

CHAPTER 2 OVERALL STRATEGY

HEALTHY PLACEMAKING • CLIMATE CHANGE • ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the three overarching cross-cutting themes that inform and shape all aspects of the County Development Plan. The legislative and policy context for each theme is outlined. These cross-cutting overarching themes align with the key principles identified in the NPF and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region.

As will be evident, there is significant overlap between the three themes. Placemaking integrates with the creation of sustainable communities which includes housing, sustainable mobility, healthy town and village centres and economic development. Climate change has implications for sustainable mobility, economic development and heritage and biodiversity. Economic development is increasingly integrated with our response to climate change and to the delivery of healthy placemaking.

2.1 Healthy Placemaking

Planning has an important role to play in creating healthy places that enable a high quality of life. The role of healthy placemaking is increasingly important in the context of a post pandemic world, climate emergency and economic recovery. Healthy environments make healthy people; healthy people underpin economic vitality¹. The environment in which we live in has a significant impact on our health and well-being. In recent years, healthy placemaking has reignited the links between public health and planning. This will become even more crucial post-COVID.

While healthy placemaking might be a relatively new term, the consideration of health and safety as part of planning policy is not a new phenomenon. Quality of life and impacts on amenity have long been important planning considerations. Town planning and public health both emerged in the late nineteenth century in response to the unsanitary and overcrowded conditions of industrial cities. Environmental pollution can have negative impacts on human health. Planning authorities have a responsibility to create and retain clean healthy environments. Many planning policies are based on health and safety considerations, for example – water and wastewater facilities, flooding, noise, sustainable mobility and open space provision.

Healthy placemaking looks at creating places where people are healthier and happier. It questions the quality of the built environment and how it is impacting on health and well being. There is increasing consensus that the built environment can positively impact on people's behaviour and that health should be a key consideration of spatial planning.

¹ Enabling Healthy Placemaking – Report, RTPi 2020 available at <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/july/enabling-healthy-placemaking/>

2.1.1 Healthy Placemaking – Strategic Context

The following section provides a brief overview of the key policy documents, particularly from a spatial planning perspective, relating to health and well-being, and healthy placemaking.

2.1.1.1 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Good health and well-being is identified as one of the 17 ‘Sustainable Development Goals’. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is recognised as being essential for sustainable development. The United Nations recognise that health and development are intimately interconnected, and call that action items under Agenda 21 must address the primary health needs of the world's population, since they are integral to the achievement of the goals of sustainable development and primary environmental care.

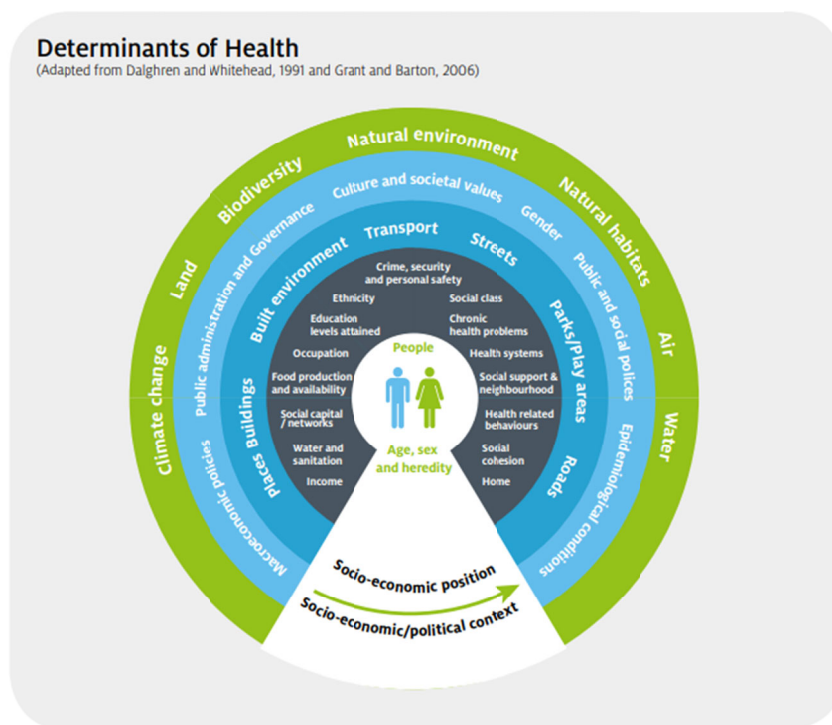
2.1.1.2 Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 - 2025

The Healthy Ireland Framework, launched in 2013, is a roadmap for building a healthier Ireland. Health is defined as everyone achieving their potential to enjoy complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. Wellbeing reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person’s life.

The Framework identifies four central goals for improved health and well being. These are:

- Goal 1 – Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life;
- Goal 2 – Reduce health inequalities;
- Goal 3 – Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing;
- Goal 4 – Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

Figure 2.1 Determinants of Health (Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 – 2025)



A healthy population is a major asset for society and improving the health and wellbeing of the nation is a priority for Government. The Framework advocates for a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach as this highlights the fact

that the risk factors of major diseases, or the determinants of health, are modified by measures that are often managed by other Government sectors, as well as by other actors in society. Broader societal health determinants such as education, employment and the environment influence the distribution of risk factors in the population, thereby resulting in health inequalities.

2.1.1.3 National Physical Activity Plan 2016

The National Physical Activity Plan creates increased opportunities for people to be active in ways which fit into everyday lives and which suits individual needs, circumstances and interests. This is achieved by removing barriers which stop people from being active, enhancing cross-sectoral co-operation at national and local level, encouraging a supportive environment where physical activity becomes normal and promoting good practice and finding new models of participation to get more people active.

2.1.1.4 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework recognises that *'location and place have an important influence on the quality of life that people can enjoy'*. It considers that place is intrinsic to achieving good quality of life. There are many reasons for this including the quality of the immediate environment, an ability to access employment, services and amenities, such as education, healthcare, shops, parks, leisure and social interactions. The NPF acknowledges that as we get older our needs and preferences in terms of quality of life change. However, there are key elements required for supporting quality of life.

Figure 2.2 Elements Supporting Quality of Life (National Planning Framework)



In accordance with NPO 26 of the NPF, the Development Plan is required, where appropriate, to integrate the objectives of public health policy as set out in Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan. The places where people live can influence their health and well-being. The NPF identifies specific health risks that can be influenced by spatial planning including heart disease, respiratory disease, mental health, obesity and injuries. Decisions made regarding land use and the built environment including transportation can influence air and water quality, traffic safety, opportunities for physical activity and social interactions.

The NPF advocates that communities that are designed in a way that supports physical activity, encourage residents to make healthy choices and live healthier lives. Enhancing public health is identified in the NPF as one of the benefits of more compact urban growth as it will encourage and facilitate more active lifestyles by creating a more walkable and cycle friendly urban environment. The quality of housing is also an important consideration in terms of health and well-being.

Relevant National Policy Objectives relating to Healthy Placemaking	
NPO 17	Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value or built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.
NPO 26	Support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, through integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.
NPO27	Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.
NPO 63	Ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.
NPO 64	Improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions.
NPO 65	Promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans.

2.1.1.5 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The vision for the Eastern and Midland region is *'to create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all'*. The RSES recognises that the place or environment in which we live or work has a profound impact on our health and states that *'placemaking is an essential link between spatial planning, improved quality of life and creating places that are attractive to live, work, visit and invest in'*. The availability of and access to services, including adequate housing, employment, healthcare, education etc are considered essential for creating healthier places. The Strategy recognises that housing affordability and supply issues are impacting upon health and wellbeing due to overcrowding and people residing in substandard accommodation or being homeless.

Healthy Placemaking is identified as one of the three key principles informing the RSES. The Strategy states that *'healthy placemaking seeks to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of places and to facilitate improvements to human wellbeing and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their environment. Placemaking is underpinned by good urban design, which seeks to create public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate social interaction'*. There are five Regional Policy Outcomes relating to healthy placemaking. These include:

- Sustainable Settlement Patterns
- Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration

- Rural Communities
- Healthy Communities
- Creative Places

Healthy Placemaking is identified as one of the growth enablers that local authorities, in developing their development plans, must consider to help the region meet its potential – *'To realise sustained economic growth and employment including the integration of better urban design, public realm, amenities and heritage to create attractive places to live, work, visit and invest in. Focus on placemaking to create attractive and sustainable communities to support active lifestyles including walking and cycling'*. The key elements in healthy placemaking are identified in Figure 2.3 which is taken from the RSES.

Figure 2.3 RSES – Healthy Placemaking



The RSES also identifies guiding principles for the creation of healthy and attractive places. The Strategy acknowledges that *'the creation of healthy and attractive places requires ongoing improvements to the physical and social infrastructure of our urban centres'*. It is advocated that effective public realm interventions can dramatically improve human wellbeing and are also a key factor in enhancing the attractiveness of places for talent and business investment as well as for residents, workers and visitors. Providing alternatives to the car in the design of streets and public spaces is considered a key element of healthy placemaking. The importance of recreation infrastructure and green spaces is also highlighted in terms of its contribution to improved physical and mental health.

