

Chapter 6 Economic Development

6.0 Introduction

Ireland is currently in the midst of a global recession after a prolonged period of significant economic growth. Up until recently high economic growth in the County had facilitated high employment growth in a broad range of sectors with the construction industry experiencing unprecedented levels of growth.

With the decline in the construction industry, it is clear that there has been a structural shift in the County's economic drivers. For future employment, it is necessary that the Council continues to support and facilitate small indigenous and medium enterprises and to attract alternative key economic drivers into the County which have a more robust growth base. This shall have to be provided for through proactive and enabling policies and objectives that will facilitate the economic development of the County over the Plan period.



Council Enterprise Initiative

The South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 recognise that the types of industries that now offer long-term prospects for generating revenues are in the new technologies and knowledge based areas such as Information and Communications Technology, Medical Devices, Biotechnology, Pharmaceuticals, the Green Economy and Renewable Energy.

Policy ECD 1

To support sustainable economic development of the County by both building the indigenous enterprise sector and by continuing to attract foreign direct investment, particularly in emerging knowledge based sectors.

6.1 Waterford County Economic Profile

The economy of County Waterford traditionally depended on strong agricultural and manufacturing sectors. While building on these strengths, the County is restructuring its economy to higher value-

added activities in the pharmaceutical, life science, engineering and international business services sectors. The County is now host to a diverse cross section of retail, commercial and industrial businesses. Employment opportunities in the County cover a broad spectrum including; Bio-technology, ICT and engineering, manufacturing and processing, professional services, tourism and hospitality and local services.

6.2 Sustainable Economic Development



The County faces a number of challenges which include declining employment in agriculture, high dependence on manufacturing, and growth in the levels of commuting. Employment creation is dependent on economic development. It is the aim of the Council to maximise the strategic location of Waterford and to take full advantage of the economic development potential of the County in order to achieve balanced and sustainable patterns of growth through economic investment in jobs and services so as to sustain the future population of the County while recognising the need for diversity in the rural areas.

Policy ECD 2

It is a policy of the Council to support and facilitate, where possible, the County Waterford Economic Development Plan, or any revision of same.

Policy ECD 3

Support the designation of Waterford City as a Gateway and the strategic location of the County along the Atlantic corridor.

Policy ECD 4

Co-operate with the private sector and agencies such as IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, FÁS, Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford LEADER Partnership, Udarás na Gaeltachta and Waterford County Enterprise Board to help deliver the County's economic development priorities.

Policy ECD 5

Support, where appropriate, rural diversification and micro enterprises.

Policy ECD 6

Develop sustainable communities as attractive places to live and work.

Policy ECD 7

Address, where feasible, infrastructural deficiencies that may be hindering economic development and aim to ensure that sustainable infrastructural development precedes economic development.

It is important to ensure that new economic and employment opportunities are developed in tandem with the provision of new housing development, in order to provide sustainable travel patterns whereby people have the opportunity to live closer to work and reduce the need for commuting.

6.3 Labour Force

An important element in supporting and developing economic development is the availability of a skilled and well educated workforce. County Waterford is in close proximity to three of Ireland's third level institutions, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and University College Cork (UCC) with a total student population of 43,000. County Waterford is strategically located within the catchment of a well educated workforce and one of the priorities of this County Development Plan is to retain this workforce within the County through sustainable job creation and the development of a network of thriving communities as provided for by the County Settlement Strategy. The County Development Plan prioritises the development of academia in the County, specifically through Waterford Knowledge Campus and by supporting and facilitating third and fourth level programmes at an outreach basis.

In addition, County Waterford can attract high level skills from outside the region. A skills register was established by Waterford County Council through www.workinwaterford.ie.

Policy ECD 8

To assist in the provision of a well educated labour force by:

1. Facilitating and supporting, where possible, the further development and expansion of Waterford Institute of Technology and in particular the Waterford Knowledge Campus;
2. Supporting the development of a University in the South East Region; and
3. Support the provision of third and fourth level research in centres throughout the County on an outreach basis.

6.4 Employment Creation

One of the key objectives of the County Development Plan is to provide sustainable job creation by way of economic development and growth. There are a number of factors which come into play when attracting an industry into the County such as strategically located land banks, a



well educated workforce, high quality transport networks, excellent infrastructure, a good communication network etc. Over recent years, Waterford County Council has invested heavily in the provision of key infrastructure and zoning of additional employment lands. This has significantly improved the competitiveness of County Waterford as a business location. Furthermore, it is critical that the County can offer high quality places to reside, a network of strong communities and good educational and social facilities in order to attract people to live and work in Waterford.

