

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly

Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy

Executive Summary



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

The Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of our region to 2031 and beyond.



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1. Introduction

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA), established in January 2015, is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland. The Region covers nine counties containing twelve Local Authorities namely - Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois, Louth, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Councils and Dublin City Council. The Region includes 3 subregions or Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs), namely the Midland, Eastern and Dublin SPAs. One of the principal functions of the Assembly is the delivery of a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), a new concept in Irish planning where not only the spatial but also the economic factors that go into the future of the Region are brought together into one all-encompassing strategy.



What is an RSES?

A RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage regional planning and economic development throughout the Region.

The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 - The National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP), and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region.

The RSES is required under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to address Employment, Retail, Housing, Transport, Water services, Energy and communications, Waste management, Education, health, sports and community facilities, Environment and heritage, Landscape, Sustainable development and climate change.

The RSES provides a:

- **Spatial Strategy** – to manage future growth and ensure the creation of healthy and attracting places to live and work
- **Economic Strategy** – that builds on our strengths to create a strong economy and jobs, that ensures a good living standard for all
- **Metropolitan Plan** – to ensure continued competitiveness of Dublin and a supply of strategic development for sustainable growth
- **Investment Framework** – to prioritise the delivery of infrastructure and enabling services by government and state agencies
- **Climate Action Strategy** – to accelerate action and ensure a clean and healthy environment, sustainable transport and green infrastructure.

The Draft RSES is informed by:

- **Project Ireland 2040** – the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan, economic and other relevant policies of the government, including climate change plans and the ten-year capital investment plan.
- **Consultation Process;** Initial Public and stakeholder consultation process with an issues paper and 171 submissions received.
- **Engagement and collaboration** with key stakeholders in the Region through Technical Working Groups and the Senior Officials Advisory Group.
- **A Socio- Economic Profile** for the Region, which has been prepared in collaboration with the All Island Research Observatory (AIRO) in Maynooth University, accompanied by a detailed Map Viewer, as part of our commitment to evidence informed policy making.
- **A Strategic Environmental Assessment,** Appropriate Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment process that has and will inform each stage in the making of the new regional strategy.

RSES Process to date

EMRA engaged in the process of preparing the draft RSES by undertaking a significant evidence gathering exercise.

This culminated in the publication of an Issues Paper and an associated background Socio-Economic Evidence Baseline Report, prepared in collaboration with the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) at Maynooth University, in order to provide a detailed overview of the socio-economic characteristics of the Region. Interactive maps were also made available on the EMRA Web Viewer. This demonstrates the Assembly's commitment to an evidence-based policy making approach to the RSES process. A simultaneous and iterative process of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment was carried also carried out.



