



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council



Volume 1 Framework Plan



Local Economic & Community Plan
2024-2030





INTRODUCTION FROM MAYOR OF THE COUNTY OF CORK COUNTY



As Mayor of the County of Cork, I am delighted to introduce the Cork County Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2030.

As we unveil this comprehensive plan which will guide us through the challenges and opportunities presented over the next six years, I am reminded of the strength that lies in the power of collaboration. The input and participation of Elected Members, economic and community stakeholders and the citizens of Cork County demonstrates our shared vision and aspiration to promote the development of our county as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, culture and environment, and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standards.

On behalf of Cork County Council, we look forward to bringing this plan to life, continuing to work with our stakeholders and citizens over the next six years to further support the economic and community development of our county for the benefit of all.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Frank O'Flynn
March 2024



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF CORK COUNTY COUNCIL



The Cork County Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2030 sets out what is needed to promote and support the economic, local and community development of the county over the next six years. To ensure this plan is robust and effective, it has been developed based on a wide-ranging database of quantifiable socio and economic data and extensive public and stakeholder engagement. This will provide Cork County Council and our economic and community stakeholders with a framework to support the sustainable development of our county.

From the outset of its development, we have recognised that this is not just a plan for Cork County Council, but for us as a Local Authority working alongside our economic and community stakeholders. This is reflected in the formation of our LECP Advisory Group which is made up of 34 key economic and community stakeholders and the important role of our North, South and West Cork Local Community Development Committees (LDCs), together with our Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC). These groups have contributed to the plan, guiding it throughout its development and will play a key role in its implementation.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to all those who participated in the development of this plan, including the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Frank O'Flynn, the Elected Members of Cork County Council, the members of the North, South and West Cork LDCs, the members of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, the LECP Advisory Group and the members of the public who participated in our Public Consultation Process. I look forward to seeing our collective efforts contribute towards a future of prosperity, inclusivity, and sustainable growth for Cork County.

Valerie O'Sullivan
Chief Executive of Cork County Council



JOINT FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE NORTH, SOUTH AND WEST CORK LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE



It has been a great privilege for us as Elected Members of Cork County Council to be in the key positions as Chairs of the North, South and West Cork Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and Chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) during such a dynamic period of growth in our county.

The High-Level Goals and Objectives in this Plan will provide a roadmap for the economic and community development of Cork County over the next six years, enabling our county to continue to thrive and prosper. Critically, the preparation of the Plan has involved extensive public and stakeholder consultation across the county, with the members of the North, South and West Cork LCDCs and Economic Development and Enterprise SPC playing a pivotal role in contributing to, shaping and reviewing the Plan at every stage of its preparation.

As Chairpersons of the LCDCs and SPC, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all those who have participated in the process to date. We look forward to working collaboratively to implement this plan and continue the development of Cork County as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business.

Signatories

Cllr. Pat Hayes - Chair of the North Cork LCDC

Cllr. Michael Hegarty - Chair of the South Cork LCDC

Cllr. John O'Sullivan - Chair of the West Cork LCDC

Cllr. Gearoid Murphy - Chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Local Economic and Community Plan seeks to support and promote a vibrant economy where enterprise can thrive through embracing technological advancements and fostering innovation, while being responsible stewards of our environment, and creating socially inclusive communities which are not just sustainable and empowered, but resilient in the face of challenges and where the health and well-being of our citizens is at the forefront.

The population of Cork County has grown more rapidly than that of the state over the past thirty years and Cork County is identified as being one of the fastest growing locations in the State over the next twenty years under the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. In addition, Cork County is the largest Local Authority in terms of geographical area and is the second most populous Local Authority in the state. It is within this context that the ambition of the Cork County Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2030 is set.

The LECP is consistent with the Cork County Development Plan and the vision for Cork to be an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standards.

This Plan has set out a series of High-Level Goals which represent the specific vision that Cork County Council wishes to deliver or achieve either directly or in partnership with its economic and community development stakeholders over the next 6 years. These High-Level Goals include the following:

- Sustainable, resilient and empowered communities and places
- A socially inclusive County
- A healthy and active County
- A low carbon and climate resilient County that protects biodiversity and the environment
- A County that supports enterprise
- A smart and innovative County

Each of these High-Level goals is supported by a list of specified objectives and a list of outcomes which summarise what each high-level goal is aiming to achieve.

The Implementation plan is a multi-agency plan and includes actions by a wide range of stakeholders. Each action has been assigned a Key Performance Indicator which will enable ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the implementation of the plan.

The Cork County LECP has been developed through collaboration between the Executive of Cork County Council, the Elected Members, the Citizens of Cork County, the members of the North, South and West Cork LCDCs, the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC and the LECP Advisory Group which made up of 34 Key stakeholders who represent a wide range of key community and economic stakeholders. Building on this collaborative approach and working together with all stakeholders will be essential for the successful implementation of the Plan over the next six years.



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Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

INTRODUCING THE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)



INTRODUCING THE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)

The Vision for the LECP

The vision for the Cork County LECP reflects the vision of the Cork County Development Plan and is to: “Promote and support the development of County Cork as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standards.”

What is a Local Economic and Community Plan?

A Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is a key statutory plan prepared under the 2014 Local Government and Reform Act which outlines the objectives and actions required by the local authority to promote and support both the economic development and community development in their region, both by the local authority and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

Why do we need a Local Economic and Community Plan?

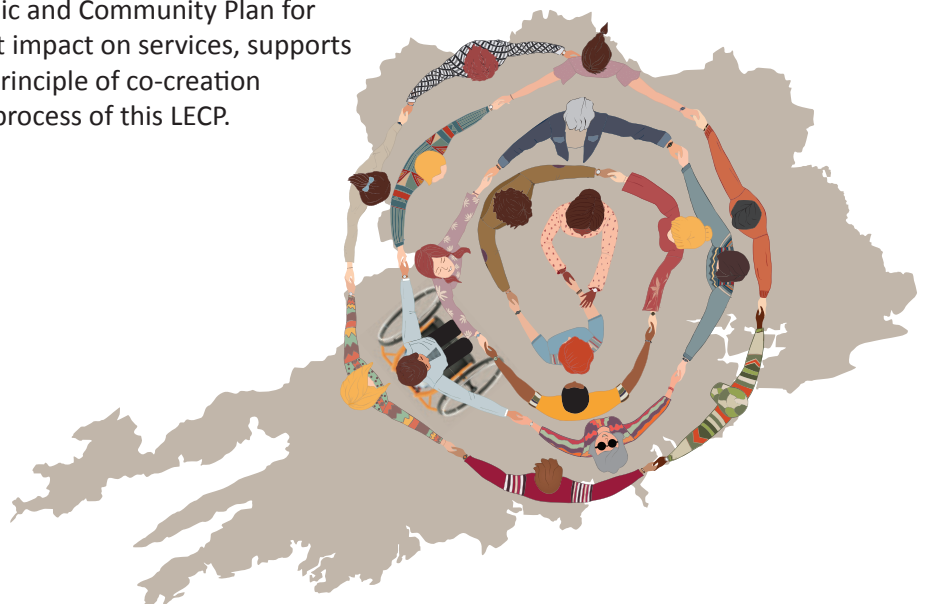
Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) are statutory plans which support the sustainable development of our counties, and the State as a whole. As has been outlined in the 2014 Local Government and Reform Act, each local authority’s LECP forms the local element of the national development framework and plays an important role in supporting collaboration to improve the quality of life for our citizens and our communities. The 2024-2030 LECP for Cork County will play a critical role in shaping the fabric of our communities in Cork County and help to enable the region to continue to thrive and prosper. The plan is evidence-based and strongly informed by stakeholders across Cork County.

What does the Local Economic and Community Plan cover?

The Local Economic and Community Plan for Cork County has an important role in supporting and promoting economic and community development in the County. It will provide a key framework to identify actions that can be implemented at a local level to meet the plan’s goals and objectives and will support relevant project and initiatives to access national and international funding. The LECP does not have a role in zoning land. The spatial plan for the County is the Cork County Development Plan 2022 and the LECP is required to be consistent with the policies, objectives and zoning of the Development Plan.

Who is the Local Economic and Community Plan for?

Everyone. This is **OUR** Local Economic and Community Plan for Cork County, and it will have a direct impact on services, supports and amenities in Cork County. The principle of co-creation has underpinned the development process of this LECP.





How is the Plan developed?

There are six phases in the development of this LECP for Cork County:

STAGE 1, PREPARATION	Cork County Council prepared a socio-economic statement, which outlined the current social and economic status of Cork County. A series of High Level Goals and Objectives were developed based on this statement.
STAGE 2, PUBLIC CONSULTATION	The Public Consultation period took place from the 15th May to 26th June 2023. During this period the public and stakeholders were invited to provide their views on the Draft Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals. These were then reviewed and revised based on the feedback received during consultation. A report was published which detailed the outcome of the public consultation process
STAGE 3, DEVELOP OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES	Following public consultation, specific, measurable, and sustainable objectives were further developed, as well as desired outcomes over the six-year period of the Cork County LECP. These are underpinned and supported by SMART Actions, which are outlined in an Initial Implementation Plan for the LECP.
STAGE 4, FINALISATION	The draft LECP will be finalised and approved to commence.
STAGE 5, IMPLEMENTATION	The Cork County 2024-2030 LECP will be launched, and work will commence of implementing the plan and achieving the High Level Goals and objectives.
STAGE 6, MONITORING AND EVALUATION	The implementation of the LECP will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that the plan is delivered successfully. An annual report on the progress of implementation will be published.

LECP Advisory Group

The Cork County LECP Advisory Group comprises of 34 stakeholders which represent a wide range of key community and economic organisations and groups. Stakeholders include representatives from: The Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, North Cork LCDC, South Cork LCDC, West Cork LCDC, South Cork Local Enterprise Office, Cork North and West Local Enterprise Office, IDA, Climate Action Regional Office, Energy Cork, Tech Industry Alliance, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, STEM Southwest, Uisce Éireann, University College Cork, Munster Technological University, National Transport Authority, Public Participation Network, Cork Education and Training Board, HSE, Cork Chamber, South West Regional Enterprise Plan, Southern Regional Assembly, Údaráis na Gaeltachta, Enterprise Ireland, IBEC, Visit Cork and Cork County Council Officers. The Advisory Group has a central role in reviewing and drafting the LECP.



STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN

Review of the Cork County 2016-2021 LECP

As part of the development process of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2030 for Cork County, a desk-based review of the previous plan was undertaken, and the findings of this review were used to inform the Draft High-Level Goals. This desk-based review was also supported and complemented by a focused engagement process with relevant stakeholders.

In terms of the key findings, stakeholders recognised the aspirational nature of the previous plan and its support in delivering targeted funding for local economic and community development. It was recognised that focus was needed to ensure that the goals and objectives of the plan are underpinned by deliverable and implementable actions, which are attributed and owned by relevant bodies/organisation, including Cork County Council. This is essential to ensure that the new LECP addresses some of the key national priority areas, including climate action, biodiversity and urban and rural regeneration. The recommendations of this review process enabled this LECP to build on the successes of the previous plan and deliver an ambitious and implementable plan which will support the economic and community development of Cork County.

What are High-Level Goals, Objectives, Outcomes and Actions?

A High-Level Goal is an idea of the future or a desired result that an individual/group/organisation envision, plan and commit to achieve. Within the scope of this LECP, this definition can be summarised as a specific vision that Cork County Council wishes to deliver or achieve either directly or in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders during the lifetime of the LECP (2024-2030). High-Level Goals are the fundamental aims of this plan and represent, at a high-level, how we envisage Cork County developing during the next six years.

Each High-Level Goal is supported by several objectives. These interrelated objectives are key priority areas and factors which are intrinsically linked to the High-Level Goal and are important to achieve in order to most effectively deliver the desired results of this plan.

The Objectives are underpinned and supported by specific Actions, which are detailed in the Implementation Plan. Actions have been designed within the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) and will be an essential component of the LECP. They will be central to achieving the High-Level Goals and objectives of Cork County's 2024-2030 plan and will have key impacts on service delivery in the community. Cork County Council will report on the implementation of these actions annually.



Structure of the Local Economic and Community Plan



Cross Cutting Issues

The High Level Goals and Objectives detailed in this document form part of the Strategic Framework of the LECP. Due to the Strategic focus of the document, the wording of the objectives in general, do not specify specific groups or individuals. However, it is intended that the objectives relate to all groups, sectors and members of our community in Cork County.



Gougane Barra



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

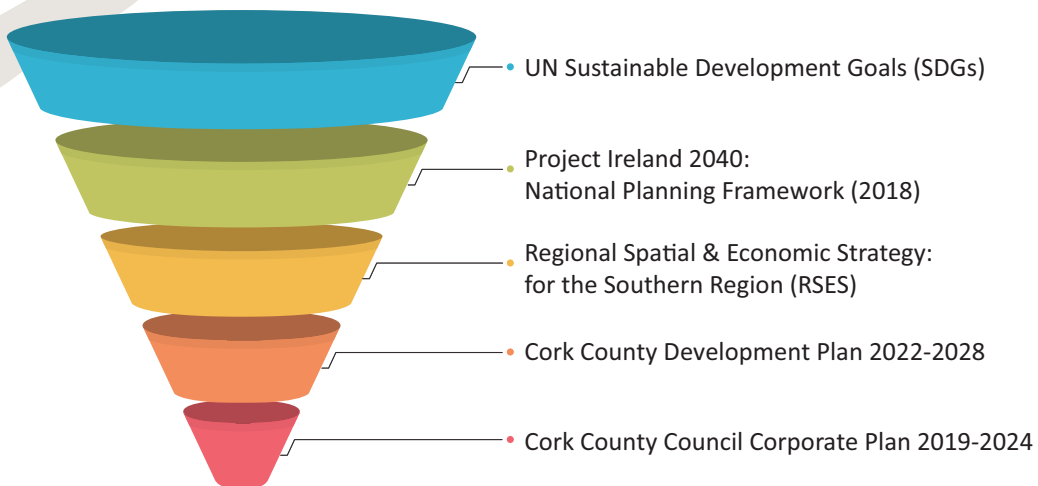
POLICY FRAMEWORK OF THE LECP



POLICY FRAMEWORK OF THE LECP

Policy Framework

The Cork County Local Economic and Community Plan is an integral framework for delivering local economic and community actions from EU, national, and regional policies, and strategies. This wider policy context sets out best practices and underpins the development of our High-Level Goals to ensure prosperous growth at a local level in Cork County over the next six years.



UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A key component of the 2024-2030 Cork County LECP is that it must be developed within the context of the principles of sustainable development. The United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (adopted by all UN Member States in 2015) outlines a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which provide a blueprint to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The UN SDGs critically recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations is intrinsically linked to strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and foster economic growth. They are also fundamentally positioned with strategies and policies that tackle climate change and enhance environmental protection. Ireland has made a commitment to ensure that the SDGs are fully considered in all Government policies and processes, and, as such, they are a fundamental consideration for the Cork County LECP process.





Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is Ireland’s overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic, and cultural development of our country over the next 20+ years. The NPF draws upon lessons learned from the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2022 and sets out a new vision based on a set of values that will ensure Ireland’s long-term economic, environmental, and social progress for all parts of our country. The NPF also sets the context for Ireland’s three regional assemblies to develop their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. The NPF aims to create a single vision, a shared set of goals for every community across the country. These goals are expressed in the Framework as National Strategic Outcomes.

- Compact Growth
- Enhanced Regional Accessibility
- Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
- Sustainable Mobility
- A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
- High-Quality International Connectivity
- Enhanced Amenities and Heritage
- Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
- Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources
- Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services





Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy: for the Southern Region (RSES)

The RSES sets out the strategic regional development framework for the Southern Region, with a primary aim to implement Project Ireland 2040 - the National Planning Framework, at a regional level and to support a balanced and equitable regional growth plan. This plan identifies Cork County amongst the fastest-growing locations in the State over the next 20 years. The overall vision of the RSES for the Southern Region is to:

- Nurture all our places to realise their full potential;
- Protect and enhance our environment;
- Successfully combat climate change;
- Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Make the Southern Region one of Europe’s most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions

The 5 Principles of the RSES Economic Strategy are:

- SMART Specialisation
- Clustering
- Placemaking for Enterprise Development
- Knowledge Diffusion
- Capacity Building

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

The County Development Plan guides the future growth and sustainable development of our county over the plan period from 2022 to 2028. The plan sets out an approach centred on the core principle of sustainability with a focus on creating vibrant, liveable, climate-resilient communities. This plan is consistent with both the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The Development Plan is a document which details the overall strategy of the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Cork taking into account national and regional planning guidelines, strategies and policy documents. It is also informed by particular national and global environmental issues as set out in the key principles which underpin the document.

At a high level, the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 aims to “provide for the development of County Cork as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standards”.



Glanworth Bridge and Castle



Cork County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024

This unique and reactive document contains the aims and actions which will inform and guide the Council's activities over this time. The Council's Corporate Plan outlines the core values, vision and aspirations of Cork County Council as well as defining the Council's significant role in directing policy and development.

Other Relevant Policy Documents/Frameworks

The Cork County LECP 2024-2030 is in compliance with other relevant national and regional policy documents and frameworks.

