Biodiversity in this document.

Cork County Council is a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate Change and Energy. In 2019 the Council adopted a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, a high level document designed to mainstream the issue of climate change in Local Authority plans, policies and operations. Cork County Council is the lead authority in a shared service guiding other Councils in the Atlantic Seaboard South Region as they plan for Climate Action (CARO). Cork County Council has also signed a Climate Action Charter setting some of our ambition for the future. Notably this charter acknowledges that local authorities will, with the support of Central Government, 'exercise our planning and regulatory roles to help improve climate outcomes in the wider community and beyond the public sector, by developing and implementing robust evidenced based policy and standards on climate action, through appropriate and relevant adaptation and mitigation measures'.

The Council's commitment to climate action will continue in the preparation of the County Development Plan where climate change will be a fundamental and core consideration permeating the plan.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) Include Climate Change within the Core Strategy of the draft County Development Plan to reflect its central role in the plan.
- b) Ensure that climate change is a key consideration in the preparation of all policy in the draft County Development Plan.
- c) Ensure that the potential climate change impact of all specific objectives is assessed.
- d) Deliver compact growth in alignment with the National Planning Framework Objectives.
- e) Promote the provision of renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- f) Ensure that implementation of the draft Plan will support reduced greenhouse gas emissions through measurable actions that may be effectively monitored.
- g) Acknowledge the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the work of the Southern Climate Action Regional Office.



## Key Issue 16: North Cork (Fermoy MD and Kanturk Mallow MD).

### Fermoy Municipal District

A total of approximately **31** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of Fermoy and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two B, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

#### Main Towns

##### *Fermoy*

Submissions highlight the issue of vacant buildings in Fermoy and the need for a range of initiatives to bring activity back to the centre of the town including the Council acquiring vacant buildings to provide living over the shop opportunities, a 'town centre first policy' to ensure town centre development is prioritised over greenfield land and a 'shared space' initiative for cars/pedestrians/cyclists to reduce traffic speed, enhance safety and facilitate a more relaxing town centre environment. The need for public transport to serve the town and the promotion of "park and stride" from edge of town parking areas is also suggested. A range of measures to improve the public realm of Fermoy are also suggested as well as the need for a 'local work hub' to provide share workspaces for remote working. The need for improvements to the water services infrastructure in Fermoy, improved cycling infrastructure to connect the town to other areas and the potential for reopening the old railway line to connect Fermoy to Mallow, Ballyhooly, Clondulane and other areas is also discussed. Reopening the Fermoy viaduct and improving access to Knockanag Reservoir are also suggested as measures that could improve walking facilities and outdoor amenities for the town.

Other submissions seek a flexible / less prescriptive approach to zoning objectives, particularly with regard to the amalgamation of objectives from the Fermoy Town Council Development Plan and the Local Area Plan, and that development close to the centre of the town should be encouraged in accordance with the principles of the NPF and RSES, and in terms of deliverability, accessibility and consolidation. The potential of protected structures / historic estates in the area to contribute the tourism offering of the town/ North Cork, and the need for a hotel in Fermoy Town is also discussed.

The need to ensure sufficient employment land is identified to meet the needs of the town and constraints on the expansion of existing industrial / business uses in the greenbelt around Fermoy town are also highlighted and a relaxation / re view of RCI 5-6, greenbelt policies and rural industry



polices is sought to address the latter. The needs of the waste management sector and motorway services facilities are specifically referenced in this regard.

Finally, other submissions argue for an increased population target and headroom for Fermoy, the need for a flexible approach to density to reflect the existing pattern of development and a realistic assessment of the capacity of the existing built up area to delivery housing.

#### ***Mitchelstown:***

The submissions are seeking supportive policies and objectives to help accelerate development in the town over the period of the plan and highlight the strategic importance of Mitchelstown to the settlement structure of the Municipal District. There are also requests to review the extent of the existing town centre in Mitchelstown to better reflect the nature of development.

#### **Villages:**

Submissions in relation to the villages raise issues in relation to the flood zone mapping, access to historic graveyards/ holy wells, proximity / impact of wind farms and renewable energy developments to settlements and the impact of the rural housing polices on the ability to get planning permission in the environs of village settlements, which specific reference to Shanballymore.

There is concerns over the land use approach to waste management facilities across the country and how to support existing waste facilities in rural areas. These issues will need to be considered further in appropriate sections of the Draft Plan.

#### **Chief Executive's Opinion**

The Fermoy MD has a strong settlement network and is relatively well served with water services infrastructure and has many strengths with regard to economy, employment and accessibility. Many of the settlements have a degree of self-containment and operate as significant local employment and service centres for a large rural hinterland. These issues will be considered in the formulation for the Draft Core Strategy.

The issues that have been raised during this public consultation period for Fermoy MD considered further in the preparation of the draft plan.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

- a) It is recommended a full review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the Fermoy Municipal District will be undertaken to address the key issues emerging from areas including the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm and facilities, economic and community development, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- b) Further review of the water main and sewer network infrastructure will be required to support development in main towns, villages and smaller settlements. The draft plan will give further guidance regarding development in the municipal district.



- c) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, to RPO 26: Towns and Villages and RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork Ring Network) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking.]
- d) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.



## Kanturk-Mallow Municipal District

A total of approximately **38** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of Kanturk Mallow and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion on the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

#### Main Towns

##### **Mallow:**

Many submissions have highlighted the need for a strong population growth target for Mallow to be retained, to reflect its status as a Key Town, with a target population of 20,000 to 2027 being proposed in several submissions. The need to prioritise the delivery of key infrastructure investments is emphasised as critical to the delivery of this growth. The potential conflict between growth and the protection of the Blackwater SAC is also raised. The need to introduce policies to facilitate and promote further growth in employment in Mallow was highlighted including the need to maximise the potential of commercial lands and provide services and facilities to support the target population growth.

The approach to density was raised in many submissions highlighting the need to apply residential density levels appropriate to the urban development pattern and considering market viability. Submissions suggested that there was a need to prioritise the zoning of lands within the plan that are deliverable, accessible and consolidate existing and permitted development and where there is a proven willingness by the landowner to develop. In addition, the need to provide enough headroom in zoned lands was highlighted.

Other points raised in the submissions include:

- Housing supply in Mallow should not be unduly dependent on the release of development sites within the Mallow North East Urban Expansion Area as these will take a long time to deliver.
- There is potential to enhance the role of Quarters town having regard to its locational advantages relative to other areas.
- There is potential to expand the town centre to the south side of the river to provide a social, commercial and community core connecting into the existing town centre and to



establish new neighbourhood centres around the new core to support and service communities on the south side.

- The need for a more integrated public transport and pedestrian/cycle strategy enhancing connectivity and making Mallow a more walkable and cycleable town.
- The need for an additional pedestrian and cycling bridge over the Blackwater to join amenity areas and connect to employment and residential uses.
- Potential for existing amenity areas on the banks of the River Blackwater to be upgraded and enhanced as key green infrastructure for the town. Opportunity to implement a network of green routes to connect amenity areas, neighbourhood centres and residential areas.
- Potential to develop a sustainable energy campus supporting the transition to a low carbon economy in Mallow.
- Need to review site-specific requirements to provide additional nursing homes in Mallow, due to an existing enough supply in the market.

### **Charleville**

Submissions highlighted the need to include supportive policies and objectives to help accelerate the economic, social and community development of Charleville over the period of the Plan and to recognise its strategic importance within the Municipal District. The need to have a strong growth target and to prioritise infrastructural investment were highlighted.