Regional Profile

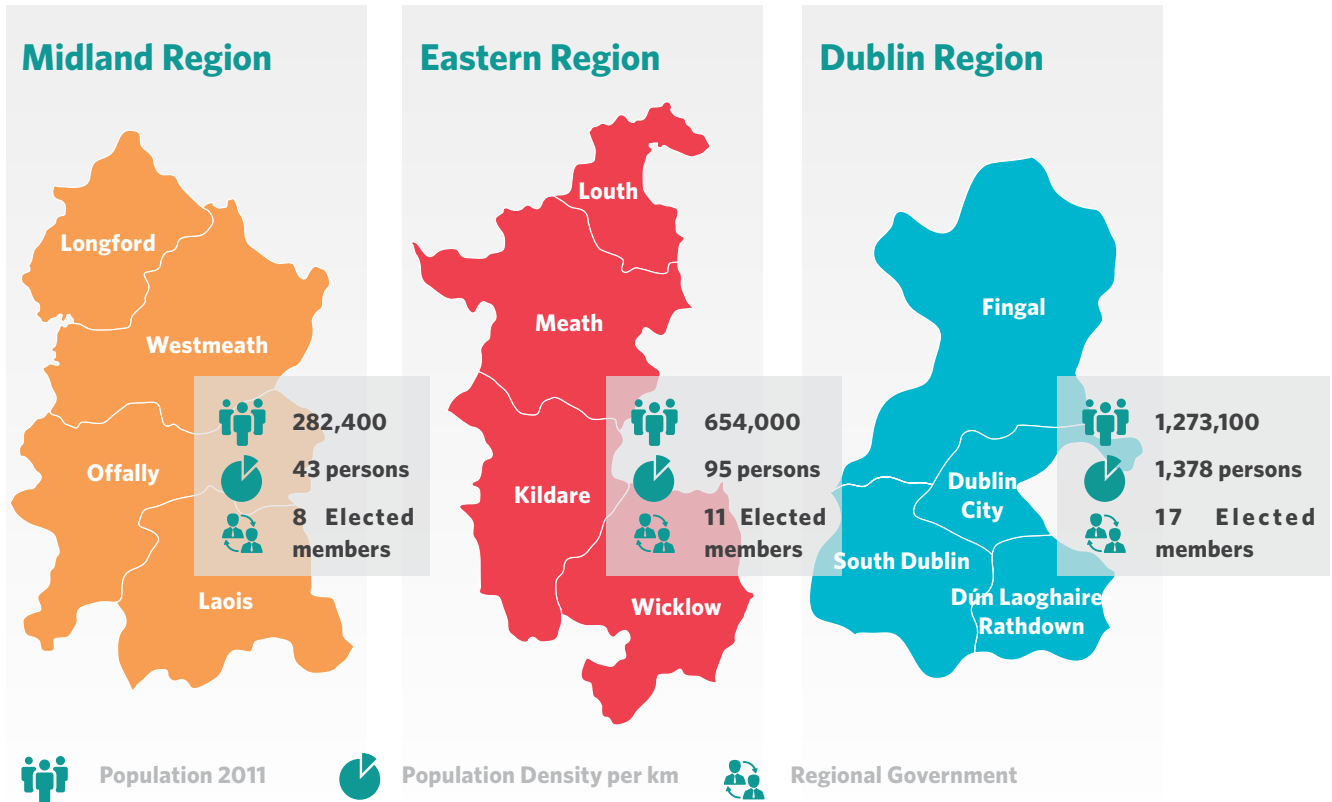


Figure 1.5 Our Strategic Planning Areas: Vital Statistics, CSO 2016

EMRA is one of the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland. The region covers nearly 14,500 square kilometres, which is the smallest in terms of land area but the largest in population size, with over 2.3 million people. The Eastern and Midland region is also the primary economic engine of the state providing more than 1 million jobs. The main settlement is the capital city of Dublin, which is home to 1.2 million people and is supported by a network of regional and county towns and an extensive rural hinterland.

The region is also home to areas of rich heritage and immense natural beauty that support a varied tourism and recreation offering, with more than 270km of coastline from Carlingford Lough in County Louth to Kilmichael Point on the Wicklow-Wexford border. Key natural assets include the raised bogs and lakes in the Midlands, the Wicklow Mountains National Park, Slieve Bloom mountains, the bays and estuaries of the eastern seaboard including the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere and inland waterways such as the Royal and Grand Canals and the Shannon corridor, which are a key focus for water-based tourism.

Our built heritage includes historic and walled towns, world class museums and attractions such as the Guinness Storehouse, the Book of Kells and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Bru na Boinne, the medieval monasteries of Clonmacnoise and Glendalough and a number of historic castles, houses and demesne landscapes.

The Eastern and Midland Region is the economic engine of the State and is on the trans-European network linked to Liverpool across the Irish Sea and to Belfast along the M1 Corridor. The Dublin region is the main global gateway to Ireland, with Dublin airport one of the fastest growing in Europe and continued growth in international exports through Dublin Port. The Eastern (mid-east) counties have the benefit of proximity to Dublin and a strong tourism and leisure offering as well as good national and international connectivity. The Midlands are a dynamic region, centrally located in the heart of Ireland with a high-quality environment and quality of life and unparalleled national interconnectivity.

A growing region

From 2006 to 2016 the Region grew by 15% - an increase of over 300,000 people - exceeding the state average growth rate of 12% over the same period. The region contains some of the fastest growing communities in the country which increases demand for housing, infrastructure and services in those areas.

Recent trends show that population growth is set to continue having regard to the Region's young demographic profile and a return to net inward migration as the country returns to economic growth after a severe economic crash in 2008. However, population growth rates varied across the region, with some peripheral and inner urban areas experiencing population decline between 2006 and 2016, while other areas have seen significant growth rates see Figure 1.6.

In line with a prevailing state-wide trend of urbanisation, the region saw the continued increase in the share of population residing in urban areas however alongside this is a trend for counter urbanisation with strong growth in the peri-urban and rural areas surrounding Dublin. Laois and Fingal were the fastest growing counties, with significant growth rates of 26% and 23% respectively.