- Building Future Skills: The Demand for Skills in Ireland's Built Environment Sector to 2030
- Clean Air Strategy
- Climate Action Roadmap 2023
- Connecting Ireland: Rural Mobility Plan
- Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy
- Dept of the Taoiseach Climate Action Roadmap 2023
- Designated Maritime Area Plan Proposal for Offshore Renewable Energy
- Digital for Good: Ireland's Digital Inclusion Roadmap
- Disability Action Plan 2024-2026
- Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth, 2021-2024 (2021)
- Economic Recovery Plan 2021 (2021)
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025
- Enterprise 2025 Renewed: Building resilience in the face of global challenges (2018)
- Future FET: Transforming Learning The National Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy
- Get Ireland Active – The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (2016) Healthy Ireland – A framework for improved health and wellbeing, 2013-2025 (2013)
- Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021–2025 (2021)
- Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)
- Leading in a changing world: Strategy 2022–2024 (2022)
- Long Term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021
- National Positive Ageing Strategy (2016)
- National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027
- National Sustainable Mobility Plan
- National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind
- OECD Skills Strategy Ireland
- Our Living Islands: National Islands Policy and Action Plan
- Our Rural Future Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 (2021)
- Public Service Apprenticeship Plan
- Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024: South-West (2022)
- Renewable Transport Fuel Policy 2023-2025
- Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025
- Social Enterprise in Ireland: A baseline data collection exercise



- Towards a Smart Southern Region - Southern Regional Assembly
- Towards a learning region – Southern Regional Assembly
- Understanding life in Ireland – The wellbeing Framework 2023
- White Paper on Enterprise Implementation Plan 2023-2024
- Cork County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
- Public Service Apprenticeship Plan
- Energy Security in Ireland to 2030
- Future Land Transport Investment Framework
- National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030
- Bioeconomy Policy
- Ireland’s Forest Strategy (2023 – 2030)
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities



Midleton



Overriding Status of the Plan

Implementing this Plan will involve Cork County Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans setting out public policy for sustainable development, including that relating to the economy, communities, infrastructure, land use tourism and environmental protection and environmental management.

This Plan is situated alongside this hierarchy of statutory documents that has been subject to environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment, as appropriate, and forms the decision-making and consent-granting framework. The Plan does not provide consent or establish a framework for granting consent and will not be binding on any decisions relating to the granting of consent.

The Plan fully aligns with the provisions of the existing National Planning Framework, Ireland 2040, National Climate Action Plan 2023, Housing For All 2021, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 and the current County Development Plan, all of which have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment. As such, the Plan is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes, and does not introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.

In order to be realised, projects included in this Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

Plans and strategies providing for new development or intensification of activities (eg regeneration plans, transport plans, public realm plans and tourism development plans etc) and projects relating to new or expanded residential, sustainable transport, industrial, enterprise, and recreational/sports developments etc, will be supported where they are in accordance with principles of proper planning and sustainable development as guided by policies of the County Development Plan.

Projects relating to the development or redevelopment of buildings, places, areas and amenities, or which support the running of festivals and other events, and which are funded by grants or schemes administered by Public Authorities will be assessed prior to funding, to ensure that they are compatible with the principles of sustainable development.

It is a specific provision of this Plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the County Development Plan identified in the accompanying Screening for SEA and AA reports shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Plan.





Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF CORK COUNTY





SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF COUNTY CORK

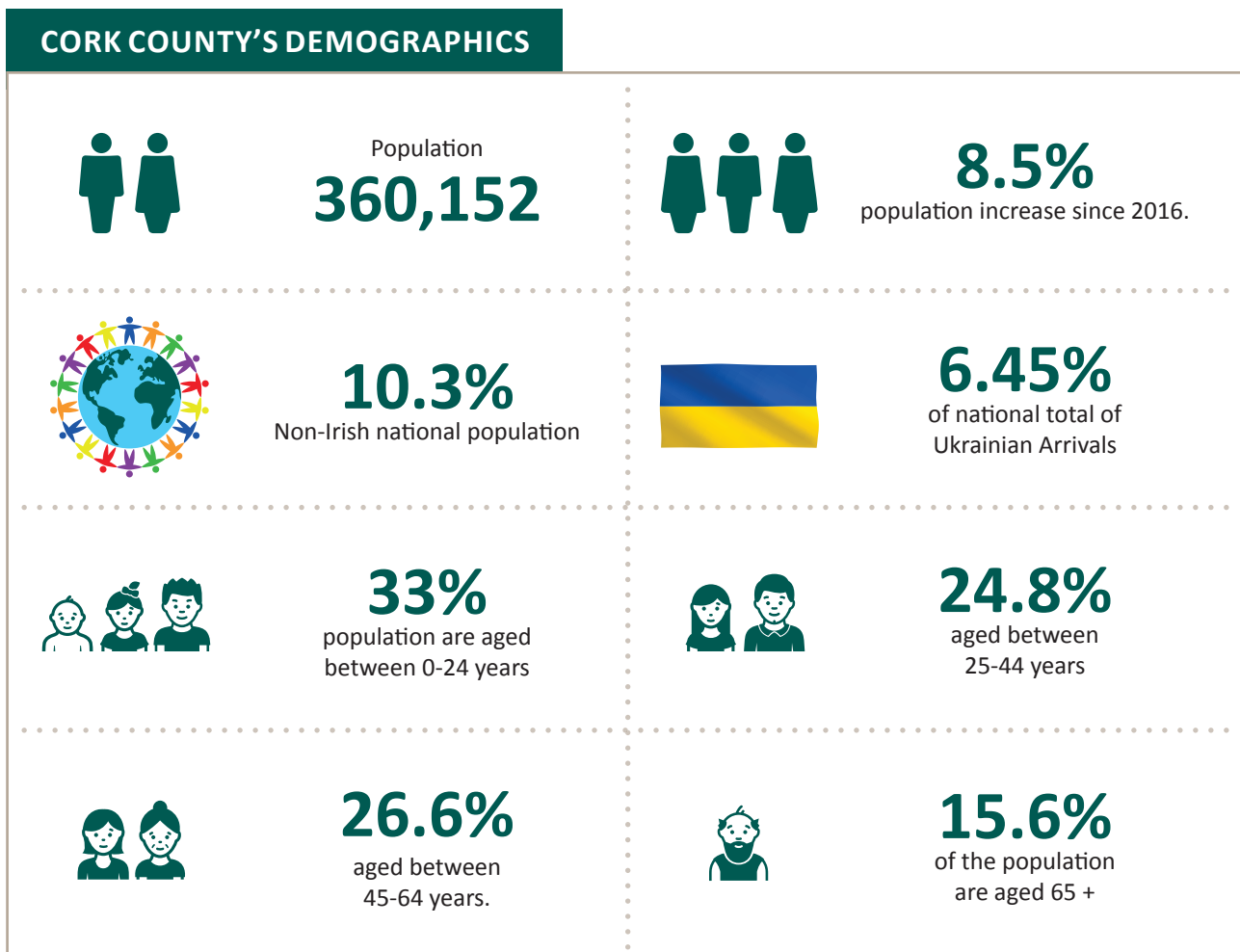
Socio-Economic Data Sources

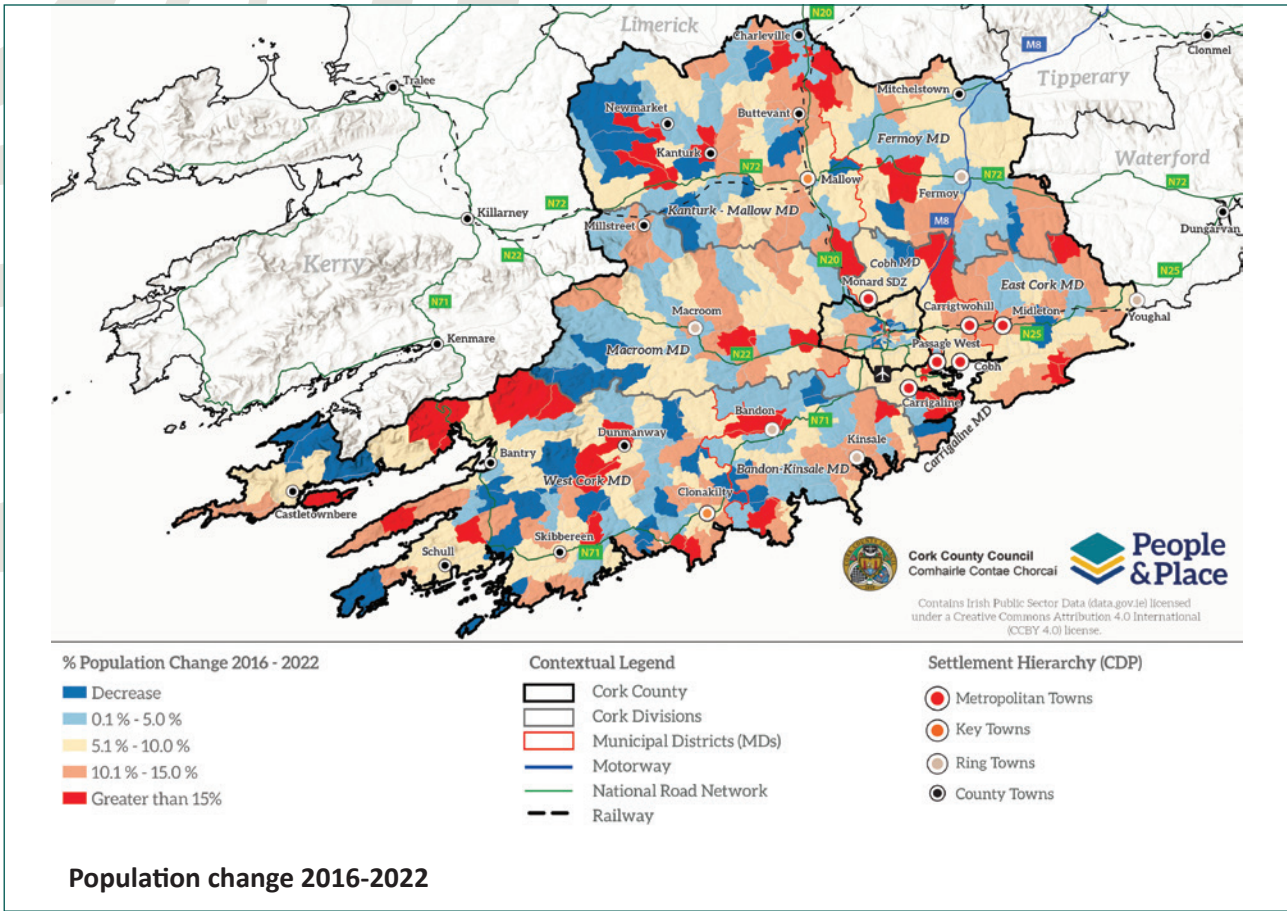
Cork County Council has created a socio-economic profile of Cork County, which has been used to develop the Framework LECP. This data is based on several verified sources, including the most recent results from the 2022 Census. Key social and economic indicators of this profile have been presented in this document, with relevant data referenced within each of the High-Level Goals.

Communities in County Cork

A community can include group of people who live in an area or share common interests, perspectives, goals or beliefs. Communities create a sense of connection, identity or social ties amongst their members. Cork County has vibrant and engaged communities, and this is demonstrated by the 525 community groups and organisations who form part of our Public Participation Network. Supporting our communities to be sustainable and vibrant places to live, work and do business is a key focus of the Cork County LECP, 2024-2030.

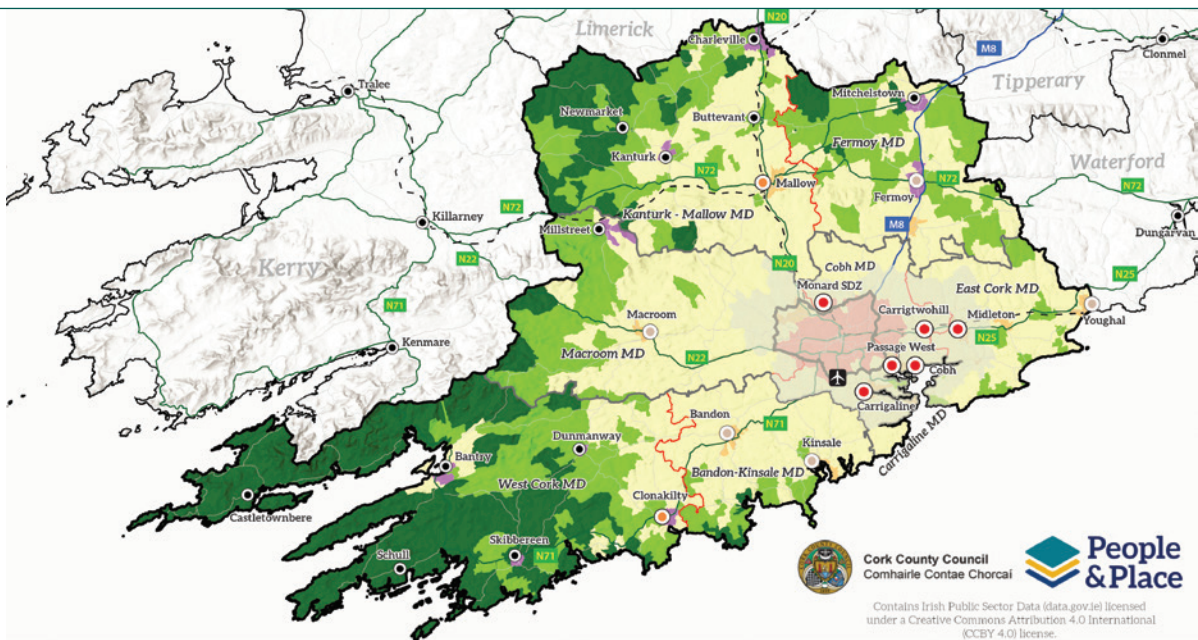
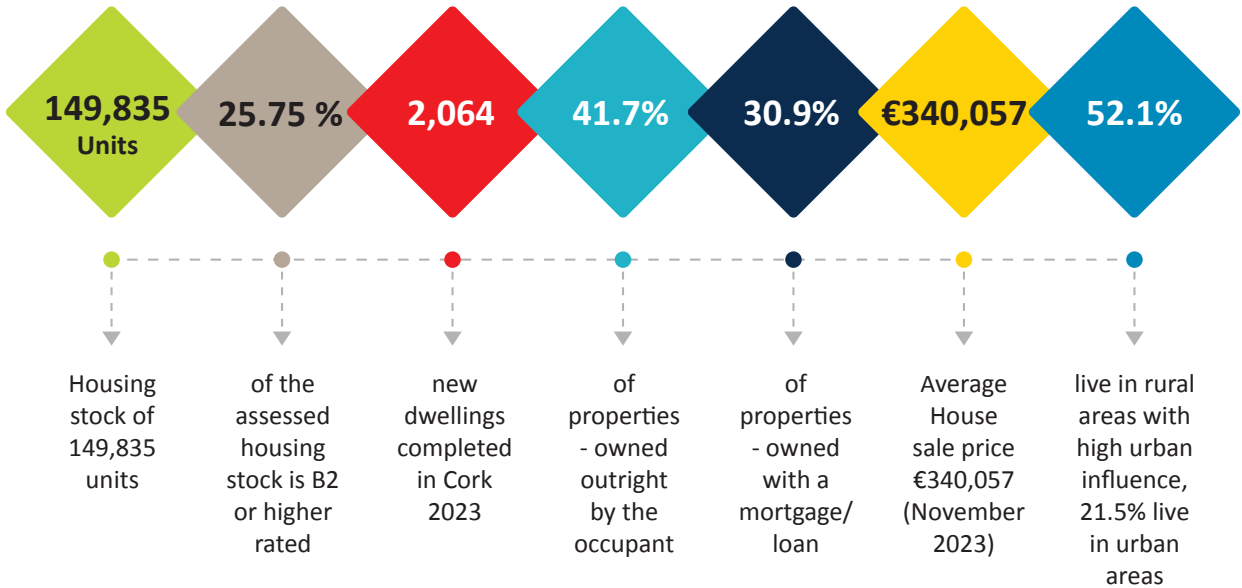
KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS







