
Chapter 2

Need for the Proposed Development

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) details the need for the proposed River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge, as outlined in current planning policy. This introductory section provides an overview of the key policies which support the proposed development. These policies are then described in detail in Section 2.2.

2.1.1 Need for the Scheme

The need to improve access to sustainable transport options and encourage walking and cycling is set out in European, national and regional planning policy. Set in this wider policy context, the need for the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge is specifically identified in Ireland 2040 Our Plan (2018), The Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Scheme (2018), Waterford City Development Plan (2013-2019), Waterford Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study (2004), and the Waterford North Quays Urban Design Framework Plan (2008). The proposed development will form a sustainable transport link over the River Suir, connecting Waterford City Centre with the Waterford North Quays SDZ and the Ferrybank area.

2.1.2 Existing Scenario

Development in Waterford City is currently primarily focused on the south side of the River Suir, with Rice Bridge being the only crossing of the River Suir in Waterford City centre. The North Quays comprise an assembly of wharves consisting of disused open spaces. A view towards the south from the North Quays is presented in Plate 2.1. The North Quays were designated as a SDZ by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2016 and a Planning Scheme was published and adopted by Waterford City and County Council in 2018. The Planning Scheme sets out a vision for the redevelopment of the North Quays and objectives with which future planning applications for the SDZ must be compliant.



Plate 2.1 Current view of the proposed bridge location from the North Quays SDZ looking south

2.2 Policy Background

2.2.1 General

The need for the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge has been identified in, and/or is consistent with, the following European, national, regional and local planning policy documents:

European Policy Context

- European Union (EU) Cycling Strategy, 2017; and
- EuroVelo.

National Policy Context

- Ireland 2040 Our Plan, National Planning Framework, 2018;
- The National Spatial Strategy, 2002 – 2020;
- Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future, 2009 – 2020;
- National Cycle Policy Framework, 2009-2020;
- Building on Recovery - Infrastructure and Capital Investment, 2016 – 2021;
- Investing In Our Transport Future: A Strategic Framework For Investment in Land Transport; and
- Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan, 2018-2027.

Regional Policy Context

- Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region, 2010-2022;
- The Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme, 2014-2020; and
- The South East Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS), 2013-2023

Local Policy Context

- Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme, 2018;
- Waterford City Development Plan, 2013-2019;
- Waterford County Development Plan, 2011-2017;
- Waterford Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study (PLUTS) 2004;
- Waterford North Quays Urban Design Framework Plan, 2008;
- Ferrybank – Bellview Local Area Plan, 2017;
- Kilkenny County Development Plan, 2014-2020;
- Waterford City Centre Urban Renewal Scheme, 2015;
- Economic Strategy for Waterford City and County, 2013; and
- One Waterford: Local Economic & Community Plan, 2015-2020

2.2.2 European Policy Context

EU Cycling Strategy, 2017

The EU Cycling Strategy consolidates a systematic review of all EU policies related to cycling, reviewing the current state of cycling in the European Union and providing a cycling implementation plan including recommendations addressed to the European level, complemented by recommendations to the national and regional/local level.

These regional and local level recommendations include:

- Develop and maintain regional and local cycle route networks;
- Develop safe cycle routes to schools, city centres and business areas;
- Segregate cyclists from other traffic where there is high speed/high volume motorised traffic, or otherwise create safe conditions on roads where cyclists mix with motorised vehicles;
- Develop and maintain national cycle route networks;
- Develop and maintain regional and local cycle route networks; and
- Develop the current and future industrial areas, as well as good connections with harbours and other transport modes.

In achieving a shift in mobility culture, the strategy requires EU cities to convince decision-makers to support cycling; encourage people to cycle more; and facilitate the cooperation among road users for safer cycling.

The strategy includes four central objectives for the timeframe of the document:

- Grow cycle use by 50% at an average across the EU;
- Halve rates for killed and seriously injured cyclists (in km cycled);
- Invest €3 billion in cycling in the period 2021 – 2027, and €6 billion from 2028 – 2034; and
- At a qualitative level, it is strongly advised that cycling is treated as an equal partner in the mobility system.

The provision of a sustainable transport bridge connecting to the Rosslare Greenway will support and contribute towards achieving the above regional and local recommendations in addition to contributing towards the four European-wide central objectives within the timeframe of the document.

EuroVelo

EuroVelo is the European cycle route network developed and coordinated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) which is envisaged to be complete by 2020. 14 routes have been outlined, consisting of over 70,000km of cycle routes, connecting the whole continent. The objectives of the EuroVelo are:

- to ensure the implementation of very high quality European-grade cycle routes in all countries of Europe, to carry the best European practice across borders and, as such, harmonise standards;
- to communicate the existence of these routes to decision makers and potential users, to promote and market their use, and to provide an important port of call for information about cycling in Europe; and
- in this way, to encourage large numbers of European citizens to give cycling a try, and in doing so promote a shift to healthy and sustainable travel – for daily trips and cycling tourism.

The EuroVelo Route 1 - Atlantic Coast Route is one of the 14 proposed routes which runs from northern Norway to Portugal and will comprise 9,100km. The proposed development would support this EU goal, providing a link between the developed Waterford Greenway and the developed cycling route with EuroVelo signs through the south coast of Wexford from Rosslare Harbour to Kilmore to Fethard to Ballyhack, as presented in yellow in Plate 2.2.



Plate 2.2 EuroVelo route 'under development' through Waterford and Wexford

2.2.3 National Policy Context

Ireland 2040 Our Plan – National Planning Framework, 2018

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government’s plan to cater for the additional people that will be living and working in Ireland and the half a million extra homes that will be needed by 2040. It focuses on growing our regions, cities, towns and villages and rural fabric; building more accessible urban centres of scale; and better outcomes for communities and the environment through more effective and coordinated planning, investment and delivery.