Relevant Regional Policy Objectives relating to Healthy Placemaking

RPO 9.1	In planning for the creation of healthy and attractive places, there is a need to provide alternatives to the car and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking in the design of streets and public spaces. Local authorities shall have regard to the Guiding Principles for 'Healthy Placemaking' and 'Integration of Land Use and Transport' as set out in the RSES and to national policy as set out in 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'.
RPO 9.11	Local authorities shall support the preparation of Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes and for revitalising spaces for example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.
RPO 9.12	In planning policy formulation and implementation local authorities and other stakeholders shall be informed by the need to cater for all levels of disability, through the appropriate mitigation of the built environment, and in particular for the needs of an ageing population.
RPO 9.13	Local authorities and relevant agencies shall ensure that new social infrastructure developments are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by adopting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full, active, valued and healthy lives.
RPO 9.14	Local authorities shall seek to support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve.
RPO 9.15	Local authorities shall support the vision and objectives of the National Sports Policy, including working with local sports partnerships, clubs, communities and partnerships within and beyond sport, to increase sport and physical activity participation levels locally.
RPO 9.16	Local authorities shall support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, through integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policies contained in development plans.
RPO 9.17	To support local authorities in the development of regional scale Open Space and Recreational facilities particularly those close to large or growing population centres in the Region.

2.1.1.6 Our Rural Future, Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

'Our Rural Future' sets out that to enhance public services for rural communities, the Government will:

90	Update the Rural Housing Guidelines for planning authorities, to address rural housing in a broader rural development and settlement context.
93	Work with An Post to identify the scope to channel additional services through the post office network.

Key Deliverables set out for 'Rural Living' include:

- Develop a pilot scheme to support the use of rural pubs as community spaces and hubs for local services.
- Increase the capacity for remote and blended learning to enable young people, in particular, in rural areas to access further and higher education courses through online learning while living in their local communities.
- Provide investment for multipurpose spaces in the community (e.g. community centres, libraries, and sports clubs) for a variety of activities, including leisure, community, cultural and services provision.
- Provide improved rural public transport services and pilot new transport initiatives to enhance the quality of life for people in rural areas.
- Deliver expanded Local Link services through the NTA's Connecting Ireland, Rural Mobility Plan.
- Ensure that all public transport services in rural and regional areas are accessible to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility.

- Through the Healthy Ireland programme, support improved health and wellbeing of rural communities in collaboration with Local Authorities and local stakeholders and partners.
- Invest in high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure specifically targeted at towns and villages across the country.
- Invest in the local and regional road network to maintain roads to a proper standard and improve regional accessibility.
- Increase investment in the repair of non-public roads through the Local Improvement Scheme.
- Increase the number of places on the Rural Social Scheme, TÚS and Community Employment Schemes to support rural communities. Develop an effective rural proofing model to ensure the needs of rural communities are considered in the development of Government policies.
- Review and enhance the effectiveness and availability of community alert and property-marking schemes in partnership with rural stakeholders to combat rural crime.

Policy Measures:

- Implement a €70 million Transitional LEADER Programme for community led rural development for the period 2021-2022, and develop and deliver a new LEADER programme to commence in 2023, in line with the next EU funding framework.
- Develop a subsidised Local Area Hackney Scheme, in designated areas of rural Ireland, which are too small or remote to support a full-time taxi or hackney service.

2.1.2 Integration of Healthy Placemaking considerations into the County Development Plan

There is a significant opportunity to pursue healthy placemaking particularly within the town and village centres as part of compact growth, regeneration and renewal. There is growing acceptance that placemaking generates social and economic outcomes and fosters healthy sustainable communities. Placemaking is increasingly recognised as an important factor in attracting investment and pursuing economic development. It is advocated that healthy places in turn create economic value by appealing to a skilled workforce and attracting innovative companies. While the County Development Plan cannot address all elements of quality of life, there are key elements that will be addressed, notably the natural and built environment.

In light of above, the County Development Plan will address the various elements of healthy placemaking in the following manner:

<p>Built Environment</p>	<p>The quality of the built environment is a key element in healthy placemaking. Create an environment that supports physical activity and encourages people to make healthy choices and live healthier lives.</p> <p>Integrate health considerations into the design and layout of the built environment. Require that new housing is built to a high standard and incorporates adequate high quality amenity space.</p> <p>Delivery of sustainable settlement patterns, with a focus on compact growth that facilitates and encourages active travel including walking and cycling.</p> <p>Regeneration of town and village centres including public realm improvements and the provision of high quality public space.</p>
<p>Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>Facilitate improved access to employment, services and amenities, such as education, healthcare, shops, parks, leisure and social interactions. Encourage a broad range of activities and services that will serve people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Pursue placemaking improvements that will generate economic confidence and in turn make settlements more attractive to employers and a skilled workforce.</p> <p>Support and facilitate community engagement in healthy placemaking in recognition of the value of members of the community in terms of their contribution as partners in placemaking. All members of a community young and old are a valuable resource as experts of their own area, as stakeholders for positive change and as custodians of the outcomes.</p>

Recreation and Open Space	Ensure that communities have access to green space including active and passive amenity space to support physical and mental health and well-being within the community. Support the delivery of recreation infrastructure including pitches, play grounds etc.
Sustainable Transport	Prioritise walking and cycling in the design and layout of new development. Support and facilitate sustainable mobility by delivering compact growth and aligning population growth with employment development to reduce the number of people doing long distance commutes and increasing opportunities for walking and cycling and using public transport
Heritage & Sense of Place	Support and encourage heritage led regeneration in our towns and villages. Encourage and pursue, where possible, regeneration and renewal projects including public realm enhancement that provide a strong focus on placemaking, sense of place and strengthening local identity.

2.2 Climate Change

This part of the plan sets out legislative requirements and principles regarding climate change that will be considered and integrated, where feasible, into the County Development Plan.

'Climate change' refers to any change in the climate over time due to change as a result of human activity. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as *'a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.'*

The 'greenhouse effect' is causing the planet to warm up, a result of the increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) causing an increase in global temperatures. This is the main cause of climate change. Many human activities can generate greenhouse gases: manufacturing, farming, running your car or heating your home. The resulting gases are building up in the atmosphere, trapping more and more heat from the sun and slowly warming the planet. This warming is disrupting climate patterns and without strong counter-measures, will intensify.

Ireland's climate is changing and the scientific consensus is that further changes are on the way. Incremental changes in climate are already evident, including changes in our average temperature, wetter winters, more intense rainfall, more flooding, summer droughts and rising sea levels, as well as subtle changes to our ecosystem. The impacts are uncertain but concerted action is required to prepare for and deal with these changes in Ireland. We need to implement measures that will help the public to adapt to these changes. An effective response to climate change must combine mitigation and adaptation.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2015) defines mitigation as *'any human intervention aimed at reducing harmful influences on the earth's climate system, including action aimed at reducing emissions and creating or enhancing sinks'*. With regard to adaptation, the Act states *'adaptation to the effects of climate change requires action to both manage the risks and to make adjustments to reduce our vulnerabilities. It is an essential component of our long term, strategic economic planning. "Adaptation" means any adjustment to -*

- a) *any system designed or operated by human beings, including an economic, agricultural or technological system, or*
- b) *any naturally occurring system, including an ecosystem, that is intended to counteract the effects (whether actual or anticipated) of climatic stimuli, prevent or moderate environmental damage resulting from climate change or confer environmental benefits*

The County Development Plan has an important role to play in addressing any land use and planning aspects of GHG reduction and impact mitigation/adaption. As climate change sources and impacts permeate a wide range of human activities, climate change is addressed throughout the plan as cross cutting theme.

2.2.1 Climate Change Legislative & Policy Context

A number of international and national climate change agreements, frameworks and programmes have been agreed. These provide information on impacts, vulnerability, adaptation and assessment; helping countries, from national to local level, make informed decisions on practical adaptation actions and measures to respond to climate change on a sound scientific, technical and socio-economic basis, taking into account current and future climate change and variability.

It is important to acknowledge that best practice in how to address climate change in a County Development Plan is evolving. The introduction of a climate assessment toolkit (Action 65 of the Government's Climate Action Plan) and forthcoming Ministerial Development Plan Guidelines will provide more guidance in this area.

2.2.1.1 International Climate Policy

Kyoto Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopted 11 December 1997, came into effect on 16 February 2005. ▪ International United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreement. ▪ Sets binding targets for 37 industrialised countries and the European Community for reducing emissions.
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopted by all UN members states in September 2015 ▪ 17 Sustainable Development Goals calling for global action from all countries. ▪ Goal 13 is specific to Climate Action with many other goals relevant to Climate Change.
The Paris Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed on 12 December 2015, all 196 parties to the UNFCCC, to hold the increase in global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to keep the more stringent target of below 1.5 degrees in sight.
The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established June 2016. ▪ A global coalition of city leaders addressing climate change by pledging to cut greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the future impacts of climate change.
Leaders Pledge for Nature 2020	Political leaders (including Taoiseach Michael Martin) participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, representing 75 countries from all regions and the European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.

2.2.1.2 European Climate Policy

European Union Adaptation to Climate Change Strategy (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Published in April 2013 ▪ Aims to make Europe more climate-resilient, by taking a coherent approach and providing for improved coordination, it will enhance the preparedness and capacity of all governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change. ▪ The Strategy focus on three key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting action by Member States, - 'climate-proofing' action at EU level, and - better informed decision making. ▪ Actions include mainstreaming of climate change into EU sector policies and funds.
European Parliament resolutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 2019 - Endorsed the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions objective. ▪ January 2020 - Resolution on the European Green Deal. ▪ March 2020 - EU submitted its long-term strategy to the UNFCCC.