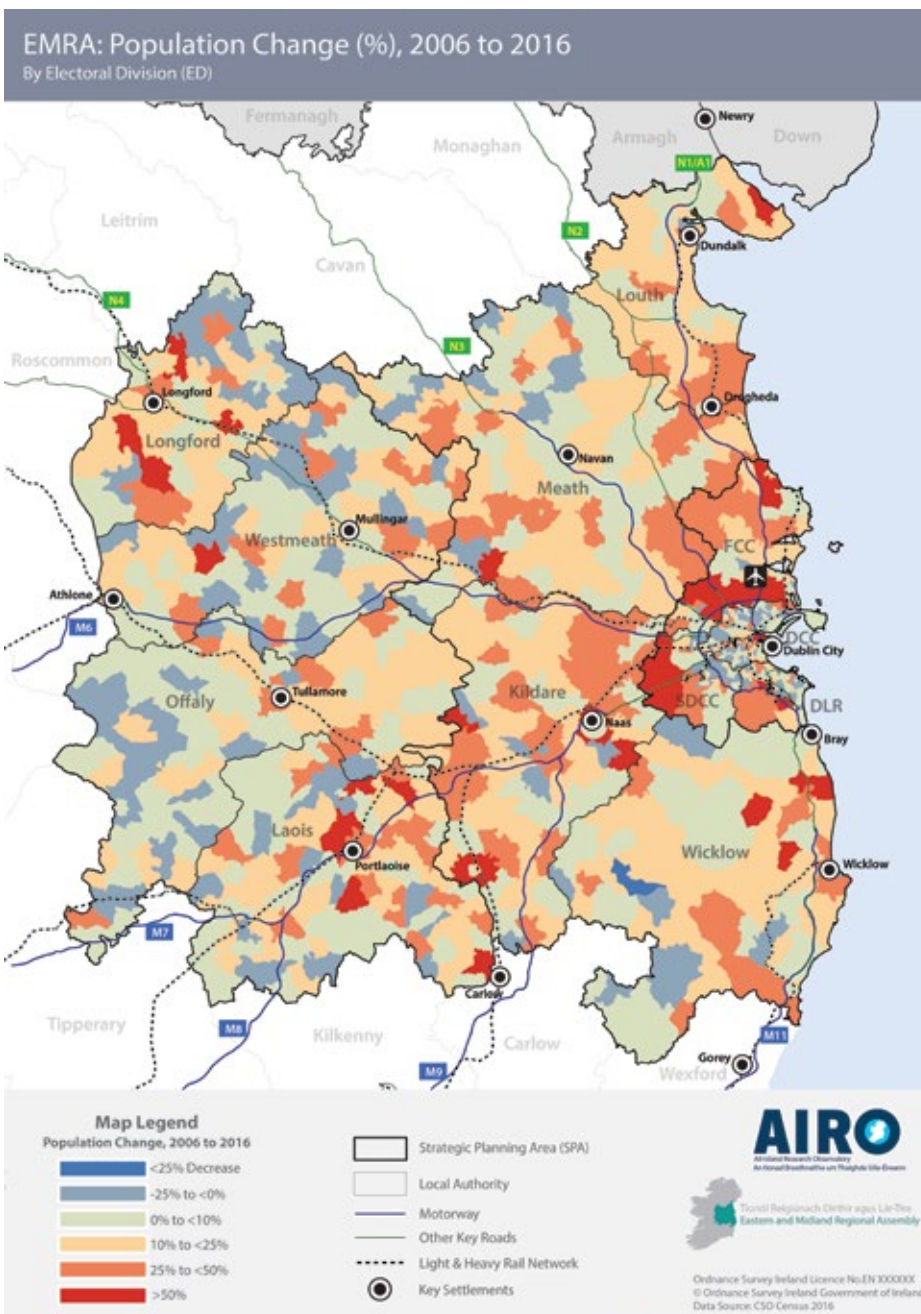


Fig 1.6 Population Change (%) 2006-2016

Young (but rapidly ageing) and diverse

The region is young, with 1 in 5 people in the region under 14 years of age and demographically diverse, with more than 1 in 8 residents who are non-Irish nationals. By 2031 there will be a significant increase in people over 65 leading to greater demand for healthcare, accommodation and services to enable independent living. There will also be a significant increase in the 15-24 age cohort, accordingly there will be demand for education and skills development and continued trend towards smaller and one person households.

2. Vision

At its core, the draft RSES sets out a settlement and economic growth strategy that seeks to ensure that the needs of the Regions' citizens such as access to employment opportunities and services, ease of travel and overall well-being are met.