Policy ECD 9

To continue to work in partnership with employment agencies and private enterprises in order to ensure continued job creation in Waterford County and to co-operate with higher education authorities as a means of supporting and encouraging Research & Development and knowledge-related industries in the County.

6.5 Location of Employment

There are a number of agencies whose responsibility it is to deliver/facilitate the delivery of jobs. In this regard, the Council has a critical role to play in ensuring that there are adequate appropriately zoned lands to facilitate such development.

The Planning Authority has addressed employment land uses within the following context:

- Strategic lands;
- Primary and Secondary Service Centres;
- District Service Centres; and
- Local Service Centres.

In the County Development Plan and the Lismore, Portlaw and Tramore Local Area Plans, there are lands zoned for Light Industry, Enterprise, Waterford Knowledge Campus, Biotechnology Park (Coolnamuck, Carrick-on-Suir) and a number of Special Use zones which allow for light industry or office use (at Baile na nGall, Portlaw and Lismore) or Master Plan areas (which makes provision for mixed use development, including light industrial and office located in Kilmeaden and Tramore).

There are approximately 265ha of land zoned for light industry in the County, of which approximately 186ha are undeveloped. There are approximately 195ha of undeveloped industrial land zoned in the County with Masterplan areas being provided for at Tramore and Kilmeaden, which may accommodate a mix of light industrial and offices, among other uses. There are additional lands zoned for industrial use in the Dungarvan Town Development Plan.

6.6 Strategic Lands

6.6.1 Waterford Knowledge Campus

Science, technology and knowledge driven enterprises have become increasingly important to economic success in a global society. Acknowledging this, the Council has zoned lands for the development of Waterford Knowledge Campus on a 163ha site on the outskirts of Waterford City. IDA Ireland, Waterford Institute of Technology and Enterprise Ireland are key partners with Waterford County Council in preparing a master plan and a strategic plan to develop a campus for this area where entrepreneurs, academics and foreign businesses will all co-locate, exchange ideas and ensure that businesses benefit from best practice and insight. This will be home to international business services financial services software and telecommunications and life science businesses of the future where skills will be a key ingredient to their success and profitability.



The Research and Innovation Centre at WIT's Carriganore Campus

6.6.2 Coolnamuck

The Council has zoned a strategic site for Bio-technology development at Coolnamuck on the outskirts of Carrick-on-Suir within the Waterford/Limerick Atlantic Gateway Corridor. It is proposed to develop a modern high-specification technology-based industrial park at this location within an attractive riverside and parkland setting to stimulate the economic development of this region.

6.6.3 Kilmeaden

Situated on the Atlantic Gateway Corridor, between Cork/Dungarvan and Waterford/Rosslare Port, Kilmeaden is within easy connection to the N24 and the M9, with easy access to Waterford Regional Airport. The Council has zoned strategic development lands, which encompass the Glanbia site, for economic development.

6.6.4 Waterford Regional Airport and Business Park

Waterford Regional Airport plays a critical role in the development of Waterford and the South East, in terms of accessibility, supporting economic development and tourism. Reflecting this, lands have been zoned at this location to facilitate the development and expansion of the Airport as '*Airport Area*' (To provide for Airport related activities including passenger terminal buildings and services, airside retail, hotel, airport infrastructure, hangerage, storage, maintenance and ancillary facilities, park & ride, transport, depot, training facilities, storage depot, warehouse, offices and light industrial/enterprise units) and Light Industry. A masterplan for the Airport and this Business Park is attached to Appendix A6.



Waterford Regional Airport & Business Park

Policy ECD 10

To ensure that the development of the strategic zoned lands at Butlerstown (Waterford Knowledge Campus), Coolnamuck (Bio-technology Park), Kilmeaden (Masterplan area), Dungarvan and Waterford Regional Airport are carried out in accordance with a Master Plan to be agreed with the Planning Authority. Any such Master Plan shall comply with the relevant policies and development management standards set out in Chapter 10 of this Plan and where required will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

6.6.5 Primary, Secondary and District Service Centres

The lands zoned for light industry and other related land use zones in the larger urban settlements of County Waterford have been provided to facilitate industrial development and encourage employment growth.



Industrial Units - Lismore

Policy ECD 11

To support and facilitate enterprise land banks within all District Service centres.

6.6.6 Local Service Centres and Settlement Nodes

It is envisaged that these centres will provide a lower range of employment opportunities for the local population. The Council shall also facilitate the appropriate expansion of existing industrial/employment facilities provided that such development does not significantly impact negatively on the surrounding environment.