2030 Climate and Energy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopted October 2014, includes EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period from 2021 to 2030. Key targets for 2030: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels). - At least 32% share for renewable energy. This was revised upwards in 2018. - At least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency. This was revised upwards in 2018.
2050 long-term strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ December 2019 - EU endorsed the objective of making the EU climate-neutral by 2050 i.e. an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. ▪ This objective is at the heart of the European Green Deal and in line with the EU's commitment to global climate action under the Paris Agreement.

2.2.1.3 National Climate Policy & Legislation

Climate Action Plan 2019²

The Climate Action Plan is a statement of Government policies relevant to decarbonisation and adapting to a changing climate, with 183 specific actions over 12 Government sectors and charts an ambitious course towards decarbonisation.

The Plan identifies how Ireland will achieve its 2030 targets for carbon emissions and puts Ireland on a trajectory to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and also reiterates Ireland's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This Plan sets out a commitment to drive the achievement of the following aims:

- 70% of the Country's electricity needs will come from renewable sources by 2030³;
- Accelerate the take up of EV cars and vans so that we reach 100% of all new cars and vans as EVs by 2030. This will mean achieving a target of 950,000 EVs on the road by 2030 and approximately one third of all vehicles sold during the decade will be Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) or Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV);
- Make growth less transport intensive through better planning, remote home-working and modal shift to public transport;
- Increase the renewable biofuel content of motor fuels;
- Set targets for the conversion of public transport fleets to zero carbon alternatives.

Under the Climate Action Plan there are three actions that are allocated to local authorities as follows:

Action 64	Introduce minimum BER standards in the Local Authority social housing stock as part of retrofit works being carried out on older stock or refurbishment of vacant dwellings.
Action 65	Develop and establish a climate-action toolkit and audit framework for Local Authority development planning to drive the adoption of stronger climate action policies in relation to the patterns and forms of future development.
Action 66	Roadmap to develop supply chain to support the phase out of fossil fuel boilers in new dwellings.

² During the making of this County Development Plan, this CAP has been updated, including updated targets for renewable energy, and these have been integrated into the final plan where possible.

³ Increased to 80% in the 2021 CAP

Climate Action & Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021⁴

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 will support Ireland's transition to Net Zero and achieve a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. It will establish a legally binding framework with clear targets and commitments set in law, and ensure the necessary structures and processes are embedded on a statutory basis to ensure we achieve our national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.

The Bill includes the following key elements:

- Places on a statutory basis a 'national climate objective', which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally-sustainable and climate-neutral economy
- Embeds the process of carbon budgeting into law, Government are required to adopt a series of economy-wide five-year carbon budgets, including sectoral targets for each relevant sector, on a rolling 15-year basis, starting in 2021
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan, updated annually
- A National Long Term Climate Action Strategy will be prepared every five years
- Government Ministers will be responsible for achieving the legally-binding targets for their own sectoral area with each Minister accounting for their performance towards sectoral targets and actions before an Oireachtas Committee each year
- Strengthens the role of the Climate Change Advisory Council, tasking it with proposing carbon budgets to the Minister
- Provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council should equate to a total reduction of 51% emissions over the period to 2030, in line with the Programme for Government commitment
- Expands the Climate Change Advisory Council from eleven to fourteen members, and provides that future appointments to the Council provide for a greater range of relevant expertise and gender balanced
- Introduces a requirement for each local authority to prepare a Climate Action Plan, which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and be updated every five years. Local authority Development Plans will also align with their Climate Action Plan
- Public Bodies will be obliged to perform their functions in a manner consistent with national climate plans and strategies, and furthering the achievement of the national climate objective.

Climate Action & Low Carbon Development Act 2015

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 sets out that the manner in which the transition towards a low carbon economy will be achieved through a 'National Low Carbon Transition and Mitigation Plan' (National Mitigation Plan) to lower Ireland's level greenhouse emissions and a 'National Climate Change Adaptation Framework' (National Adaptation Framework, published 19th January 2018), to provide for responses to changes caused by climate change. These plans will be renewed every five years and are required to include tailored sectoral plans.

The Act makes provision to ensure that public bodies consider fully, and integrate, the objectives set out in the National Low-Carbon Roadmap, national adaptation framework and sectoral adaptation plans in their strategic planning and day-to-day decision making, and take the necessary steps in respect of mitigation and adaptation in their areas of responsibility.

⁴ The Bill was signed into Law on 23 July 2021, The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

National Mitigation Plan 2017

This is the first National Mitigation Plan (NMP) and it is an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the level of decarbonisation required. This plan provided guidance on how each responsible Government department, incorporates sectoral mitigation measures into the following four sectors:

- Decarbonising Electricity Generation,
- Energy Efficiency in the Built Environment,
- Decarbonising Transport, and
- An Approach to Carbon Neutrality for Agriculture, Forest and Land Use Sectors.

The mitigation measures set out in the NMP lay the foundations for transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. In support of this, the NMP also includes over 100 individual actions for various Ministers and public bodies to take forward through its implementation.

While this was published 19 July 2017, it was quashed by the Supreme Court on 31 July 2020, because the Plan failed to specify the manner in which it was proposed to achieve the “national transition objective,” as required under the 2015 Climate Act.

National Adaptation Framework 2018

The National Adaptation Framework (NAF), Ireland’s first statutory framework, sets out a clear pathway for Ireland to become a resilient economy and society, capable of dealing with the complexities and challenges climate change is likely to present. This NAF follows on from and builds on the work already carried out under the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2012). The NAF sets out the National Adaptation Strategy which aims to reduce Ireland’s vulnerability to climate change impacts. The critical importance of planning and development measures in the overall strategic approach to adaptation to climate change is recognised and the role of the spatial planning process, with full engagement of key stakeholders, in providing an established means through which to implement and integrate climate change objectives, including adaptation, at local level.

The NAF provides a list of sectors that are impacted from climate change, with a lead government department identified as responsible for crafting and implementing a sectoral adaptation plan. The sectors include:

Theme	Sector Level	
Natural & Cultural Capital	Seafood Agriculture Forestry	Biodiversity Built & Archaeological Heritage
Critical Infrastructure	Transport Infrastructure Electricity and Gas Networks	Communications Networks
Water Resource & Flood Risk Management	Flood Risk Management Water Quality	Water Services Infrastructure
Public Health	Health	

The majority of these sectors are relevant to this development plan, hence the NAF is a key guide to ensure this County Development Plan integrates climate action into the land use objectives of the plan. Given the development plan’s remit as a land use framework not all sources and impacts can be addressed through the plan objectives. Wicklow County Council has a number of other strategies and initiatives in place that have a broader remit in its approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework acknowledges that global climate change will have consequences for Ireland to 2040 and beyond. The NPF acknowledges that as an island, it is in our interest to ensure we respond to climate change and its impacts such as sea level change, more frequent and sustained rainfall events and greater vulnerability of low-lying areas to flooding. The NPF recognises that our most densely populated areas are potentially vulnerable if we do not take the appropriate steps in flood risk management and climate change also has significant consequences for food production and biodiversity.

It is noted in the NPF that *'if Ireland is to make up for lost ground in relation to carbon reduction targets and move towards the objectives of a low carbon and climate resilient Ireland by 2050, it is necessary to make choices about how we balance growth with more sustainable approaches to development and land use and to examine how planning policy can help shape national infrastructural decisions'*. The NPF also acknowledges that forests play an important role in helping with climate change mitigation, through carbon sequestration in forests and the provision of renewable fuels and raw materials. Forests are a major carbon sink and afforestation is the most significant mitigation option that is available to Ireland's land use sector.

The NPF recognises the role of the planning system in facilitating mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and ensuring that sustainable infrastructure networks build resilience to climate change. The NPF has clearly defined National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) supporting the objectives of this framework, including NSO 8 'Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Society', NSO 1 'Compact Growth' and NSO 4 'Sustainable Mobility'.

Under the NPF the Government will support:

- Integrating climate considerations into statutory plans and guidelines in order to reduce vulnerability to negative effects and avoid inappropriate forms of development in vulnerable areas;
- More energy efficient development through the location of housing and employment along public transport corridors, where people can choose to use less energy intensive public transport, rather than being dependent on the car;
- The roll-out of renewables and protection and enhancement of carbon pools such as forests, peatlands and permanent grasslands;
- The development of sustainable supply chains in the bio economy;
- Grey adaptation which typically involves technical or engineering-oriented responses to climate impacts, such as the construction of sea walls in response to sea-level rise;
- Green adaptation which seeks to use ecological properties to enhance the resilience of human and natural systems in the face of climate change, such as creation of green spaces and parks to enable better management of urban micro-climates.

Relevant National Policy Objectives relating to Climate Action

Relevant National Policy Objectives relating to Climate Action	
NPO 54	Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
NPO 55	Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.
NPO 56	Sustainably manage waste generation, invest in different types of waste treatment and support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a healthy environment, economy and society.
NPO 57	Enhance water quality and resource management by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring flood risk management informs place-making by avoiding inappropriate

	<p>development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring the River Basin Management Plan objectives are fully considered throughout the physical planning process. ▪ Integrating sustainable water management solutions, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS), non-porous surfacing and green roofs, to create safe places.
NPO 58	<p>Integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans.</p>

Resource Efficiency and Transition to a Low Carbon Economy



Sustainable Land Management and Resource Efficiency
Adopting the principles of the circular economy to enable more sustainable planning and land use management of our natural resources and assets.