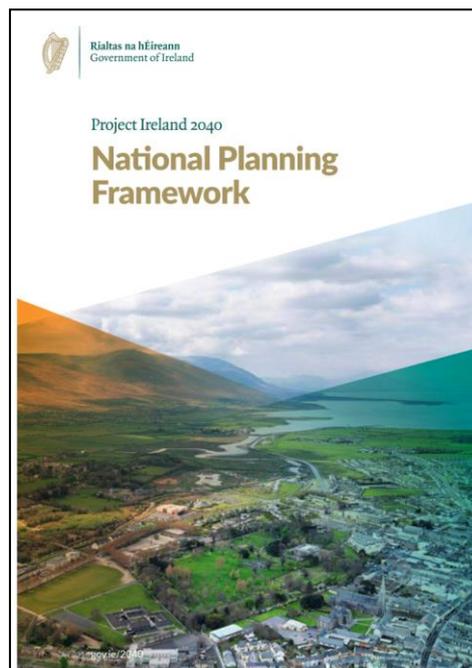


Plate 2.3 National Planning Framework, 2018

Waterford is the principal urban centre in Ireland’s south-east and is unique in having a network of large and strong regional urban centres in close proximity that complement the role of Waterford. The NPF stresses that a stronger Waterford City would lead to economic recovery for the wider south-east which has experienced slower economic recovery than the national average in recent years, together with high unemployment rates, lower value job opportunities and less job creation. To enable future growth, the NPF has proposed the following key enablers:

- *“Delivering the North Quays SDZ regeneration project for integrated, sustainable development together with supporting infrastructure, including a **new pedestrian bridge or a pedestrian/ public transport bridge over the River Suir**; and*
- *Provision of Citywide public transport and strategic cycleway networks.”*

As quoted above, the NPF directly calls for a new pedestrian/public transport bridge over the River Suir to support the North Quays SDZ. The bridge will also contribute to the objective to provide citywide strategic cycleway networks. The NPF also aims to achieve sustainable mobility through the following public transport objectives:

- Expand attractive public transport alternatives to car transport to reduce congestion and emissions and enable the transport sector to cater for the demands associated with longer term population and employment growth in a sustainable manner; and
- Develop a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in metropolitan areas to address travel needs and to provide similar facilities in towns and villages where appropriate.

The NPF also highlights that recent census results show major increases in the proportions of people travelling by bicycle and walking where investment is made in enhanced active travel pedestrian and cycle facilities and where streets are made safer and more attractive. Proposals to develop green networks and infrastructure include the implementation of planning transport strategies for the five Irish cities, Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, and other urban areas with a major focus on improving walking and cycling routes including continuous urban greenway networks and targeted measures to enhance permeability and connectivity.

The NPF also sets out National Policy Objectives with the aim of achieving healthy communities. National Policy Objective 28 seeks to:

“Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by integrating physical activity facilities for all ages, particularly prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed future development, in all settlements.”

The proposed River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will provide walking and cycling facilities and an electric shuttle bus service for communities in the Ferrybank and Bellfield areas to access Waterford City centre. The proposal will also provide access to the North Quay SDZ from Waterford City centre. The proposed bridge will reduce the need for car dependence and will encourage residents to make healthy choices and live healthier lives through the provision of supporting infrastructure.

National Spatial Strategy 2002 - 2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020 is a planning strategy designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. The strategy focuses on people, places and building communities. It recognises that through closer matching of where people live with where they work, Ireland will be able to sustain: -

- A better quality of life for people;
- A strong, competitive economic position; and
- An environment of the highest quality.

County Waterford is located in the South East Region of the NSS, which also covers Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South and Wexford, as illustrated in Plate 2.4. Waterford

City is identified as the Gateway of the South East Region. The Gateway is supported by the towns of Kilkenny and Wexford as Hubs, and development in surrounding and adjacent towns. Plates 2.4 and 2.5 show the Gateway and Hubs identified for the South East region by the NSS.

The NSS states that balanced regional development needs to enhance the attractiveness of areas for people. It is proposed that physical and cultural liveliness will be required to ensure that there is a combination of attractive social and cultural facilities for both people and business at the Waterford Gateway. These facilities can be achieved through creating:

“...opportunities for consolidating Waterford City around the River Suir, with particular emphasis on the possibilities for developing the North Docks precinct”

The proposed development is supported by the NSS in terms of the connectivity between the north and south quays of Waterford City whilst aiding the development of the North Quays.