Policy ECD 12

To facilitate the appropriate expansion of existing employment /industrial uses in Local Service Centres and settlement nodes and to support the sustainable development of small scale employment uses on appropriately zoned land within these settlements to provide sustainable local employment subject to meeting the development standards as set out in Chapter 10 of this Plan.

6.7 Rural Employment & Enterprise

Waterford is primarily a rural county and the Council recognises the importance of rural diversification in sustaining the local economy. There is significant scope to develop rural economies

by implementing a focused approach to rural economic development. A balance must be achieved which supports the development of enterprise/employment generation in rural areas, whilst protecting the character of the area and the sustaining the development of the enterprise/industrial lands designated within the settlements. The Council will support micro-enterprises and cottage style



industries in rural areas where they do not detract from the rural character of the area or have a significant negative effect on the surrounding environment or landuses.

Economic activity in the rural areas shall be assessed in terms of:

- Type of use;
- Scale of development;
- Suitability of development at the specific location;
- Traffic implications;
- Noise implications; and
- Adjoining landuses and impact on residential amenity.

Section 10.36 of the Development Standards of this Plan (Chapter 10) outlines the criteria for rural enterprises and the criteria to which any development proposal will have to adhere.

Policy ECD 13

To support and facilitate, where possible, appropriate and sustainable rural development, including the provision of farmers markets, subject to the Development Control Standards as set out in Chapter 10 of the Plan.

6.7.1 Agricultural Development Policy

The Planning Authority will support and facilitate sustainable agricultural developments and improvements where the developments are considered in relation to their likely impact on the

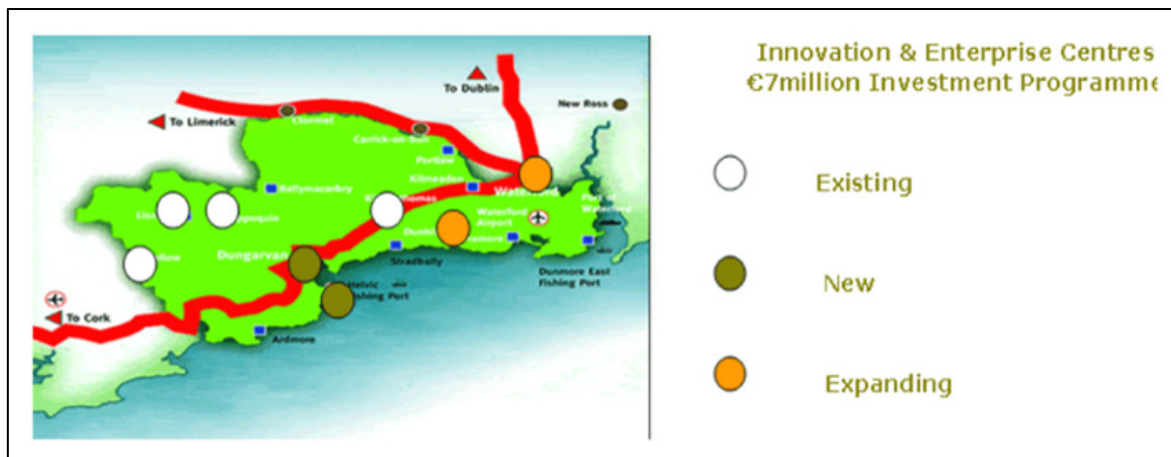
environment, landscape, character and amenity of the surrounding area (Refer to Section 10.2 Access).

The Council will normally permit development proposals for agricultural development where:

- (a) They are appropriate in nature and scale to the area in which they are located;
- (b) The proposal is necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding or enterprise;
- (c) Where the proposal involves the erection of buildings, there are no suitable redundant buildings on the farm holding which would accommodate the development;
- (d) The development is not visually intrusive in the local landscape and, where the proposal is for a new building(s) and there are no suitable redundant buildings, the proposal is sited adjacent to existing buildings and suitably visually integrated in the holding; and
- (e) The proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this Plan. Appropriate small-scale on-farm agricultural diversification will play an important role in retaining rural communities. These types of applications will be favourably considered where the scale and nature of the activity is appropriate to the location, and the proposal can be satisfactorily integrated into the rural landscape. Typical uses could include those such as the following, defined as examples of farm based diversification into non-agricultural activities in the CAP Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (p141):
 - Provision of tourism facilities. The type of facilities envisaged would be renovation of farm buildings for tourism purposes, walking, cycling, angling, pony trekking, bird watching etc;
 - Development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, specialty food provision, open farms etc;
 - Development of farm shops selling home/locally grown and manufactured products; and
 - Commercial development of allotments.