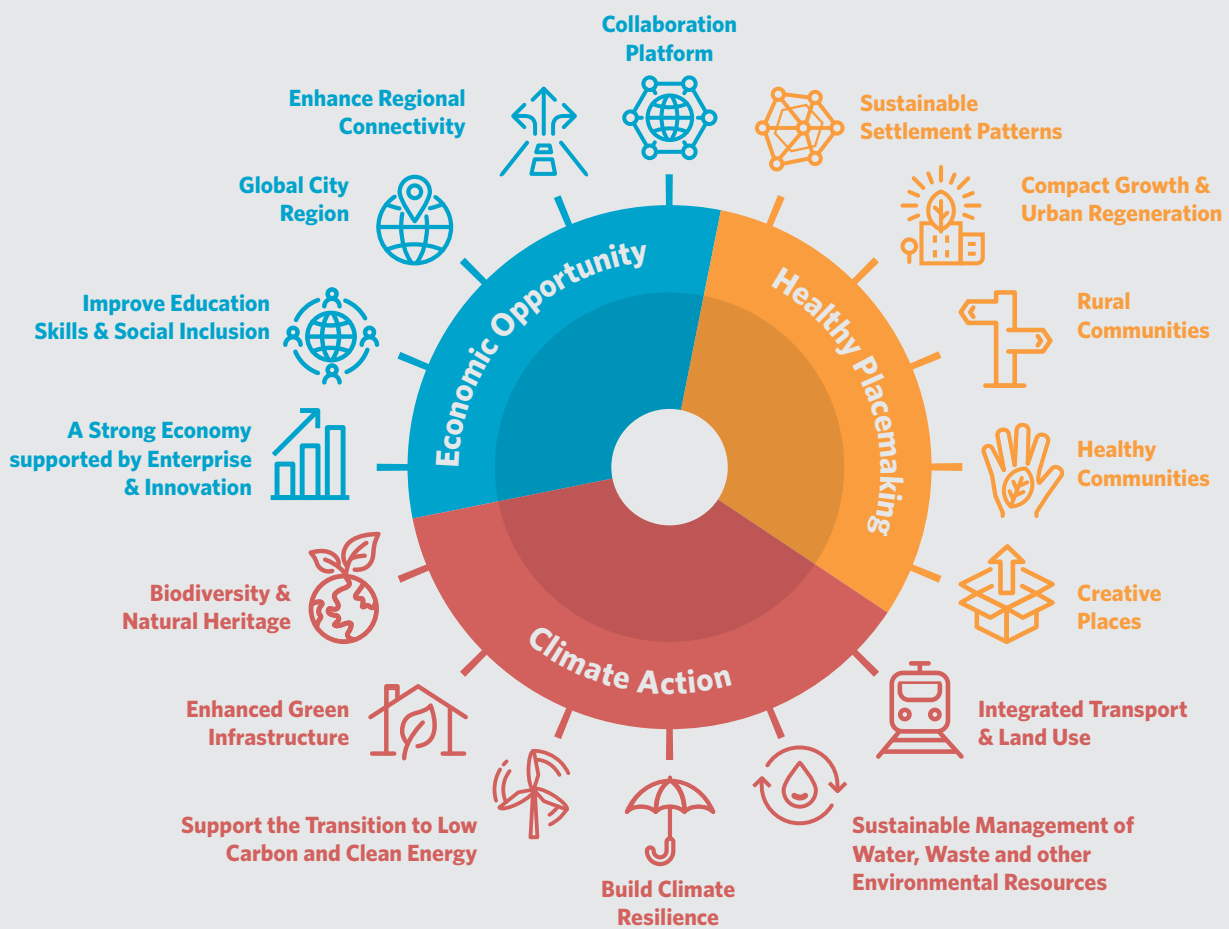
Vision Statement

To create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all

A shared vision and set of goals that sets the strategic direction for where we want our region to be by 2031 and beyond is set out in the draft RSES which is informed by extensive public consultation and developed in collaboration with elected members and key stakeholders. This has led to the creation of 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) which are aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the EU thematic objectives and national policy including the NPF's National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) to embed a coherent policy hierarchy and to ensure that future investment is targeted towards identified policy recommendations and goals.



Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs)



KEY PRINCIPLES

Healthy Placemaking

To promote people's quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit and study in.

Climate Action

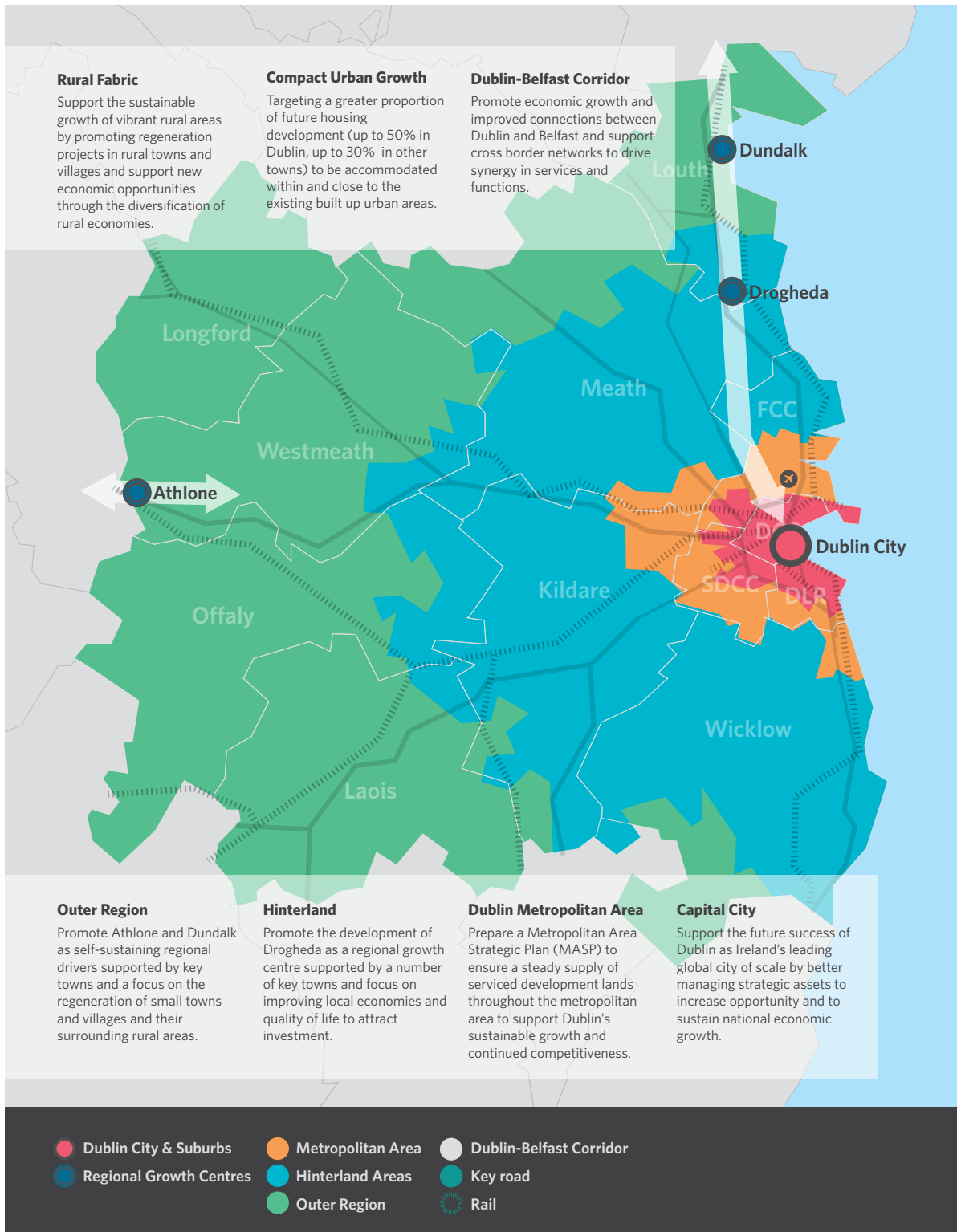
The need to enhance climate resilience and to accelerate a transition to a low carbon economy recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this.