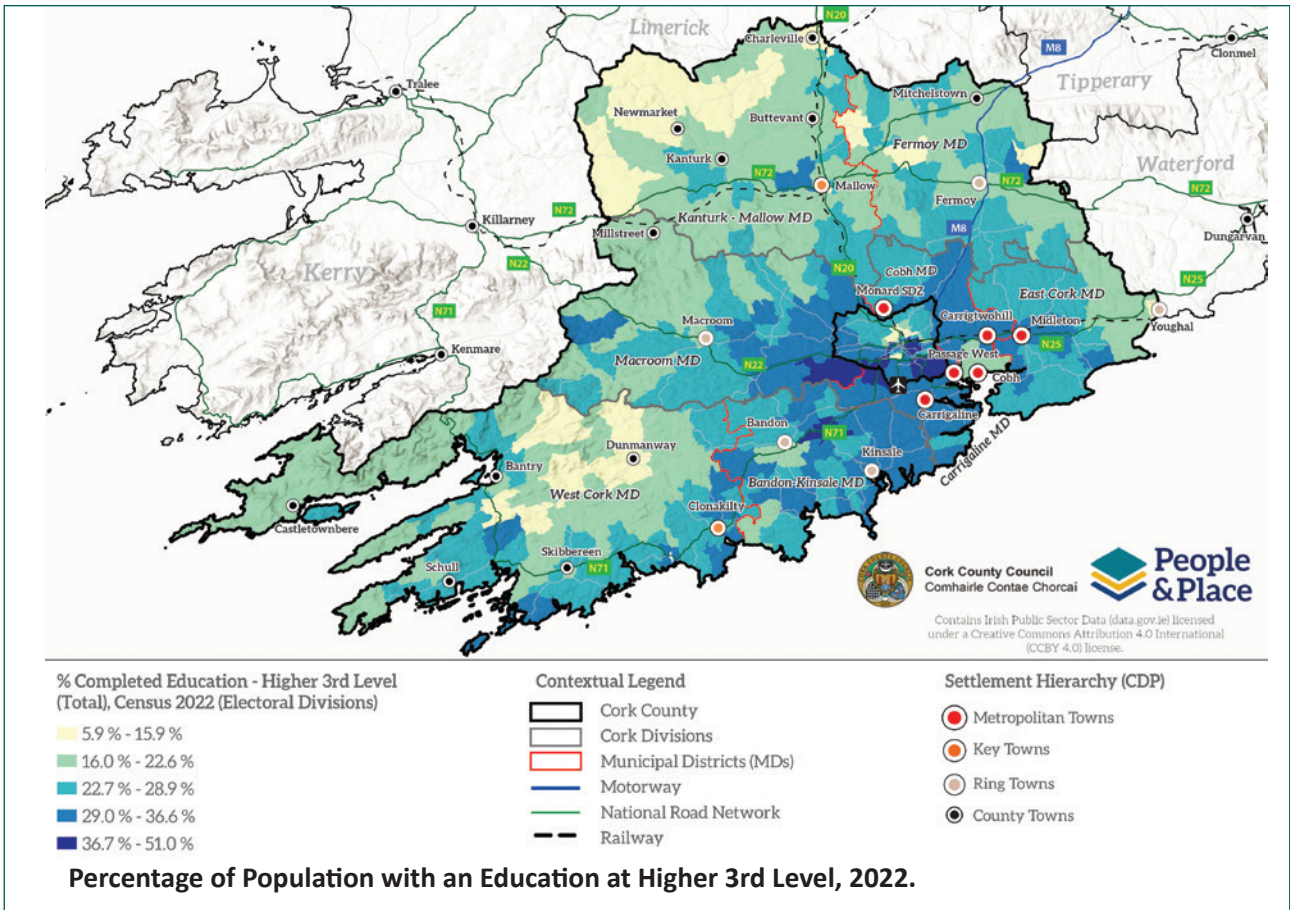
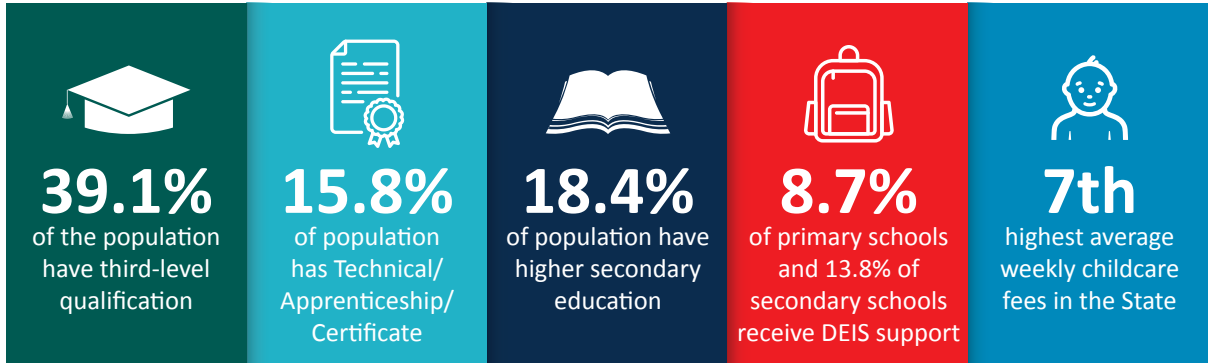
CORK COUNTY'S HOUSING



Urban/Rural Classification



CORK COUNTY'S EDUCATION





CORK COUNTY'S HEALTH



21%

of residents have a self-declared disability



1.4%

of residents have bad/very bad health



Levels of physical activity
same as national averages



Lower levels of socio-economic
deprivation than national averages



Charles Fort



CORK COUNTY'S ECONOMY



More affluent than the State, as a whole



Household Median Gross Income is **€49,489**, State average (€45,256)



Average disposable income, **€23,856**, 3rd highest nationally



Known Job Locations (not mobile) **110,053** Cork County, 104,812 Cork City



22% of local jobs in County Cork are in FDI supported companies



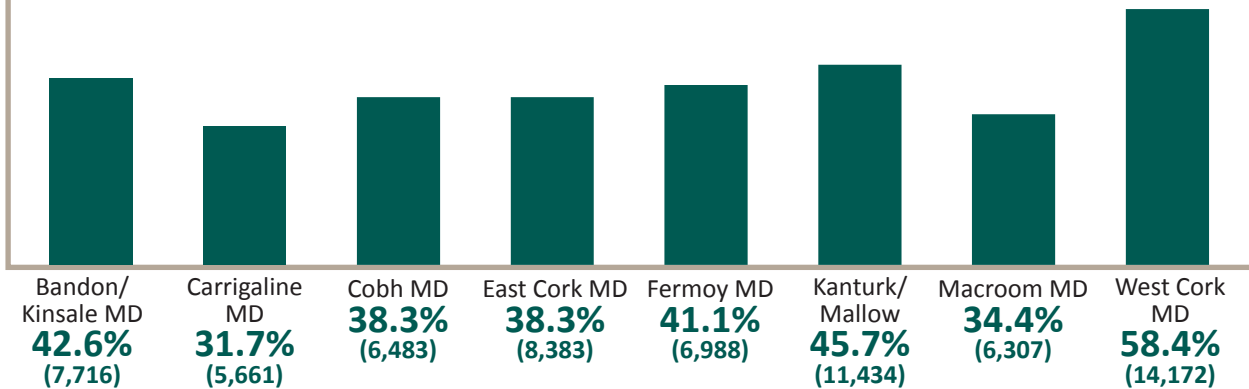
93.9% of the Cork County's labour force is in employment



Lowest unemployment rate in the state

31,773 resident workers are mainly working from home (5th highest in the state)

% Resident Workers who Live and Work in the MD, 2022



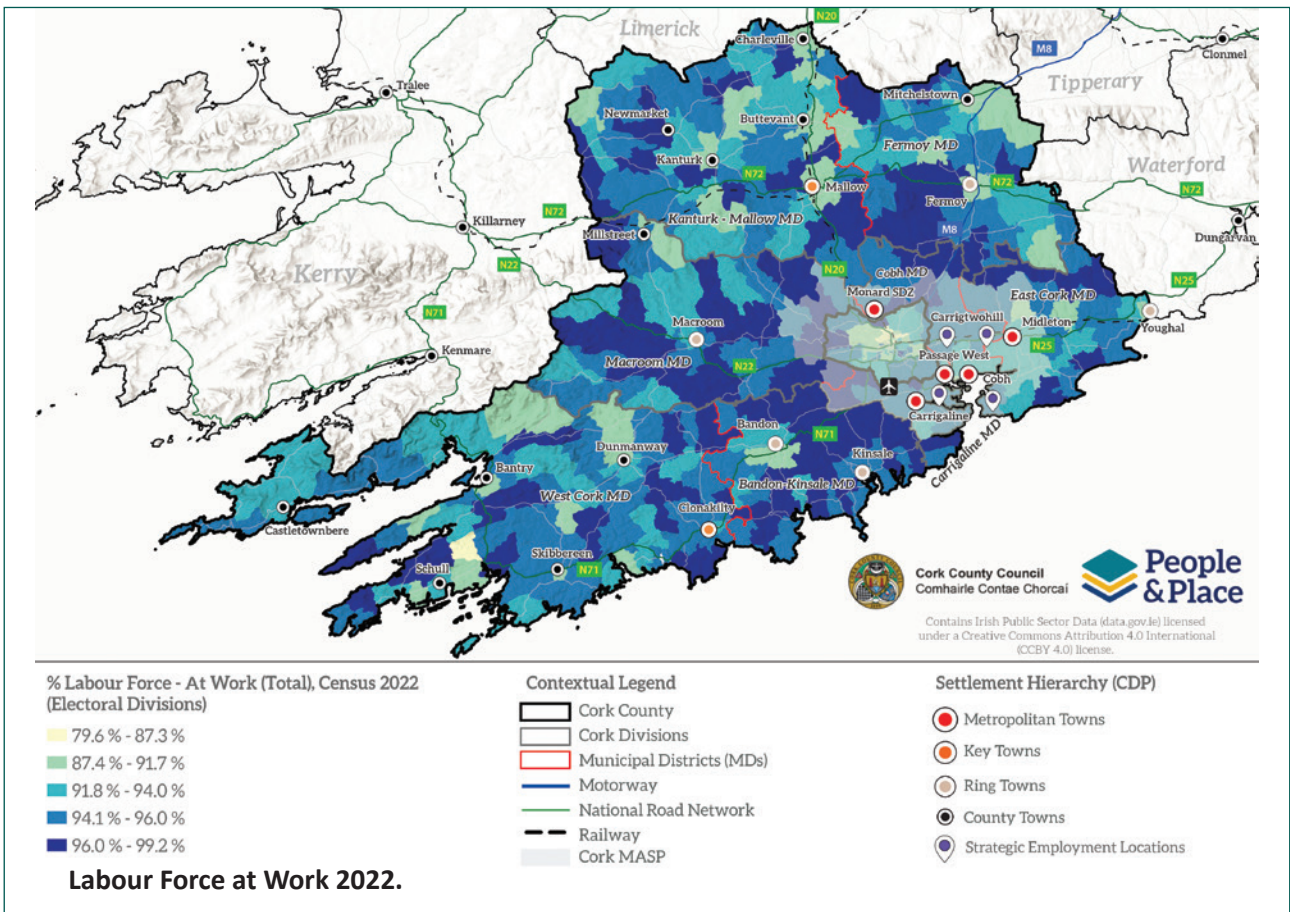
171,626 people in the Cork County labour force

Cork Harbour has a fundamental role in the local and national economy, and connects Ireland to global trade routes and opportunities for further economic development. It is home to world leaders in Pharma, Biopharma, Chemical manufacturing and other global industries that have tapped into the strong skilled workforce of County Cork.



1,451,000 overseas tourists, 1,211,000 domestic/resident travellers visited Cork - 2019, spending **€842 million**

Cork County has a relatively diverse employment profile, with high participation across all sectors of employment. Sectors of employment have a distinct spatial profile, with greater employment in the primary sector (Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry) in North and West Cork.





CORK COUNTY'S COMMUNITY



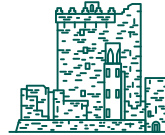
382
Community Groups supported by Community grants since 2020



525
local groups in our Public Participation Network



30 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 7% of national total



3,000 protected structures, **50** Architectural Conservation Areas and **19,000** recorded archaeological monuments



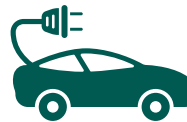
108 outdoor gyms, **100** playgrounds, **48** parks, **20** multi-use games areas (MUGA) and **10** greenways.



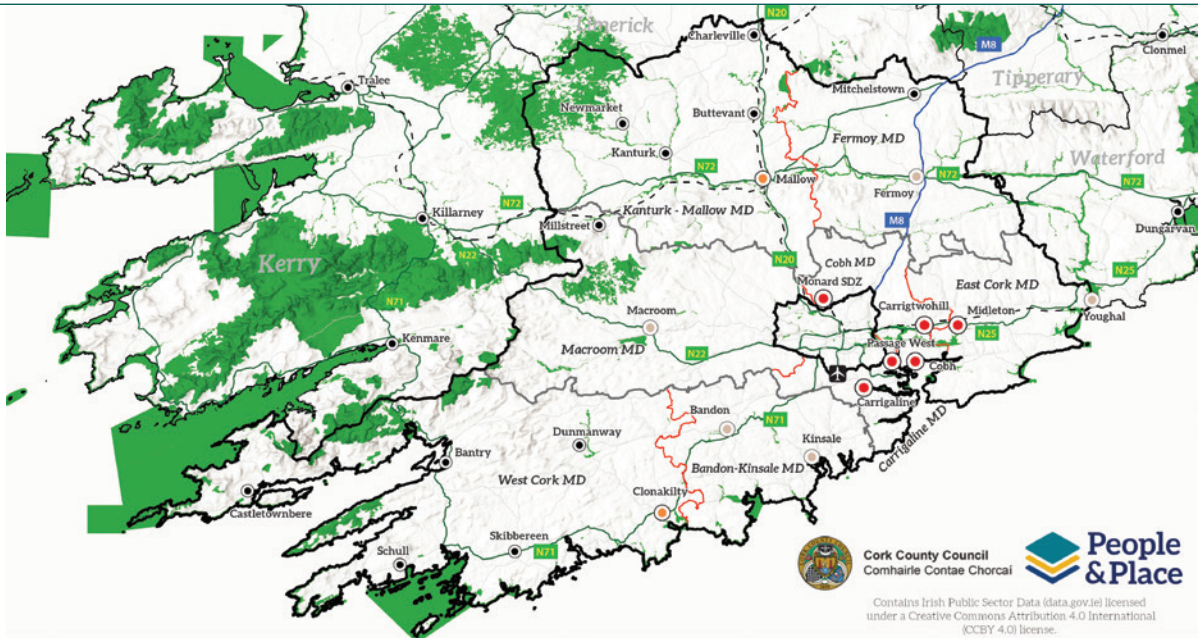
Seven inhabited islands in West Cork



26 awards and medals in the 2023 Tidy Towns, including "Tidiest Island" Award.



44.4% of new car registrations are electric or hybrid



Natura 2000 Sites
■ Natura 2000 Sites

Contextual Legend

- Cork County
- Cork Divisions
- Municipal Districts (MDs)
- Motorway
- National Road Network
- Railway

Settlement Hierarchy (CDP)

- Metropolitan Towns
- Key Towns
- Ring Towns
- County Towns

Natura 2000 Sites



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

Local Economic and Community Plan Public Consultation

HAVE YOUR SAY

15th May to 26th June



www.corkcoco.ie



Local Economic & Community Plan
2023-2029



PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Under sections 66C(2)(i) and 66C(3)(i) of the 2014 Local Government and Reform Act, local authorities are required to engage in public consultations on both the economic and community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan. This section outlines the consultation strategy and methodology deployed as part of the Cork County Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2030, and also discusses the results and analysis of this process.

Consultation Events

Public consultation is imperative to ensure enhanced decision-making and produce better policies, strengthen democracy, and build trust with local communities. Cork County Council's public consultation strategy has been informed by the recently published *Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making* and was developed in accordance with nine principles for inclusive community engagement.



9 principles for inclusive community engagement.



Public consultation was focused on the draft Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals document for the 2024-2030 Cork County LECP and aimed to enable and empower the public to engage meaningfully with the draft document and provide critical feedback to help inform and shape the plan. Consultation included:



LECP Advisory Group

- **Advisory Group Workshop (April 2023):** Over thirty key economic and community stakeholders attended a hybrid (both in-person and online) stakeholder workshop to review the draft document. The Advisory Group includes representatives from the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, North Cork LCDC, South Cork LCDC, West Cork LCDC, South Cork Local Enterprise Office, Cork North and West Local Enterprise Office, IDA, Climate Action Regional Office, Energy Cork, Tech Industry Alliance, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, STEM Southwest, Southwest Regional Enterprise Plan, Uisce Éireann, University College Cork, Munster Technological University, National Transport Authority, Public Participation Network, Cork Education and Training Board, HSE, Cork Chamber, Southern Regional Assembly, Údaráis na Gaeltachta, Enterprise Ireland, IBEC, Visit Cork and Cork County Council Officers. The workshop provided an overview of the document and the draft High-Level Goals and Objectives and enabled stakeholders to provide structured feedback during a series of thematic roundtable discussions. The document was subsequently revised prior to going to Public Consultation. This group met at each stage of the process to advise on the content of the plan.

- **Public Events (May-June 2023):** Thirty-two hours of face-to-face public consultation was facilitated over eight public events including consultation events held in each of the divisional areas (North, South and West) and a consultation stand for two days at the Cork Summer Show. Public events aimed to empower citizens of Cork County with a meaningful opportunity to engage with the plan and provide tacit community-based knowledge on the unique socio-economic profiles, challenges and opportunities of the vast network of communities within Cork County. Public events included presentations on the purpose of the 2024-2030 Cork County LECP, the policy frameworks and socio-economic data underpinning it, and the High-Level Goals included within the draft document. These events also included interactive Q&A based activities and roundtable discussions.



Public Consultation Event



- **Virtual Consultation Room (May-June 2023):** In order to ensure that the public consultation process was accessible to the largest extent possible, Cork County Council developed a Virtual Consultation Room. The Virtual Consultation Room was an online interactive space which provided an opportunity to engage with a substantial audience and allowed potential users to access the content within the online platform at any time during the consultation period from any computer or mobile device. The Virtual Consultation Room sought to mirror the content that was presented during the public events, and contained the draft document and its contents, as well as presentations related to 2024-2030 Cork County LECP, the policy frameworks and socio-economic data underpinning it. It also provided opportunities for users to make a formal submission to the plan.





- **Cork County Council website:** Information on the LECP and the consultation process as well as copies of the documents and public notices were available in both English and Irish on the Council’s website. It also enabled the public to make submissions on the plan.
- **Public Libraries:** Hard copies of the Draft Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals as well as posters with details on how to make submissions and access the virtual consultation room were made available in each of the 24 public libraries in the County.
- **Questionnaire:** As part of the public consultation process for the Draft Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals document, Cork County Council developed a public submission questionnaire which had a range of questions based on several key areas of interest for the LECP. This was accessible on the Council’s website, in the virtual consultation room and at the public consultation events.
- **Written Submissions:** An online public submission form was made available for use by members of the public on the Cork County Council website and the LECP virtual consultation room. In addition, written submissions could be submitted by email, post or via public submission boxes which were available at all public consultation events.
- **Public Notices:** Public notices were placed in six local papers which are in circulation in the County. These notices were also published on the Council website. In addition, there were a series of posts on the Cork County Council social media channels, as well as press releases to publicise the period of public consultation.

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2030





What is the best thing about your community/local area?

It's people , castle , rail station
 Supports from bodies such as LEOs, ABP
 Transport (rail) Friendly
 Services transportation The people
 The public servies peaceful Central location
 Sense of community
 It a very quiet and kind community

What do you think is the biggest challenge for your local area?