6.8 Enterprise Centres

A network of Community Enterprise Centres is being developed in County Waterford where activities such as software development, IT, commercial research and development, data processing and telemarketing will be fostered. Enterprise centres currently exist in Tallow, Dunhill, Kilmacthomas, Cappoquin, and the Innovation centre at WIT and Carriganore Campus. Additional Enterprise Centres are planned for Dungarvan and An Rinn. This will provide a network of centres for start-up businesses throughout County Waterford. These enterprise areas will require landscaping, design and environmental standards higher than those in standard industrial areas.



Policy ECD 14

To promote the sustainable development of Enterprise Areas as the primary location for the development of employment uses that are inappropriate to town centre locations and require environmental standards higher than those in industrial areas such as business parks or industrial estates. The development of inappropriate uses, such as light industry and retailing will not, normally be encouraged.

Objective ECD 1

To ensure that the highest standards of design, layout and hard and soft landscaping, including use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) where appropriate, are applied to new enterprise centres, and that pedestrian/cycling and public transport access is provided for.

6.9 Green Economy

It is anticipated that the Green Economy will yield significant results for businesses, particularly in rural areas. A range of opportunities exist in renewable energies for farmers, energy producers and businesses. In addition, the provision of renewable energy solutions will help attract globally mobile industries to County Waterford, as it provides a cheaper, cleaner solution that reduces the carbon footprint.

Policy ECD 15

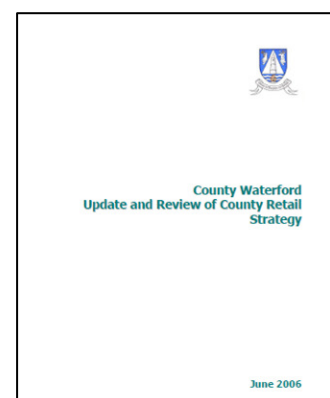
To facilitate appropriate renewable energy infrastructure and promote the use of renewable energy among businesses and households throughout Waterford County.

6.10 Retail

6.10.1 Retail Planning Guidelines

The Retail Planning Guidelines, which came into effect on 1st January 2001, were published as a response to the changing retail environment with the aim of producing an optimal spread of retail development accessible to the widest possible population. Further to changes in the sector and to address over restrictive guidance, the amended Retail Planning Guidelines (January 2005) removed the floorspace cap on retail warehouses within the functional areas of the four Dublin Local Authorities and in the other National Spatial Strategy Gateways.

The Waterford County Retail Strategy 2003 (which forms part of this Development Plan) was reviewed in 2005 and makes projections for retail floor space requirements for both convenience and comparison goods shopping up to 2011. The Retail Strategy highlighted that leakage of retail shopping (both convenience and comparison) from County Waterford is considerable and that this matter needs to be addressed through the implementation of the policies of the Strategy. It is envisaged that the Retail Strategy shall be updated during the lifetime of this Plan.



Objective: ECD 2

The Council shall have regard to the County Retail Strategy (or any revision of same) when guiding and regulating retail development in County Waterford.

6.10.2 County Retail Hierarchy

The purpose of the Retail Hierarchy is to indicate the role and importance of the various urban centres of the County in order to enable the Council to protect each centre's overall vitality and viability whilst allowing each centre to perform its overall function within the County's settlement hierarchy. Identifying key centres which can accommodate major retail floorspace assists the market by bringing certainty and thus improving the County's competitiveness.

County Retail Hierarchy	
Level/Retail Function	Centre
Level 1: County Town Centre	Dungarvan
Level 2: Sub County Town Centre	Tramore
Tier 1 Level 3: Town Centre	Dunmore East Lismore Cappoquin
Tier 2 Level 3: Town Centre	Kilmacthomas Portlaw Tallow
Level 4	All Other Local Service Centres
Level 5	All Settlement Nodes

Table 6.1 County Retail Hierarchy

In order to maintain the town/village centres' primacy in retailing, the Retail Planning Guidelines recommend applying the '*Sequential Approach*' in the determination of planning applications for retail development. This essentially recognises the importance of sustaining the retail importance, vitality and viability of town/village centres and ensuring that development takes place in an orderly fashion from the main core centre in an outwardly direction. Proposals for major retail schemes are required to select an appropriate site using the sequential approach as follows:

- In the first instance, the priority should be in locating new retail development within town/village centres;
- If town centre locations are not readily available within a reasonable and realistic timescale, then edge of centre sites should be looked to. In the Retail Planning Guidelines, these are defined as sites that are within 300m – 400m of the Core Retail Area; and

- Only after options for town centre and edge of centre are exhausted, should out of centre locations and sites be considered.