Economic Opportunity

To create the right conditions and opportunities for the region to realise sustained economic growth and employment that ensures good living standards for all.

3. Growth Strategy

The Growth Strategy, set out in Chapter 3, identifies the growth scenario to be pursued in the Region in order to accommodate the growth identified in Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework. A key element in the development of the Growth Strategy is an asset/potential based criteria approach, which integrates an evidence based approach to the identification of settlements with the capacity for growth in the Region.



The Growth Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region sets out the key locations for population and employment growth, coupled with investment in infrastructure and services to meet the medium to long term growth needs of the region. The Strategy will:

- Support the continued growth of Dublin as our national economic engine
- Deliver sustainable growth of the Metropolitan Area through the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)
- Target Growth of our Regional Growth Centres of Athlone Drogheda and Dundalk as regional drivers
- Support our vibrant rural areas with a network of towns and villages
- Facilitate the collaboration and growth of the Dublin - Belfast corridor
- Embed a network of key towns through the Region to deliver sustainable regional development

Development of an Asset-Based Approach

In developing the Growth Strategy for the Region, there has been a strong recognition of the need to integrate an evidence driven asset-based approach to the identification of settlements which have the greatest capacity and potential for growth and to act as engines for wider regional growth. The asset-based criteria outlined was developed to identify an (emerging) spatial hierarchy of settlements in the Region.

Local Authorities, in developing their Core Strategies and development of urban settlement hierarchies will consider the growth enablers for all parts of the Region. The guiding principles for growth in the Region include;

- **Economic Growth** – Ensure that potential and opportunities for economic growth are harnessed and maximised across the Region, whilst supporting agglomerations and synergy between talent and place.
- **Aligning population and housing growth** – More emphasis on consolidating the development of places that grew rapidly in the past decade or so experiencing large scale commuter driven housing development with a particular focus on addressing local community and amenity provision in many of the larger commuter towns.
- **Compact and sustainable growth** – A focussed approach to compact, sequential and sustainable development of urban areas from large to small with targets for 30-40% of new homes to be built on land within the built up area. Placemaking to realise sustained economic growth and employment including the integration of better urban design, public realm, amenities and heritage to create attractive and liveable places that support active lifestyles and human health.
- **Regeneration and Development** – Identification of significant ready-to-go urban regeneration projects which could harness publicly owned lands, former healthcare, military, transport and other untapped assets with community and wider private and public-sector support and investment.
- **Regional Accessibility** – To enhance regional accessibility and enable the development of key towns on the strategic and public transport corridors. To promote the best use of existing and planned transport infrastructure and to promote sustainable and active modes of travel.