Plate 2.4 National Spatial Strategy South East Region

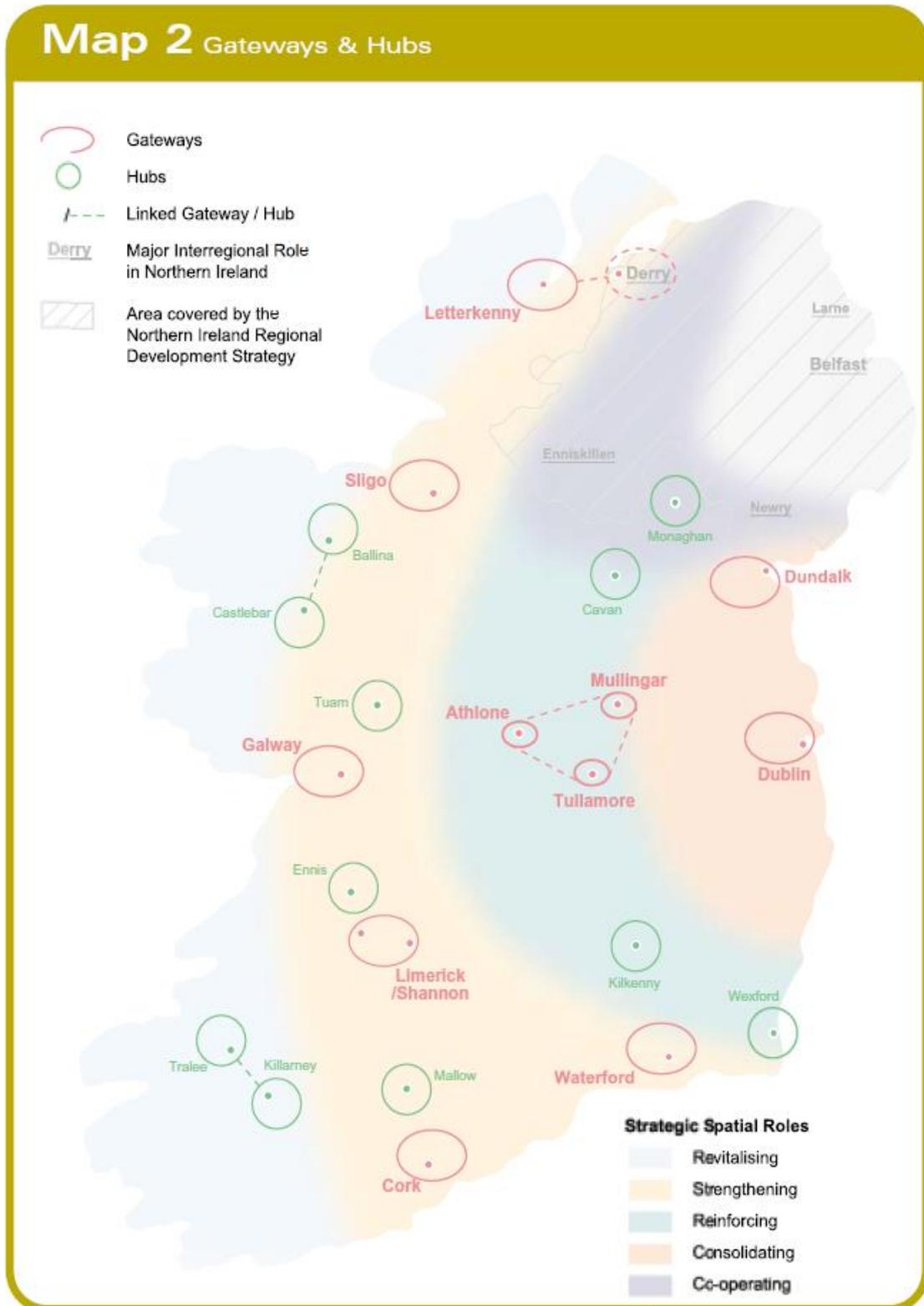


Plate 2.5 National Spatial Strategy Gateways & Hubs

Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 - 2020

Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future presents a transport policy framework for Ireland covering the period up to 2020. The policy, launched by the Department of Transport in 2009, sets out a vision, goals and targets to be achieved, and outlines 49 actions that form the basis of achieving a more sustainable transport future.

Despite the much needed investment promoted through Transport 21, congestion will intensify, transport emissions will increase, economic competitiveness will suffer and quality of life will decline unless sustainable transport policies are adopted.

The Smarter Travel policy document sets out five key goals as follows:

- Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and, in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport;
- Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks;
- Minimise the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car; and
- Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels

The policy document sets out 49 Actions identified to achieve these key goals. The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge supports a number of the 49 actions contained within the Smarter Travel Policy, and is neutral with the remaining actions as detailed in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Smarter Travel Action Compliance Assessment

Action Number	Compliance	Comments
1	Supportive	Provision of a new pedestrian and cycle facility promotes walking and cycling to access community facilities and public transport.
2	Supportive	Provision of a new pedestrian and cycle facility, with direct access to Waterford City, supports the integration of land use planning.
3	Supportive	The provision of the proposed bridge is supportive of Action 3 and is supportive of the Waterford PLUTS 2004.
4	Supportive	The provision of a new pedestrian and cycle facility is supportive of Action 4 in promoting more sustainable travel patterns, such as cycling, walking and connecting proposed relocated train station.
5	Neutral	The proposal will not impact on e-working targets for the public sector.
6	Neutral	The proposal will not impact on establishment of e-working centres.
7	Supportive	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will provide a segregated safe route for pedestrians and cyclists from Waterford City to Ferrybank and from Ferrybank and Bellfield to Waterford City, thereby assisting in facilitating access to the schools. The resultant reduction in traffic volumes using Rice Bridge will also assist improving the road safety within the area for vulnerable road users and provide the platform for future enhancements to pedestrian and cycle amenities in Waterford City centre.
8	Supportive	The proposal will provide a dedicated safe route for vulnerable road users that allows for the connection of housing developments and the city centre, supporting a modal shift to non-motorised forms of transport for commuting to workplaces. It will not directly influence workplace travel plans.