The core shopping area correlates with the Town/Village Centre zoning.

Policy ECD 16

To facilitate and encourage the development of retail development and services that consolidate and strengthen the core retailing area and to meet the needs of the existing and future population over the lifetime of this Plan. All proposals for retail development shall be subjected to the Sequential Test.

6.10.3 Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood centres generally serve smaller, more localised communities within larger settlement centres where many of the inhabitants are able to shop for their daily needs within easy reach of their homes, preferably within walking distance. The Council shall look favourably on appropriate uses in neighbourhood centres such as:

- Local community and social facilities;
- Crèche/childcare facility;
- Convenience shop;
- Doctor/Dental surgery/medical centre/pharmacy;
- Limited retail/office development; and
- Café/restaurant.

Objective ECD 3

To identify within expanding new residential areas, locations for neighbourhood centres to enable convenience needs to be better met locally and thus minimise unnecessary journeys, demand on car parking, etc.

6.10.4 Retail Warehousing and Retail Parks

Retail warehouses comprise of large stores specialising in the sale of household goods and bulky items catering mainly for car-borne customers. The Retail Planning Guidelines set thresholds of a maximum size of 6,000 square metres gross and a minimum of 700 square metres gross. The range of goods is generally restricted to the sale of bulky household goods including carpet /furniture /white

electrical goods, etc. The goods listed above are not an exhaustive list of acceptable goods; however it is an indication of the type of goods that will be considered in such locations.

Retail parks involve the development of three or more retail warehouses, together comprising 8,000 to 15,000 square meters around a shared car park. The development can be anchored by a single unit of up to 6,000 square meters.

6.10.5 Discount Food Stores

Discount food stores of up to 1,500 square metres gross have a potential role in extending the choice of retailing particularly for certain sectors of the community. Their customer catchment and retail offer is different to the mainstream superstores and supermarkets and their trade draw will be different. They provide a specialised form of predominantly convenience shopping. This will be relevant when assessing impact, although the effect on neighbourhood centres and other shops should also be considered.

Discount food stores can effectively anchor smaller centres or local neighbourhood centres as well as complementing existing convenience shopping in established Level 3 or 4 Centres. Proposals for such developments will be considered in relation to the provisions of the Plan concerning the design, layout and impact of retail developments. Applications for discount food stores must demonstrate that they will not have a significant negative impact on Level 3 or Level 4 Centres in the Retail Hierarchy.

Policy ECD 17

To facilitate the provision of discount food stores subject to the appropriate protection of Level 3 and 4 centres in the retail hierarchy, and the need to confine their use to the sale of largely convenience goods.

6.11 Sustainable Tourism

County Waterford is made up of a rich mosaic of natural amenities, vibrant towns, picturesque villages, a scenic coastline, woodlands, mountains, bog lands and fertile pastures. These combine to provide both residents and visitors with an excellent environment to live in or visit. It also provides the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors with an opportunity to harness commercial opportunities in a sustainable manner. Offering an attractive tourist product that builds on the natural beauty of the County, Waterford attracts discerning tourists who seek a quality product and experience. Some of

Waterford's unique attractions include: the Comeragh Mountains; the UNESCO - designated Copper Coast Geopark; a beautiful coastline; and the Blackwater Valley including the heritage towns of Lismore and Portlaw. Waterford hosts the only Irish speaking Gaeltacht area in the South East. The vibrant towns of the County such as Dungarvan, Ardmore in the west and Tramore and Dunmore East and the villages along Waterford's Coast offer a range of hotels, conference facilities, cafés, bars and restaurants.



www.itsafeeling.com



A range of new festivals and events have raised the profile of the County. These events build on the strengths of the County and seek to improve the well-being of participants and include: The Waterford Festival of Food; the Sean Kelly Tour of Waterford; and the John Treacy Classic Run. These add to the already successful: Féile na Déise in Dungarvan; the Bluegrass Festival in Dunmore East; the Tramore Oceanic Surf and Sea Festival; along with the St Patrick's Day festivities throughout the County.

The main objective of Fáilte Ireland South East is to consolidate the position of the tourism industry in County Waterford. This objective will be pursued through a number of collaborative initiatives, including; the ongoing development of festivals and events and the expansion of the Family and Activity Holiday destination programmes. It is intended that such measures will ensure that Waterford's tourism offering is fit for purpose.

Policy ECD 18

To continue building on the strengths of the County, giving priority to sustainably developing the tourism product, festivals and events and to consolidate the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors in County Waterford.