Low Carbon Economy
Our need to accelerate action on climate change.



Renewable Energy
Our transition to a low carbon energy future.



Managing Waste
Adequate capacity and systems to manage waste in an environmentally safe and sustainable manner.

Protecting, Conserving and Enhancing Our Natural Capital



Sustainable Water Management
Consideration of flood risk in planning and development management and treating urban waste water.



Green Infrastructure Planning
Protecting and valuing our important and vulnerable habitats, landscapes, natural heritage and green spaces.

Creating a Clean Environment for a Healthy Society



Water Quality
Recognising the links and addressing on-going challenges between development activity, water quality and our health.



Promoting Cleaner Air
Addressing air quality problems in urban and rural areas through better planning and design.



Noise Management
Incorporating consistent measures to avoid, mitigate and minimise or promote the pro-active management of noise.

Source: National Planning Framework (2018)

2.2.1.4 Regional Policy Context

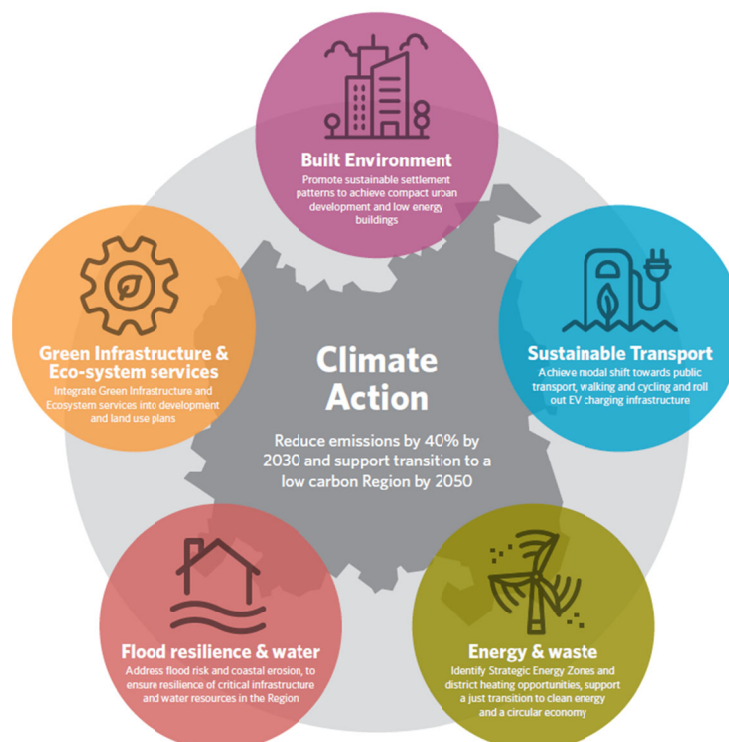
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region

The RSES is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape future growth and to better manage regional planning and economic development throughout the Region. It identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. The thematic approach taken in preparation of the RSES is underpinned by cross-cutting key principles, one of which is climate action – in particular the need to enhance climate resilience and to accelerate a transition to a low carbon society recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this.

The RSES is in itself a Climate Action Strategy – aiming to contribute to the acceleration of climate action, ensure a clean and healthy environment promoting sustainable transport and strategic green infrastructure.

The RSES clearly states that Local Authorities, in developing their core strategies and settlement hierarchies, shall consider the following growth enabler, in relation to Climate Action, for every part of the Region to meet its potential: *Climate Action – to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient region with focus on energy transition, carbon sequestration and reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns.*

Figure 2.4 RSES – Climate Action



The RSES identifies a number of Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) on Climate Action:

- RSO 6 Integrated Transport & Land Use;
- RSO 7 Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources;
- RSO 8 Build Climate Resilience;
- RSO 9 Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy;
- RSO 10 Enhanced Green Infrastructure; and
- RSO 11 Biodiversity & Natural Heritage.

The RSES also states that *'Local Authorities, in preparing their development plans, are required to include objectives for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas. This is to include the promotion of measures to reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change'*.

The RSES includes a number of climate change Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) that are relevant to land use plans. These cover the areas of Strategic Energy Zones, Wind Energy Guidelines, energy efficient buildings, low energy/ carbon construction materials and electric vehicles.

Relevant Regional Policy Objectives relating to Climate Action	
RPO 3.5	Identification of suitable employment and residential lands and suitable sites for infrastructure should be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental concerns such as landscape, cultural heritage, ensuring the protection of water quality, flood risks and biodiversity as a minimum.
RPO 3.6	City and county development plans shall undergo assessment of their impact on carbon reduction targets and shall include measures to monitor and review progress towards carbon reduction targets.
RPO 3.7	Local authorities shall have regard to environmental and sustainability considerations for meeting sustainable development targets and climate action commitments, in accordance with the National Adaptation Framework. In order to recognise the potential for impacts on the environment, Local authorities shall address the proper site/route selection of any new development and examine environmental constraints including but not limited to biodiversity, flooding, landscape, cultural heritage, material assets, including the capacity of services to serve any new development.
RPO 7.4	Statutory land use plans shall take account of the risk of coastal erosion, whereby new development should be avoided in areas at risk of coastal erosion to the extent practicable.
RPO 7.7	To reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for all urban and rural areas in the Region and to work with Local authorities and the relevant agencies to support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring and to inform a regional air quality and greenhouse gas emissions inventory.
RPO 7.12	Future statutory land use plans shall include Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and seek to avoid inappropriate land use zonings and development in areas at risk of flooding and to integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SUDS, non-porous surfacing and green roofs) to create safe places in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Local authorities.
RPO 7.14	Local authorities shall take account of and incorporate into the development of local planning policy and decision making the recommendations of the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.
RPO 7.15	Local authorities shall take opportunities to enhance biodiversity and amenities and to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats, including where flood risk management measures are planned.
RPO 7.28	Work with local authorities and relevant stakeholders, to identify areas of high value agricultural land and to ensure food security in the Region and to promote sustainable farming practices that maintain the quality of the natural environment, protect farm landscapes and support the achievement of climate targets.
RPO 7.32	With the assistance and support of the Climate Action Regional Offices, local authorities shall develop, adopt and implement local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies which shall

	address issues including local vulnerability to climate risks and identify and prioritise actions, in accordance with the guiding principles of the National Adaptation Framework, National Mitigation Plan.
RPO 7.33	Climate Action Regional Offices shall provide support to the local authorities on the development, adoption and implementation of local climate action strategies (which can address both adaptation and mitigation). Ongoing support should relate to the specific actions, and obligations and timescales for same that must be undertaken by the Local authorities in accordance with local climate change adaptation strategies and compliance with national policy.
RPO 7.34	EMRA supports the National Policy Statement on Bioeconomy (2018) and supports the exploration of opportunities in the circular resource-efficient economy including undertaking a bio-economy feasibility study for the Region to identify the area of potential growth in the Region to inform investment in line with the national transition objective to a low carbon climate resilient economy.
RPO 7.35	EMRA shall, in conjunction with Local authorities in the Region, identify Strategic Energy Zones as areas suitable for larger energy generating projects, the role of community and micro energy production in urban and rural settings and the potential for renewable energy within industrial areas. The Strategic Energy Zones for the Region will ensure all environmental constraints are addressed in the analysis. A regional landscape strategy could be developed to support delivery of projects within the Strategic Energy Zones.
RPO 7.38	Local authorities shall consider the use of heat mapping to support developments which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted. A feasibility assessment for district heating in Local Authority areas shall be carried out and statutory planning documents shall identify local waste heat sources.
RPO 7.40	Local authorities shall include policies in statutory land use plans to promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock and energy efficiency in traditional buildings. All new buildings within the Region will be required to achieve the Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).
RPO 7.42	Local authorities shall include proposals in statutory land use plans to facilitate and encourage an increase in electric vehicle use, including measures for more recharging facilities and prioritisation of parking for EVs in central locations.
RPO 7.43	Climate Action Regional Offices and local authorities should consider the identification of critical infrastructure within their functional area, and particularly of the interdependencies between different types of sectoral infrastructure, as a first step in 'future-proofing' services and to help to inform longer-term adaptation planning and investment priorities.
RPO 8.7	To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use.
RPO 8.23	EMRA supports the protection of the marine related functions of ports in the Region in order to ensure the future role of ports as strategic marine related assets is protected from inappropriate uses, whilst supporting complimentary economic uses including the potential for facilitating offshore renewable energy development at ports.

Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs)

In January 2018, the Government established four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) to drive climate action at regional and local level. This recognises the commitment by Local Government to develop and implement its own climate action measures, as well as the need to build capacity within the sector to respond and adapt to climate change. The CAROs are operated by a lead Local Authority in four different regions grouped according to shared climate change risks. Wicklow is within the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office.

2.2.1.5 County Wicklow's Local Climate Change Policy

Wicklow's Climate & Biodiversity Emergency

On the 29th April 2019 Wicklow County Council (WCC) declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. This emergency requires action on Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change and on Biodiversity. In response to climate change, WCC has adopted the WCC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy which sets out the approach for adaptation to Climate Change and it addresses how WCC as an organisation responds to the impacts of climate change. In addition WCC signed the Climate Action Charter in December 2019 committing WCC to progress, monitor, evaluate and report on 23 specific action items in the Charter.