Action Number	Compliance	Comments
9	Neutral	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the promotion of personalised travel plans.
10	Neutral / Supportive	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the promotion of freight policy. The resultant reduction in congestion on Rice Bridge, along Dock Road and along the South Quay will improve the efficiency of road based freight traffic through this area of Waterford City.
11	Neutral	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the implementation of fiscal measures aimed at reducing car use.
12	Supportive	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will reduce the current congestion experienced along Dock Road, Rice Bridge and the South Quay and will thereby improve conditions for the operation of local road based public transport.
13	Supportive	This action is in relation to the provision of a bus service in urban areas. The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will comprise a regular bus service and as such the implementation of the proposed bridge will have a supportive impact on this action.
14	Supportive	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will allow the connectivity of the Waterford Greenway and the proposed New Ross to Waterford Greenway and will therefore promote the implementation of sustainable transport modes for smaller urban areas.
15	Highly Supportive	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge supports Action 15, through the provision of dedicated high quality safe shared pedestrian and cycling facilities linking Waterford City and surrounding housing estates. The proposed bridge will also link the Waterford Greenway with the proposed New Ross to Waterford Greenway. The reduction in vehicular traffic volumes along Dock Road, Rice Bridge and the South Quay will afford the opportunity to implement environmental improvement measures within Waterford City to improve the existing cycling infrastructure.
16	Highly Supportive	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge supports Action 16, through the provision of dedicated high quality, safe, shared pedestrian and cycling facilities linking Waterford City and surrounding housing estates. The reduction in vehicular traffic volumes along Dock Road, Rice Bridge and the South Quay will afford the opportunity to implement environmental improvement measures within Waterford City to improve the existing cycling infrastructure.
17	Supportive	The implementation of the proposed bridge as a link to the Waterford Greenway and the New Ross to Waterford Greenway support Action 17 in providing greater access to these recreation facilities.
18	Neutral	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the establishment of a car sharing website and initiatives.
19	Neutral	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the establishment of car club schemes.

Action Number	Compliance	Comments
20	Neutral	Due to the potentially reduced traffic through this area of Waterford City centre as a result of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge, the implementation of priority schemes for other forms of motorised transport including mopeds and segways can be investigated.
21	Neutral	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the implementation of integrated ticketing systems on the public transport network.
22	Supportive	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will provide improved access to Waterford Train Station and Waterford Bus Station for pedestrians and cyclists, thereby providing greater connectivity for non-motorised users.
23	Supportive	The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will include pedestrian phases to all traffic signal controlled junctions providing priority for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposal will provide improved access to public transport for non-motorised users.
24	Neutral	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the implementation of an on-line integrated journey planner.
25	Highly Supportive	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge is supportive of Action 25 through the implementation of a new dedicated, segregated, safe walking and cycling route within Waterford City, linking the city centre with the North Quay SDZ and surrounding housing estates. The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will also provide economic benefits to Waterford City, through alleviation of the continued reliance on the single crossing of the River Suir in Waterford City centre.
26	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the restructuring of the air navigation system in Europe and Ireland.
27	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the public service obligation for regional air transport services.
28	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the maritime transport sector emissions.
29	Supportive	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will alleviate some of the traffic using Dock Road, Rice Bridge and the South Quays, thereby assisting the movement of goods by providing relief to the congestion currently experienced in this area.
30	Supportive	The provision of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport which will lead to a reduction in CO ₂ emissions.
31	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact meeting the 10% target for Bio-fuels by 2020.
32	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact in meeting the 10% target for electric vehicle technology by 2020.

Action Number	Compliance	Comments
33	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the implementation of fuel efficient vehicle fleets in the public sector.
34	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the implementation of VRT and Motor Tax systems.
35	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact the Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) initiatives to introduce energy efficient technologies to the transport sector.
36	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on efficient driving module of the national driver test and implementation of on-board technologies to encourage eco-driving behaviour.
37	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact the introduction of a Sustainable Travel and Transport Bill. The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will however support sustainable modes of transport through the provision of a new pedestrian and cycle facility.
38	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the interdepartmental working group.
39	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the establishment of the National Sustainable Travel Office.
40	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the establishment of the Dublin Transportation Authority.
41	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not support the Greater Dublin Area Transportation Strategy.
42	Supportive	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge supports the objectives of the Waterford PLUTS and the Waterford County Development Plan and will assist in modal shifts of behaviour through the provision of safe segregated pedestrian and cycle facilities connecting the city centre to surrounding housing developments.
43	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will not impact on the sustainable transport initiatives between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
44	Supportive	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport will assist in delivering a modal shift of transport to more sustainable forms of transport through the provision of a dedicated, segregated, safe route for pedestrians and cyclists to access the city centre, the Waterford Greenway and Waterford bus station and Waterford train Station from the housing developments on the north and south of the river, affording the opportunity to further improve pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities.
45	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport will not impact on the training of local authority staff and result in the introduction of sustainable travel components to a course at third level institutions.

Action Number	Compliance	Comments
46	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport will not impact on the introduction of branding to support the concept of smarter travel.
47	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport will not impact on the introduction of fund to support innovative sustainable travel projects.
48	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport will not have an impact on the introduction of a national travel, transport and mobility household survey.
49	Neutral	The implementation of the River Suir Sustainable Transport will not have an impact on the biennial reporting on the progress of the Smarter Travel Policy.

National Cycle Policy Framework, 2009 – 2020

The vision of the National Cycle Policy Framework is to create a strong cycling culture in Ireland, to the extent that by 2020, 10% of all trips will be by bike. It is hoped that encouraging cycling will provide an improved quality of life with benefits including better air quality, improved health including mental health, stronger communities and more sociable and vibrant streets. The modern approach to mobility is to provide more options, so transport options can be combined, using bicycles for some trips.