Policy ECD 19

To encourage new investment in the Tourism sector with specific reference to accommodation in terms of choice, location and quality of product.

Policy ECD 20

To work with community groups and the private sector to raise the profile of County Waterford as a place to visit using e-commerce, national and international media.

Objective ECD 4

To facilitate, where possible, the work of Fáilte Ireland in any analysis of the Tourism Activity/Sector of County Waterford.

6.12 Sustainable Tourism and Recreation

Sustainable tourism provides for a high quality, competitive tourism product based on, and in harmony with, a high quality natural environment. Many of the top visitor attractions in the County, such as Mahon Falls, Nire Valley, the River Blackwater, the coastline and associated beaches owe their attraction to their spectacular beauty and setting. It is important to enhance these areas for their continued development in the tourism industry, while at the same time protecting and conserving the qualities that make these areas attractive in the first instance. Waterford County Council will promote a sustainable approach to the development of the tourism sector while protecting the built and cultural heritage which forms the resources on which the County's tourism industry is built upon.

Policy ECD 21

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the expansion of tourist activities in appropriate locations where they can be supported by, and provide support for, existing communities. In all cases, development will be required to comply with key sustainable tourism and environmental principles and the development management standards as set out in Chapter 10 of this Plan.

6.13 Walking and Cycling and Other Outdoor Pursuits

The scenic and varied landscape of County Waterford lends itself exceptionally well for walking and cycling activities. Waterford County Council over the past number of years has supported and encouraged the provision of infrastructure to facilitate both cycling and walking and shall continue to do so during the life time of this Plan. The development of cycle and walking tourism presents a particular opportunity to bring the economic benefits of tourism to the more rural and isolated



The Sean Kelly Tour Passing Clonea Beach

areas of the County through the requirement for accommodation, shops and restaurants/cafes.

Walking is steadily becoming one of the main recreational pastimes in County Waterford. There are a number of strategic walking /amenity trails in the County that have the potential to be major tourism attractions including:

- The disused Railway Line between Dungarvan and Waterford City; and
- The Munster Way (which connects with the Avondhu Way in East Cork and the Tipperary Heritage Trail in South Tipperary).

A walking strategy has been prepared by Waterford County Council in association with the Regional Tourism Authority, Waterford Leader Partnership, Waterford Sports Partnership, Waterford County Council and other stakeholders, that examines the role of walking in the Tourism industry, particularly in terms of Green Sustainable Tourism. In the County Development Board's *'Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural*



Hill Walking in the Comeragh Mountains

Development of County Waterford 2002-2012' walking and walkways were identified as having major strategic potential for the County and a specific objective of same is to "enable Waterford to become the walking capital of Ireland". In order to facilitate the development of recreational trails in the County a Recreational Trails Committee is now in place. This committee consists of representatives from the key stakeholders in the area of trails development to co-ordinate the development, upgrade and promotion of trails in County Waterford. The Waterford Recreational Trails Plan 2010-2012 sets out the framework for future trails development in the County.

Waterford County Council in conjunction with Waterford Sports Partnership, local cycling groups and community volunteers are actively promoting cycling in the County through the development of an annual cycling tour event 'The Sean Kelly Tour'. The tour which has been running since 2007 is growing in popularity with entry numbers reaching in excess of 2,000 persons. To obtain the greatest

benefit from this event ‘*Sean Kelly Cycling Routes*’ have been developed throughout the County and these routes are clearly signposted and available for the public to enjoy throughout the year.

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 ECD 24

The Council supports the protection and sustainable development of coastal walkways in the interest of providing access to coastal heritage and scenic landscapes.

Objective ECD 5

To facilitate, as the opportunities arise, the sustainable development/enhancement of tourist trails and designated walking and cycling trails that do not cause landscape or environmental degradation throughout County Waterford. The Council shall also encourage the development of off-road cycling at appropriate locations.

Objective ECD 6

The Council shall seek to record and map all public Rights of Way in the County during the lifetime of the Plan.

6.14 Comeragh Mountains Area

The Comeragh Mountain area is a valuable asset in attracting visitors and walkers/hikers to County Waterford. In 2011, the Council will, in conjunction with the local community, work to develop a sustainable development strategy for the area that will assist in developing sustainable tourism products that use the amenities of the area without damaging them, e.g. walking, cycling, fishing, rock climbing. The Council recognises the attractiveness of this area and will aim to manage the appropriate development of the overall area through appropriate signage, way finding, mapping, promotion and the provision of services for activity holidays, while protecting the unique



character of the area. Appropriate commercial /tourism developments in settlements in the Comeragh Mountain Area which will enhance the economic prospects of the area will be favourably considered, subject to development management standards.