Issues raised included the need to apply residential density levels appropriate to the town, ensuring there is ample headroom and prioritising the zoning of lands within the plan that are deliverable, accessible and consolidate existing and permitted development.

Several submissions highlighted the need to support the redevelopment of key opportunity/brownfield sites within the town centre supported by land use strategies which are based on a coherent approach to allocating land uses. Monitoring of development patterns and active land management over the plan period was considered vital. The overall importance of the rejuvenation of the town centre and public realm was highlighted in several submissions recognising its importance in assisting retail and commercial activity and investment.

Other points raised in the submissions included:

- Potential to utilise council owned lands in Charleville to provide social and affordable housing.
- Potential for Market Court House on Main Street to be used as a museum.
- Opportunity for lands on northern side of Charleville to provide car park facilities for Church and Town.
- Potential to develop a tourist amenity incorporating Moatville House as part of a tourist trail.
- Potential to develop a cycle trail around Charleville Town connecting to the Ballyhoura Cycle trail.



**Other Main Towns:**

There were no specific policy related submissions for the other towns in the Municipal district i.e. Kanturk, Newmarket and Buttevant.

A submission by the OPW requested that the Council have regard to the proposed development of a flood relief scheme in Kanturk. A submission from Coillte highlighted that part of its estate includes lands which are near the settlement of Newmarket.

**Villages:**

Submissions in relation to the villages raise issues in relation to the need for additional housing, facilities, services and infrastructure to enhance rural communities/reverse rural depopulation. The need to upgrade wastewater infrastructure was an issue for several settlements while flooding was raised as an issue in others. Many of these submissions highlighted specific proposals for their communities which they would hope to see advanced over the plan period.

**Chief Executive's Opinion**

The Kanturk Mallow MD has a strong settlement network and is relatively well served with water services infrastructure and has many strengths with regard to economy, employment and accessibility. The settlement of Mallow in particular (designated as a key town in the RSES) is of particular strategic importance to North Cork and the wider County. Charleville, although smaller has a strong employment base as County Town in North Cork and the potential capacity to drive sub regional growth in shared hinterlands with Co. Limerick.

Many of the settlements have a degree of self-containment and operate as significant local employment and service centres for their rural hinterlands. These issues will be considered in the formulation of the Draft Core Strategy.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

- a) It is recommended a review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the Kanturk Mallow Municipal District will be undertaken to address the key issues emerging from areas including the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm and facilities, economic and community development, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- b) Further review of the water main and sewer network infrastructure will be required to support development in main towns, villages and smaller settlements. The draft plan will give further guidance regarding development in the municipal district.
- c) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of sustainable travel and transport facilities to provide a healthier, socially inclusive and sustainable society and provide access for all. The need for a more integrated public transport and pedestrian/cycle strategy is a particularly important matter for Mallow given its status as a Key Town.



- d) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, RPO 19, Key Town Mallow, RPO 26: Towns and Villages, RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork Ring Network) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking.]
  
- e) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of community, sports and recreational facilities and to provide a more socially inclusive society and access for all.
  
- f) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.





## Key Issue 17: South Cork (Carrigaline, Cobh, East Cork and Macroom MDs).

### Carrigaline Municipal District

A total of approximately **49** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of Carrigaline and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two B, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

#### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Numerous submissions raise issues of a strategic nature affecting all Municipal Districts including issues in relation to the supply of housing and employment land, approach to water services provision, delivery and funding of infrastructure, sustainable transport, built heritage issues and vacant sites, and amid the Covid-19 crisis, the importance of access to local enterprise hubs with access to broadband, open spaces, and public realm in our towns and villages has been thrown into especially sharp relief. These issues are referred, where they are considered most relevant in the previous sections of this document.

Several submissions raised the broad issues of housing land supply and how best to achieve the targets for the County as a whole and the targets set for the Cork (MASP) area which Carrigaline MD forms part of. Often coupled with this, there were requests to optimise sites that have existing infrastructure connections that will facilitate the growth targets, and requests that the County Development Plan (CDP) identify and prioritise the necessary roads and infrastructure to unlock sites capable of meeting future growth targets, particularly in Carrigaline.

Numerous submissions requested that the population distribution and unit allocation per settlement should be increased and that there should be an overall increase in the population for the MD as a whole and particularly to the Main Towns and the Key Village of Crosshaven and Bays.

Issues regarding policy were raised throughout numerous submissions, with the majority of requests for a change in policy referring to retaining current zonings within the CDP and the inclusion of less prescriptive zoning objectives. There were also requests for the alignment between statutory and non-statutory plans in CDP, for Carrigaline.

#### Main Towns

##### *Carrigaline*

It was noted that the settlement network should be reconsidered to ensure that development is prioritised in areas where investment in infrastructure, amenities and placemaking will deliver the



greatest social, environmental and economic benefits for the county and the region. The issues for Carrigaline focus around the future growth and the role played by the Metropolitan Town, with many submissions stating that Carrigaline Town Centre needs investment, and suggesting that the forthcoming plan should include incentives and urban design and traffic framework to allow for greater connectivity, permeability and appropriate urban growth. It was stated there was a need to reduce the car dependency on private motor vehicles in the most car dependent town in Ireland, Carrigaline, through sustainable and active travel and to create a civic and cultural centre in the town centre. Requests for an increase in commercial offerings to entice inward travel into the town were also received.

In addition, there were requests regarding the growth of Carrigaline. To facilitate growth to achieve the population and housing targets submissions suggested to formalise the status of the existing Metropolitan Towns Strategic Land Reserve's (SLR), including SLR2 at Fernhill Carrigaline, as part of the response to the significant uplift in population and housing units required in the new Cork County Development Plan. There were also calls for infrastructure provision strategy to unlock constraint on existing zoned lands relating to road infrastructure while on the other hand numerous submissions were received related to concerns regarding the upgrade of the Mountain Road to form part of the Relief Road around Carrigaline.

The importance of the link between Carrigaline and the Strategic Employment Area of Ringaskiddy was a key issue within submissions, as many residents within Carrigaline work and commute to Ringaskiddy.

Recreational and amenity issues were raised regarding Carrigaline. Submissions noted that the Owenabue River is an outstanding natural asset in the Town, and there is a need to dramatically enhance this feature in Carrigaline. Further requests were received asking for the Plan to prioritise the development of the greenway, connecting Crosshaven, Carrigaline, Ringaskiddy, Monkstown, and Passage West with the existing Passage West to City Greenway, with further proposed recreational facilities and amenities listed within submissions, which can be seen in Volume 2 of this report.

### ***Passage West***

Issues regarding population and housing growth targets for Passage West and Monkstown were raised in submissions and are also referred to in other sections of this report and the enhanced choice in housing is considered particularly important for a rapidly expanding settlement like Passage West.

Submissions regarding issues with the Passage West through to Raffeen section of the proposed Lee to Sea Greenway were raised over the capacity, safety and discomfort the proposed development may inflict on the narrow paths and roads of Passage West and Monkstown, and on the pedestrians who avail of the existing amenity. Suggestions were made that the Planning Department should facilitate the Lee to Sea project by incorporating it into the new section of N28.

Many submissions stated there was a dominance of traffic in the settlement area and suggests traffic calming measures and the reclaiming of spaces for pedestrians and cyclists in Passage West and Monkstown.



There were also requests for the provision of a services within the town centre, noting it would contribute to the revitalisation of the town.