Keeping younger generations in the town.
 Spaces in second level education
 Dispersion Relief Transport Lack of transportation
 Getting of traffic in Road Ageing pop
 Development road works
 Supporting seniors and new arrivals
 Lack of public transport, within the town bounds

Can you identify one thing that would significantly improve your local area and your daily life?

Facilities for younger people
 More transportation Greenway
 Schools- primary and second levels. Co work hub
 Public transport Water services Leap cards for the train
 Relief road
 Leap cards for train in the more rural areas
 Integration and coordination of supports and services available

Example of Slido Responses from Public Consultation.



Stakeholder Consultation

Cork County Council has established three LCDCs, aligned with the Divisional Area boundaries of North, South and West Cork. Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) were established “for the purposes of developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development”. The three LCDCs in Cork County are:

- North Cork LCDC
- South Cork LCDC
- West Cork LCDC

The LCDCs have a statutory role in the development of the LECP. The Act confers responsibility for the preparation, adoption and implementation of the community elements of the LECP on the LCDC. In accordance with the Guidelines the Plan has been presented to the three LCDCs at each stage of its development for their input and approval.



West Cork LCDC



South Cork LCDC



North Cork LCDC

Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee

The role of the SPCs is to assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. The SPC system enables Councillors and sectoral interests an opportunity to be fully involved in the policy making process from an early stage when policy options are more fluid.

The SPC has a statutory role in the development of the LEP and have played a key role in setting the economic high level goals and objectives of the LEP. In accordance with the Guidelines the Plan has been presented to the SPC at each stage of its development for their input and approval.



Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee

LECP Advisory Group

The Cork County LECP Advisory Group is made up of over thirty key economic and community stakeholders including representatives from the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, North Cork LCDC, South Cork LCDC, West Cork LCDC, South Cork Local Enterprise Office, Cork North and West Local Enterprise Office, IDA, Climate Action Regional Office, Energy Cork, Tech Industry Alliance, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, STEM Southwest, Uisce Éireann, University College Cork, Munster Technological University, National Transport Authority, Public Participation Network, Cork Education and Training Board, HSE, Cork Chamber, South West Regional Enterprise Plan, Southern Regional Assembly, Údaráras na Gaeltachta, Enterprise Ireland, IBEC, Visit Cork and Cork County Council Officers.

The LECP Advisory Group met 5 times during the development of the Framework LECP. At these meetings workshops were held to enable the members of the Advisory Group to input into the development of the High-Level Goals, Objectives and Outputs of the plan.



LECP Advisory Group



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

SCAN OUR QR CODES BELOW
TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE LECP



PUBLIC SUBMISSION FORM



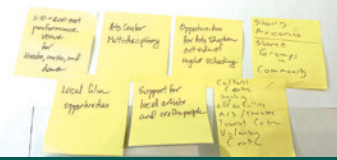
LECP QUESTIONNAIRE



Local Economic & Community Plan
2023-2029



ECONOMY



PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION SUBMISSIONS

During the public consultation period, 42 written submissions and questionnaire responses were received. Submissions were also made by 58 people via interactive sessions at the public consultation events. The written submissions included responses from the following bodies and elected members:

SUBMISSIONS FROM ORGANISATIONS AND ELECTED MEMBERS

- Cllr Alan O'Connor
- Comhairle na Nóg
- National Transport Authority
- Cork Airport
- Uisce Éireann
- Children Youth Services Committee
- Cork Chamber
- Youghal Family Resource Initiative
- Kingstown College Mitchelstown
- Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí
- Mallow Probus

The points of each submission were individually considered in the context of the scope of the LECP and the wording of High Level Goals, Objectives and SCOT analysis and amendments were made to reflect the contents of the submissions where appropriate.



Toe Head



KEY TOPICS RAISED

Within the submissions, there were five core topics which were most frequently raised by respondents. These were:





HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1: SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

The submissions made under each high-level goal have been summarised into topics and listed below.

Summary of Submissions

- High quality of life and wellbeing
- High quality public realm
- Importance of placemaking
- More allotments and community gardens
- Environmental measures in public realm projects
- Community Groups to cater for all ages/needs
- Increased transparency of community projects
- More collaboration between community groups and clubs
- New/Improved sports facilities
- Communal sports facilities
- New/Improved community facilities
- Improved public transport
- Parking in town centres
- New/improved active travel facilities
- Promotion of Active Travel
- More rural public transport
- Renew and regenerate towns and villages
- Support sustainable development
- Improved broadband connectivity
- Promotion and development of tourism
- Slower and sustainable tourism
- Promote and Support Heritage, culture and the arts
- Positive impact of the arts
- New/Improved cultural and arts facilities
- Develop heritage potential
- Collaboration between stakeholders on projects
- Greater public consultation
- Assistance for groups in applying for funding
- Identification of Múscraí Gaeltacht in plans
- Signage in the Múscraí Gaeltacht
- Initiatives to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2: A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE COUNTY

Summary of Submissions

- Improved public transport
- Need for rural and community transport
- Greenways have no purpose for those with physical disabilities
- More understanding of people with disabilities
- Use expertise of disabled people in developing schemes
- Support neurodiversity
- Access to lifelong learning and further education
- Youth not staying in rural areas
- More activities for elderly
- Pathways for lifestyle of older population
- Age Friendly Activities
- Initiatives to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour
- Improved broadband connectivity
- Mental health supports
- More childcare/afterschool services
- Early years support and education
- Listen to the voices of children and young people
- Objectives should specifically name children and young people
- Collaboration on project planning
- Create volunteering opportunities
- Inclusion of marginalised groups
- Inclusion and integration of new arrivals



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3: A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COUNTY

Summary of Submissions

- Improved public transport
- Greater diversity of sports activities
- New/better sports facilities
- New/better community facilities
- Communal sports facilities
- Improved broadband connectivity
- Age Friendly Activities
- Health and Wellbeing Promotion



Dunkettle to Carrigwohill Interurban Route 1



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4: A LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT COUNTY THAT PROTECTS BIODIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Summary of Submissions

- Promote and Support renewable energy
- Information on renewable energy
- Use of roof space for Solar panels
- Support use of EVs
- Decarbonisation
- Supporting Agriculture sector to decarbonise
- Transitioning to a circular bioeconomy
- Apprenticeships to help meet Climate targets
- More sustainable transport options
- Prioritise public transport
- NTA's Connecting Ireland: Rural Mobility Plan
- Safer walking and cycling facilities
- Protection of biodiversity
- Addressing climate change
- Co-existence with wildlife
- Environmental Protection and Enhancement
- Better opportunities in the Múscraí Gaeltacht in terms of sustainability
- Research centre on biology in the Múscraí Gaeltacht



Sheeps Head



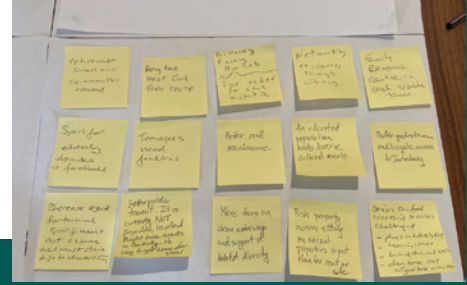
ECONOMIC HIGH LEVEL GOALS

High Level Goal 5: A County that Supports Enterprise

- Public Realm Improvements
- Regeneration of towns and villages
- Improved public transport
- Funding for retail business
- Funding/Support for start-ups and SMEs
- Maximise potential as economic hub
- Employment opportunities
- Upskilling and training opportunities
- Access to lifelong learning and further education
- Youth not staying in rural areas
- Support businesses to transition to a low carbon economy
- Support business to decarbonise
- Invest in harbour economy
- Invest in tourism offerings
- Promotion and development of tourism
- Invest in fishing ventures
- Recognition of Cork Airport as an important economic driver
- Facilities for farmer markets
- More opportunities for sustainability and research in the Múscaí Gaeltacht

High Level Goal 6: A Smart and Innovative County

- Access to lifelong learning and further education
- Improved public transport
- Youth not staying in rural areas



SUBMISSION ISSUES RAISED

Other Issues

- Use of Venn diagrams/tables in the report
- Reference to Irish Water be replaced with Uisce Éireann

Below is a summary of the submissions made on issues which are not covered by the Local Economic and Community Plan but are covered by other plans or agencies.

Issues outside of the Scope of the LECP

- Housing development requirements
- Election of community group officers
- Individual plans for towns
- Provision of private fitness centre
- Allocation of buildings/premises
- Zoning and use of buildings and land
- New/Upgraded road network
- Infrastructure projects
- Greenway feasibility issues
- Provision of Health Services
- Provision/Supply of housing units
- Provision/Supply of utilities
- Employment land review
- Engagement/involvement in planning process
- Establishing town councils



Mizen Head



OUTCOMES OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS

Cork County Council held eight in person public consultation events across the three divisional areas of Cork County (North, South and West). These events included interactive sessions which enabled those attending to give their opinions on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities in their area. Attendees were also given the opportunity to make formal written submissions, answer questionnaires and provide shorter comments under each High-Level Goals. The key thematic areas raised within these submissions and comments have been outlined below under each divisional area. These points were fully considered and have been reflected in the SCOT analysis and objectives.

WEST CORK CONSULTATION EVENTS

Comments and feedback received during the public consultation events in the West Cork Divisional area indicated that the key strengths, challenges and opportunities for the local area and community were:

Strengths of West Cork

- The natural environment (beaches, woodlands), amenities and people.
- Active community groups and business associations with a strong sense of pride in place.
- Vibrant festival culture.
- Strong tourism offering with locally owned businesses.

Challenges for West Cork

- Economic challenges, including the cost-of-living crisis and access to funding for community groups and businesses.
- Insufficient public transport between West Cork and Cork City (as well as between local communities), which contributes to geographic isolation.
- Climate change and biodiversity restoration.
- Migration of the younger population to urban areas.
- Dereliction of towns and villages.

Opportunities for West Cork

- More connected and enhanced public transport, as well as increased active travel infrastructure (cycling and walking routes).
- Enhanced public realm works to improve towns and villages.
- Additional investment and funding for community facilities (community centres, amenities for teenagers and senior citizens).
- Capacity for enhanced investment in cultural services and facilities (film production, music and theatre performance space).



NORTH CORK CONSULTATION EVENTS

Comments and feedback received during the public consultation events in the North Cork Divisional area indicated that the key strengths, challenges and opportunities for the local area and community were:

Strengths of North Cork

- Strong sense of community with active community groups and volunteers.
- Train connectivity, particularly in Mallow.
- Historical landmarks and access to natural green spaces and amenities.
- Access to public services.

Challenges for North Cork

- Lack of public transport in rural and isolated communities.
- Migration of the younger population to urban areas.
- Supporting an ageing population and ensuring appropriate facilities and healthcare access for older populations.
- Access to funding for community groups and businesses.

Opportunities for North Cork

- Development of additional school infrastructure (primary and secondary levels) in higher population towns, such as Mallow.
- More connected and enhanced public transport, as well as increased active travel infrastructure (cycling and walking routes) and investment in EV charging points.
- Development of a co-working hub in the area.
- Investment (and increased access for funding) for community facilities and age friendly initiatives.



Mallow Castle



SOUTH CORK CONSULTATION EVENTS

Comments and feedback received during the public consultation events in the South Cork Divisional area indicated that the key strengths, challenges and opportunities for the local area and community were:

Strengths of South Cork

- Good location in close proximity to Cork City, with strong transport links.
- Strong tourism offering with further scope for growth.
- Active and vibrant community and sporting groups with a strong sense of community.
- Inclusive and diverse communities.

Challenges for South Cork

- Investment required for infrastructure and services to support population growth.
- Lack of local community services and amenities for teenagers and older adults in certain areas.
- Biodiversity loss and water pollution.

Opportunities for South Cork

- Development of remote working hubs in the area for public and private sector employees.
- More connected and enhanced public transport, as well as increased active travel infrastructure (cycling and walking routes).
- Increased investment in community health and development services.
- Further investment (and access to funding) for community services and facilities.



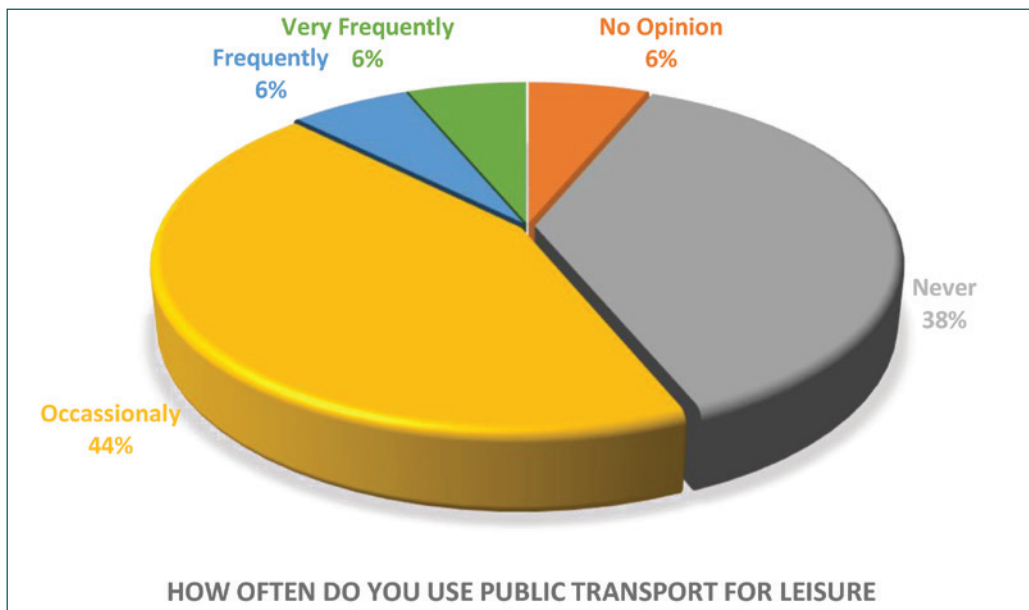
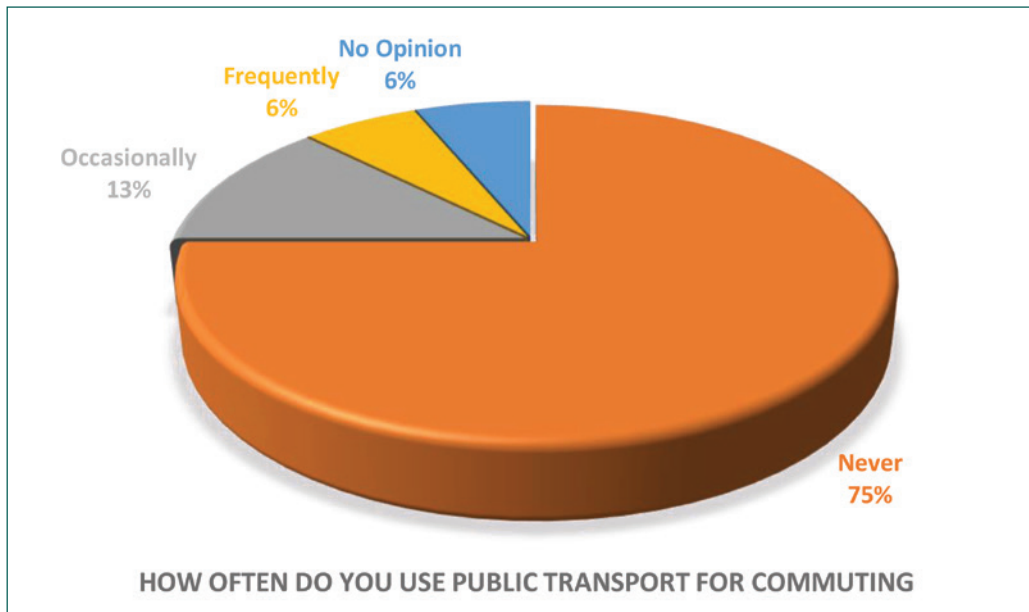


PUBLIC SUBMISSION QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of the public consultation process for the Draft Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals document, Cork County Council developed a public submission questionnaire based on several key areas of interest for the LECP. Some of the main trends from the responses are outlined below, in relation to the appropriate High-Level Goal.