The WCC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy has been drawn up in line with the National Adaptation Framework, the National Mitigation Plan and the Climate Action Plan. WCC has also established a Climate and Biodiversity Special Policy Committee (SPC) and has established a Climate Action Team led by a Climate Action Officer, both of which will play a key role in guiding the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy as part of WCC's response to Climate Change.

Wicklow County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019)

This strategy addresses how Wicklow County Council as an organisation responds to the impacts of Climate Change. It does not look directly at the work being done to prevent or mitigate Climate Change. The Climate Adaptation Strategy aims to:

- Make Wicklow a stronger County by reducing impacts of future climate change related events.
- Fully consider and mainstream climate adaptation in the day to day delivery of services by WCC.
- Actively engage with and inform citizens and communities in Wicklow about the impacts of climate change. Public awareness is key to developing effective climate adaptation measures.

The Strategy features a range of actions across the following six themes:

1. Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations (functions and activities of the local authority)
2. Infrastructure and Built Environment (climate resilient infrastructure)
3. Land use and development (sustainable policies and measures)⁵
4. Drainage and Flood Management
5. Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure (natural capacity to absorb the impacts of climate change)
6. Community Health and Wellbeing (empowering resilient communities)

The strategy states that '*Climate Change will be fully integrated as a concern in all relevant plans and policies that influence planning and development. It will ensure that the County Development Plan and associated plans focus on delivering sustainable communities with climate smart buildings and infrastructure. It will ensure the continuing focus on protecting habitats in the planning system and also recognises their role in protecting against Climate Change*

⁵ Theme 3 on 'Land use and development' is relevant to the County Development Plan. The goal is 'Sustainable policies and measures are devised influencing positive behavioural changes, supporting climate adaptation actions and endorsing approaches for successful transition to low carbon and climate resilient society'.

threats'. A number of actions have been identified to fulfil this goal by integrating climate change into the CDP. It is considered that this plan fulfils these goals.

Climate Action Charter (2019)

Wicklow County Council signed up to the Climate Action Charter in December 2019. This charter includes substantial targets with regard to mitigation of climate change and increasing energy efficiency. Wicklow County Council is currently in the process of drawing up an implementation plan which takes in all the actions from the Climate Action Charter and the Climate Adaptation Strategy. The implementation plan will list all the actions, who is responsible for delivering it and an indication of the time to deliver it.

Wicklow County Council Draft Energy Plan / Energy Performance Strategy (2020)

Wicklow County Council Housing and Corporate Estate Department are currently working on an Energy Plan / Energy Performance Strategy which seeks to deliver the targets of the Charter with regard to Council's infrastructure / assets. Upgrading of the public lighting to LED lights is an example of such a project.

2.2.2 Integration of climate considerations into the County Development Plan

Climate change action is one of three cross-cutting key principles of this plan. It has been integrated into the County Development Plan in a proactive way with the inclusion of relevant policies and objectives. Strategic policy outcomes, incorporating climate change mitigation and adaptation into land-use planning, supported by land-use policies and objectives that where relevant incorporate objectives that both mitigate against the source of the causes of climate change and adapt to reduce the impacts of climate change. Climate change action informs objectives in relation to all chapters of the plan, including the town and settlement plans and the plan appendices.

Given the Development Plan's remit as a land use framework, not all sources and impacts are addressed in the plan objectives (e.g. impact on insurance costs). The Development Plan's role in addressing climate change is part of a combined overall effort by Wicklow County Council to fulfil its role in addressing the climate change challenge. Climate change poses a real threat to ecosystems, however these ecosystems including wetlands and woodlands, are important for their role as carbon sinks, water attenuation and flooding protection. As it noted in the RSES, careful land management is needed to ensure that land use changes do not impact on the ability of the natural environment to absorb climate impacts. The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment also have a key role to play in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The approach taken in crafting this County Development Plan is to identify what are the impacts and sources of climate change, identify the key sectors of the sources of impacts that are relevant to the County Plan as a land use plan and to ensure that these are considered in the crafting of all policies and objectives.

In Ireland the NAF and the NMP set the framework for climate change adaptation and mitigation respectively. The sectors identified by the NAF and the NMP as the source and impacts of climate change in Ireland are diverse and wide ranging. The National Climate Action Plan provides focused actions for each sector, with different government departments and state bodies responsible for the implementation of the relevant actions.

Under the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Local Authorities will be required to prepare local Climate Action Plans outlining how they are implementing their adopted Climate Action Adaptation and Mitigation strategies.

Building on the NAF and the NMP, the RSES identifies the following five areas where Climate Change Action should be targeted in the region namely Built Environment, Sustainable Transport, Energy and Waste, Flood Resilience and Water, and Green Infrastructure and Eco-system services.

In light of above, this County Development Plan will address these sectors in the following manner:

Built Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery of sustainable settlement patterns, with a focus on compact growth. ▪ Regeneration of town and village centres, with the prioritising of the development of underutilised and brownfield sites. ▪ Promotion of environmentally sustainable development in terms of location, layout, design and energy and water usage.
Sustainable Transport	<p>Provide policy, objectives and standards that promote and facilitate a sustainable approach to transportation with strategies and objectives in place to facilitate the necessary actions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reduction in the need to use motorised vehicles, increased opportunities for walking and cycling ▪ reduction in journey length and times, reduction in congestion ▪ higher intensity of use of public transport ▪ development and increased usage of alternative vehicle fuel sources, such as electricity, hydrogen and biofuels
Energy & Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide policy, objectives and standards that promote and facilitate the development of alternative and renewable sources of electricity to meet the electricity demand with policy and objectives for reduction in electricity use, wind energy, solar energy, hydro energy, bio-energy and small scale renewable electricity generation. ▪ Support the development of enabling infrastructure, especially at the ports/harbours, for the off-shore wind energy sector. ▪ Support waste prevention, minimisation, reuse and recycling. ▪ Promote and support the circular economy and the 'just transition' to clean energy.
Flood resilience & water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure. ▪ Conservation and enhancement of water resources including sea, rivers, lakes and groundwater. ▪ Effective and environmentally sound management of waste water. ▪ Reduction and management of flood risk. ▪ To build resilience to increased risks of extreme weather events, changes in sea level and patterns of coastal erosion to protect property, critical infrastructure and food security.
Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To conserve and enhance biodiversity, protected habitats and species. ▪ To identify, protect and enhance Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services and promote the sustainable management of strategic natural assets such as coastlines, farmlands, peatlands, uplands woodlands and wetlands. ▪ Promote and facilitate an environmentally sustainable approach to practicing agriculture and forestry.

In all of its own undertakings / programmes / projects and in its requirements for new developments with respect to addressing Climate Action, Wicklow County Council shall implement the principles of **'Just Transition'**, which extends from the principle of climate justice and is enshrined in the Preamble of the 2015 Paris Agreement. In order to secure a 'Just Transition' and climate justice in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, public participation and inclusion of those furthest behind in the decisions made about them is key. Wicklow County Council will ensure that local / regional areas and individuals least able to mitigate and adapt to climate change will not bear the burden of the transition to a zero carbon economy and that decisions made in relation to the development of County Wicklow will be carried out in accordance with 'just transition' principles.

2.3 Economic Opportunity

This section sets out the principles regarding the sustainable development of Wicklow's economy that are relevant to and implementable through a land-use plan, that will be considered and integrated where feasible into this County Development Plan. The land-use objectives of this plan aim to support the strategies of the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan and the Wicklow Local Enterprise Office, which have a wider remit than the County Development Plan in the area of economic development.

2.3.1 Economic Opportunity – Strategic Context

2.3.1.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

Economic opportunity, enterprise development and employment growth form a significant element of the National Planning Framework. Two of the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) are directly relevant to economic opportunity: NSO 3 'Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities' and NSO 6 'A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills'.

NSO 3 advocates that the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund create a virtuous cycle of progressive planning for investment in and economic diversification of our rural towns and villages, re-purposing them to meet the challenges of the future.

NSO 5 indicates that a competitive, innovative and resilient regional enterprise base is essential to provide the jobs and employment opportunities for people to live and prosper in the regions. This can be achieved by building regional economic drivers and supporting opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, to leverage the potential of places. It is recognised that delivering this outcome will require the coordination of growth and placemaking with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity, and in skills and talent to support economic competitiveness and enterprise growth.

The NPF identifies three elements required to achieve full sustainable employment: supporting entrepreneurialism and building competitive clusters, sustaining talent and boosting human capital in all regions, and digital and data innovation. With regard to the latter, the NPF notes that Ireland is very attractive in terms of international digital connectivity, climatic factors and current and future renewable energy sources for the development of international digital infrastructures, such as data centres. This creates added benefits in relation to establishing a threshold of demand for sustained development of renewable energy sources. There is also greater scope to recycle waste heat from data centres for productive use, which may be off site.

The NPF states that the pattern of urban growth targeted is population and employment led, recognising that firms and enterprise development are drawn to urban locations by market forces such as agglomeration, migration and specialisation that depend on factors such as scale, accessibility, innovation, supported by higher education institutions and quality of life.