### ***Ringaskiddy***

The issues for Ringaskiddy centred on the land use and growth of the settlement. Submissions established that existing policy was preventing any significant non-industrial based land uses in Ringaskiddy, which was stated is no longer sustainable or consistent with National Policy Objectives. Port and Industrial activity are the main priority of land use in Ringaskiddy, yet submissions acknowledged the need for housing and population growth in Ringaskiddy, to alleviate the pressure in Carrigaline to meet targets, and also as a strategic measure so people could live within the Strategic Employment Area and have a more sustainable commute to their place of employment.

Issues arose regarding the capacity of zoned land within Ringaskiddy ensuring enough capacity in zonings for Ringaskiddy, particularly Industrial Zonings. It notes there is a need to prioritise activities in Ringaskiddy such as: of Large-Scale Employment, Port, Industrial, Storage, Warehousing, Logistics, Large-Scale Lay Down Areas, and Renewable Energy.

Other issues for the town include the encouragement of further development of Ringaskiddy/Shanbally as an energy hub and promotes the transitioning requirements to future, cleaner, more renewable energy's in the area, and the inclusion of objectives for expansion, and diversification of the Energy, Climate and Marine cluster at Ringaskiddy and the associated student accommodation with the cluster.

### **Key Village**

#### ***Crosshaven and Bays:***

The issues for Crosshaven and Bays, as outlined by the submissions, refer to the future growth and development of the settlement. The submissions noted key villages, such as Crosshaven and Bays, have the potential to consolidate and strengthen its rural hinterland and support economic growth associated with tourism. It was considered that the scale of the different constituent parts of Crosshaven and Bays downplays the contribution which these settlements can make as sustainable population growth within the Cork Metropolitan Area. Many submissions noted that a single development boundary for Crosshaven and Bays settlement should be provided in the forthcoming plan. Issues arose regarding maintaining Crosshaven as a key village with medium scale of development. There were also requests that the new County Development Plan make appropriate provision for increased population and associated housing targets in Crosshaven, because as a settlement it can play an enhanced role at sub-regional level to drive the development of the area.

Submissions made reference to the land zoned for a hotel, stating it is a critically important site which needs careful and sensitive treatment when developed as it has the potential to strengthen the centre of the village.

### **Chief Executive's Opinion**

Regard will be given to a review of the settlement network in line with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region. Other factors which will also play a critical part in the evaluation of a settlements place within the network will include the water services infrastructure already in place, the scale of development that has already taken place, the amount of employment



provided within the settlement and the level of other services available. It is noteworthy that there are transport infrastructure challenges across the Municipal District which impact on the amount of development land that is available for development and the overall level of growth that can be accommodated in any settlement.

The current policy approach to the appropriate scale of development to be located in towns and villages is supported by and in compliance with the Departments Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. The suggestion that the Planning Authority should avoid overly prescriptive objectives on individual sites will be reviewed.

Submissions sought residential development beyond the existing settlement development boundaries, while considerable development opportunities currently exist within the existing towns, villages and rural clusters across the County. Such a development pattern would result in deficiencies in terms of the provision of basic infrastructure and public services, in addition to unsustainable travel patterns and the loss of valuable agricultural lands, unless contiguous to the existing development boundary and in keeping with the NPF.

The role of amenities and sustainable travel methods in towns, villages and communities has been heightened as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, and thus their inclusion and development will be imperative to the success of the forthcoming plan. Our reliance on unsustainable travel methods needs to be shifted to allow for more accessible and healthier ways to travel and commute around settlements.

The Plan Review acknowledges the overlaps which are prevalent between the themes of population, housing and placemaking. It is intended that a greater degree of policy co-ordination is necessary as these are all mutually supportive and an integral part of the settlements in County Cork.

In relation to the Transport and Infrastructural issues, Housing and Population issues, and the Heritage issues raised in the submissions, please refer to the relevant sections of this report. The list of submissions are listed within Volume 2 of this Chief Executives Report.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) It is recommended that a full review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the Carrigaline Municipal District will be undertaken which will address key issues emerging from areas including the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm, tourism, and facilities, economic and community development, capacity of zoned land, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- b) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of sustainable travel and transport facilities to provide a healthier, socially inclusive and sustainable society and provide access for all. It is noted that some of the projects identified in the submissions are outside the scope of the County Development Plan and these issues will be referred to the relevant Municipal District Officers and/or the town teams.



- c) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, to RPO 26: Towns and Villages and RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork Ring Network) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking.]
- d) It is recommended that the draft plan reflect on the infrastructural and recreational and amenity issues raised in submissions.
- e) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.



## Cobh Municipal District

A total of approximately **45** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of Carrigaline and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two B, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Many of the submissions raise issues of a strategic nature affecting all Municipal Districts. These include the following issues:

**Housing:** Issues raised include the supply of housing, appropriate location, density and scale of residential development. The availability of land for housing is also raised in several submissions.

**Community:** Issues raised include the provision of community facilities including the issue of lack of community facilities in villages, consideration of requirements for nursing home provision in settlements and the appropriate locations for same.

**Land Use Zoning Categories:** Some submissions seek greater flexibility within land use zoning categories.

**Infrastructure provision:** Some submissions caution that certainty regarding infrastructure provision should precede zoning, others seek flexibility in the quantum of land that may be delivered in advance of required infrastructure provision.

**Attractive spaces:** The need for safe, attractive, permeable town and village cores and open spaces was raised in several submissions. Submissions seek vibrant town and village centres.

**Greenbelts:** The role of greenbelts is raised in a few submissions – some seek their safeguarding and a submission seeks an expanded development role for greenbelts.

**Strategic Employment Location:** In a few submissions the employment role of these locations is highlighted, as is their potential role in delivering population growth.

**Sustainable Transport:** Included in submissions is the issue of appropriate location, quantum and scale of growth in settlements served by rail transport. Submissions seek consolidation of growth in areas near public transport, other services and amenities. Submissions seek development of off-road walking/cycling routes.



Urban Expansion Areas and SDZ: Concern is raised in several submissions regarding the timing of provision of infrastructure in these areas and the appropriate growth target and density in that context.

Road infrastructure: The upgrading of the R624 to Cobh and the N25 between Carrigtwohill and Middleton are referenced in submissions as key economic enablers, with the R624 upgrade being requested for safety reasons also.

Other Issues: Other issues raised include waste management, water service provision, need for broadband provision, protection of built and natural heritage, road safety, climate change resilience, marine energy potential, appropriate land uses in towns. These strategic issues are addressed under the relevant topic heading in previous sections of this document.

### **Overall Municipal District**

Overall there were just under 50 submissions received regarding Cobh MD settlements with these relating to each of the towns and strategic employment areas and to several villages, particularly Glounthaune. As the Cobh MD contains a number of settlements (Cobh, Carrigtwohill, Little Island, Glounthaune) that are served by rail, reference to this is common to many of the submissions. Submissions are made seeking consolidation of settlements served by rail transport as well as enhanced connectivity to rail stations. Some submissions seek strong growth targets for these settlements and a density of development that is appropriate, with one submission cautioning against over reliance on high to medium density along the rail corridor. The key issues raised in relation to settlements in the MD are presented below.

### **Main Towns**

#### ***Cobh***

A significant issue raised is the need for upgrading of the R624 to facilitate economic development and planned growth. A number of submissions seek a stronger population growth for Cobh. The issue of infrastructure provision and phasing of development is raised. The need for adequate community facilities in the town centre is raised and two submission point to the need for appropriately located nursing home provision in the town. One submission raises a range of issues regarding sustainable development, sustainable travel (proposes a specific off-road walking/cycling route on Great Island) and the creation of an attractive town centre. This submission also includes a proposal to install segregated public bins in the town.