Proposed interventions are divided into hard and soft measures. Hard measures consist of engineering measures, planning and infrastructure such as permeable developments, cycling-friendly transportation infrastructural designs, removing cyclist-unfriendly systems, a focus on schools and integrating cycling and public transport. Soft measures are based on education and communication, using marketing tools to drive behavioural change in cyclists and road users. The fiscal benefits of cycling include the value to the health service due to increased activity, better productivity in the workforce and less congestion in urban areas. The National Cycle Policy Framework aims to provide appropriate levels of, and timely, funding towards its implementation.

The proposed development will support the hard measures of this plan, providing an opportunity for behavioural change. The location of the proposed development will ensure integration of cycling and public transport, providing a link between the proposed transportation hub as part of the North Quays SDZ and the bus station on the South Quay.

Building on Recovery - Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016 – 2021

Building on Recovery is the Capital Plan that presents the Government's framework for infrastructure investment in Ireland over the period from 2016 to 2021.

It states that the "...*Capital Plan is a high level financial and budgetary framework. It is not part of the physical planning process*". It goes on to state that "*The Exchequer transport capital allocation is largely framed by the recommendations and priorities set out in the recently published Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport. These priorities are threefold: to maintain and renew the strategically important elements of the existing land transport system; to address urban congestion; and to improve the efficiency and safety of existing transport networks*".

The Capital Plan combines direct investment by the Exchequer of €27 billion and investment from the wider semi-state sector, including Public-Private Partnerships

(PPPs) of €42 billion. The Exchequer and PPP component is primarily targeted at addressing priority needs in transport, education, housing and health care. The Plan also confirms the Exchequer Programme will provide support to proposals to develop and regenerate Waterford City's North Quays to support jobs and tourism in the region, when details are finalised. The River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge, as proposed by the Waterford North Quays Planning Scheme, will play a large role in the regeneration of the North Quays, providing connectivity through from Ferrybank to Waterford City centre.

The Capital Plan has committed €100 million to smarter travel and carbon reduction measures, including greenways, to ensure that the transport sector makes a major contribution to climate change mitigation targets. Encouraging public transport alternatives to private vehicular options is a key element in reducing Ireland's carbon emissions, by providing a viable, less polluting alternative to car and road transport. By creating a new pedestrian/cycle/public transport link between the North and South Quays, a high quality, safe alternative to the private car will be provided for commuters between Waterford City centre and surrounding areas such as Ferrybank, Bellfield and the proposed North Quays SDZ. Due to the proposed relocation of the Waterford train station to Dock Road as part of the SDZ proposal, the proposed development will impact on a wider range of commuters, creating an essential link between the proposed transport hub and Waterford City centre.

Investing in Our Transport Future – A Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport

The Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT) which was published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) outlines the key principles against which national and regional, comprehensive and single mode based plans and programmes will be drawn up and assessed. The framework does not set out a list of projects to be prioritised, however the following three priorities are noted in terms of investment:

- Priority 1 – Achieve steady state maintenance;
- Priority 2 – Address urban congestion; and
- Priority 3 – Maximise the value of the road network.

In terms of Priority 2, the report states that “*measures should include: Improved and expanded walking and cycling infrastructure. Investment in improving the quality and time competitiveness of alternatives to the car often play an important role as a driver of modal shift and should be supported.*” The implementation of these projects in conjunction with supportive spatial planning policies is also encouraged, in securing investment.

In terms of Priority 3, the report states that “the value of the road network will be maximised through targeted investments that:

- in the case of roads, provide access to poorly served regions, for large-scale employment proposals, to complete missing links and to address critical safety issues; and
- support identified national and regional spatial planning priorities.

The proposed River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will support the objectives of the SFLIT by providing a sustainable transport alternative to the private car and improving connectivity to and within the Ferrybank, Bellfield, North Quays SDZ and Waterford City.

Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan 2018 – 2027

The Government published Ireland's National Development Plan 2018 – 2027 (NDP) to drive long term economic, environmental and social progress in Ireland over the next decade. The National Development Plan is integrated with the NPF.

In relation to Waterford, the NDP recognises the Waterford North Quays SDZ regeneration project as a potential project for receiving funding from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The proposed development will play a crucial part in facilitating this redevelopment and is included in the objectives of the North Quays Planning Scheme. The NDP also recognises that a number of sustainable transport projects will be delivered in Waterford to provide sustainable travel options including urban cycling and walking routes.

The location of the proposed bridge will encourage the switch from private car and will encourage sustainable modes of transport, thereby alleviating congestion and helping to meet climate action objectives.

2.2.4 Regional Policy Context

Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022

The South-East Region covers Waterford City and Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. Covering approximately 13.5% of the state, the region was home to about 11% of the population (460,838) in 2006 at the time of publishing. The Regional Planning Guidelines provide a strategic planning framework for the South-East Region with the objective of implementing the NSS at regional level and achieving balanced regional development.

With regards to transportation, the long-term objective of the South-East Regional Authority is to '*achieve balanced regional development through the development of an integrated sustainable transport system involving road, rail, air, sea, bus, cycling and walking*'. The Regional Authority supports the development of dedicated walkways and cycleways such as 'Slí na Sláinte' and 'Greenways' in urban and rural areas, e.g. along the trackbeds of former railway lines. Emphasis will be given to provision of safer cycling and pedestrian routes to schools and a safer environment in the immediate vicinity of schools, where opportunities arise.