The NPF recognises that placemaking is critical to economic prosperity as globalisation continues to have a concentrating effect. The NPF explains that many sectors, but in particular those related to the information economy and knowledge development, tend to be very place specific. Highly skilled individuals are attracted together, as firms agglomerate in the larger, denser skilled labour markets found in urban areas. The attractiveness of places to highly skilled potential employees and the availability of a steady stream of local talent and innovation associated with third level research institutions are recognised as important factors.

The NPF indicates that it is important to identify locations where enterprise can access competitively priced development lands, utilities and commercial properties to the highest standards available internationally. It is also stated that regional and local planning policies should be sufficiently agile to accommodate valid propositions for enterprise development that may emerge and for which there are strong locational drivers that do not apply to the same extent elsewhere.

Relevant National Policy Objectives relating to Economic Opportunity	
NPO 5	Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.
NPO 6	Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.
NPO 10b	Regional and Local Authorities to identify and quantify locations for strategic employment development, where suitable, in urban and rural areas generally.
NPO 21	Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.
NPO 22	Facilitate tourism development and in particular National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.
NPO 23	Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.
NPO 24	Support and facilitate delivery of the national Broadband plan as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas.

2.3.1.2 Our Rural Future, Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

Investing in Remote Working

Remote working has the potential to be transformative for rural Ireland. Supported by appropriate infrastructure and facilities, remote working can encourage more people to live in rural areas while working in good quality jobs, no matter where their employer is based. Developing remote working hubs in rural town centres will have the added benefit of helping revitalise those towns.

The shift from the fixed workplace model will be supported by a national network of remote/co-working spaces and enterprise hubs which have the potential to become a significant resource to support our national economic development. They will enable many people to work locally and offer new or expanding companies the opportunity to locate in rural areas, either as primary locations or advance second sites.

The Government will implement the National Remote Work Strategy which aims to make remote working a lasting feature of Ireland's workforce in a way that can maximise the benefits economically, socially and environmentally.

The Strategy will, inter alia, provide employers and employees with ongoing up-to-date guidance on remote work and raise awareness of existing remote work hub infrastructure in Ireland.

The Programme for Government mandates public sector employers, colleges and other public bodies to move to 20% home and remote working from 2021. The potential use of co-working spaces by civil servants, including through shared hot-desking in Government office spaces, will be explored in this context on a pilot basis.

The Tax Strategy Group will review the current tax arrangements for remote working in respect of employees and employers, and assess the merits of further enhancements for consideration in the context of Budget 2022.

The Government has invested significantly in remote working hubs and enterprise spaces over the last number of years, including through the Department of Rural and Community Development, Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta, and it is committed to continue to do so.

IDA Ireland, in its FDI Strategy 2021-2024, recognises the potential of remote working as part of its value proposition to attract investment to Ireland. Remote working can present opportunities to create jobs in regional locations that might previously have been more likely to be based in large urban centres. The agency will engage with clients and identify opportunities to promote the uptake of remote working across their client base with a view to supporting regional job creation.

While there are many public, private and community owned hubs being established across the country, the benefits of remote and co-working spaces will be best realised if the hubs – existing or planned - are developed in a cohesive way that ensures that the right facilities are located in the right places to meet demand and maximise utilisation. In this context, the Government will invest strategically in remote working hubs in rural areas and create a cohesive national network of available working facilities.

The Department of Rural and Community Development, as Chair of the National Hub Network Oversight Group, and the Western Development Commission will complete work in 2021 on developing and mapping a comprehensive picture of remote working hubs across the country, classifying the various facilities available. This will help to inform further investment decisions. The initiative will also lead to the establishment of a national integrated network of 400 remote working hubs, supported by shared back-office services and the development of an app to allow remote and mobile workers to book space in any of the hubs in the network through a centralised booking system. Many of the hubs will also be made available for community-based activities.

2.3.1.3 Regional Strategies

Regional Enterprise Plans

The nine Regional Enterprise Plans are an integral part of Ireland's enterprise policy, aimed at driving economic growth and sustaining better standards of living throughout Ireland. As a 'bottom-up' initiative, the Plans complement national level policies and programmes emanating from a 'top-down' approach such as Ireland's national enterprise policy, *Enterprise 2025 Renewed* and the *Future Jobs Ireland* initiative.

The first set of Regional Enterprise Plans to 2020 (REPs), which are currently in implementation, were launched in early 2019 and build on the success of the previous Regional Action Plans for Jobs which were in operation up to the end of 2018. The REPs provide perspective and ideas from the 'bottom-up'. They are informed by an understanding of unique local strengths and assets and enable more effective translation of national policy into regional and local impact. Each Plan has been created by regional stakeholders who have collectively identified a number of Strategic Objectives for enterprise development for their region.

The Plans complement and build on the existing activities being undertaken by the Enterprise Agencies, the LEOs and the wider range of State Bodies directly involved in supporting enterprise development in the regions, and as such, generate added value from regional and local actors working collaboratively.

Nine Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committees, chaired by private sector business people and comprising representatives of the Local Authorities, LEOs, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Regional Skills Fora, Higher and Further Education Institutes, enterprise champions and others, oversee the implementation of the Plans. The Committees maintain the Plans as 'live' agendas which aim to be agile and responsive to both new opportunities and also new challenges, for example: Brexit, Climate Action, Digital Economy, and most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic economic impacts.

The **Mid-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020**⁶ builds on the success of the Mid-East Regional Action Plan for Jobs (2016–2017) to ensure that it remains effective and that it continues to deliver jobs across the Mid-East region and can be robust to address the challenges faced, including Brexit.

This Plan focuses on four core objectives:

1. Developing the Mid-East as a hub for the Screen Content Creation Sector;
2. Developing a Network of Innovative Co-working Workspaces;
3. Building an ecosystem framework to support the Agri-food sector;
4. Ensure the availability of Skills and Talent to realise the Region's future economic potential and address up-skilling requirements.

⁶ This plan has now been superseded by the Mid-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 (2022)

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

The RSES sets out a settlement and economic growth strategy that seeks to ensure that the needs of the Region’s citizens such as access to employment opportunities and services, ease of travel and overall well-being are met. The RSES vision includes creating a sustainable and competitive region with employment opportunities for all. Growth should be sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient. This requires the development of a strong economic base that is supported by enterprise, innovation and skills. The aim is for a vibrant and diversified enterprise base with strong and healthy clusters bringing disruptive technology innovations to national and global markets, with a responsive and efficient labour market. The RSES seeks to achieve this vision through the following economic principles:

Figure 2.5 RSES – Economic Opportunity



Relevant Regional Policy Objectives relating to Economic Opportunity	
RPO 4.27	Key Towns shall act as economic drivers and provide for strategic employment locations to improve their economic base by increasing the ratio of jobs to workers.
RPO 4.79	Local authorities shall identify and provide policies that recognise the contribution that small towns, villages and rural areas contribute to social and economic wellbeing. As part of this policy provision that seeks to support and protect existing rural economies such as valuable agricultural lands to ensure sustainable food supply, to protect the value and character of open countryside and to support the diversification of rural economies to create additional jobs and maximise opportunities in emerging sectors, such as agribusiness, renewable energy, tourism and forestry enterprise is supported.
RPO 4.82	Local authorities shall ensure that economic development that is urban in nature should be in the first instance located in urban areas.