#### ***Carrigtwohill***

A more flexible approach to the phasing of development is sought as well as a strong population target and application of appropriate residential densities. Consideration of development potential of lands at risk of flooding is also sought.

#### ***Little Island***

Several submissions seek a stronger population target for the town and the retention of its strategic employment location status. It is proposed that its employment role and its location on a rail corridor can support a stronger population target and the application of appropriate density levels is called for. Reference is also made to the 'existing built up area' land use category and the flexibility this offers in responding to economic opportunities. A submission seeks delivery of sustainable travel through enhanced connectivity.



**Monard Strategic Development Zone:**

A single submission is received in relation to the SDZ that seeks consideration of the growth target and infrastructure provision timeline for Monard SDZ, consideration of Monard General Development Contribution Scheme and the recreation and amenity provision requirements

**Other Settlements****Glounthaune**

Many submissions were received in relation to this key village, including submissions from residents and developers. The submissions largely related to the need to create a consolidated, attractive settlement and to the development potential of the settlement offered by its location on a rail corridor.

Several submissions raise the issue of the need to protect the greenbelt and character and setting of the village, and the need to protect natural and built heritage and scenic routes. They seek enhanced permeability within the village, application of DMURS standards and they raise road safety concerns, particularly for pedestrians. They seek appropriate housing mix, design and density, and the delivery of compact growth supporting the 10-minute neighbourhood concept. They also seek adequate provision of community facilities, including nursing home and recreational facilities. One submission from a community group seeks a funding commitment to the provision of infrastructure prior to the zoning of land and detailed guidance regarding the future development of the settlement.

The issue of consideration of the settlement hierarchy, the appropriate location, quantum and scale of growth for this settlement is raised. Some submissions point to Glounthaune's potential for residential development due to its rail link and proximity to Little Island Strategic Employment Location A submission requests the removal of the restriction of 40 units per individual housing scheme on larger strategic sites to allow a greater number of residential units to be delivered. Another seeks 'town' rather than 'key village' status for the settlement.

**Carrignavar**

Additional growth is proposed in Carrignavar.

**Watergrasshill**

Two submissions seek population growth for the village with one seeking a flexible approach to development of zoned sites and expressing concern that there is limited opportunity for residential development. One submission seeks a proactive approach to encourage consolidated growth of existing settlements to counteract one off housing.

**Knockraha**

One submission raises the Issue of availability of enough land for development, for the provision of community/amenity facilities and retail development Another submits that there should be no further development until adequate community facilities are in place. It also seeks protection of built heritage, seeks an extension to the graveyard and seeks greater connectivity and permeability within the village. Both submissions see a need for measures to increase pedestrian safety.

**Whitechurch**

A single submission seeks retention of its key village status, a stronger population growth target, a larger scale of development and an appropriate density of development.

### ***Caherlag***

A submission requests the removal of the village nuclei settlement status from Caherlag in the context of the influence of the designation on land prices.

### ***Belvelly***

A single submission was received in relation to Belvelly. It primarily seeks upgrading and realignment of the R624 to Cobh. It also seeks listing of Belvelly bridge as protected structure, upgrading of wastewater services and a lower speed limit through Belvelly.

Of relevance to the Cobh MD, which benefits from a rail corridor, is national policy in relation to sustainable transport and compact growth outlined in the Transport and Mobility section of this volume.

### **Chief Executive's Opinion**

Consideration will be given to a review of the settlement network in line with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region. Other factors which will also play a critical part in the evaluation of a settlements place within the network will include the water services infrastructure already in place, the scale of development that has already taken place, the amount of employment provided within the settlement and the level of other services available. Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation and Cork Harbour Special Protection Area are located within the MD.

A significant area of the Cobh MD lies with the Southern RSES Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan area. It is an objective of the RSES for the role of the MASP area to be strengthened as an international location of scale, a compliment to Dublin and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Southern Region.

A key consideration in the Cobh MD is its strong employment function and the sustainable transport opportunity offered by the Cork Suburban Rail Network. It contains Carrigtwohill and Little Island strategic employment areas, Cobh town which has a significant tourism role, and it adjoins Cork Harbour and Cork City. Climate change and Transport policy demand an integrated approach to land use and transport planning whereby development will be planned so that the need to travel is reduced and the opportunity to travel sustainably is increased. This will mean accommodating higher densities than would have been previously provided for at locations proximate to rail stations where other existing or planned supporting infrastructure and services will facilitate this, in line with national guidance Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. Similarly, land use and transport integration points to a need to increase the provision of housing proximate to employment areas. Cobh MD contains two urban expansion areas (Ballynoe, Cobh and Carrigtwohill North), where the Council is taking a lead role in the delivery of core infrastructure to accelerate housing delivery.

Consideration will be given to a review of the settlement network in line with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region. Other factors which will also play a critical part in the evaluation of a settlements place within the network will include the water



services infrastructure already in place, the scale of development that has already taken place, the amount of employment provided within the settlement and the level of other services available.

The need for alignment and upgrading of the R624 is recognised. This is identified as a key economic enabler in the Southern RSES. The current County Development Plan supports its delivery and the new plan will continue this support. Cobh town has a strong growth target and it is appropriate to retain a strong growth role for the town. The R624 upgrading is needed to facilitate this development.

The need for appropriate levels of community facilities in our settlements is recognised and it is important that new community infrastructure is delivered in tandem with planned population growth. In Glounthaune it is important that consideration of growth targets in the context of available infrastructure (water infrastructure and public transport) is carefully balanced with the need for adequate community facilities.

While Cobh MD is largely located within Metropolitan Cork, the northern, more rural section, is in the Greater Cork Ring Strategic Planning area. Of relevance to the rural areas of this Metropolitan MD, the National Planning Framework reaffirms the importance of creating a strong enterprise culture to ensure the sustained economic and societal vibrancy of rural communities. Supporting job creation in rural areas is also a key enabler to rejuvenating rural towns and villages. Indeed, it is critical that future employment opportunities in the rural economy require measures to support rural entrepreneurship and innovative rural Medium and Small-Medium Enterprises (SME's). Building on diversification and modernisation strategies, improving governance models and supporting innovative food and non-food value chains can help boost economic development, ecosystem services and entrepreneurial innovation.

The current policy approach to the appropriate scale of development to be located in the villages is supported by and in compliance with the Departments Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. The suggestion that the Planning Authority should avoid prescriptive standards of development yields on individual sites will be reviewed.

See also Chief Executive's Opinion in other sections of this volume of relevance to submissions received to Cobh MD including Transport and Mobility, Community, Housing Density and Placemaking and Core Strategy.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) It is recommended that a full review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the Cobh Municipal District will be undertaken which will address key issues emerging from areas including the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm and facilities, economic and community development, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- b) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, in particular RSES MASP objectives, RPO 26: Towns and Villages and RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork to



Waterford Transport and Economic Network/Axis) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. See also recommendations relating to Transport and Mobility, Climate Change, Core Strategy, and Housing Density and Placemaking.

- c) It is recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of community, sports and recreational facilities and to provide a more socially inclusive society and access for all.
- d) It is recommended that the quantum, location, density and layout of development maximize public transport opportunities including the East Cork rail corridor public transport opportunity.
- e) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.