Objective ECD 7

To support and facilitate, where possible, the appropriate development of the Comeragh Mountains Area as a National amenity with associated tourism related accommodation and activities that do not cause landscape or environmental degradation and avoid adverse effects on the designated sites in the area.

6.15 Marine Leisure

Marine recreation relates to leisure activities in and on the sea, inshore and offshore and along the seashore. County Waterford boasts an extensive coastline and is well positioned to further develop its marine leisure product. County Waterford boasts a magnificent coastline from Woodstown in the east to Ardmore in the west of the County. Long sandy beaches at Tramore, Bunmahon, Clonea and Ardmore are key attractions in the County and host a range of activities such as surfing, sea kayaking and kite surfing. Sailing is popular in Dunmore East and Dungarvan and the Copper Coast offers one of the most scenic coastal drives in Ireland with dramatic cliff faces.



The Council shall encourage and promote integrated clusters of water based tourism with associated land based activities on appropriately zoned land which would serve to attract local, national and international visitors and further contribute to the economy of the region.

Policy ECD 25

To develop the marine leisure sector of the County in a coherent and sustainable manner, including the development of marinas, water sport based activities, improvement of quays and slipways and enhanced interpretation and safety that do not cause landscape or environmental degradation and avoid adverse effects on the designated sites in the area.

6.16 Heritage and Culture

County Waterford boasts a rich array of architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage, which includes the Round Tower in Ardmore, the Heritage Town of Lismore with St Carthages Cathedral and Lismore Castle, and King John's Castle, Dungarvan. Other highlights are the maritime heritage of Dunmore East, the sand dunes of Tramore, the industrial heritage of Portlaw and over 200 thatched



Lismore Castle

cottages. Furthermore, there are a number of impressive country houses and associated gardens such as Mount Congreve and Curraghmore that have the potential to become major tourist attractions. The Council recognises that the natural and built heritage of the County is a key tourism resource and will seek to promote and enhance this asset for the enjoyment of the public and visitors to the County.

Policy ECD 26

To protect and enhance Waterford County's architectural and cultural heritage as a strong tourism product in a sustainable manner.

Objective ECD 8

To identify and develop visitor trails where appropriate to promote the landscape heritage, demesnes and great gardens open to the public and promoting appropriate accessible sites of industrial heritage in the County.

Objective ECD 9

To retain and protect the unique architectural heritage of villages and towns in the County.

6.17 Rural Tourism

It is recognised that the growth of the tourism industry is critical to the economy of County Waterford. This is particularly the case in the rural areas where employment opportunities are reducing and traditional employment levels in agriculture are in decline. Waterford County Council

will support rural tourism initiatives based on agri tourism, rural enterprise and the appropriate exploitation of natural heritage and culture.

6.18 Integrated Rural Tourism and Recreational Complexes (IRTRC)

While seeking to ensure that most tourism development with associated accommodation facilities, are located in or close to towns and villages or on tourism zoned lands, the Council recognises that, by its nature, some tourism developments may require other locations. In this regard, consideration will be given to the provision of *Integrated Rural Tourism and Recreational Complexes* and *Medium Sized Tourism Developments* at appropriate locations throughout the County.

The IRTRC policy was adopted as a variation to the 2005-2011 Waterford County Development Plan. (Refer to Appendix A7 for the full IRTRC policy document and associated development standards). An Integrated Rural Tourism and Recreational Complex can be defined as a high quality tourism development located in a rural location which includes the following:



- A quality hotel (min 50 beds); and
- A leisure centre/spa, conference centre or similar; and
- Other facilities such as an 18 hole golf club or a similar major public facility such as an adventure centre, marina, or an indoor recreation centre.

Standards in relation to the development of IRTRC in association with Protected Structures are set out in full in Appendix A7.

6.18.1 Medium Sized Tourism Developments and Associated Holiday Homes

Medium sized tourism developments of a local scale may have the capacity to accommodate holiday homes. A smaller tourism development may consist of the provision of any of the following:

- A quality hotel (minimum of 50 bedrooms), or
- A golf course, or

- A major equestrian centre, holiday camp (similar to Trabolgan), marina, adventure centre, sporting activities with a maritime/estuarine location: or
- A similar type facility of regional attraction.

Policy ECD 27

To support the sustainable development of appropriately located Integrated Rural Tourism and Recreational Complexes which add to the amenity value and tourism potential of the County and are in accordance with the development standards set out in Chapter 10 and Appendix A7, and meet the requirements of EIA and Natural Habitats Regulations.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment will be carried out where required to ensure that there is no negative impact on the integrity (defined by the structure and function and conservation objectives) of any Natura 2000 site located at or adjacent to a proposed site for an IRTRC development and that the requirements of Articles 6 (3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC are fully satisfied.