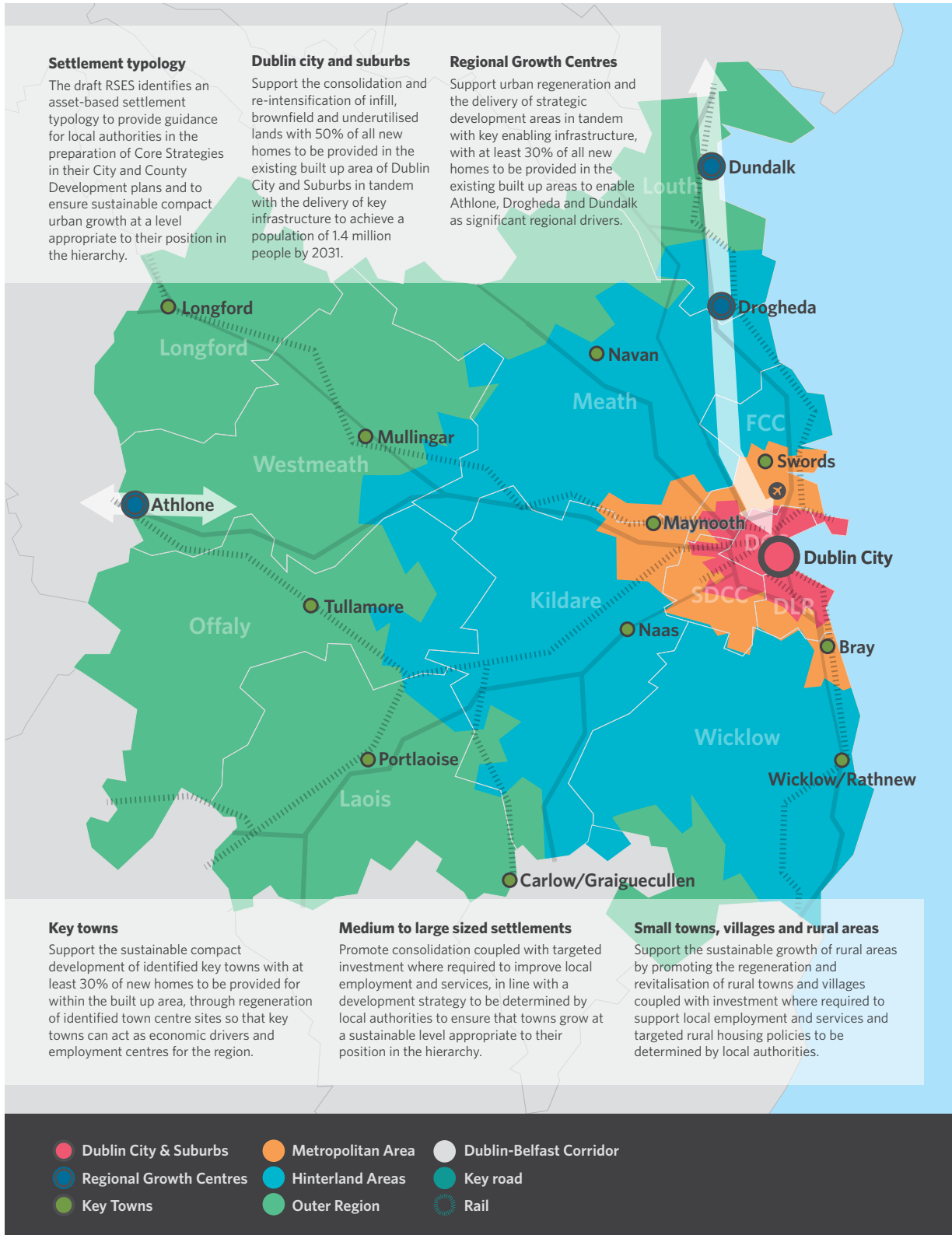
ASSET/POTENTIAL BASED CRITERIA APPROACH TO GROWTH STRATEGY

ASSET-BASED CRITERIA - aim is to enable places to fully realise their potential

SCALE Centres of scale which have the critical mass to drive growth.	ECO SYSTEM ENTERPRISE Enterprise clusters and networks.
FUNCTION Functional role and level of services including provision of employment.	CONNECTIVITY Transport capacity and accessibility and communications.
HUMAN CAPITAL Talent attraction and skills development.	NATURAL CAPITAL Environmental sensitivities and assets.
PLACEMAKING High quality vibrant public spaces and enhanced quality of life.	INFRASTRUCTURE Enabling infrastructure to drive regional growth.

4. Settlement Strategy

The Settlement strategy of the RSES, set out in Chapter 4, identifies a hierarchy for the Region and the identification of key growth areas that will see significant development up to 2031 and beyond. The RSES seeks to facilitate growth that is directed towards a number of key designated settlements as part of an integrated land use and transportation strategy to achieve more co-ordinated and sustainable settlement and travel patterns across the Region.



The draft RSES supports the implementation of National Policy Objectives and targets contained in Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF) and alignment with the investment priorities of the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP) by coupling new development with the required investment in services and infrastructure.

The draft RSES considered the following in the development of the Settlement Strategy:

- Whether a settlement is located inside or outside the Dublin City-Region catchment
- The scale of employment provision and net commuting flows
- Accessibility and influence in a regional context
- The extent of local services provision i.e. administration; education- particularly third level, health, retail, arts, culture and amenities
- Particular sub-regional interdependencies, for example, where a settlement may be located in relation to a number of nearby settlements
- Local ambition, initiative and commitment to achieve compact growth

Settlement Hierarchy

The draft RSES has used a robust evidence based approach to derive a settlement hierarchy that will achieve the Regional Strategic Outcomes for the benefit of the whole Region as outlined in table 4.1.

Settlement Typology	Description	Areas		
		Metropolitan	Hinterland	Outer Region
Dublin City and suburbs	International business core with a highly concentrated and diversified employment base and higher order retail, arts, culture and leisure offer. Acts as national transport hub with strong inter and intra-regional connections and an extensive commuter catchment.	Dublin city and suburbs		
Regional Growth Centres	Regional Growth Centres are large towns with a high level of self-sustaining employment and services that act as regional economic drivers and play a significant role for a wide catchment area.		▪ Drogheda	▪ Athlone ▪ Dundalk
Key towns	Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres	▪ Bray ▪ Maynooth ▪ Swords	▪ Navan ▪ Naas ▪ Wicklow-Rathnew	▪ Graiguecullen (Carlow) ▪ Longford ▪ Mullingar ▪ Tullamore ▪ Portlaoise
Medium to Large Towns	i) Medium to large sized towns with a moderate level of jobs and services- includes sub-county market towns and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining. ii) Towns with high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.	To be defined by Development Plans		
Small towns and villages	Small towns and villages under 5000 population (4,000 population in the Outer Region) and above 1500 with local service and employment functions.	To be defined by Development Plans		
Rural	Rural villages less than 1,500 and the wider rural region	To be defined by Development Plans		

Table 4.1 Settlement Hierarchy

Dublin City and Suburbs

The RSES supports the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites to provide high density and people intensive uses within the existing built up area of Dublin city and suburbs and ensure that the development of future development areas is co-ordinated with the delivery of key water infrastructure and public transport projects.

Regional Growth Centres

The draft RSES supports the direction of significant population and economic growth towards the key Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Drogheda and Dundalk. These towns, located outside the Dublin Metropolitan Area are, in addition to Dublin, critical to the implementation of effective regional development as set out in the NPF.