## East Cork Municipal District

A total of approximately **27** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of East Cork and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two B, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

#### Main Towns

##### **Midleton**

In Midleton submissions suggest the need for greater emphasis on the strategic contribution to be made by towns like Midleton, that are served by the Cork Suburban Rail Line, and have a greater contribution to make to objectives for future population growth, compact growth etc. It is argued that additional housing land will be needed in Midleton. Submissions highlight the opportunity to expand the town to include lands to the north (Knockgriffin / Water Rock) and the availability of lands in the Ballinacurra area, the development of which would support the regeneration of this historic port area of the town.

Another submission notes that Midleton has been identified for significant population growth in successive statutory plans and has consistently under delivered in terms of population and housing growth, to the detriment of the town. It is considered that there is now a timely opportunity to re-evaluate the strategic role of Midleton given the evolving planning context since 2014 and the potential over emphasis on some parts of the town, including the Water– Rock area, given the infrastructural upgrades needed to deliver much of the zoned land in that area. A fresh approach is advocated, reflecting a “delivery orientated strategy”. Submission points to underdeveloped land north of the town in the Broomfield area which is well placed for development in the short term as the land is not dependent on significant infrastructural upgrades, enjoys good accessibility to the town centre, public transport and employment opportunities. The Broomfield area is seen as having the opportunity to create a sustainable neighbourhood in accordance with the 10-minute City and Town Concepts identified in the RSES, and the 20-minute neighbourhood referenced in the Council's own public consultation document.

A further submission advocates for the consolidation of the Baneshane area as a key residential neighbourhood to help deliver the growth targets for the town, with an emphasis on a live-work environment, and suggests that Baneshane should have the same recognition as the Ballinacurra or Water-Rock residential areas. The submission indicates that the Plan should prioritise lands that are already serviced and deliverable to consolidate existing and approved development. In addition, the



Plan should establish an appropriate allocation of development potential to infill / brownfield lands having regard to the urban capacity study and the challenges of bringing such sites / units forward for development. The urgency of resolving infrastructural constraints impeding development in Midleton is also highlighted.

The importance of the Street Life, Safe Routes and Riverside Living for Midleton is highlighted in another submission which sets out a number of suggestions for the future development of the town including enhancing the public realm, outdoor dining spaces, living over the shop, greater provision for walking and cycling and the opportunities for high quality public amenity space along the Owenacurra River.

Other submissions highlight the importance of the Midleton distillery and the need to address issues with the proposed route of the Northern Relief road in the town.

Other submissions highlight the need for appropriate residential density, the need for residential and community services to meet the needs of an ageing population and the opportunities offered by 'elderly care campus' type developments in a community setting. The need for more amenity and outdoor green space and facilities such as parks, swimming pools, running tracks, playgrounds, MUGAs etc. is also highlighted.

Finally, other submissions raised the need to undertake a comprehensive review of the extent of the existing retail centres in Midleton and the appropriateness of new retail designations, particularly in the area of Ballinacurra to meet the needs of existing and proposed new populations. Other submissions highlight the rigidity of the current approach to zoning in the plan and call for more flexibility in land use zoning similar to other Local Authorities and the introduction of a zoning matrix to deal with and manage certain developments which do not always fall within the land use objectives of an area and allow for residential development, for example, to be 'Open for Consideration' on a case by case basis across all of the existing land use zoning categories under certain circumstances.

### ***Youghal***

One submission refers to Youghal and considers that the town has been neglected and overlooked having seen a significant decline in employment and investment over the last 40 years. The submission makes a number of suggestions for development including the re-establishment of a rail service to Youghal; extending the boardwalk by completing a circular path from Claycastle via Butlers Shop, the Aura Centre and back to front strand; improving access to Claycastle by providing proper footpaths, bridge over the railway and start the Blueway at Claycastle and on to Redbarn and beyond; provision of toilets, showers, proper lifeguard facilities and electric car charging points : provision of a Blueway (walking and cycling route) starting at Claycastle and linking on to Redbarn, Gortaroo, onto the N25 and back to Claycastle. Future circuit could link to Pilmore, Knockadoon, Garryvoe and Ballycotton; provision of cycle lanes in the town.

### **Villages**

Submissions were received in relation to Aghada/ Whitegate, Ballinacurra (part of Midleton), Ballycotton, Killeagh, and Mogeely. Issues raised include the scale of growth allowable in villages (particularly those with good employment opportunities), the need for more compact multi-unit residential schemes in villages, the need for flexibility on density and support for live/work units,



the opportunities for sustainable travel offered by the Midleton–Youghal Greenway, flood zone mapping, coastal protection works and rural housing restrictions / need for alternative housing options in the environs of village settlements (Killeagh).

Residents of Ballinacurra seeks its re-designation as a village, separate from Midleton, and highlight the lack of infrastructure and amenities in the area, issues with flooding and the need for investment in community facilities in the area.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

The Councils remains committed to the delivery of substantial population and employment growth in Midleton and Youghal, supported by the delivery of supporting community facilities and infrastructure and actively working with infrastructure providers, landowners and other stakeholders in the area in this regard.

The current policy approach to the appropriate scale of development to be in the villages is supported by and in compliance with the Departments Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. The suggestion that the Planning Authority should avoid prescriptive standards of development yields on individual sites will be reviewed

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) The existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the East Cork Municipal District will be reviewed to address key issues emerging including population and housing growth targets, land supply for different land uses, density, infrastructure requirements, public realm, economic and community development, regeneration and housing etc. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- b) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, to RPO 26: Towns and Villages and RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork Ring Network) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking.]
- c) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of community, sports and recreational facilities and to provide a more socially inclusive society and access for all.
- d) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.



## Macroom Municipal District

A total of approximately **34** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of Macroom and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Some of the submissions raise issues of a strategic nature affecting all Municipal Districts including issues in relation to the supply of housing and employment land, approach to water services provision, delivery and funding of infrastructure, sustainable transport, built and linguistic heritage issues and vacant sites, and amid the Covid-19 crisis, the importance of access to local enterprise hubs with access to broadband, open spaces, and public realm in our towns and villages has been thrown into especially sharp relief. These issues are referred, where they are considered most relevant in the previous sections of this document.

At the outset it should be noted, given the location of the Macroom MD and containing one of the two Gaeltacht areas in the County, it is intended that the County Council will fulfil its obligation under Section 10(2)(m) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the 'protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the development plan' and this will do undertaken in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders including Údarás na Gaeltacht.

Another overarching and perhaps even countywide theme are that of rural enterprise and a request for a positive strengthening of existing Objectives EE 9-1 and ECON 4-4 of 2014 Cork County Development Plan, which deal with long established uses located within rural areas.

Several submissions raised the broad issues of housing land supply and how best to achieve the targets for the County as a whole and the targets set for the Cork (MASP) area, of which the Macroom MD forms a relatively small part. Coupled with this, there were also requests for a review of the settlement hierarchy or network within the Macroom MD, with special mention given to the promotion of Killumney / Ovens to a 'Main Town' or 'Key Village within Metropolitan Cork'. In addition, there were calls for the promotion of Farran from 'Other Location' to 'Village'.

Many submissions requested that the population distribution and unit allocation per settlement should be increased without exception and that there should be an overall increase in the population for the MD as a whole and particularly to Macroom town itself and Killumney / Ovens.