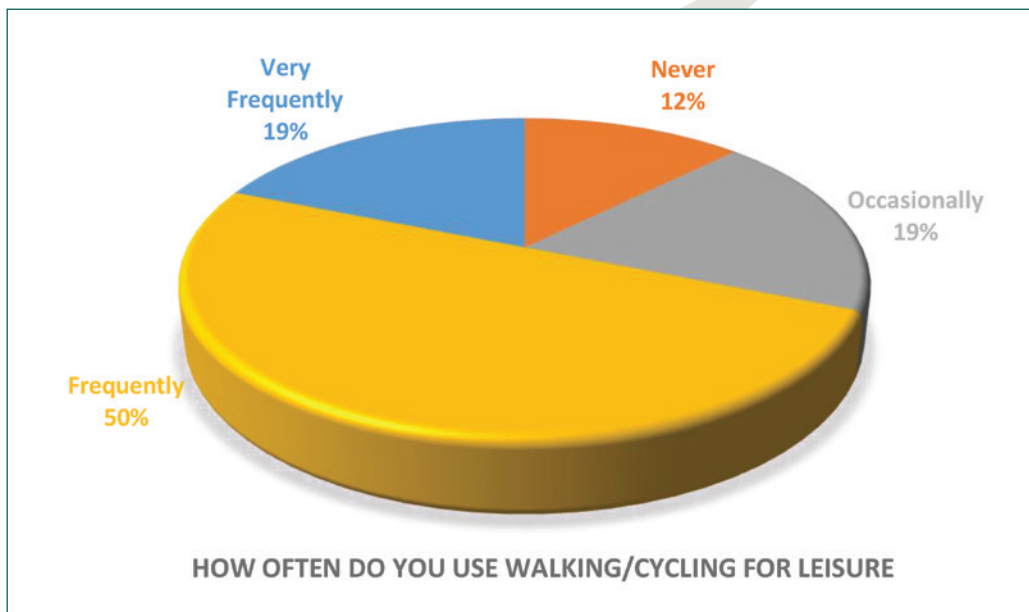
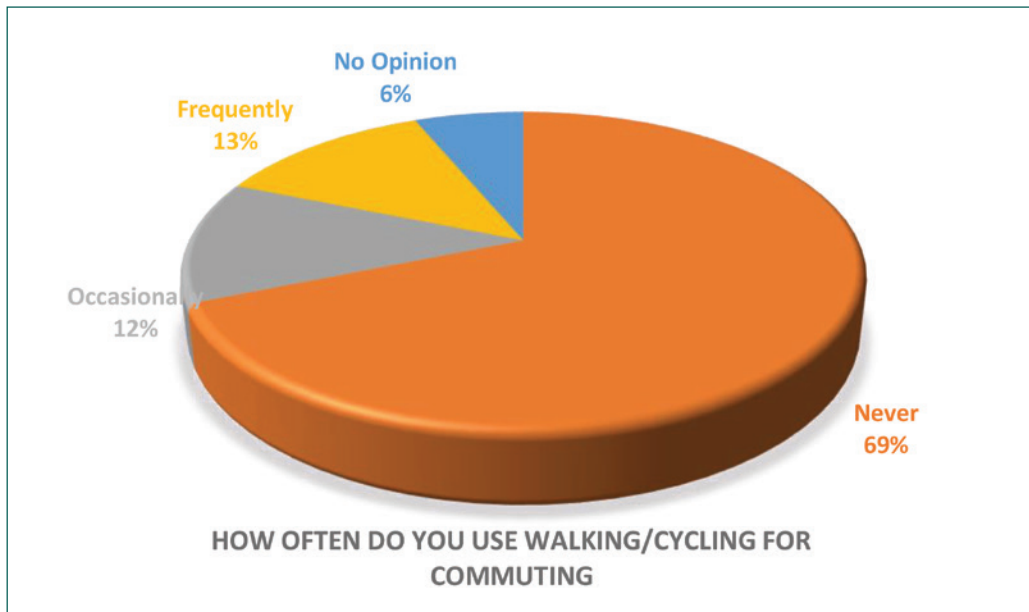
High Level Goal 1: Sustainable, Resilient and Empowered Communities and Places

When asked how often they use public transport for commuting, only 6% of respondents stated that they frequently use it with 13% using it occasionally. The remaining 75% of respondents stated that they never use public transport for commuting. While the percentage of respondents who frequently used public transport for leisure purposes was the same as for commuting, the percentage of who occasionally used it for leisure purposes was higher at 44%.



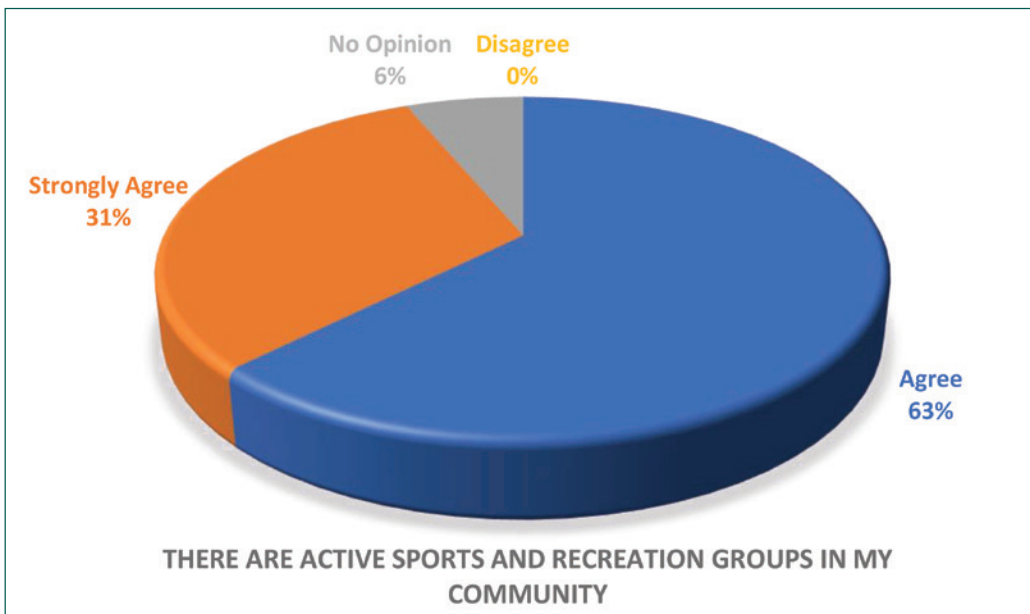
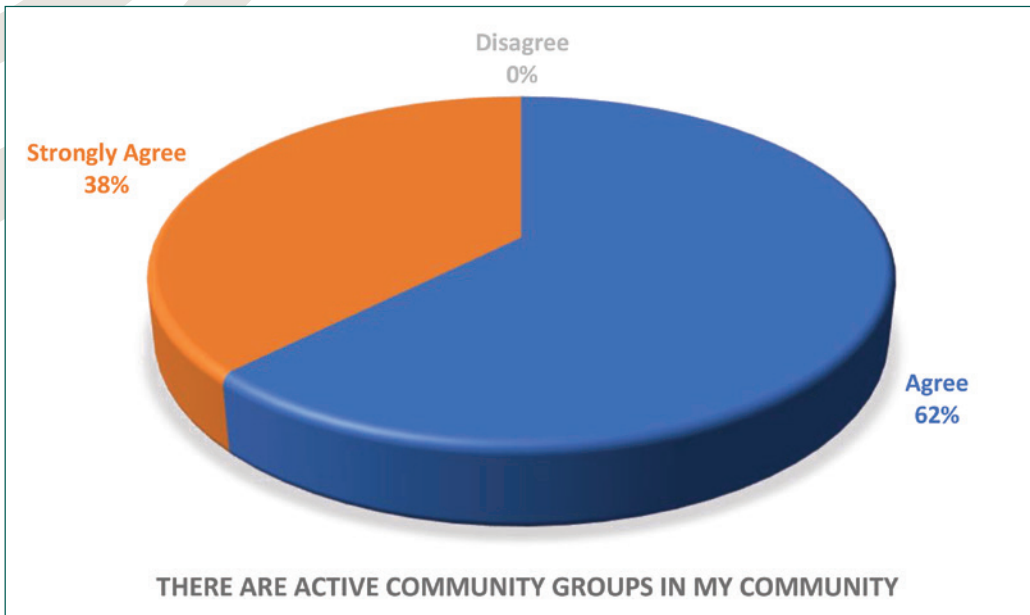
An improved public transport offer within the county was one of the key issues for respondents in the received written submissions. This would indicate that while the current levels of use are low, the availability and extent of the public transport offering is a key barrier. Supporting the delivery of sustainable and inclusive multimodal transport was included as an objective under the draft document under High Level Goal 1. To strengthen this objective, the wording was expanded, and the following objective included: “support and promote initiatives and projects which improve access to public transport for rural and urban areas, including enhanced connectivity and public transport offering.”

A similar trend was found when respondents were asked if they used walking/cycling for commuting with 69% stating that they never walked or cycled to commute. However, 69% stated that they frequently or very frequently walked or cycled for leisure. Active travel infrastructure was an important issue for those who made written submissions, and this has been reflected in the following objective in High Level Goal 1 to “Facilitate the delivery and promotion of safe active and sustainable travel infrastructure.” The word safe was included in the wording in response to the public consultation submissions.

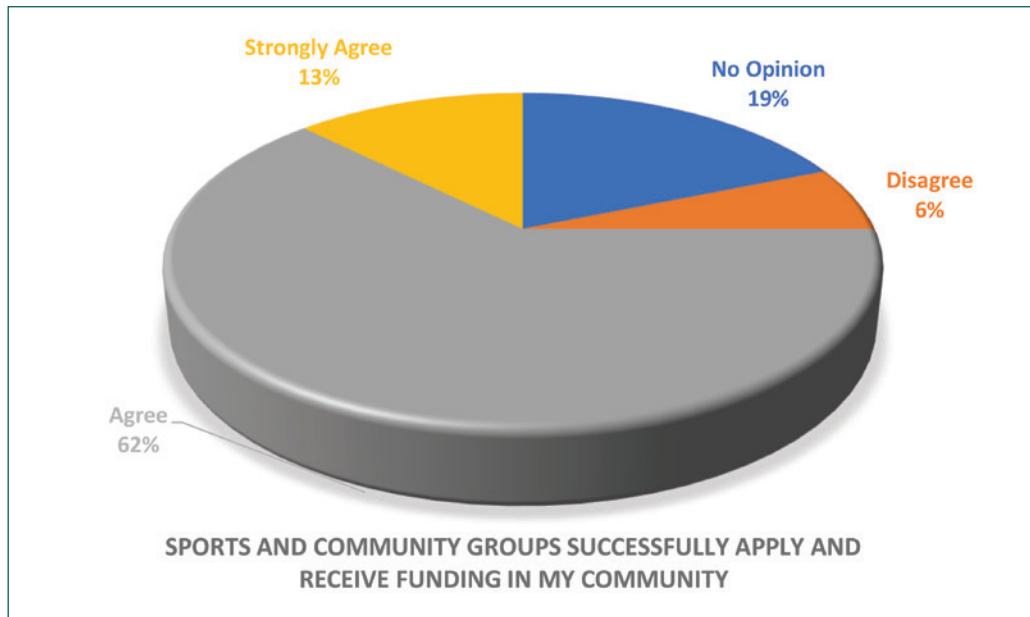




Respondents indicated a strong use of sports and community facilities with only 6% of respondents stating that they never used local sports facilities, while all respondents to the question “how often do you use community facilities in your area” stated that they either occasionally (50%), frequently (25%) or very frequently (25%) used those facilities. This reflects the data in the socio-economic analysis in terms of levels of activity in the County. There was also a very positive response to the statements that there are active community, sports and recreation groups in the county.



75% of respondents stated that sports and community groups in their community successfully apply and receive funding, reflecting the existing financial supports that are available.



A significant number of the written submissions sought new, improved or increased availability of community and sports facilities in their communities. This is reflected in a number of the objectives under High Level Goal 1 including:

- Support initiatives and projects to provide new sports recreation and community facilities and increase availability, improve access and enhance existing facilities.
- Support and promote collaboration between community groups and sporting/recreation organisations to deliver enhanced and inclusive facilities and amenities in their community.
- Enable local groups and communities to access supports and information to help them maximise opportunities for funding through various schemes.

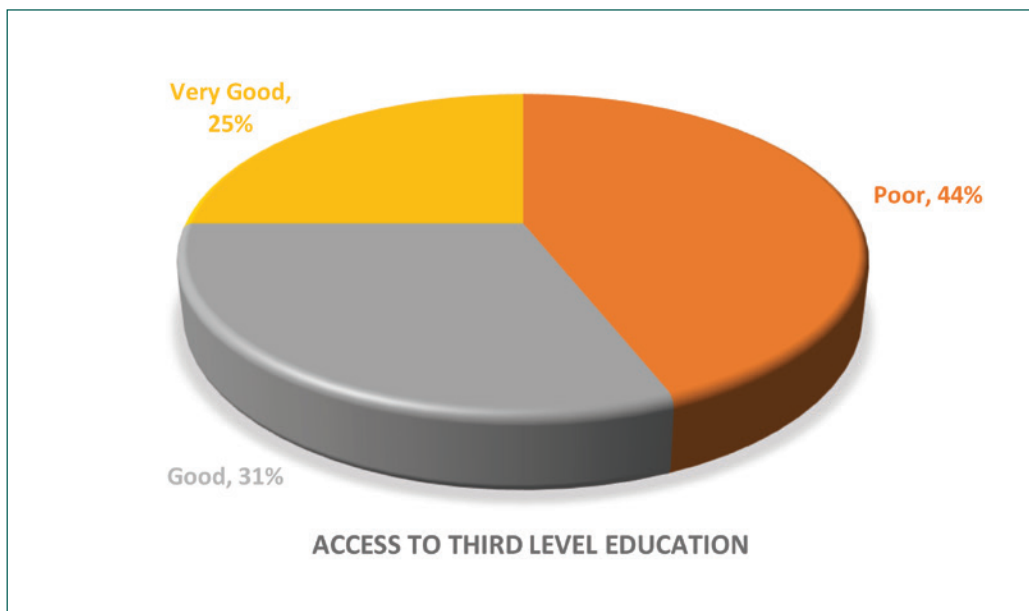
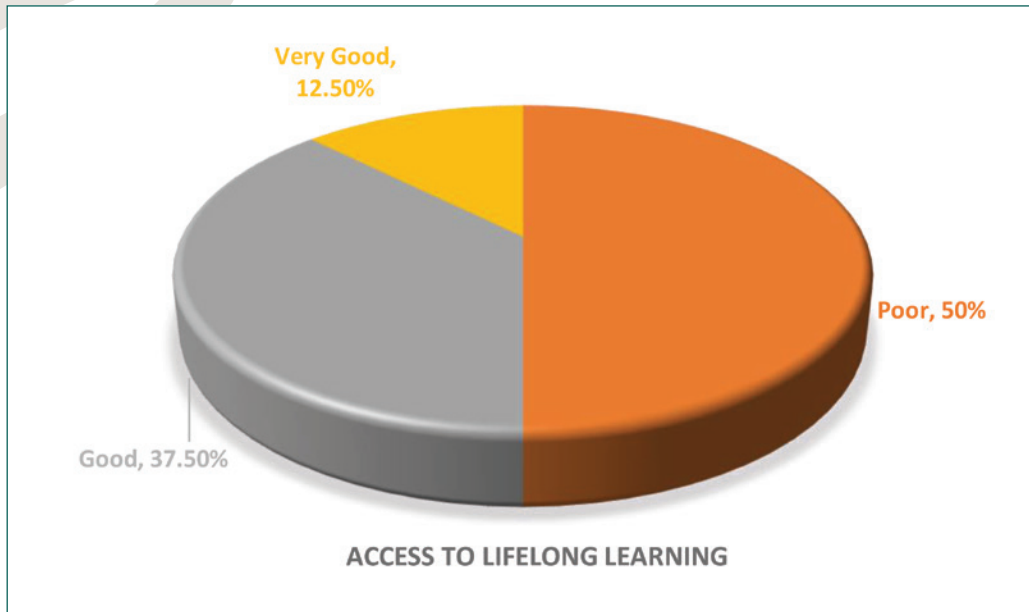
Reflecting data in the socio-economic analysis that affirmed that Cork County has one of the lowest crime rates in the state, all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “My community is a safe place to live in”.





High Level Goal 2: A Socially Inclusive County

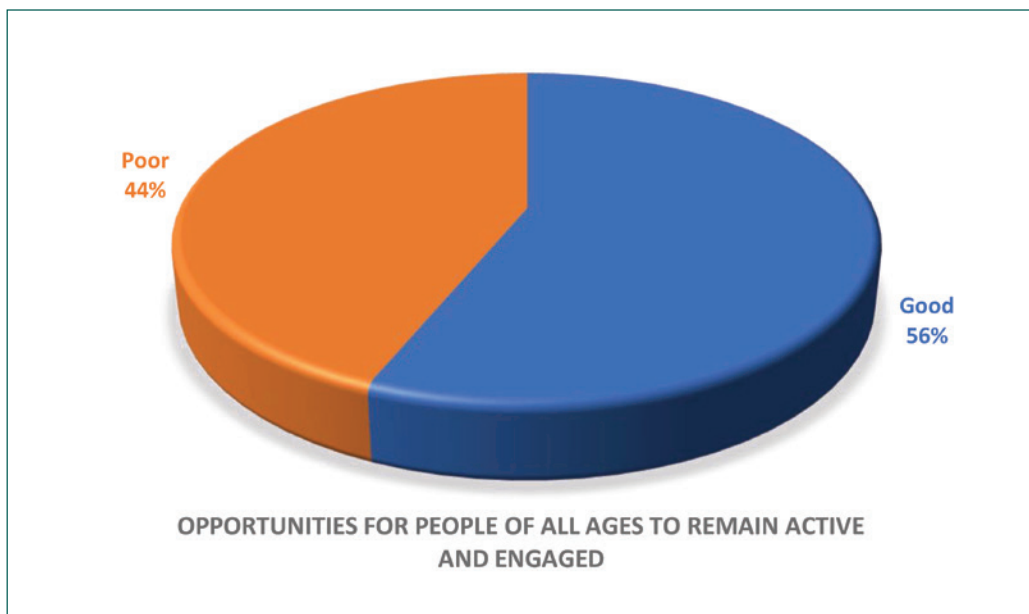
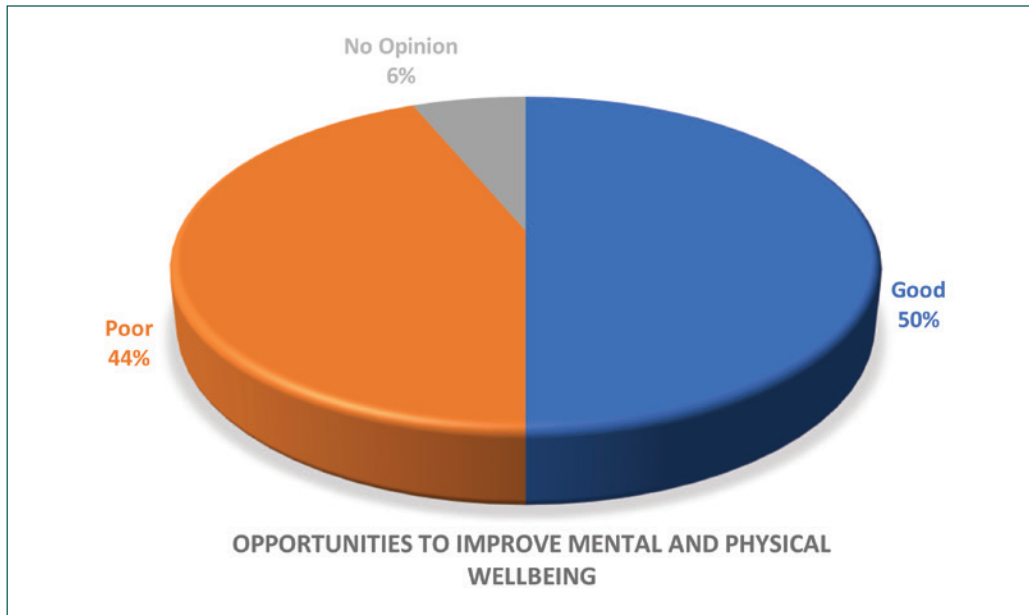
There were mixed responses in terms of access to education (pre-school, third-level, apprenticeships and further education and training), with almost a direct split between positive and negative responses. The socio-economic analysis highlighted geographical differences in progression and access to education and an objective to promote and support equitable access to education, training and lifelong learning was included in the Framework to reflect this. Submissions were also received with regards to early childhood and family education and support and an objective to support the provision and enhancement of community-based child and family services and facilities is included under High Level Goal 2.