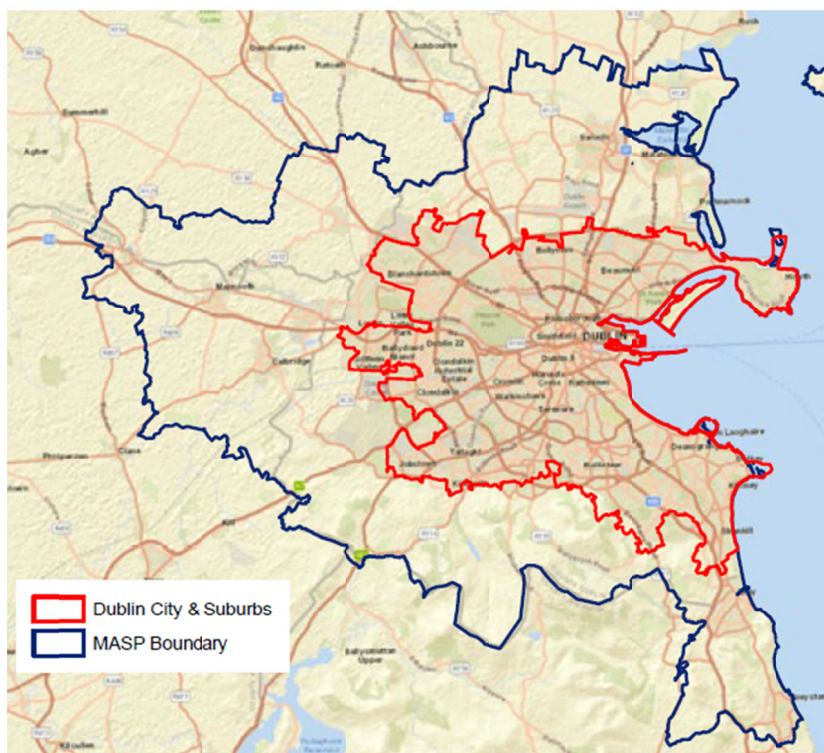
RPO 6.1	<p>Support the national economic agencies, Local Enterprise Offices, Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committees, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, with their plans for job creation and enterprise development with an emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An enterprise base with increased productivity and more diversification – including diversification of their markets – with high levels of innovation, skills adaptability and relatively low costs of doing business. ▪ Maintaining full employment with unemployment rates of each Strategic Planning Area not exceeding the State average by more than one percentage point. ▪ Applying the Guiding Principles for strategic employment and investment prioritisation in placemaking for enterprise development presented in this RSES.
RPO 6.2	Support local authorities to ensure their LECPs and city and county development plans are sufficiently agile to account for unexpected opportunities, to accommodate valid propositions for enterprise development that may emerge and for which there are strong locational drivers that do not apply to the same extent elsewhere.
RPO 6.6	Support local authorities to explore mechanisms for the emergence of a diversified sectoral mix in rural areas. This includes the identification of appropriate locations to drive regeneration of these rural towns and villages for example by the provision of serviced sites for housing and co-working/incubator space near Institutes of Technology to facilitate technological spill overs through greater connections and linkages.
RPO 6.7	Support local authorities to develop sustainable and economically efficient rural economies through initiatives to enhance sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy, tourism, and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage.
RPO 6.8	To support the sustainable development of tourism in the Region in line with the strategic objectives of both Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands experience brand propositions.
RPO 6.10	EMRA will support the preparation of a Retail Strategy / Strategies for the Region in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, or any subsequent update, to update the retail hierarchy and apply floorspace requirements for the Region.
RPO 6.11	Future provisions of significant retail development within the Region shall be consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, or any subsequent update, and the retail hierarchy for the Region, expressed in the RSES, until such time as this hierarchy is updated.
RPO 6.12	Local authorities shall include objectives in development plans and local area plans supporting emphasis on placemaking for town centres, for example through inclusion of a Placemaking Strategy for towns and implementation of Town Centre Renewal Plans.
RPO 6.13	Local authorities shall support the preparation of Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes and for revitalising vacant spaces for example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.
RPO 6.14	EMRA will support the use of targeted financial incentives to re-establish the dominant role of town centres provided for in planning policy to encourage a greater take up of town centre development opportunities for retail, residential, commercial, and leisure uses.
RPO 6.16	Support working with relevant landowners and recreational/ tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and coastal areas to ensure maintenance of the existing network.
RPO 6.17	Support the maintenance of, and enhanced access to state and semi-state lands such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways, etc., together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes. Access should be planned and managed in a sustainable manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors, and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism.
RPO 6.21	EMRA will work with local authorities and Fáilte Ireland to identify destination towns within the

	Region for the prioritisation of investment and supports to drive tourism growth in the Region, to spread the benefit of tourism throughout the Region and to encourage the increase of tourism product development.
RPO 6.22	EMRA support the preparation of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure alignment, and consistency between land use and ocean based planning, and to ensure co-ordination which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the Marine economy.

The ‘Metropolitan Area’

The north-east part of the County, including Bray and Greystones, are identified in the RSES as being in the ‘Metropolitan Area’. The requirement for a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) to be prepared for Dublin as part of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is set out in Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF). The MASP provides, for the first time, a 12 to 20 year strategic planning and investment framework for the Dublin metropolitan area.

Figure 2.6 Map of Metropolitan Area



The MASP is aligned with a number of Regional Strategic Outcomes in the RSES which include managing the sustainable and compact growth of Dublin, the regeneration of cities and better use of under-used land, integrated transport and land use and the promotion of Dublin as a global city region. The MASP aims to continue densification in the city centre, re-intensify strategic employment areas within the M50 ring and to activate key strategic sites such as Cherrywood to complement existing employment hubs such as the city centre, Docklands and Sandyford Business District, providing for a limited number of people intensive employment locations that are accessible to public transport.

The MASP also supports employment generation at strategic locations within the metropolitan area to strengthen the local employment base and reduce pressure on the metropolitan transport network, including; future employment districts in Swords and Dublin Airport/South Fingal; Maynooth; **Bray; Greystones;** Dunboyne-Portrane; and Leixlip. Strategic employment locations, particularly those that are employee intensive should be located in proximity to existing or planned strategic transport corridors.

In terms of employment / mixed use development in the MASP area, the RSES identifies the following Strategic Development Areas and Corridors in Wicklow:

- **Strengthening commercial town functions in Bray**
- **New mixed use residential and employment district at Fassaroe, west of Bray.**
- **Developing the IDA strategic site in Greystones to strengthen economic base in North Wicklow**

2.3.1.4 Economic Profile of County Wicklow

A detailed socio-economic analysis of the County was carried out as part of the LECP process (2016). This was based on data from the 2011 Census. As part of the ongoing implementation and review of the LECP, an updated socio-economic analysis has been prepared, principally based on the 2016 Census, but also including some additional data up to end 2019. The key findings of that assessment are set out to follow, but it is acknowledged that this data may too be out of date and will not reflect the seismic shift in the economy that has occurred in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

The rates of participation in the labour force and workforce in County Wicklow are similar to those of Ireland. Within the county, rates (on both indicators) are higher in the Bray and Greystones Municipal Districts than in the rest of the county. Relative to the county (as a whole) and the Eastern and Midlands Region, the Arklow and Wicklow Municipal Districts have lower proportions of persons at work, and they have higher rates of unemployment. The Arklow MD emerges as having the greatest challenges in respect of unemployment and a reliance on traditional economic activities. In contrast, the Bray and Greystones MDs have more vibrant economic profiles. That said however, these two municipal districts have internal variabilities, and a number of neighbourhoods, particularly in Bray Town which has persistent socio-economic weaknesses.

The business demography data reveals a notable increase in the number of firms in the County since 2014. The vast majority of firms in County Wicklow are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); almost 94% have up to ten employees. Over 40% of the county's workforce is employed in firms that have fewer than ten employees.

The sectoral profiles of firms and occupations among the resident workforce indicate the significance of the construction sector. The construction sector is most prevalent in the Arklow and Baltinglass Municipal Districts, although the rate of home building is higher in the Bray and Greystones Municipal Districts. The Arklow and Baltinglass MDs also have a higher proportion of the workforce engaged in agriculture and manufacturing than is the case in other parts of the county. These two municipal districts exhibit a more traditional economic profile and lower levels of economic vitality than pertain in the northeast of the county. The northeast of County Wicklow has higher proportions of the workforce engaged in professional and commercial services – working locally and in the GDA.

County Wicklow's industrial profile correlates, in spatial terms, with its occupational profile. Furthermore, the County's economic geography also correlates with its socio-economic profile. The northeast of the County, and in particular the Greystones MD, has a higher proportion of resident workers, who are employed in professional

occupations and who, by extension, belong to the higher socio-economic groups. In contrast, the south and west of the County – in both urban and rural communities – have higher proportions of persons who are in manual occupations and who belong to the lower socio-economic groups. The data highlights the importance of promoting economic diversification in these parts of County Wicklow, in tandem with socially oriented interventions – supporting integrated human capital and economic development.

The north of the County has high levels (>50% in most EDs) of commuting to the GDA and commuting to the GDA is manifestly more significant than travel to any other destination. Proximity to the GDA shapes the socio-economic profile of much of North Wicklow, particularly Greystones and its wider environs. The M11 from Bray – Enniskerry to Wicklow – Rathnew and the N81 from Tallaght to Blessington are very significant transport and economic corridors. Movement along both corridors is predominantly by private modes of transport, thus posing challenges for County Wicklow in respect of environmental degradation and energy security. Long-distance commuting also affects communities, as County Wicklow responds to spillover effects from the GDA, particularly in respect of housing. There are also quality-of-life considerations for commuters and their families.

The analysis shows that outbound commuters are more likely to be younger (than the mean / median of all workers), have higher levels of educational attainment and belong to higher socio-economic groups. The data also indicate that, relative to the jobs held by commuters, jobs based in County Wicklow are more likely to be associated with lower skill levels and lower socio-economic status.

2.3.2 The Role of Land Use Planning in Economic Development

The LECP and LEO strategies and objectives, and the various sectoral action plans, will require to be implemented by a wide range of actions and agencies, with the County Development Plan’s role limited to the land-use and development aspects of the strategies. The County Development Plan shall aim to avoid policies and objectives that unduly restrict the growth of existing enterprises or the development of new enterprises, subject to the development complying with normal planning criteria, such as appropriate location, health and safety, protection of the environment and quality design.