## **Main Towns**

### ***Macroon***

The issues for Macroon centre around the future growth of the town itself, with many submissions stating that Macroon Town Centre needs investment, and suggesting that the local area plan should include incentives and urban design and traffic framework to allow for greater connectivity, permeability and appropriate urban growth. In addition, there were requests for a new urban strategy focusing on amenity and heritage opportunities, public plazas and a new pedestrian bridge across the river to the north of the town linking the Coolehane road to the services and amenities of the town centre and the Sullane River Valley. There were also concerns regarding the survey and analysis of the town centre as carried out in the Urban Capacity Study for the town and it is noted that the proposed town centre designation at the very least needs to reflect the existing built footprint of retail in the town centre and also allow for expansion with similar complementary land uses where appropriate.

Other issues for the town include the perceived high amount of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas particularly in Macroon town, which it is argued, need to be resurveyed.

### ***Millstreet***

There were no significant individual requests for Millstreet, however one submission queries why the public sewer system in Millstreet does not extend back past the Finnow Bridge on the Killarney Road.

## **Chief Executive's Opinion**

Consideration will be given to a review of the settlement network in line with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region. Other factors which will also play a critical part in the evaluation of a settlements place within the network will include the water services infrastructure already in place, the scale of development that has already taken place, the amount of employment provided within the settlement and the level of other services available. It is noteworthy that there are water services and transport infrastructure challenges across the Municipal District which impact on the amount of development land that is available for development and the overall level of growth that can be accommodated in any settlement.

The current policy approach to the appropriate scale of development to be in the villages is supported by and in compliance with the Departments Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. The suggestion that the Planning Authority should avoid prescriptive standards of development yields on individual sites will be reviewed.

The National Planning Framework reaffirms the importance of creating a strong enterprise culture to ensure the sustained economic and societal vibrancy of rural communities. Supporting job creation in rural areas is also a key enabler to rejuvenating rural towns and villages. Indeed, it is critical that future employment opportunities in the rural economy require measures to support rural entrepreneurship and innovative rural M&SMEs. Building on diversification and modernisation strategies, improving governance models and supporting innovative food and non-food value chains can help boost economic development, ecosystem services and entrepreneurial innovation.



In relation to the Heritage issues raised in the submissions, please refer to the Heritage Section of this report, particularly the sections dealing with the built and linguistic heritage.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) Accordingly, it is recommended that a full review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the Macroom Municipal District will be undertaken which will address key issues emerging from areas including the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm and facilities, economic and community development, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- b) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, to RPO 26: Towns and Villages and RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork Ring Network) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking.]
- c) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of community, sports and recreational facilities and to provide a more socially inclusive society and access for all.
- d) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.





## Key Issue 18: West Cork (Bandon Kinsale MD and West Cork MD).

### Bandon Kinsale Municipal District

A total of approximately **76** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of Bandon Kinsale and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two B, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

#### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions

Some of the submissions raise issues of a strategic nature affecting all Municipal Districts including issues in relation to the supply of housing and employment land, approach to density, approach to water services provision, delivery and funding of infrastructure, sustainable transport, built heritage issues and vacant sites, tourist and marine tourist related issues and amid the Covid-19 crisis, the importance of access to local enterprise hubs with access to broadband, open spaces, and public realm in our towns and villages has been thrown into especially sharp relief. These issues are referred, where they are considered most relevant in the previous sections of this document.

Bandon Kinsale Municipal District is located mainly within Greater Cork Strategic Planning Area and the remainder within the West Cork Strategic Planning Area and a number of submissions raised the broad issues of housing land supply and how best to achieve the targets for the County as a whole and within the two main towns Bandon and Kinsale and within the smaller settlements within the Municipal District.

Many submissions referred to future growth in settlements in relation to the two main towns designated as Ring Towns but also within the smaller settlements within the Municipal District and referred to population distribution and housing unit allocation.

#### Main Towns

##### ***Bandon***

Submissions received proposed that a renewal strategy is required for the delivery of housing in the County and where growth in Bandon needs to be prioritised it being the largest of the two towns within the Municipal District. The concept of urban regeneration was welcomed as there are many vacant buildings within the town and brownfield sites underutilised which would be suitable for densification and redevelopment. Linked to this the suggestion to make the public realm an attractive space in the town would bring homeowners back into the town and thereby addressing the issue of vacant properties and urban development.



As part of the need for the overall growth of Bandon the town requires significant infrastructural investment road infrastructure with heavy traffic traversing the town, including the review of the role of the Northern Relief Road. In conjunction with the need for infrastructural investment was the requirement to allow for greater connectivity, and permeability with greater access to pedestrians and cyclist within and on the approach roads to the town.

Several submissions have raised the importance of the town's heritage and the opportunities it presents to expand the tourism offer in the town. A submission was also made on the historic Gallows Green public space within the town and how it could fulfil an enhanced role within the town centre.

### **Kinsale**

Several submissions have raised the issue of addressing housing provision in Kinsale including reallocation of growth of lower order settlements to Kinsale town, and to provide for additional headroom for Kinsale. Submissions highlighted restrictions on development in the town due to topographical, historical and heritage constraints.

Submissions were received relating to the need for a strategic Masterplan of Key Waterfront properties in the town centre be prepared with improved linkages to the outer harbour. Other submissions referred to the need to provide a stronger policy supports to strengthen Kinsale's Marina development and associated amenity and accommodation offering and promote the town as a water-based activity hub. Consideration needs to be given to developing a strategic waterside site in Kinsale, including provision for a market and car parking.

Road constraints were referred to and the need to review and updating of the Traffic and Transportation Study in Kinsale given the town's historic environment, significant tourist market and opportunities to activate zoned lands. The need for a Relief Road and infrastructure upgrades that can enable pedestrianisation of the town centre, better traffic management including bus parking for tourists needs to be examined.

Many submissions have raised the importance of the town's heritage and requests to protect, enhance and enforce matters which are impacting negatively on the town's historic environment. More joined up thinking is also requested in the treatment of iconic historic sites within the town such as James Fort and Desmond Castle. Relating matters include requests that the forthcoming Plan preserves and marks existing Rights of Way, preserving important Views from public roads, restoring old street signage and protecting important local historic areas and woodlands. The issue of allowing ultra-modern buildings within a historic town is also an issue that needs to be addressed in the Plan.

A number of local actions/community matters are recommended in Kinsale including development of a network of blueways/ greenways and creating a local business hub and digital hub, the need for iconic visitor centres, maritime park, mobility plan for Kinsale including cycle routes, while supporting soft and green long term strategies to address flooding in the town as per the Flood Directive. Again, reflecting the strong tourism element of the town, the matter of more land to be considered for outdoor recreation, leisure and camping/glamping pursuits in the town particularly within Kinsale environs was highlighted.



## **Other Settlements**

Other than the main settlements there were many submissions relating to the smaller settlements and rural areas relating to population projections, brownfield development, need for additional residential development scale of growth of the settlement, traffic safety, amenity facilities, heritage issues. Tourist issues and marine tourist issues were raised relating to many settlements and within the wider area of Bandon Kinsale Municipal District which has many historical and heritage areas along with its scenic coastline.

## **Chief Executive's Opinion**

Consideration will be given to a review of the settlement network in line with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region. Other factors which will also play a critical part in the evaluation of a settlements place within the network will include the water services infrastructure already in place, the scale of development that has already taken place, the amount of employment provided within the settlement and the level of other services available. It is noteworthy that there are water services and transport infrastructure challenges across the Municipal District which impact on the amount of development land that is available for development and the overall level of growth that can be accommodated in any settlement.

The current policy approach to the appropriate scale of development to be in the villages is supported by and in compliance with the Departments Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. The suggestion that the Planning Authority should avoid prescriptive standards of development yields on individual sites will be reviewed.