The regional planning guidelines have been adopted by the authority for the south-eastern region and they are based on implementing the policies in the Government Policy '*Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future*'.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 contain the following policies for sustainable infrastructure;

PPO 5.8 It is an objective of the Regional Authority:

- *To support walking and cycling as the mode of first choice for journeys up to 7 kilometres;*
- *To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of cycling and walking facilities in the region, including development of 'Slí na Sláinte' and 'Greenways' in urban and rural areas;*
- *To promote the development of cycling by the construction and improvement of cycle links within the region. Where cycle links are proposed adjacent to designated Natura 2000 sites, Appropriate Assessment Screening will be required in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive;*

- *To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in towns, at neighbourhood centres, at public facilities such as schools and libraries and in all new developments;*
- *To support the sustainable development of the inter-urban National Cycle Network so that the majority of the network is off-road;*
- *To promote the objectives of the Department of Transport's National Cycle Policy Framework in the development of cycling facilities;*
- *To comply with the 'European Charter of Pedestrian Rights' in order to improve facilities for pedestrians and access to such facilities for people with disabilities. PPO 5.9 The Regional Authority will support measures to prioritise improved pedestrian use and traffic calming and cycling facilities as part of an integrated approach to the sustainable management of movement.*

The proposed development will provide and facilitate the sustainable development of segregated cycling and walking facilities in a manner consistent with this regional policy.

The Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014 - 2020

The Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 was prepared in co-operation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders as required under Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation and as detailed in the 'Code of Conduct on Partnership' which is intended to support and facilitate Member States and Managing Authorities in the implementation of the partnership principle.

Priority 5. Sustainable Integrated Urban Development had an allocation of €52 million with the priority objectives to: 1) support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres and 2) to revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies. The Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme under Priority 5 has an objective to increase the number of integrated urban regeneration initiatives to improve the urban environment and revitalise urban areas. The Waterford Gateway project is funded by the Grant Scheme which is financed under the European Regional Development Fund co-funded Southern and Eastern Regional Programme. The Waterford City project will entail carrying out high quality accessible public realm improvements and balance transport modes. It will improve access and encourage the proposed new retail shopping initiative at the southern end of the retail spine to improve the city's retail offer. Together with regeneration of substantial brownfield sites in the city centre, an urban mobility plan will give priority to sustainable modes of transport. The proposed development supports the Programme as it will improve accessibility, promotes sustainable mobility and will regenerate the surrounding area.

The South East Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS) 2013 – 2023

This strategy is an Action Plan for the south east arising from the Joint Committee on Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, in response to the unemployment crisis in the region. The objective of the strategy is to identify the economic needs of the southeast, prioritising the urban centres, recognising disparities, addressing geographical inequalities and driving balanced regional development.

The aim is to focus on the Southeast's key strengths in tourism, developing a critical mass of expertise through improved educational attainment, delivery of a Technological University and strong research and development. The strategy aims to maximise the potential of existing key assets such as the two ports of national

significance (Rosslare and Waterford), the regional airport and develop a regional transport hub that aligns road, rail and port infrastructure.

The proposed development will enhance economic development within the Southeast region, providing connectivity and access between Waterford City centre and the proposed transport hub that is proposed as part of the North Quays SDZ. This will aid the development of the North Quays as a Key Strategic Site, which will provide employment through mixed use developments.

2.2.5 Local Policy Context

Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme 2018

The Planning Scheme for the Waterford North Quays SDZ was prepared by Waterford City and County Council for the site which was designated by the Government as a SDZ in January 2016. The Planning Scheme outlines a vision and principal goals for the development and includes Specific Objectives under the headings of; Physical and Social Infrastructure, Planning Strategy, Architectural Strategy and Actions and Implementation.

An access strategy is included within the Planning Scheme, ensuring the future demands for travel are met in a sustainable way (see Plate 2.6). The strategy of the scheme is to limit car usage by making alternative modes of transport more accessible and attractive. A sustainable transport bridge capable in width to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and a public bus is proposed from the North Quay to the South Quay in the vicinity of the Clock Tower on the South Quay. The bridge is proposed to provide direct access to the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists, a vital link in the connection of the Waterford Greenway to the proposed New Ross to Waterford Greenway and an opportunity for the retail sector in the city to operate a courtesy bus which would connect the North and South Quays. The bridge is regarded as a critical piece of enabling infrastructure and is required to have an opening centre section to allow the continuing use of the river by marine traffic.

The proposed development fully satisfies the requirements of the Planning Scheme and will promote a modal shift away from the private car. The proposed bridge will support the following Specific Objectives:

PSI 1: To develop and promote a modal shift away from the private car use towards increased use of a sustainable integrated multi modal transportation network to include walking, cycling public transport integrating bus and rail infrastructure. All future planning applications shall demonstrate how they seek to implement the actions contained in the Government's "Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020".

PSI 2: To support and facilitate the development of an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport modes, to serve the existing and future needs of all ages in association with relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders and to facilitate the integration of walking and cycling with public transport.

PSI 4: To provide a cycle and sustainable transport bridge across the river to form part of strategic cycling and walking routes.

PSI 5: To create and support a well-designed network of pedestrian infrastructure to promote and facilitate walking and cycling; provide priority for pedestrians and cyclists within the North Quays and linking with the surrounding walking and cycling networks in Waterford/Kilkenny environs, including the Waterford/New Ross Greenway.



Plate 2.6 Access Strategy of the Waterford North Quays Planning Scheme

Waterford City Development Plan 2013 – 2019

Chapter 5 of the Waterford City Development Plan – City Centre, outlines a number of objectives focused on protecting the role of the city centre and supporting its expansion as an economic force and capital of the region. The plan outlines the opportunity for the dynamic transformation of the area and waterfront and the need for redevelopment of the North and South Quays which would in turn, revitalise the river landscape by sustainably integrating everyday city life with the river.