In this regard, it is considered that the County Development Plan has the following key functions in the achievement of the specific goals and objectives of the LECP and economic development generally:

<p>To set out a planning framework for economic development that is in line with the provisions of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>The policies and objectives for economic development must sit within the overall planning framework / ‘Core Strategy’ set out in this plan. The employment hierarchy for the County within the ‘Core Strategy’ clearly sets out the function and type of economic activity appropriate for each level of settlement within the hierarchy, which is derived from the principles set out in the NPF and RSES.</p> <p>The larger towns of the County clearly have the most potential to deliver larger scale and a wider range of employment developments and these locations should act as the key economic drivers within the County and the wider region, with smaller towns and villages focusing on the micro/local economy.</p>
<p>Ensuring an adequate supply of zoned and serviced land for employment</p>	<p>In accordance with sustainable planning principles, the priority location for new jobs growth shall be the existing town centres and existing developed lands (such as brownfield lands). In circumstances where the total jobs growth cannot be met within the existing town centre / brownfield lands or where certain uses are not suitable to locate in existing built up areas, this growth will be targeted to occur in ‘greenfield’ locations.</p> <p>The amount of undeveloped ‘greenfield’ land zoned for employment use in any settlement</p>

	shall be determined on a case by case basis, having regard to the particular characteristics of the settlement and the strategy for job creation, and shall include an assessment of the likely employment type and density that would be suitable at each location.
Resilient Town Centres	<p>As the nature of retail evolves it will be necessary for some town and village centres to redefine and broaden their functions. The growth of online retail has undoubtedly impacted on towns and villages. Retailers can access new markets without the need for physical presence. This has undermined the traditional function of the 'Main Street'. It is no longer sustainable to rely on retail as the only use in town and village centres. As the nature of retail evolves it will be necessary for some town and village centres to redefine and broaden their functions.</p> <p>While retail is considered a key function of town and village centres and the most appropriate location for retail development, it is no longer sustainable to rely on retail as the only use in town and village centres. Successful healthy town centres provide a diversity of uses, activities and experiences which in turn feed off each other. A broad mix of uses encourages trade and activity and contributes to a range of activity from daytime through to night time. Town and village centres throughout the county need to be dynamic and able to evolve to accommodate new uses. This is essential for their continued vitality.</p> <p>The reuse and regeneration of vacant buildings is an essential catalyst to transform the capacity and potential of our smaller towns and villages.</p>
Promoting and facilitating an overall improvement in the quality of life in all parts of the County	<p>Making a place attractive for both employers and employees as a place to live, work and do business is fundamental to attracting new employers to the County. Specific actions to improve quality of life include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring town centres are vibrant with high quality public realm and a good range of retail and retail services; ▪ Promoting and facilitating high quality residential development with supporting social and community facilities; ▪ Creating an attractive urban and rural environment to facilitate residency and recreational needs of the projected labour force; and ▪ Increasing and improving the range of quality recreational, amenity and cultural facilities.
Supporting education facilities and the knowledge economy & facilitating and promoting entrepreneurial activity	<p>The promotion and facilitation of educational facilities, in particular third level and further educational facilities, is recognised as a key catalyst for future economic activity within the County.</p> <p>The presence of Wicklow County Campus at Clermont House, Rathnew offers significant opportunities for the development of a centre of excellence for higher education and research, capable of establishing partnerships with wider industry, creating jobs, addressing social challenges and driving economic growth within the County.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial activity will be supported and facilitated wherever possible, for example, by facilitating developments / applications engaged in training and education, and business start-up and incubator facilities. Supporting small scale, start-up developments in rural areas, town / village centres and in suitable residential areas, will be supported wherever possible, as this is seen as key stepping stone to the development of a larger enterprise.</p>
Supporting employment growth around Wicklow's natural resources and supporting key sectors for growth	<p>The objectives will aim to support existing resource based industries, including energy generation, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and the extractive industry, while also promoting the diversification of the rural economy.</p> <p>In addition the natural and man-made assets of Wicklow create significant opportunities for the expansion of the tourist and recreational sectors. While these areas already make a significant contribution to the county's economy, further opportunities exist to increase this offering. The objectives set out in Chapter 11 of this plan aim to facilitate the</p>

expansion and further development of this sector over the lifetime of the plan in a sustainable manner.

Through research and analysis undertaken for both the LECP, it is clear that certain sectors / industries have great potential in County Wicklow, above other locations. While this plan will support the development of all sectors/industries within the County subject to normal planning criteria, the following key sectors have been identified, with this plan setting out particular policy supports for the future growth of these areas.

The key sectors identified within the County include the film industry, the food sector, maritime industry including support services for off-shore wind energy, information and communications technology, and tourism and recreation.

2.4. Development Plan Strategy

The Development Plan Strategy is guided by the three cross cutting themes, Healthy Placemaking, Economic Opportunity and Climate Action. Each of these themes is identified as a strategic principle.

2.4.1 Vision for the County

To guide and facilitate the sustainable growth of the County in a manner which supports a deep respect for its unique natural heritage, capitalises on the potential of our towns and villages to deliver compact growth, facilitates healthy placemaking, supports the creation of self-sustaining settlements and rural areas that are attractive places to live in, work in and visit, provides for new job opportunities, embraces climate action and enables the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy, improves sustainable mobility and conserves our heritage.

2.4.2 Strategic Principles

The Development Plan Strategy is guided by three strategic principles, Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity. These cross-cutting principles align with the key principles identified in the RSES. These principles frame the strategic county outcomes.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES	
Healthy Placemaking	The quality of place has an impact on all aspects of our lives. Placemaking focuses on the interaction between people and the natural and built environment, a sense of place and facilitating a high quality of life. The creation of attractive healthy places that support sustainable communities is a central objective of this Plan. Healthy placemaking involves creating places that facilitate a good quality of life and encourage healthier lifestyles.
Climate Action	Integrate climate change objectives into the County Development Plan to facilitate the sustainable growth of the County, enhance climate resilience and enable the transition to a low carbon, environmentally sustainable economy. The County Development Plan plays an important role in influencing a reduction in GHG emissions by guiding the sustainable growth of the County, encouraging more compact mixed-use development and greater use of sustainable transport options such as cycling, walking and public transport, restricting development in areas that are at risk of flooding and protecting the natural landscape and biodiversity.
Economic Opportunity	Encourage a sustained emphasis on creating and facilitating new employment opportunities to support self-sustaining settlements throughout the County and facilitate a high quality of life. In accordance with national and regional policy it is important that the Development Plan facilitates a better alignment between population growth and employment to create healthy and attractive places.

2.4.3 Strategic County Outcomes

The ten Strategic County Outcomes are informed by the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the key issues arising in submissions from members of the public. The three cross-cutting principles inform the core strategy and the county policy objectives which will guide and inform all new development in the County over the next six years.

STRATEGIC COUNTY OUTCOMES	
SCO1 Sustainable Settlement Patterns & Compact Growth	The delivery of compact growth in all towns and villages by capitalising on the potential for infill and brownfield development, moving away from a reliance on greenfield development and creating places that encourage active lifestyles is essential for the successful delivery of the development plan strategy.
SCO2 Resilient Town & Village Centres – Regeneration & Renewal	Activate the potential for renewal of our town and village centres, creating resilient, adaptable and vibrant places with a strong focus on people. It is essential that we protect and maintain the viability of town and village centres, target the reversal of decline and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes. It is important that regeneration and renewal projects respect and embrace Wicklow's beautiful old buildings and historic streetscapes which give our settlements their identity and strong sense of place. The quality of new architecture will have a long standing impact on the quality of our settlements and therefore should be of the highest quality to withstand the test of time.
SCO3 Strong Rural Communities & Sustainable Rural Development	Strengthen rural communities and support the sustainable development of rural areas. Encourage innovation and rural diversification in order to sustain vibrant rural communities. Leverage the potential of rural settlements to accommodate sustainable growth and a range of services including social and economic enterprise.
SCO4 Sustainable Healthy Communities	Places should facilitate a high quality of life for all regardless of age or ability. Access to quality housing, employment, childcare, education, health services, community facilities and a clean unpolluted, environment including clean air and water, are defining elements of healthy, attractive and successful places. Investment in a well-designed public realm which includes public spaces, parks, playgrounds, streets and recreational and sport infrastructure to cater for all ages is essential.
SCO5 Sustainable Mobility	The County Development Plan plays an important role in influencing a reduction in GHG emissions by guiding the sustainable growth of the County. The integration of land use and transportation planning, in order to support sustainable mobility and encourage a shift away from the private car to active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport, will deliver improvements in terms of quality of life and climate change.
SCO6 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity	Natural heritage and biodiversity is the cornerstone of Wicklow's identity – 'The Garden of Ireland'. It is essential that we conserve and enhance the County's rich natural heritage and biodiversity for the benefit of current and future generations.
SCO7 Climate Resilience & the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy	Support the transition to low carbon clean energy by facilitating renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations and supporting the development of off-shore renewable energy enabling infrastructure especially at ports and harbours. Facilitate the sustainable management of waste including the circular economy. Restrict development in areas that are at risk of flooding and protect the natural landscape and biodiversity.

<p style="text-align: center;">SCO8 A Strong Economy</p>	<p>Strengthen and broaden the economic base, harness opportunities for economic growth to build economic resilience, strengthen enterprise ecosystems and create quality jobs that align with population growth, ensure a good standard of living and reduce the need for long-distance commuting. Support place making improvements that will generate economic confidence and in turn make settlements more attractive to employers and a skilled workforce. Support community wealth building as a transformative approach which is about creating a better and more sustainable economy that strengthens our communities through local job creation, sustainable development and local business networks.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SCO9 Tourism</p>	<p>Capitalise on Wicklow's location within Ireland's Ancient East and facilitate a year round tourism industry that harnesses Wicklow's natural amenities and vast recreational opportunities. Ensure that tourism development respects and protects the very assets it depends upon.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SCO10 Education & Skills</p>	<p>Recognising the important link between education and skills and employment opportunities, it is necessary to continue to improve the opportunities for education and skills within the County and to further develop Wicklow County Campus Centre of Excellence as a third level education facility for enterprise, education, training, research and development.</p>