The National Planning Framework reaffirms the importance of creating a strong enterprise culture to ensure the sustained economic and societal vibrancy of rural communities. Supporting job creation in rural areas is also a key enabler to rejuvenating rural towns and villages. Indeed, it is critical that future employment opportunities in the rural economy require measures to support rural entrepreneurship and innovative rural Medium and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's). Building on diversification and modernisation strategies, improving governance models and supporting innovative food and non-food value chains can help boost economic development, ecosystem services and entrepreneurial innovation.

In relation to the Heritage issues raised in the submissions, please refer to the Heritage Section of this report, particularly the sections dealing with the built and linguistic heritage.

## **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

- a) Accordingly, it is recommended that a full review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the Bandon Kinsale Municipal District will be undertaken which will address key issues emerging from areas including the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm and facilities, economic and community development, heritage, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.



- b) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, to RPO 26: Towns and Villages and RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks (Cork Ring Network) and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking].
- c) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of community, sports and recreational facilities and to provide a more socially inclusive society and access for all.
- d) The MD and Settlement Specific Submissions will be considered carefully in the preparation of the settlement specific policies of the draft plan.



## West Cork Municipal District

A total of approximately **55** submissions were received relating to this Municipal District.

This section addresses the issues raised in the submissions relating to the MD of West Cork and gives the Chief Executive's Opinion to the issues raised. As advertised as part of this stage of the plan making process, this Chief Executive's Report as provided for in Paragraph 4(b) (ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, **but shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose and a list of these submissions is appended to Volume Two B, Appendix F, of this Report for reference. It should be noted that where a submission raises both strategic issues relating to a settlement and refers to a parcel of land – the latter part of the submission is not included in the summary of the submission or referred to in the Chief Executive's Opinion or Recommendation.**

### Summary of the Principal Issues Raised in Submissions - Overall Municipal District

A broad range of issues relating to the West Cork MD were highlighted in the submissions received. Some of the issues raised are strategic in nature and affect all the municipal district, whilst other issues are more localised matters relating to individual settlements. Common themes include population growth & distribution, settlement hierarchy, land supply & housing, approach to flood risk management, promotion of Tourism opportunities, provision of water services infrastructure, delivery & funding of infrastructure, sustainable travel, protection and enhancement of biodiversity & the environment, provision of walkways and other amenities.

Several submissions raised issues that will be determined by the draft plan Core Strategy, highlighting for example the role of towns and villages in West Cork in the new County Settlement Structure. In this regard, the special circumstances of Clonakilty as a key town which can play an important employment and service function serving its coastal and peripheral hinterland with scope for economic collaboration across a number of other West Cork settlements on the N71 Corridor supported by Skibbereen and Bantry are specifically mentioned.

Therefore, it was requested that the role of the main towns should reflect the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy which defines Clonakilty as a key town, and Bantry as having an enhanced role as a serviced centre in West Cork. Several submissions highlight the need to manage future development with an emphasis on compact growth and walkable towns. The importance of tourism to the economy of West Cork and the need to promote further tourism opportunities which benefit from the Wild Atlantic Way, together with support for diversifying the rural economy are requested. The role of towns and villages in the provision of housing, their employment function, public realm & renewal, enhanced walkways & cycleways and other amenities to improve the quality of life of residents are recurrent themes also.

Water services capacity constraints is a significant issue impacting on the growths of towns and villages, the impact on Ballineen/Enniskeane is referenced in one submission. In contrast, several submissions requested the re-calibration of growth targets in favour of towns over the villages and village nuclei. In the West Cork MD, growth targets of 800 units allocated to villages despite the lack



of water services infrastructure, was mentioned. In addition, submissions noted that there is an over reliance on rural houses in the county.

Several submissions discussed employment related issues across the MD. Submissions noted that Clonakilty has one of the best job-ratios in the county, with significant employment potential for more. Contrastingly, challenges securing employment opportunities for other West Cork towns were also highlighted, Bantry and Dunmanway were noted in this regard. While many submissions stressed the importance of the tourism, particularly in West Cork, concerns were also raised about an over reliance on the sector. The promotion of enterprise & innovation in towns which are unable to rely on tourism is needed. The importance of investment in marine related infrastructure & upgrades in securing the future employment base of marine based towns and villages such as Bantry and Union Hall are also highlighted.

## **Main Towns**

### ***Clonakilty***

A key issue highlighted for Clonakilty is the future growth strategy for the town, with several submissions highlighting its strategic role and the need to create the right conditions to support its sustainable growth. Submissions noted that the county is behind in meeting its annual growth targets and noted that numbers of housing completions is low. Clonakilty is only providing 18% of its annual growth targets. In this regard, the designation of Clonakilty as a key town in the RSES is also referenced in many submissions, and the need for policies and objectives which reflect this new higher order designation. In support of this role, focused measures are requested to reconcile access & connectivity issues in support of consolidated growth. The need for investment in sustainable transport modes, and improved infrastructure is also highlighted. The need for future relief routes highlighted in the current Clonakilty Town Plan are noted. The proposed Clonakilty Northern Relief road is highlighted as a critical piece of infrastructure to meet the future growth targets for the town.

Water supply capacity issues will be a significant challenge for the growth of Clonakilty. Several submissions have highlighted the importance of sustainable travel, improved walking & cycle routes including the role of Public Bike sharing schemes. The role of Local Transport Plans in delivering a framework for the integration of spatial and transport planning is deemed essential to attain sustainable compact settlement which meet the 10-minute city and town concepts. Furthermore, there are requests that the county development plan identifies and prioritises the necessary footpath and infrastructure upgrades required to meet future growth targets.

### ***Bantry***

The submissions received discussed a variety of issues & challenges in relation to Bantry including population and employment decline, the need for town centre renewal & regeneration and compact growth. Bantry should be designated a Special Regeneration town with a dedicated team to guide the regeneration process, reverse population decline and restore the towns vibrancy.

A detailed proposal was submitted on behalf of local community representatives setting out a community vision for Bantry Inner Harbour and surrounding lands. In addition, this included, the RIAI 2019 Design Review of the Bantry Harbour Area, detailing potential design options for the future planning and development of Bantry based on the work of three Architects. Various suggestions are made for the North Shore & South Shore Area of the Harbour, Wolfe Tone Square, Town centre, and



the employment & population growth strategies to improve the attractiveness of the town for visitors, investors and the local community. The need for the Bantry Relief route to secure the future growth of the town was emphasized.

Several issues were raised in relation to town centre retailing and the practical difficulties facilitating larger retail formats in towns such as Bantry. These are discussed further in the Town Centre & Retailing under the Town Centre & Retailing Topic in this section.

Several submissions were received which highlight the RSES objective for an enhanced role for Bantry as a serviced centre & the need for a strong population growth target to reflect this. The experience of Urban sprawl in Bantry is described as unsustainable. Submissions cite urban development in Kinsale, Cobh & Cork city as positive examples of achieving compact growth in a challenging topography. Flexibility in land supply & density is also requested.

Overall, the need for a strengthened role and function for Bantry is considered necessary in order to widen the employment base to fully maximise its locational assets. In this regard, proposals exploring the potential for an Event centre in the town were submitted. Furthermore, a submission was received seeking a flexible approach to enterprise and zoning objectives with specific reference to the potential of worked out quarries in the aquaculture industry. The locational advantage of Bantry was highlighted in this regard.

The importance of Bantry House as a major tourist attraction & community recreational area and the need for further investment by the state, in its protection, restoration and management was also highlighted.