Half of respondents indicated that services for people with disabilities in their communities is not sufficient. On this basis, an objective has been included to facilitate initiatives which support and enable people of all abilities to fully participate in education, employment and in their communities.

High Level Goal 3: A Healthy and Active County

Respondents were divided when asked their opinion on the opportunities to improve mental and physical wellbeing in the county with 50% stating that there were good opportunities while 44% stating there were poor opportunities. A similar split in opinion was seen in the responses to the question relating to opportunities for people of all ages to remain active and engaged, with 56% stating there were good opportunities and 44% stating that the opportunities were poor.



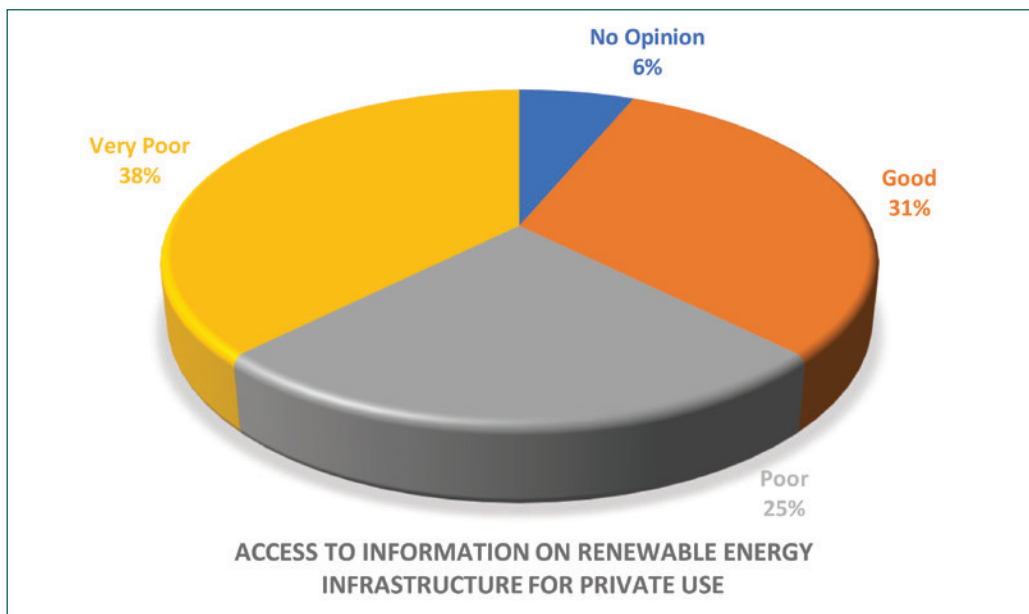
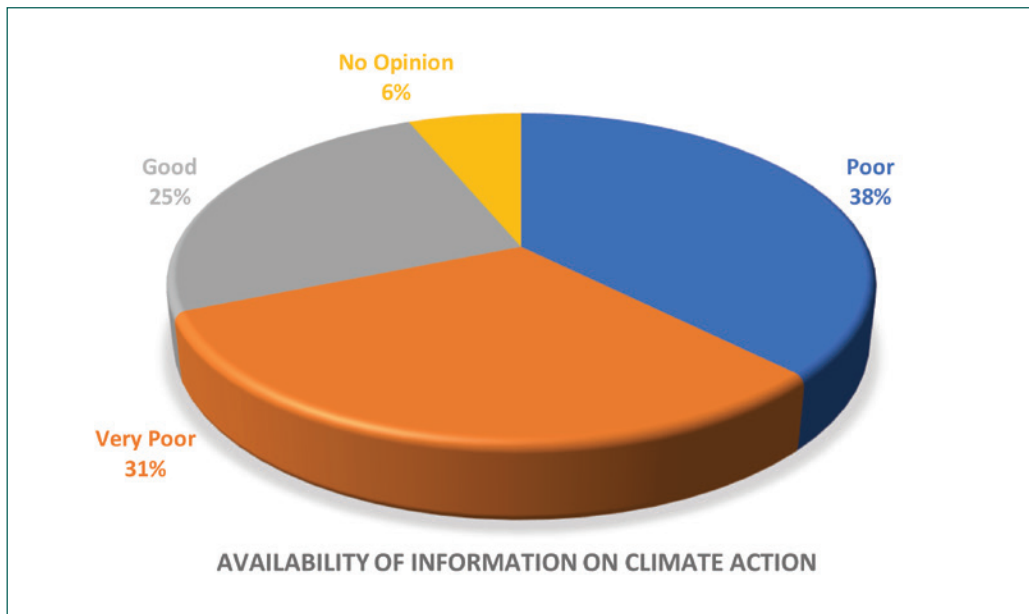
However, 81% of respondents stated that there were either good or very good opportunities for participation in organised sports and recreation.



Supporting and promoting actions which improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of Cork County is a key focus of the objectives which are included in the Framework under High Level Goal 3. To further support these objectives, the wording of an objective was amended to include the following “Support public transport initiatives which enhance connectivity for all citizens to enable them to live vibrant and healthy lives”

High Level Goal 4: A Low Carbon and Climate Resilient County

This high level goal seeks to provide a framework through which climate action interventions can be delivered at a local level. When asked about the availability of information on climate action, 69% of respondents stated that it was poor or very poor. Similarly, 63% of respondents stated that the information available on renewable energy infrastructure for private use was poor or very poor. The responses to the questions in this section of the questionnaire, showed that there are significant opportunities to progress the objectives of this high level goal through improved availability of education and training on both climate change and climate action interventions and maximising opportunities for funding. In this regard, the following objective was included in the Framework, which references climate action interventions, under High Level Goal 4 “Raise awareness of climate change and climate action interventions and facilitate education and training”

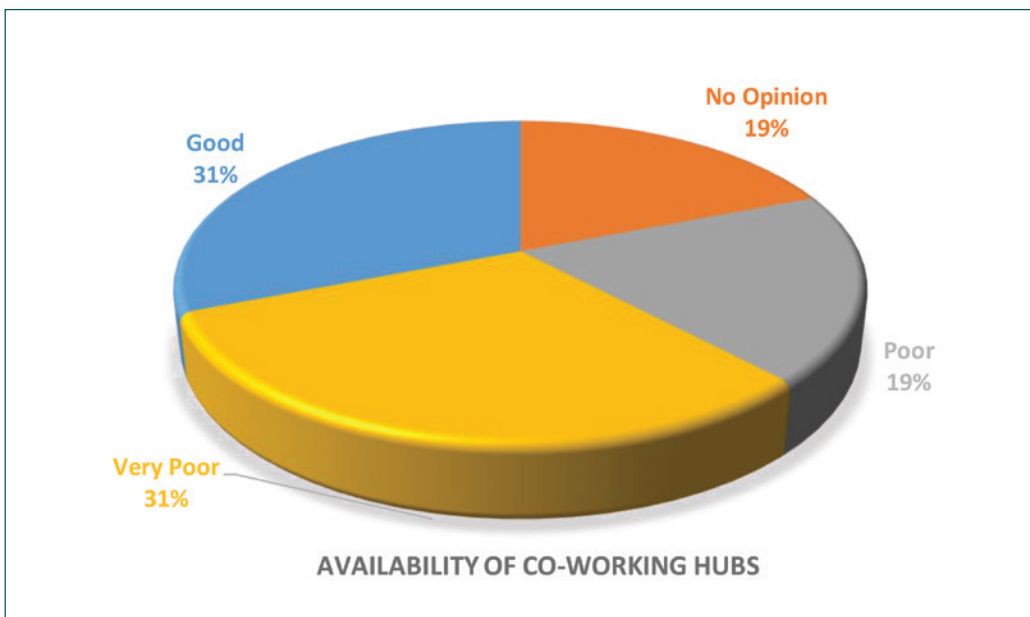


When asked about access to climate action funding for community groups, 75% of respondents stated that it was poor or very poor. It is recognised that increasingly climate action interventions will occur at a local level and it is important that Cork County Council maximise funding opportunities for this purpose. Reflecting this, the first objective under High Level Goal 4 was amended as follows “Promote and support community initiatives and maximise funding opportunities to address climate change, become climate resilient, transition to a low carbon economy and work towards achieving net zero carbon”.



High Level Goal 5: A County that Supports Enterprise

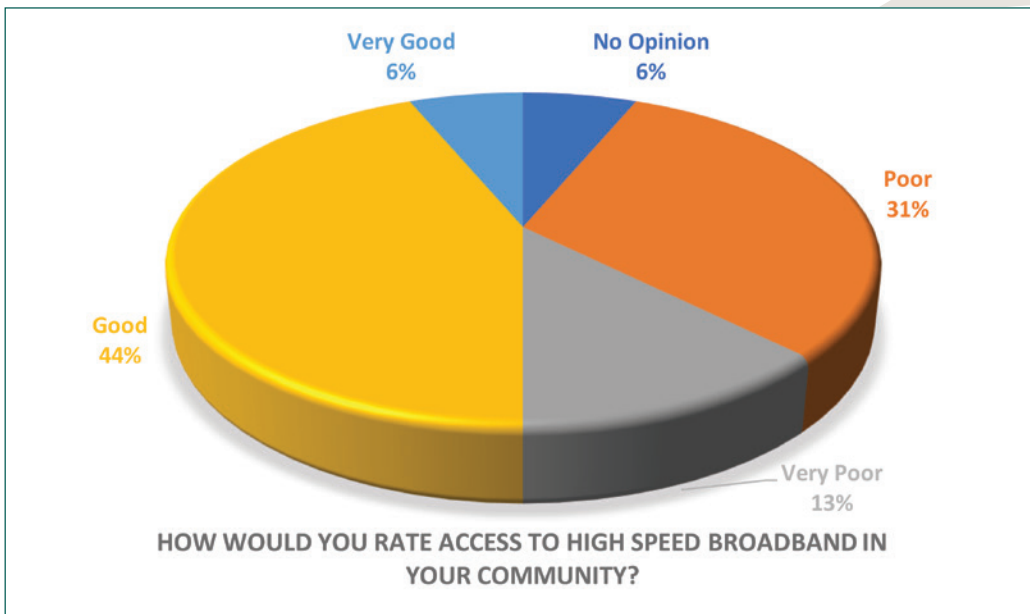
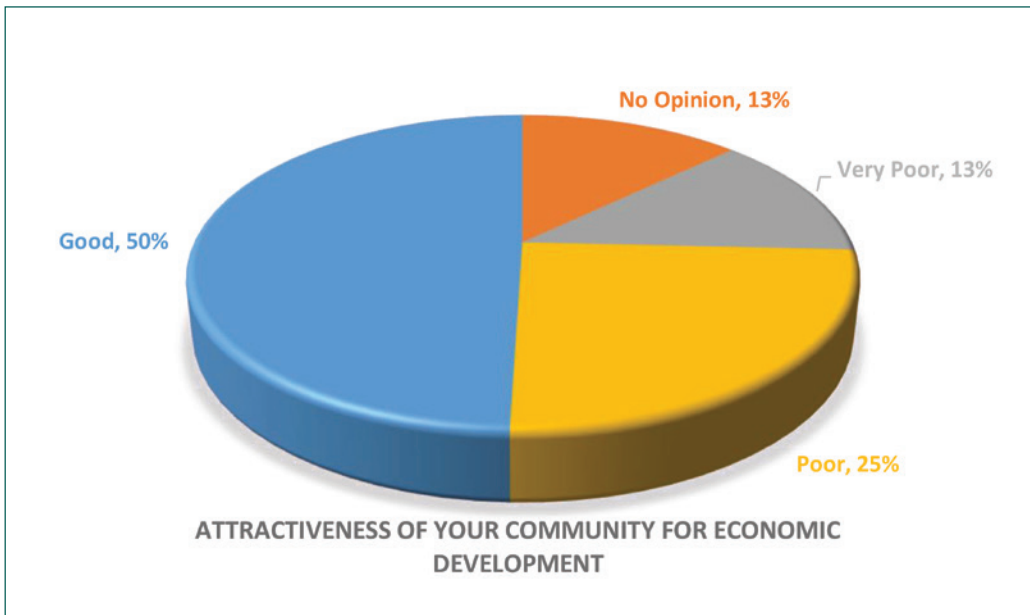
This high-level goal included a significant number of objectives which seek to further develop the supportive landscape for enterprise and economic development in the County, particularly our indigenous and SME sectors. It is noted that the questionnaire responses relating to High Level Goals 5 and 6 included a higher level of respondents stating they had no opinion than in the sections relating to community. This is likely due to a number of the questions being targeted at employers and businesses. The responses to the questionnaire indicated that further supports for entrepreneurship and indigenous companies/SMEs are required to ensure continued economic development. Responses also affirmed that additional funding is required for start-ups, while there is also scope for further expansion of co-working hubs in Cork County. An additional objective was included under High Level Goal 5 which seeks to; “Support and promote trading opportunities for locally produced goods and services.”





High Level Goal 6: A Smart and Innovative County

This high level goal seeks to build on the existing innovative landscape within the county to increase capacity within our economy and aid in the creation of vibrant, sustainable and liveable communities. In terms of access to high speed broadband, there was almost a direct split between positive and negative responses. This reflects the need to support the continued rollout of the national broadband plan throughout the whole county, which is included in a number of the High Level Goals. Digital connectivity is a key factor in the future economic development of the County and is reflected in the following objective “Support the delivery of enhanced digital connectivity to attract inward investment and enable economic growth”. Respondents also indicated that communities in Cork County are attractive for economic development and investment.







Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

SCOT ANALYSIS





SCOT ANALYSIS

A SCOT analysis is a technique used to help identify the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats within Cork County.

STRENGTHS

- Strong demographic performance – especially in South Cork;
- Connectivity with the metropolitan zone;
- High levels of household income – especially in South Cork;
- High levels of labour force participation – throughout the county;
- Influential, renowned and celebrated diaspora;
- Strong county brand and recognition;
- Consistent growth in employment in state-assisted companies;
- Relatively resilient industrial (sectoral) profile;
- Economic spill-overs from Cork City and its role as a regional centre;
- Significant natural resources and habitats – including marine and coastal sites, many of which are integrated into local economic development and tourism services;
- Heritage, Culture and the Arts;
- Within three of Fáilte Ireland’s tourism experience brands, the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Ancient East and Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands;
- Strong community engagement and active community groups and organisations;
- Cork Harbour’s role as an economic driver for the South of Ireland and organisations;
- Strength of the tourism offer and popularity of Cork County as a tourist destination;
- Inclusive and diverse communities.
- Strong family businesses/SMEs in many communities
- Strong family businesses/SMEs in many communities
- UCC, MTU and Further Education Institutes
- Ability to offer citizens/residents a good quality of life
- Growing levels of working from home in areas outside the Metropolitan Area

CHALLENGES

- Persistent peripherality and structural weaknesses in North and West Cork, particularly in respect of demographic vitality, household income and economic opportunities;
- Inter-generational socio-economic disadvantages in both Local Authority Housing Estates and in peripheral rural communities;
- Poor health and social outcomes in disadvantaged communities;
- Meeting the housing, educational and medical needs of new arrivals;
- Relatively low proportion of schools with access to DEIS resources;
- High proportion of holiday homes in West Cork;
- Cost of living crisis;
- Public transport connectivity especially in rural areas;
- Climate change and biodiversity loss;
- Car dependency.
- Weak demographic structure in Gaeltacht communities, which is undermining the inter-generational continuity of the Irish Language
- A relatively narrow economic base, especially in peripheral rural areas
- Rejuvenating town and village centres and addressing housing vacancy
- Diverting waste away from landfill and reducing waste generation.
- Provision of services and supports for ageing population;
- Continue to improve broadband connectivity



Mallow Castle Playground



OPPORTUNITIES

- Relatively high proportions of persons with technical, apprenticeship, certificate and third-level qualifications;
- Low rate of unemployment – opportunities to attract returning migrants and newcomers;
- Furthering upstream and downstream opportunities associated with the expansion of international and indigenous firms;
- Harnessing ecological resources, retro-fitting homes and deriving benefits from Natura 2000 sites (especially in North and West Cork), as part of the Just Transition to a post-carbon society;
- Further decreasing the amount of household waste going to landfill and further increasing the proportion of electric and hybrid vehicles;
- Opportunities for revitalisation of areas.
- Strengthening the productive capacity of small and indigenous firms through inter-firm clustering and smart specialisation;
- Availing of education, research and regional engagement opportunities associated with UCC and MTU;
- The Irish Language and An Ghaeltacht – harnessing the opportunities associated with language planning and increased interest in, and respect for, the language;
- Promotion of sustainable tourism;
- Harnessing the potential of connected/remote working to stem and reverse population decline in rural communities;
- Further promoting active and public transport to support place-making, positive ageing, healthy communities and environmental protection;
- Capacity to embrace and apply smart village and smart region methodologies;
- Harnessing social and knowledge capital associate with in-migration;
- Building on investments that are being made in education to overcome challenges associated with lower level of education attainment in peripheral areas.