6.19 Holiday Homes and Second Home Accommodation

The development of sustainable and appropriately sited tourist accommodation is necessary for the effective development of the tourism industry. The provision of holiday homes must be balanced with the requirements for permanent homes and the protection of the natural landscape and environment. Furthermore the character of existing villages and settlements must be conserved and protected from inappropriate, over scaled development.

In keeping with the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, there will be a presumption against holiday home/second home development in areas outside of designated settlements, in visually vulnerable and sensitive areas and areas along designated scenic routes. Clustered holiday /second home development shall be considered where the proposed developer demonstrates compliance with the IRTRC policy, or where the proposed development is in a designated settlement or on lands zoned for tourism development. However, care must be taken to ensure that such a development does not overwhelm an existing settlement, with large seasonal fluctuations in the population, resulting in pressure on services in the high tourist season and an exodus from the settlement in low season.

Policy ECD 28

To support at appropriate locations the sustainable development of appropriately scaled holiday home/ second home developments within existing settlements or on tourism zoned lands or in association with IRTRC policy (Appendix A7) in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in Chapter 3, or the Rural Tourism policy.

6.20 Caravan and Camping Sites

The Council recognises that the provision of sites for caravans and camping is an important element in the accommodation of holiday makers and the Planning Authority is keen to see the provision of quality tourist and visitor accommodation for all price ranges and for a variety of lifestyles. However, caravan sites can be visually obtrusive features in the landscape detracting from its scenic quality and amenity and for this reason the Planning Authority will ensure that the design, operation and impact of such tourist and visitor accommodation does not have a significant negative affect the amenity of the surrounding landscape.



Ardmore Caravan Site

Policy ECD 29

To consider the provision of caravan and camping sites at appropriate locations where they do not cause landscape or environmental degradation and are consistent with the Settlement Strategy for the County, and incorporate a high standard of layout, design, landscaping and amenity in such proposals.

6.21 Extractive Industry

The Council recognises the importance of the aggregate and mineral extractive industry to the economic life of the County and will assist in facilitating its operation in suitable locations where it will not give rise to detrimental environmental impacts. There shall be an onus on the developer to demonstrate that the proposed quarrying activities would not have a significant negative effect on adjoining and neighbouring landuses, designated sites, protected views, etc. The Council shall require developers, when making an application for planning permission, to outline compliance with the Quarry Planning Guidelines 2004 (DoEHLG) and the Guidelines for the Environmental Management in the Extractive Sector 2006. (Refer to Section 10.2 Access)

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Section 261 provides for the registration of quarries. Waterford County Council registered a total of 18 quarries under this process.

Policy ECD 30

To support and facilitate the mineral and aggregate extractive industry where such operations do not have a detrimental environmental effect on other majority land uses, or designated or proposed conservation sites in the area of the extraction and do not adversely affect European Conservation Sites.

Objective ECD 10

The Council shall aim, subject to resources, to identify areas containing significant aggregate resources and to safeguard these valuable un-worked deposits for future extraction.

6.22 Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture

Total forest cover in County Waterford, which consists of coniferous forest plantations, currently stands at approximately at 22%. Given the need to restructure agricultural practices, the Council will support the development of forestry, particularly deciduous forestry and biomass as an alternative agricultural land use.



Local Fishing Boats, Boatstrand

The active fishery harbours in County Waterford are located in Dunmore East, Dungarvan, Heilbhic, Passage East and Tramore. Marine and river based fisheries support and sustain small coastal and rural communities across the County.

Policy ECD 31

To support and co-operate with the appropriate development agencies in the provision of vital infrastructure at appropriate locations for forestry, fisheries and aquaculture activity in accordance with the Policies and Objectives of this Plan.

Policy ECD 32

To support and promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector, in order to maximise its contribution to jobs and the economic profile of the County, and the growth of coastal communities.

6.23 Prevention of Major Accidents

The Seveso Directive seeks to prevent major industrial accidents involving dangerous substances and to limit the consequences of accidents on people and the environment. Industrial developments coming within the ambit of the Seveso Directives shall be given special consideration, and shall be controlled under the EU Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances Regulations 2000. (Refer to Development Standards, Chapter 10).

Policy ECD 33

To adhere to the Major Accidents Directive (Seveso 11) and the requirements of the Health and Safety Authority in the assessment of new development/expansion of existing developments involving hazardous substances.