### **Skibbereen**

In addition to the requirement that the development plan formulate a growth strategy based on the potential networks between West Cork towns, the main issues raised in the Skibbereen submissions relate to the town centre regeneration, opportunities for biodiversity networks & enhanced green infrastructure, the potential of the Marsh area was also highlighted. Similar to other West Cork towns, policies and objectives to support the potential for enhanced cycle routes, greenways & sustainable transport modes are encouraged in the town. In relation to roads, the need for the completion of the Northern distributor road was emphasised. There was also a request to review the Skibbereen Western Distributor route which is an objective of the 2009 Town plan.

### **Dunmanway**

Submissions highlighted a range of issues in relation to Dunmanway, including the lack of housing options available in the town, the need for compact growth and sequential development. The decline in employment opportunities in the town was highlighted. It was requested that greater flexibility in employment land uses were needed to allow a range of uses on business zoned land. The need to promote greater opportunities to broaden the employment base is requested, potentially in the tourism sector. Submissions also noted the impact of the wind energy policy in this regard.

A submission highlighted that development in Dunmanway near the Bandon River cSAC is impacted by the wastewater discharges affecting freshwater pearl mussel.



Several submissions in relation to energy/windfarms have also highlighted the over concentration of wind farms in the Dunmanway area and the negative impact of this on community and the other sectors of the economy which rely on the natural environment as a resource.

### **Castletownbere**

There were no significant individual submissions for Castletownbere, although one submission did request that roads be resurfaced following completion of main drainage works. The sensitivity of the Owenagappul River and Glanmore Lake/Glanmore Bog SAC to water abstraction was also highlighted together with the need to give careful consideration to the potential for adverse impacts on same associated with development objectives for Castletownbere and the wider Beara Peninsula.

### **Schull**

A detailed submission was received in relation to Schull addressing a number of wide ranging issues. It is requested that Schull retains its main settlement status as defined in a number of successive development plans and local area plans since 1986. It is noted that Water services deficiencies have impacted on the growth of the settlement. It is argued that the Skibbereen Water Supply Upgrade Scheme, which is to be completed shortly, will help deliver housing for the first time in many years. Several measures are recommended to support town centre vibrancy & vitality in Schull including; Living over the Shop initiatives, removal of on-street parking, improved public realm, on street dining to mention a few. The submission also raised issues for the draft plan in relation to employment, tourism, marine infrastructure, housing and an appropriate density range.

### **Island Communities**

In recognition of the importance of Island Communities, continuation and resourcing of the objective in the current plan to support the inhabited islands in County Cork is requested. It is also suggested that the plan should incorporate priorities from the Government's Islands Policy Consultation Paper, such as equality of opportunity and enabling a vibrant, harmonious society, and ensures that the unique cultural, physical and environmental heritage of coastal areas and the islands are protected. A partnership approach between island communities and the Council in the development, implementation, and review of plans and developments affecting the islands is recommended. The need to prioritise the maintenance of small fishing piers to support small-scale fishing which employs clusters of families around the Cork coast is also highlighted.

A submission was received highlighting the need to address tourism and visitor accommodation on Heir Island, in order to meet market demand. The overall lack of properties to rent on the Island is mentioned. The submission also notes that the current development policies re the islands are too onerous and restrictive.

A submission was received supporting policies in relation to community facilities, employment and economic activity and preservation of heritage, culture and language in the Gaeltacht in Cork.

### **Villages**

The submissions received in relation to the West Cork village settlements raised a range of issues and explored several proposals to help strengthen the employment base and improve the potential of the Wild Atlantic Way Tourist Route. This included suggestions for the development of Walkways in the settlements of Durrus & Rosscarbery. The need for improved Tourist facilities & accommodation in Owenahincha is also requested. Traffic management and public realm initiatives



and increased amenities are requested for Baltimore. Furthermore, in relation to Baltimore, there was a request to allow for individual & second homes to be provided in the village. It was also requested that development objectives for the village should reflect national policy which seeks to promote compact and mixed-use residential growth in village centres. A submission received in relation to Ballingurteen highlights the need for a greater role for villages in the provision of employment & housing opportunities. The suitability of villages to provide a range of housing options particular to meet the needs of the ageing population is given specific mention.

### Chief Executive's Opinion

The scope and content of submissions received highlight a diverse range of social, economic, environmental and infrastructural issues key to the sustainable development of West Cork Communities, that will inform polices in the draft development plan.

In common with the other MD's, key issues for the West Cork MD are the Core Strategy, settlement network and the constraints associated with the deficits in water services infrastructure. Consideration will be given to a review of the settlement network in line with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region. Other factors which will also play a critical part in the evaluation of a settlements place within the network will include the water services infrastructure already in place, the scale of development that has already taken place, the amount of employment provided within the settlement and the level of other services available. It is noteworthy that there are transport and infrastructure challenges across many of the settlements which impact on the amount and location of land that is available for development and the overall level of growth that can be accommodated in any settlement. Future population growth and distribution and land supply will be determined having regard to the Core Strategy, Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment.

In line with RPO 23 of the RSES, the draft plan will reflect the role of Clonakilty as a Key Town in the settlement typology. The draft plan will seek to meet these requirements whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment of Clonakilty Bay and while acknowledging the significant water services constraints currently impacting on the town. The Draft Plan will also reflect the enhanced role for Bantry as referenced throughout the RSES, the role of Skibbereen as a Service Centre and the West Cork Marine Network as identified in the RSES Settlement Typology.

The draft plan will seek to include policies that build on each town's inherent strengths, supporting their sustainable growth, identifying the key infrastructural requirements, and supporting the creation of attractive sustainable residential communities well connected to town centres and public transport nodes.

Submissions received which set out various proposals to enhance West Cork settlements such as additional and enhanced walkways, facilities to enhance tourism and recreational amenities, initiatives seeking to improve town centre public realm and measures seeking to diversify the rural economy are noted and will be considered, where appropriate, in the draft plan.

The council recognises the important role of towns and villages in West Cork in terms of housing, employment and service delivery. The draft plan will consider the role and function of towns and villages in the provision of essential services, identifying opportunities for a diversified economy,



revitalising and renewing their built environment and providing housing options to meet the needs of their wider rural communities whilst protecting their environmental qualities.

Many of the issues raised above are discussed in more detail under the key topics detailed in this report.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

- a) It is recommended that the Settlement Network for the County will be reviewed in accordance with the policies and objectives of the NPF and the RSES, to RPO 23: Key Town Clonakilty, RPO 26: Towns and Villages RPO 30: Inter-Urban Networks and RPO 27: Rural Areas. [See also recommendations relating to Core Strategy, Settlements and Placemaking.]
- b) Having regard to the above, it is recommended that a review of existing policies and objectives for each settlement in the West Cork Municipal District will be undertaken which will address key issues emerging from areas including; the future upgrades to existing infrastructure, public realm and facilities, economic and community development, regeneration and housing. In addition, the population and housing targets for the County will include an analysis of current demographic and population data trends in a Housing Needs Demand Assessment and form the basis for objectives and policies in an evidence based and sequential manner.
- c) Implement the recommendations accompanying the key issues arising from the submissions under the main topics addressed in Section 2. These recommendations will inform the policies to be included in the Draft Plan, insofar as they will apply to the West Cork Municipal individual settlements.
- d) It is also recommended that the Draft Plan will promote the development of community, sports and recreational facilities and to provide a more socially inclusive society and access for all.







# Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

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## Cork County Council

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