THREATS

- Demographic imbalances – strong growth in peri-urban zones and main commuter settlements, but stagnation and decline in peripheral rural areas, mainly in West and North West Cork;
- Reliance on traditional industries in some parts of North Cork;
- Ageing of the population;
- Increasing rents and property prices – putting pressure on disposable income;
- Recent (since 2019) slowdown in the rate of increase in new home-building;
- Strong demand for energy – particularly from industry;
- Ageing of the agricultural workforce;
- Decrease in the diversity of farm output and an increase in intensification, especially in dairying and cereal areas.
- Lower incomes and poor public transport connectivity threaten many households ability to make a just transition to zero carbon emissions;ions;
- Ensuring adequate accommodation and service provision for migrants and local citizens/residents, in order to support integration and inter-culturalism;



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

HIGH LEVEL GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES





HIGH LEVEL GOALS


COMMUNITY

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1  SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2  A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE COUNTY

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3  A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COUNTY

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4  A LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT COUNTY THAT PROTECTS BIODIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMIC

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 5  A COUNTY THAT SUPPORTS ENTERPRISE

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6  A SMART AND INNOVATIVE COUNTY



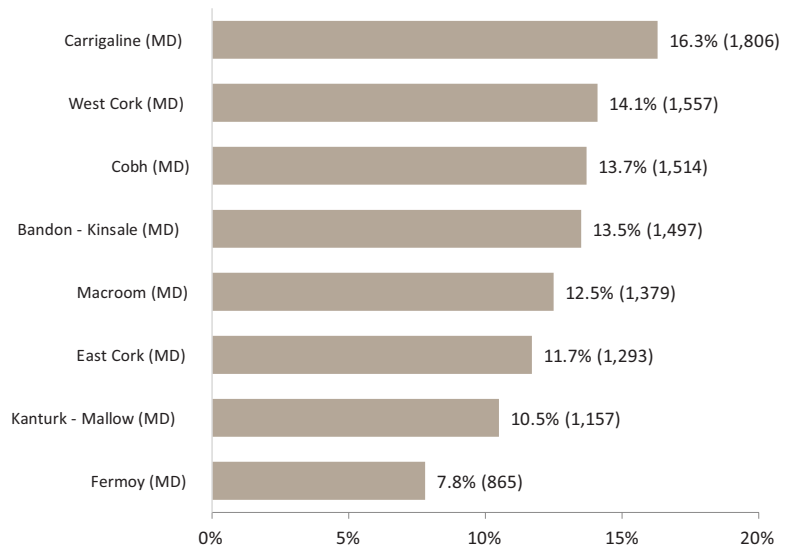
HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1: SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

A sustainable community is one that meets the needs of everyone in the community while protecting and limiting the damage to the environment. The first high level goal seeks to support the communities in Cork County to be sustainable, resilient and empowered communities and places. This reflects the vision of Cork County Development Plan which is to provide for the development of Cork County as an attractive, competitive, safe and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standards.

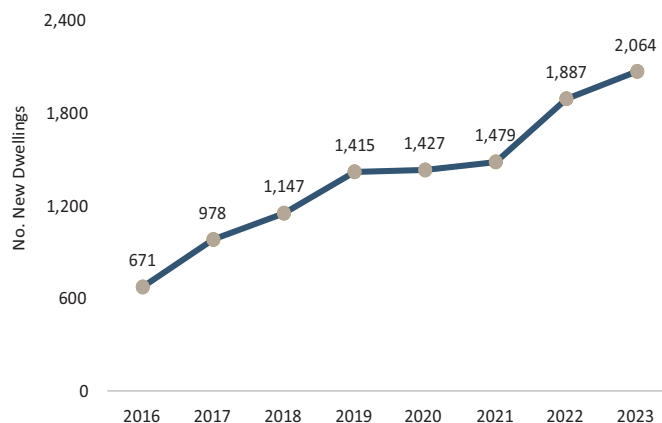
WHAT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS US



COMPLETIONS BY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT, 2016-2023



COMPLETIONS TIMELINE, 2016-2023 (N= 11,068)





2,064
new dwellings completed in 2023



8%
of the housing stock is vacant
= Higher than State Average



4.84%
of houses unoccupied holiday homes



41.7%
owned outright by the occupant

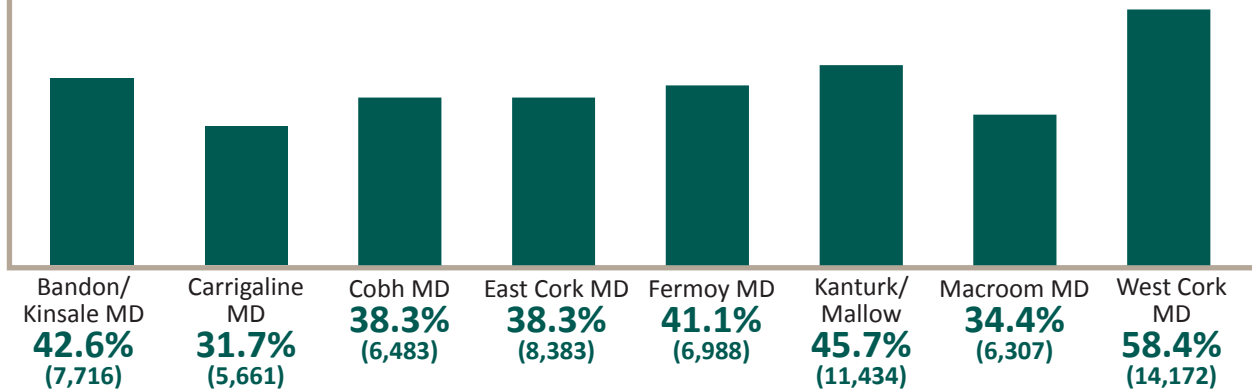


30.9%
of properties - owned with a mortgage/loan



26 awards and medals in the 2023 Tidy Towns, including "Tidiest Island" Award.

% Resident Workers who Live and Work in the MD, 2022



County Cork has one of the lowest recorded crime offences rates per capita in the country.



Housing Vacancy is most prevalent in rural areas and not in areas of demand



1,451,000 overseas tourists, 1,211,000 domestic/resident travellers visited Cork - 2019, spending

€842 million



Seven inhabited islands in West Cork



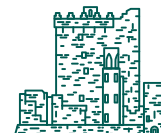
108 outdoor gyms, 100 playgrounds, 48 parks, 20 multi-use games areas (MUGA) and 10 greenways.



382
Community Groups supported by Community grants since 2020



577
local groups in our Public Participation Network



3,000 protected structures, **50** Architectural Conservation Areas and **19,000** recorded archaeological monuments



POLICY CONTEXT

Ensuring the creation of attractive, liveable, well-designed, high-quality places that are home to diverse and integrated communities who enjoy a high quality of life and well-being is one of the key themes in the National Planning Framework.

As detailed above this High Level Goal reflects the vision of the Cork County Development Plan. It also supports the ambition of the RSES to be one of Europe's most Creative, Innovative and Greenest and Liveable Regions.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives to support this High Level Goal are:

- Facilitate the building of sustainable communities to encourage sustainable housing development and continue to support the growth of designated key towns, settlements and the Metropolitan Area in accordance with the RSES and County Development Plan.
- Promote and support placemaking to ensure the creation of liveable, inclusive, safe, well designed, and high-quality sustainable places, communities and public realm.
- Support initiatives and maximise potential opportunities for funding from various schemes to renew and regenerate our towns and villages.
- Support the delivery of sustainable and inclusive digital connectivity.
- Support and promote initiatives and projects which improve access to public transport for rural and urban areas, including enhanced connectivity and public transport offering.
- Support initiatives and projects to provide new sports, recreation and community facilities and increase availability, improve access and enhance existing facilities.
- Facilitate the delivery and promotion of safe active and sustainable travel infrastructure.
- Promote and support community safety and security initiatives.
- Encourage initiatives to enhance community integration, diversity and engagement.
- Promote and further develop Cork County as a vibrant, sustainable tourism destination.
- Support community led groups who work to improve and enhance the towns, villages and communities in the county.
- Promote and support initiatives and projects to increase availability, improve access and enhance facilities for the Heritage, Culture and the Arts of the County.
- Support sustainable job creation within our communities.
- Enable local groups and communities to access supports and information to help them maximise opportunities for funding through various schemes.
- Support and promote collaboration between community groups and sporting/recreation organisations to deliver enhanced and inclusive facilities and amenities in their community.
- Support and promote a diverse range of community festivals and events across the County.
- Continue to support and promote opportunities for public consultation and involvement for all members of the community.
- Support communities and places to develop and promote their unique identities.
- Promote and support initiatives and projects which seek to protect the architectural and archaeological heritage of County Cork.



OUTCOMES FOR HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1

- Increase in sustainable development in our communities.
- Growth of designated key towns, settlements, and the Metropolitan Area in accordance with the RSES and County Development Plan
- Placemaking utilised to enhance our towns, villages and communities.
- Regenerating of our towns and villages.
- Improved digital connectivity.
- Increase in safe active travel options and an enhanced public transport offering.
- Enhanced community integration and engagement.
- Sustainable job creation.
- Support for local communities and groups.
- Further develop Cork County as a sustainable and vibrant tourist destination.
- Harness the benefit of available funding opportunities.
- Protection of our heritage and promotion of our culture and arts.
- Promotion of our communities' unique identities.
- Improved community, recreation and sporting facilities.
- Enhanced opportunities for collaboration between the groups, organisations and agencies operating within the County to benefit our communities and economy.



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2: A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE COUNTY

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 includes a new definition of social inclusion to clearly identify what is to be achieved:

“Social Inclusion is achieved when people have access to sufficient income, resources and services to enable them to play an active part in their communities and participate in activities that are considered the norm for people in society generally.” The County-level data of the Pobal HP Index of Affluence and Deprivation reveals that Cork County is more affluent than the State as a whole. The electoral level data shows that there are however areas which are marginally below average on the index with a small number of areas being classified as disadvantaged. This high level goal seeks to address this and work towards the achievement of social inclusion as defined above.





WHAT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS US



2nd lowest unemployment rate in the State



Household Median Gross Income is **€49,489**, State average (€45,256) based on 2016



Lower than State average levels of socio-economic deprivation



€340,057 Average House Sale Price (November 2023)



€1,291 Average Rental Cost



12.5% of households supported by state pension



11.1% of households working age rely on social welfare for their main income



26.5% of disposable household income spent on rent (state 29%)



€23,856 Disposable Income per person (4th highest in state)



76.7% of all households have access to broadband



2nd highest level of supplement supported tenancies in the State



8.7% of primary schools and **13.8%** of secondary schools receive DEIS support



1,131 Irish Travellers



7th Highest Average weekly childcare fees in state.



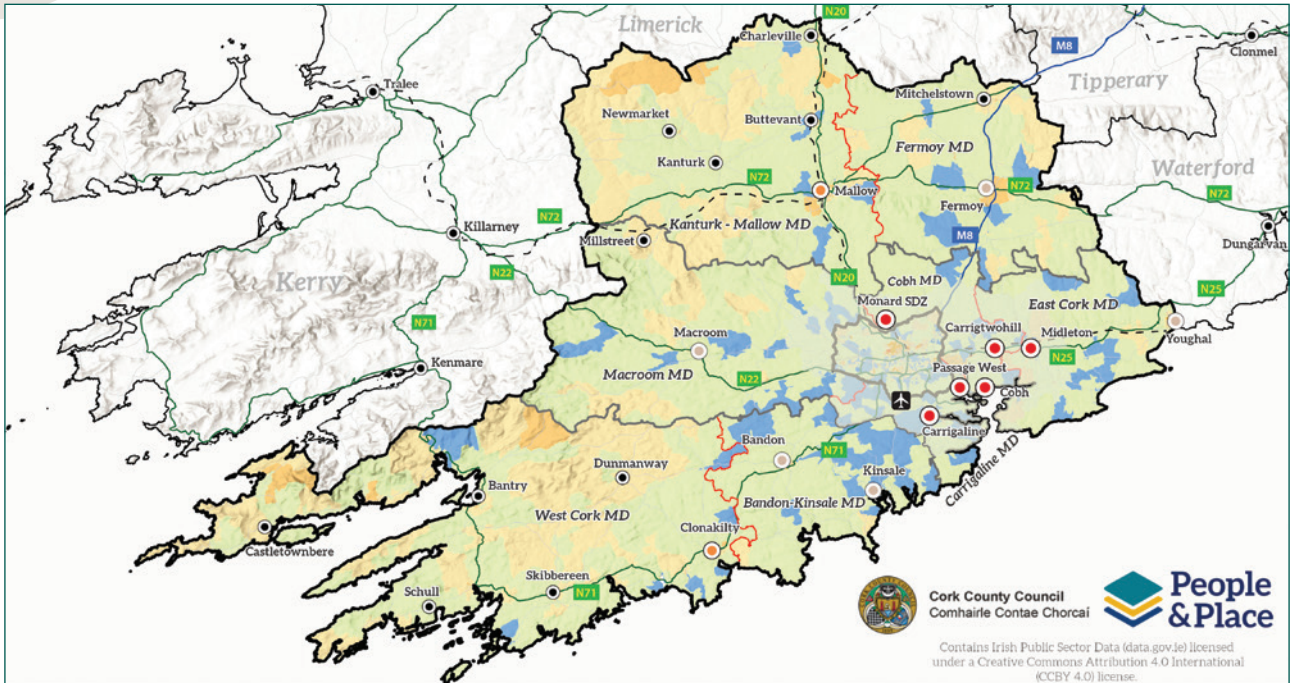
6.45%

of national total of
Ukrainian Arrivals



**Pluri-activity and seasonal
employment – significant
in rural parts of Cork
particularly West**

- Progression to University – 40.1% (County)
Northern Division 36.5%, Southern 39.2%,
Western 45.1 %
- 37.6% Progress to TU/Other
- 22.3% Progress to other pathway



% Pobal HP Deprivation Index, 2022

- Extremely Affluent
- Very Affluent
- Affluent
- Marginally above Average
- Marginally below Average
- Disadvantaged
- Very Disadvantaged
- Extremely Disadvantaged

Pobal HP Deprivation Index

Contextual Legend

- Cork County
- Cork Divisions
- Municipal Districts (MDs)
- Motorway
- National Road Network
- Railway
- Cork MASP

Settlement Hierarchy (CDP)

- Metropolitan Towns
- Key Towns
- Ring Towns
- County Towns



POLICY CONTEXT

Ensuring the creation of attractive, liveable, well-designed, high-quality places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being is one of the key themes in the National Planning Framework. Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland and Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities, which is a five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024 highlights the importance for local authorities to create vibrant, inclusive, safe, sustainable, self-determining communities that have the social, cultural, and economic well-being of all community members at their core. This is reflected in the vision and policies of the Cork County Development Plan and the RSES.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives to support this High Level Goal are:

- Promote and support equitable access to education, training, and lifelong learning and the development of the Southern Region as a UNESCO Learning Region.
- Engage proactively with third-level institutions, education and training providers, the South West Regional Skills forum, research centres and employers to address identified skills shortages in existing and future economic growth sectors, to address climate change and develop the County's human capital and aid the achievement of a UNESCO Learning Region.
- Enable the provision of supports to help reduce barriers to employment and increase opportunities for the existing and recently arrived populations.
- Facilitate the delivery of focused programmes and supports to enhance inclusion and diversity and reduce isolation across our communities.
- Support citizens in accessing information on available supports.
- Promote actions that improve the quality of life for all citizens in Cork County to improve their mental, physical, and social well-being.
- Support the provision and enhancement of community-based services to address poverty and social exclusion.
- Support the provision of improved digital connectivity and multi-modal transport connectivity to aid social inclusion.
- Facilitate initiatives which support and enable people of all abilities to fully participate in education, employment and in their communities.
- Promote the embedding of accessibility and the principles of universal design into practice.
- Support the Council's Age Friendly Strategy.
- Support initiatives which seek to aid independent living for older people.
- Support the promotion of the Irish language and culture.
- Support the provision and enhancement of community-based child and family services and facilities.



OUTCOMES FOR HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2:

- Equitable access to education, training, lifelong learning and the development of the Southern Learning Region as a UNESCO Learning Region.
- Reduced barriers to employment and increased opportunities.
- Enhanced inclusion, diversity, and community connectivity.
- Improved access to support and information.
- Enhanced quality of life for all citizens.
- Enhanced community-based services to addressing poverty and social exclusion.
- Improved connectivity and a reduction in social isolation.
- People of all abilities enabled to participate in education, employment and in their communities.
- Increased ability of older people to live independently.
- Promotion of the Irish language and culture.
- Enhanced provision and support for children, young people and families.



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3: A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COUNTY

Improving health and wellbeing throughout the country is a core focus of the *National Planning Framework* and is intrinsically linked to the UN sustainable development goals and objectives. County Cork is an active county with lower than average levels of residents who have self declared bad or very bad health. The Cork County LCDC Healthy Ireland Strategy 2021-2024 seeks to harness a culture of health and wellbeing in our community. This high level goal seeks to build on this and support the implementation of that strategy to aid the residents of County Cork to be healthy, well and active.