The Plan outlines a number of objectives regarding a pedestrian crossing of the River Suir. The following objectives are contained within the plan:

- To provide an appropriately designed and constructed pedestrian river crossing located in the vicinity of the Clock Tower to provide accessibility to the North Quays and facilitate future development. (OBJ 6.2.7)
- Investigate the feasibility of provision of an open span bridge facilitating a light public transport system in the vicinity of Reginald's Tower linking up with future development on the north quays. The provision of such a looped transport system in the City is desirable. There is an option for such a looped transport system also being facilitated via a new pedestrian bridge at the Clock Tower as per the North Quays Urban Design Framework. (OBJ 6.2.8)
- To expand the network to connect the city centre to any proposed North Quay development with a foot/cycle bridge. (OBJ 6.2.2)

Other objectives which the proposed development would support include:

- To facilitate the development of an accessible city centre, with particular reference to persons with disabilities, pedestrians and cyclists and to improve the availability of public transport, and short-term parking, within easy reach of the central area. (POL 5.4.6)
- To provide a citywide cycle network to link all areas of the city to each other via main routes. Existing and proposed extension of the city's cycle network is also outlined on the zoning objectives map. The proposed network is both radial and orbital, with some elements located off street in amenity areas. (OBJ 6.2.1)
- To provide cycle and walking networks between neighbourhood areas, further negating the need for car based journeys. (OBJ 6.2.4)

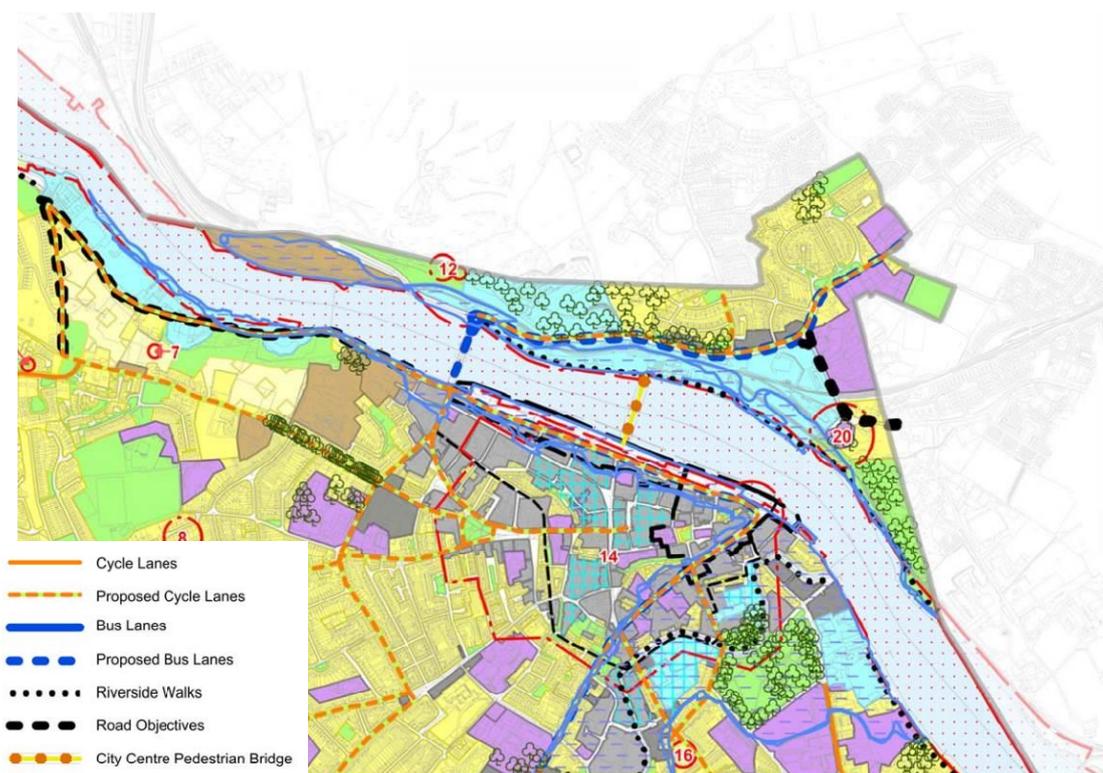


Plate 2.7 Proposed location of the City Centre Pedestrian Bridge (Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019)

Waterford County Development Plan 2011 – 2017

The Waterford County Development Plan is largely in favour of promoting walking and cycling connections throughout the urban and rural areas of Waterford. The following policies and objectives are included in the plan and are supportive of the proposed development:

- Policy ECD 22 It is the policy of the Council to continue to promote and facilitate, where possible, the provision of high quality walking and cycling routes in Waterford.
- Policy ECD 23 It is the policy of the Council to promote Waterford as the “Walking Capital of Ireland.”
- Policy INF 14 To implement the smarter travel policy framework as produced by the Department of Transport and to encourage the sustainable creation of cycle and pedestrian friendly communities through the provision of cycle paths and other initiatives to curtail the dependency on private motor vehicles whilst seeking to minimise the depletion of the hedgerow resource that could potentially arise from cycle path provision.
- Objective INF 5 It is the objective of the Council to support the policies of the ‘National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020-Smarter Travel’, Department of Transport, April 2009 while ensuring that any environmental effects of the implementation of the policies are fully assessed and adequately mitigated.
- Objective INF 6 It is the objective of the Council to promote the sustainable development of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling facilities in the towns and villages, to minimise the dependence on private motor vehicles, and to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. New and upgraded road developments will be encouraged to integrate cycle lanes. These will include urban/village developments and short distance routes.