These centres will require the preparation of a (joint) urban area plan to provide a coordinated planning framework to identify and deliver strategic sites and regeneration areas so that a minimum of 30% compact growth can be achieved.

The RSES sets out population targets for the Regional Growth Centres as follows:

- Athlone: The vision provided for in the draft RSES is that Athlone will act as the lead town for future development in the Midlands to become a Regional Growth Centre with a population target in the region of 30,000 by 2031.
- Drogheda: The vision provided for in the draft RSES is that Drogheda will act as a Regional Growth Centre with a population target in the region of 50,000 by 2031.
- Dundalk: The vision provided for in the draft RSES is that Dundalk will act as a Regional Growth Centre with population growth to achieve a target population in the region of 50,000 by 2031.

Key Towns

Key Towns are large towns which are economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as regional drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres. The RSES sets out Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) to ensure that Development Plans provide for the sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in the town core of identified key towns by consolidating the built footprint through a focus on regeneration and development of identified key town centre infill / brownfield sites.

Other towns

There are medium to large towns across the region that vary in size and function, from commuter towns to self sustaining settlements with a strong level of jobs and services. A number of settlements including many smaller towns have undergone rapid residential expansion over the recent decade and now require 'catch up' investment in local jobs and services provision. As indicated in Table 4.1. these towns will be identified by the relevant Local Authorities and their policy response set out in the Core Strategies of County Development Plans in accordance with the Guiding Principles in the draft RSES.

Large towns with over 10,000 population or 2,500 jobs are eligible to apply for the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF), announced under Project Ireland 2040 to support compact growth and urban regeneration projects. These projects are local authority led and may also include community and/or private sector partners. Smaller towns and villages under 10,000 are eligible for the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

Rural Areas

The Strategy recognises the major contribution that rural areas make towards regional and national development in economic, social and environmental terms. Rural areas in the Region contribute to Ireland's unique culture, and provide significant natural resources, biodiversity, environmental qualities and landscape features.

The countryside within the Region provides for rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while avoiding over-spill development from urban areas and urban generated housing. Planning for rural areas must provide a balance between managing demand in the most accessible rural areas in proximity to Dublin and larger towns, whilst supporting the sustainable growth of rural economics and rural communities.

The draft Strategy aims to strengthen the fabric of rural Ireland, supporting rural towns and communities as well as the open countryside, improving connectivity, and supporting job creation, particularly in a more diverse range of sectors. The draft RSES seeks to ensure that in Development Plan policy Local Authorities shall prioritise the regeneration of rural towns and villages through identification of significant ready-to-go regeneration projects for rural villages and rural areas which could harness untapped assets with community and wider private and public sector support and investment including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

Guiding Principles for Core Strategies

The revisions made by the Planning and Development Act 2018 under section 11 will require local authorities to review their development plans and to commence the preparation of a new development plan or vary the existing development plan.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2000 requires local authorities as part of their City or County Development plans, to prepare a Core Strategy to include a settlement hierarchy and evidence-based population and housing targets for all towns, villages and the open countryside. The Growth Strategy and Settlement Strategy of the draft RSES provides guidance for local authorities regarding where best to plan for the Region's growing population and economy.

Local authorities, in the preparation of their Core Strategies should have due regard to the settlement typology of towns in the Region and carefully consider the phasing of development lands to ensure that towns grow at a sustainable level appropriate to their position in the hierarchy.

Settlement Typology	1. Dublin city and suburbs	2. Regional Growth Centres	3. Key Towns	4. Medium to large sized Settlements	5. Small towns, villages and rural areas
Significance	International	National	Regional	County	Local
Socio economic functions	International business core with strong diversified economic base with access to international markets. High density retail and service hub with high quality arts, culture and leisure offer	Large regional centres with strong economic base and good connectivity to Dublin and its markets. High level of service and retail functions playing a key role for a wide catchment.	Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers	Medium to large sized towns, some of which have experienced rapid population growth and require 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.	Small towns and villages with local service and employment functions. Rural areas both within and outside the influence of large urban areas.
Transport profile	Self-sufficient (high internal trip rate) transport hub with high quality public transport and links to other centres	Self-sufficient settlements with higher rates of internal trips and public transport connections to Dublin and other centres	Self-sufficient settlements (Outer Region) and commuter settlements with high quality public transport and growth capacity at transport nodes	Self-sufficient and commuter settlements, with good public transport and regional transport links, some of which may be highly car-dependent	Small towns and rural villages some of which may not have good public transport or regional connections and may be highly car dependent.
Policy Response	Continued consolidated population and employment growth with a focus on improving housing supply and amenity provision to create sustainable communities and improve public transport and sustainable travel options.	Key drivers of regional economic growth aligned with significant rates of population growth, coupled with investment in services, amenities and sustainable transport	Commensurate population and employment growth, on high quality public transport corridors coupled with investment in services, amenities and sustainable transport	Consolidation coupled with targeted investment where required to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to become more self-sustaining settlements.	Consolidation coupled with targeted rural housing and investment policies where required to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to become more self-sustaining.