WHAT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS US



21%
of residents have a self-declared disability



1.4%
of residents have bad/very bad health



Percentage of people with disability highest in areas with older age profile – North and West Cork



Cork performs well in respect of social determinates of health



Poor Health Outcomes are linked with Age and Socio Economic Deprivation



The population of the County is predicted to age over the next 20 years.



POLICY CONTEXT

The Healthy Ireland Framework 2013-2025 sets out a national roadmap for improving health and wellbeing in the State, and seeks to deliver a healthy Ireland, where “everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility. This framework underpins national and local policy in relation to health and wellbeing, and outlines four key high-level goals:

- To increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
- To reduce health inequalities
- To protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing; and
- To create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

Implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework is being supported by several strategic national action plans, which outline priority areas and specific actions to address the framework goals. Improving health and wellbeing throughout the country is also a core focus of the National Planning Framework and is intrinsically linked to the UN sustainable development goals and objectives.

There are also a significant number of additional health and wellbeing related policies that support the delivery of the Healthy Ireland framework, including the National Physical Activity Plan and the National Positive Ageing Strategy, as well as policies in relation to smoking, obesity, and alcohol and drug use.

The Cork County LCDC Healthy Ireland Strategy outlines the direction and objectives to enhance health and wellbeing in the county up to 2024.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives in the LECP the framework to support this high level goal may include:

- Foster cross-agency collaboration and partnerships to continue to improve health and wellbeing and maximise funding opportunities.
- Support and promote increased participation in physical activity and sports for all ages and abilities.
- Support the implementation of health based initiatives at a local level to improve health and wellbeing.
- Support and promote participation in recreational activities to increase wellbeing and reduce isolation for all ages and abilities.
- Support initiatives that facilitate healthy and positive ageing in association with the Council’s age friendly strategy and policies.
- Support and promote increased awareness of, and engagement with, health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Support initiatives which seek to address health inequalities within the county.
- Support public transport initiatives which enhance connectivity for all citizens to enable them to live vibrant and healthy lives.



OUTCOMES FOR HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3

- Enhanced collaboration to address health and wellbeing and capitalise on available funding opportunities.
- Increased participation in physical activity and sports.
- Implementation of Local health-based Initiatives to improve health and wellbeing.
- Promotion of recreational activities and wellbeing.
- Increased support for healthy and positive ageing.
- Increased awareness and engagement with health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Reduction in health inequalities.
- Enhanced connectivity through transport initiatives.
- Reduction in social isolation.



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4: A LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT COUNTY THAT PROTECTS BIODIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The need to address the current climate crisis is one of the defining contexts to be addressed at all levels of government in Ireland. Project Ireland 2040 seeks to enable a national transition to a competitive low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The Cork County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 sets a clear pathway for Cork County Council to actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures. This High Level Goal reflects the aims of the Climate Action Plan and seeks to provide a framework through which climate action interventions can be delivered at a local level.

WHAT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS US



30 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 7% of national total



18 Special Protection Areas 18% of national total



101 Areas of Geological Interest



31 Planned Solar Farms – Largest in State



41 windfarms – 2nd highest in State

25.75% Assessed Stock B2 or higher



Cork County is:

- 2nd highest generator of wind energy in the state
- 3rd Highest generator of solar energy in the state



2nd Highest Total Heat Demand in Country (GWh)



18.4% of domestic waste handled by Council Civic Amenity sites



44.4% New Car Registration are Electric or Hybrid



Sea Level in Cork Harbour has risen by 40cm since 1942



Average rainfall has increased by 3% (1981-2010) compared to 1961-1990 (baseline)



0.5 degree Celsius – Average temperature increase 1981-2010 (compared to baseline)



4 of the hottest summers have occurred in the last 10 years (Records began 1961)



POLICY CONTEXT

Project Ireland 2040, states that future planning and development of our communities will be refocused at a local level to enable a national transition to a competitive low carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, identifies decarbonization, resources efficiency, and climate resilience as priority areas for action to address climate change in the region. Cork County Council's 2022 County Development Plan is in alignment with the Project Ireland Framework, in seeking to deliver compact, connected, sustainable growth in a more efficient and sustainable way.

The Cork County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 sets out the Council's ambition to lead the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County, by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action, at the local level. Set against the backdrop of an evolving and ambitious framework of national climate policy, Cork County Council maintains a strong commitment to mainstreaming climate action across its own operations and functions, whilst also pursuing a leadership role on climate action, at the local level. The Council's Climate Action Plan demonstrates a coherent approach to climate action across the administrative and political structure of the local authority

Cork County Council is a signatory to the Climate Action Charter which sets out a common understanding in relation to climate change, acknowledges the need for a whole government approach to address climate change, and acknowledges specific local government supports. Furthermore, Cork County Council is the lead authority in a shared service guiding other Councils in the Atlantic Seaboard South Region (Climate Action Regional Office) as they plan for climate action, the mandate includes; driving climate action and building capacity in Local Governments, coordinating engagement across government departments and agencies, translate sectoral efforts at a local level and build on climate action experiences and expertise.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives to support this High Level Goal are:

- Promote and support community initiatives and maximise funding opportunities to address climate change, and biodiversity restoration/enhancement, become climate resilient, transition to a low carbon economy and work towards achieving net zero carbon.
- Work towards the just transition through supporting opportunities for public and private investment in economic development that is both sustainable and inclusive.
- Facilitate key stakeholders to identify opportunities for decarbonisation and improved sustainable practices.
- Support and facilitate the continued development of opportunities for renewable energy generation and business growth in Cork County.
- Support initiatives to aid all sectors in transitioning to low carbon and sustainable practices.
- Implement and support projects and initiatives which protect biodiversity and support the principle of biodiversity net gain in accordance with County Development Plan and County Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Enable key stakeholders to identify opportunities to support the retrofitting of the existing housing, business, community and municipal buildings.
- Raise awareness of climate change and climate action interventions and the importance of healthy functioning ecosystems in mitigating the impacts of climate change and facilitate education and training of same.
- Support the continued development of sustainable communities in the County.



- Support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.
- Collaborate strategically to maximise County Cork’s potential for the development of renewable energy support projects and initiatives which seek to implement the policies and objectives of the outcome of the National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind and the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan.
- Support the implementation of policy, projects and initiatives which advance environmental protection.
- Support projects and initiatives which support and develop blue green infrastructure and nature based solutions.

OUTCOMES FOR HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4

- Increase in climate action initiatives and awareness.
- Increased levels of climate resilience in the County.
- Increase in sustainable and inclusive economic development to work towards the just transition.
- Increased collaboration to identify decarbonisation opportunities and promote sustainable practices.
- Growth in renewable energy and collaboration to maximise Cork County’s potential in this area.
- Continued transition towards low carbon and net zero across all sectors.
- Increase in biodiversity protection, restoration, enhancement and support for the principle of biodiversity net gain.
- Increase in levels of retrofitting of existing housing, businesses, community and municipal buildings.
- Development of sustainable communities.
- Implementation of the climate action plan objectives.
- Provision of funds for local community climate action and decarbonisation.
- Enhanced environmental protection.
- Increase in the use of nature-based solutions.
- Increase in the development of blue and green infrastructure.



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 5: A COUNTY THAT SUPPORTS ENTERPRISE

Over the past 10 years, the number of active enterprises in Cork County has remained constant between 27,000 and 30,000 with the county being home to almost 11% of enterprises in Ireland. This high level goal seeks to build on the existing success in Cork and further develop the supportive landscape for enterprise and economic development in the County, particularly our indigenous and SME sector.

WHAT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS US



Strong labour force participation



All municipal district areas have higher rates of employment than the national average.



Lowest unemployment rate in the state



171,626

people in the Cork County labour force



93.9%

of the Cork County's labour force is in employment

Diverse employment profile

Cork County has a relatively diverse employment profile, with high participation across all sectors of employment. Sectors of employment have a distinct spatial profile, with greater employment in the primary sector in North and West Cork.



Known Job Locations (not mobile)

110,053

Cork County, 104,812 Cork City



17.9% employed in manufacturing industries



6.5% employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing



6.4% employed in the building and construction sector



21.5% employed in the commerce and trade sector



23.4% employed in professional services



4.9% employed in public administration



6.7% employed in the transport and communication sectors



Substantial FDI investment and support for Irish SMEs



22% of jobs in Cork County and City are in FDI supported companies



2 LEO offices
support **433 Clients**
and **2,272 SME jobs**



92.5%
of Enterprises employ
less than 10 employees.

POLICY CONTEXT

National economic policy is underpinned by a number of key policy documents, including the *Economic Recovery Plan 2021*, *Enterprise 2025 Renewed*, *Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth*, and *Enterprise Ireland’s Leading in a changing world: Strategy 2022–2024*. These critical national policies outline a high-level pathway for the continued growth and economic development of the State and recognise the significant and permanent structural changes that have emerged in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, including a rebalancing towards e-commerce and remote working. Economic policy is also deeply underpinned by the challenges presented by climate change, the EU Green Deal, and the ongoing transition to decarbonisation.

The high-level goals and objectives of these national policies are imagined at a regional level in both the *Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region* and the *Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024: South-West*. The overall vision of the RSES for the Southern Region is to:

- Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Make the Southern Region one of Europe’s most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions

This vision is also reflected in the *Regional Enterprise Plan* for the South-West, which outlines a high-level objective of developing the South-West as “the most innovative and enterprise focused region in the country”. The *Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028* is deeply embedded within the context of these key national and regional economic policies, with the principles of economic development and resilience central to the plan.



Fermoy



OBJECTIVES

The objectives to support this High Level Goal are:

- Support the development and enhancement of entrepreneurship, business start-ups and SMEs to embed further resilience in our enterprise landscape and encourage diversification.
- Enhance opportunities for indigenous companies to expand, grow and diversify their workforce.
- Promote and support innovative and sustainable economic growth and the transition to a low carbon economy.
- Support SME's to exploit the supply chains of MNEs to facilitate growth in the indigenous sector.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders and employers to support and promote increased opportunities for apprenticeships and further education training courses for both existing employees and those seeking to enter the workforce.
- Facilitate an increased awareness of the available supports and resources for job seekers and employers.
- Promote placemaking and develop projects in key employment centres that ensure the creation of attractive, enterprise development friendly, liveable, well designed, high quality places that are home to a diverse enterprise base mix and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and wellbeing.
- Support projects and initiatives which seek to aid the development of enterprise in the MASP and at the four Strategic Employment Locations.
- Facilitate further opportunities for FDI investment and balanced economic development.
- Support the development of enterprises in high-growth potential sectors, including the Marine, Circular Bioeconomy, Tourism and Energy sectors.
- Support the growth of co-working hubs, smart working and facilitate 2nd site locations for FDI.
- Ensure the sustainable growth of the rural economy by promoting and supporting jobs in the farming, agri-food and fishing industries and exploit our competitive edge in this sector.
- Work with international, national, regional and local partners to promote Cork and facilitate exports, trade, raise capacity and sharing best practice.
- Support the development of the industrial and commercial infrastructure of County Cork.
- Facilitate the building of capacity to enable effective responses to emerging opportunities and challenges and risks to the economy.
- Build Strategic Partnerships to ensure Cork is an easy place to do business in.
- Support the sustainable development of Tourism as a key economic driver in the County.
- Support and promote trading opportunities for locally produced goods and services.
- Harness the wider tourism, transport and economic opportunities presented by Cork Harbour and Cork International Airport as important strategic assets in attracting economic investment to the County.
- Support the development and promotion of underrepresented entrepreneur groups.
- Support and promote projects and initiatives which seek to aid talent acquisition and retention.



OUTCOMES FOR HIGH LEVEL GOAL 5

- Increased in the number of business start-ups.
- Embedding of entrepreneurial resilience and increased support for businesses to diversify and expand.
- Growth in the number of Indigenous companies: who expand, diversify, and increase their workforce.
- Increase in sustainable economic growth while transitioning to a low carbon economy.
- Increased skill Development, apprenticeships and further education opportunities.
- Increased awareness of available resources and support for job seekers and employers to strengthen the labour market.
- Utilisation of placemaking initiatives in key employment centres, creating attractive, enterprise-friendly, and liveable places that foster a diverse enterprise base mix and integrated communities.
- Continue to attract foreign direct investment (FDI).
- Growth in high-potential sectors such as Marine, Circular Bioeconomy, Tourism, and Energy.
- Further development of industrial and commercial infrastructure in County Cork.
- Increased capacity to effectively respond to emerging challenges and risks to the economy, ensuring sustainable growth.
- Growth of co-working hubs, smart working and facilitate 2nd site locations for FDI.
- Increased trading opportunities for local goods and services
- Development of underrepresented entrepreneur groups.
- Increased in sustainable talent acquisition and retention.
- Increased collaboration with international, national, regional and local partners to promote Cork and facilitate exports, trade and sharing best practice.
- Increased collaboration to ensure Cork is an easy place to do business in.
- Increased support to aid the development of enterprise in the MASP and at the four Strategic Employment Locations.



HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6: A SMART AND INNOVATIVE COUNTY

SMART specialisation is an enterprise innovation policy concept which was developed by the European Commission that aims to boost regional innovation, contributing to growth and prosperity by helping and enabling regions to focus on their strengths. This high level goal seeks to build on the existing innovative landscape within the county to increase capacity within our economy and aid in the creation of vibrant, sustainable and liveable communities.

WHAT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS US

Prominent existing research and innovation centres



7 out of top 10
Pharmaceutical Companies
have operations in Cork



Cork has
2 of the Country's
leading universities



33,000
3rd Level Students
in MTU and UCC



Strong record
of skilled graduates

Educated workforce with diverse skillsets



Cork County has established clusters in key sectors such as Life Sciences, Technology and Agri-food, with growing clusters in International Financial Services (IFS) and Marine/Energy



Strong clusters in key economic drivers of Cork County, such as Little Island and Ringaskiddy.

Educated workforce with diverse skillsets



39.1%
of the population
have third-level
qualification



15.8%
of population
has Technical/
Apprenticeship/
Certificate



18.4%
of population have
higher secondary
education



POLICY CONTEXT

Smart Specialisation has emerged as a key area of national significance and focus, with the recent publication of the National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027 defining Smart Specialisation as a “bottom-up, place-based, dynamic process which brings together regional and national actors to identify opportunities and shape future policy direction”. The strategy aims to achieve impact across five national priority areas:

- Digitalisation and digital transformation
- Green transformation for enterprise
- Innovation diffusion
- International collaboration on Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I); and
- Improving the national or regional enterprise research and innovation system.

At a regional level, the Southern Regional Assembly has outlined an ambition to become a SMART region, which focuses on people and place rather than technology and seeks collaborations across all sectors to harness digital and data to create vibrant, sustainable and liveable communities. Supporting the goals and objectives of the national Smart Specialisation Strategy are key policies and strategies in relation to Digitalisation and Clustering, which recognise the variety of stakeholders and factors involved in achieving a SMART region, and enhancing innovation, economic development and placemaking. Clustering, in particular, has been cited as a key objective in both the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024: South-West, and focuses on “creating linkages between organisations and stimulating collective action with the aim of enhancing the enterprise environment for mutual benefit of members”. Underpinning these innovation policies is the need to ensure an educated and skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of a modern economy, and addressing the skillsets required for both existing and future enterprise.



Roches Point



OBJECTIVES

The objectives to support this High Level Goal are:

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to identify the competitive advantages of Cork County to develop new economic opportunities.
- Support the development of economic social and environmental opportunities identified through smart specialisation.
- Strengthen existing research, innovation and industry clusters, innovation ecosystems and support the development of new clusters to enhance innovation and competitiveness.
- Support, promote and continue to invest in our Harbour Economy to realise the goals and objectives of the Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.
- Aid the digital transformation of enterprises and facilitate investment and development of the required supporting infrastructure.
- Engage proactively with third-level institutions, education and training providers, the South West Regional Skills forum, research centres and employers to address identified skills shortages in existing and future economic growth sectors, to address climate change and develop the County's human capital and aid the achievement of a UNESCO Learning Region.
- Support, promote and continue to invest in the lifelong learning of Cork County's highly educated population to attract further investment and enhance economic growth.
- Support the delivery of enhanced digital connectivity to attract inward investment and enable economic growth.
- Support projects and initiatives that will enable Cork County to be a place for lifelong ambition, innovation and support for the silver economy.
- Support regional collaboration, access to open data and leveraging new technologies to co-create sustainable and resilient communities and places and aid the delivery of a Smart Southern Region.
- Support projects and initiatives which seek to further progress the delivery and achievement of the objectives of the Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.
- Participation in EU (and other) co-funded projects and initiatives (to build capacity and innovation).
- Support the development of relevant opportunities through partnerships and collaboration with European and other regions.





OUTCOMES FOR HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6

- Collaboration to identify Cork County’s competitive advantages and the creation of new economic opportunities.
- Further develop resilience in the economy and the capability of Cork County to capitalise on emerging economic opportunities and challenges.
- Strengthening of existing and new research, innovation, and industry clusters to boost innovation, competitiveness, and collaboration.
- Ongoing support, promotion, and investment in the development of the Harbour Economy.
- Increased Digital Transformation of enterprises.
- Skills Development through collaboration with third-level institutions, education and training providers.
- Aid the achievement of a UNESCO Learning Region.
- Increased Investment and support for Lifelong Learning and the County’s Highly Educated Population to attract further investment and promote economic growth.
- Growth of the silver economy.
- Increase in Digital Connectivity, Inward Investment, economic growth potential and innovation.
- Support the delivery of the objectives of the Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.
- These outcomes collectively contribute to the overarching goals of economic development, innovation, sustainability, and resilience for Cork County.
- Enhanced regional collaboration to aid the delivery of a Smart Southern Region.
- Development of opportunities through partnerships and collaboration with European and other regions.



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council