- Objective INF 7 Require planning applications for residential, commercial, retail, community, educational and industrial developments to demonstrate the proposal's accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. The Council will also seek the provision of appropriate, well-designed pedestrian ways for residential development proposals to link with amenities and facilities. Such proposals shall adhere to the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG May2009).
- Policy INF 15 The Council encourages a high quality of design and layout proposals within urban areas, which strive for universal accessibility for pedestrians, to provide adequate and convenient access to public transport and reduce the dependence on the private motor car.

Waterford Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study (PLUTS) 2004

The Waterford PLUTS 2004 was adopted by Waterford and Kilkenny Councils in 2004 in order to provide a vision and strategy for the development of Waterford City and Environs up to the year 2020. A key element of the Study is the achievement of critical mass to allow the city to reinforce and develop its role as the economic driver of the South-East region of Ireland. The key issues outlined are achieving critical mass, developing a compact, balanced city, integrating land use and transport, harnessing the excellence of the educational resource, utilising existing key assets and managing growth.

A key development challenge for Waterford and its environs according to the PLUTS is to fully harness its riverfront potential and the amenity of the river in the city as a central focus for the development of a new Irish urban experience. The North Quays are identified as a primary redevelopment area, with a proposed new city centre bridge for pedestrians and cyclists and the provision of a new rail platform on the North Quays as part of a public transport interchange. The Study includes the proposed bridge as a relevant transportation feature:

“A new city centre bridge for pedestrians and cyclists which will link the redeveloped North Quays with the existing City Centre”

An efficient and sustainable transport system has a key role to play in easing and improving accessibility and mobility within a compact urban area, while in the short-term, growth is recommended to be provided through more river linkages including the supply of a choice of transport modes that promote public transport including bus, rail, cycling and walking. The Study aims to maximise segregated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and the proposed River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will provide a key pedestrian and cycle link between the north and south quays. The PLUTS highlights that any master plan for the North Quays must investigate the feasibility of providing the bridge in conjunction with the development.

The proposed development will satisfy the proposals outlined in the PLUTS by providing a bridge for pedestrians and cyclists, easing and improving accessibility between the city centre and the future redevelopment of the North Quays through an additional river crossing.

Waterford North Quays Urban Design Framework Plan (2008)

The Urban Design Framework was designed by Waterford City Council to develop a broad vision, basic development concepts, integrated framework plan, key urban design guidelines and measures for implementation for the North Quays area of the City.

A new City Centre bridge exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists linking the redeveloped North Quays with the existing City Centre is a principal feature of the Plan. The potential for the bridge to facilitate a light city centre public transport loop is also to be investigated. The bridge is said to enable the expansion of the main street and space structure of the city centre by providing new connections to the north quays, Ferrybank and the larger environs. It will also provide a vital link between the pedestrian and cycle networks of the north and south sides of the river, and improving movement and access to the existing bus station. The development guidelines within the plan state that the proposed pedestrian bridge will be a key enabler of development, not only 'opening up' the area for development and associated footfall, but potentially serving as an icon for the area and the city. The design will be a crucial factor in overcoming access constraints arising from level differences.

The proposed development is a key enabler of the Waterford North Quays Urban Design Framework Plan and the proposed expansion of the City Centre.

Ferrybank – Belview Local Area Plan, 2017

The Ferrybank – Belview Local Area Plan (LAP) 2017 came into effect in January 2018. This LAP includes various transport objectives and outlines a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Ferrybank and Belview areas.

The LAP re-emphasises the PLUTS requirement for a “*new city centre bridge for pedestrians and cyclists which will link the redeveloped North Quays with the existing City Centre*”. The Plan also highlights that the Ferrybank/Belview area is in close proximity to Waterford City which “*means that many opportunities exist for the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport*”.

Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020

The Development Plan sets out Kilkenny County Council's policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county from 2014 to 2020. The Development Plan aims to implement the provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines and to target the growth of the Ferrybank/Belview area within the Waterford environs to advance sustainable development. The proposed development will assist with allowing the sustainable development objectives of the Plan to be realised by encouraging sustainable modes of transport. The proposed development will also allow South Kilkenny to grow by connecting the region with Waterford City centre.

Waterford City Centre Urban Renewal Scheme, 2015

The Urban Renewal Scheme outlines public realm upgrades, alterations to traffic circulation and urban realm improvements. Its Vision includes maximising the potential of the City Centre to continue to grow as a national and regional destination. The proposed development would complement and facilitate the urban renewal of this area and Waterford City through alleviating traffic along Rice Bridge, offering an alternative mode of transport to and from Waterford City and ensuring greater connectivity in the city.

Economic Strategy for Waterford City and County, 2013

The Economic Strategy identifies measures which include a series of interventions that will help to reposition Waterford as a top class micro city at European level and as the key driver of the South East Region. These interventions are designed to improve the economic performance of both Waterford and the South East Region to build a robust pathway of economic growth for Waterford and the South East. The Strategy recognises Waterford's strengths and weaknesses and develops a strategy accordingly. The proposed River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge will assist the

economic strategy reach its objectives by improving connectivity of Waterford City with residential areas in South Kilkenny and with the proposed North Quays Strategic Development Zone.

One Waterford: Local Economic & Community Plan, 2015-2020

The Plan identifies and delivers positive step changes that will deliver the economic and social transformation of Waterford, to grow the local and regional economy, strengthen Waterford's role as the regional leader of the South East, ensure that our communities are strong and engaged, and ensure that all people have an excellent quality of life. An objective of the plan is to revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment, including realising the economic potential of the North Quays by 2019. The proposed River Suir Sustainable Transport Bridge is necessary in order for these objectives to be realised.