Table 4.3 Settlement Typologies and Policy Responses

5. Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategy

As a requirement of the NPF, the draft RSES provides for a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Dublin as set out in Chapter 5. The MASP provides a 12-year strategic planning and investment framework for the Dublin metropolitan area, addressing high level and long-term strategic development issues to support future growth and competitiveness and the creation of sustainable communities for a resident population of some 1.65m people in the metropolitan area by 2031.

The MASP has been prepared in collaboration with local authorities and public transport and infrastructure providers to promote greater co-ordination between stakeholders in the metropolitan area and to support the implementation of relevant City and County Development Plans. A vision statement has been set out for the MASP area to 2031 with a 2040 horizon;

Vision Statement

To create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all

This high-level vision is underpinned by a spatial framework that supports the overall Settlement Strategy as set out in Chapter 4 and sets out an integrated land use and transportation strategy for the sequential development of the metropolitan area focussed on:

- Consolidation of Dublin city and suburbs
- Key Towns of Swords, Maynooth and Bray
- Planned development of strategic development areas in Donabate, Dunboyne, Leixlip, and Greystones

The MASP is an integrated land use and transportation strategy for the metropolitan area that sets out;

- A Vision for the future growth of the metropolitan area and key growth enablers, identifying strategic corridors based on their capacity to achieve compact sustainable and sequential growth along key public transport corridors, existing and planned
- Large scale strategic residential, employment and regeneration development opportunities and any infrastructure deficits or constraints that need to be addressed
- A sequence of infrastructure priorities to promote greater co-ordination between Local Authorities, public transport and infrastructure providers for the phased delivery of sites

To achieve ambitious compact development targets of at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the existing built up area in Dublin and 30% in other settlements, the MASP identifies strategic residential, employment and regeneration development opportunities along with the requisite infrastructure investment needed to ensure a steady supply of sites in tandem with the delivery of key public transport projects as set out in the NDP.

The supply of quality, affordable housing plays a key role in underpinning economic growth and competitiveness of the Dublin metropolitan area. The NPF identifies a target population of 1.4 million people in Dublin City and Suburbs for 2031, an increase of some 220,000 people, and a target of 1.65m in the MASP, an increase of some 250,000 people.

Strategic development corridors

The MASP identifies strategic residential and employment development corridors based on their capacity to achieve compact sustainable and sequential growth along key public transport corridors, existing and planned.

The following corridors are identified:

- City Centre within M50
- North-South Corridor
- North-West Corridor
- South-West Corridor
- Metrolink Corridor

Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan



1. Within the M50 ring (Multi modal)

The proposed DART Underground and LUAS extensions to Finglas, Poolbeg and Lucan will support consolidation of Dublin city including the ongoing regeneration of Dublin Docklands and Poolbeg, redevelopment of older social housing, industrial and underutilised lands including Dunsink.

2. North-South Corridor (DART expansion)

The DART Expansion Programme will increase capacity to support ongoing development of the North Fringe lands and Donabate to the north and south to Woodbrook - Shanganagh, and the expansion of Bray- Fassaroe and, Old Conna linked to improved public transport connections.

3. Maynooth/Dunboyne line (DART expansion)

Strategic development areas along the Dunboyne/ M3 parkway commuter line include the Dublin Enterprise Zone and Hansfield SDZ lands, the sequential development of lands in Dunboyne served by the M3 Parkway station and along the main line for sequential growth in Leixlip and Maynooth.

4. South-West Corridor (Kildare line-Luas red line)

The consolidation of the western suburbs at Clonburris, Kilcarbery and Adamstown SDZ, linked to increased capacity on the Kildare line, at Grangecastle supported by bus, brownfield regeneration at Naas Road and Tallaght and residential development of Fortunestown on the LUAS redline.

5. Metrolink Corridor (Metrolink/ LUAS Greenline extension)

The development of the proposed MetroLink project, subject to appraisal and delivery will unlock significant long-term capacity in Swords-Lissenhall in South Fingal - Dublin Airport and in the south county at Sandyford, Cherrywood and Ballyogan linked to upgrading of the LUAS Greenline

6. Economic Strategy

This is the first time that Irish planning is required to deliver an economic strategy intrinsic to a regional spatial plan. The Economic Strategy is to promote smart specialisation and clustering underpinned by orderly growth in our settlement strategy and investment in 'placemaking' to create places that are attractive to live, work, study, visit and invest in.



Spatial Enterprise Strategy

Smart specialisation is a place-based approach that involves wide stakeholder engagement to identify strategic areas for intervention based on identified regional assets and potential. Smart Specialisation aims to boost productivity and competitiveness and to build a vibrant and diversified enterprise base with a strong focus on Science and Technology investment and promoting engagement between academia and enterprise to drive the commercialisation of research bringing disruptive technology innovations to national and global markets.

It is supported by policies to strengthen collaboration and facilitate networks between key sectors and 'clusters' to develop a favourable ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship. Investment in 'placemaking' and human capital (skills and talent) is key to realising regional potential – to create places where people will want to live and work and where the infrastructures and environment are attractive to business.

Regional Economic Drivers

The Economic Strategy is underpinned by an orderly Growth Strategy to facilitate the managed growth of Dublin and to increase the scale and socio-economic functions of our regional growth centres in Athlone, Dundalk and Drogheda. The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor is also a key growth enabler, connecting the only two cities of scale on the island linking Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry in Northern Ireland.

Skills, Enterprise and Innovation

A strong future economy is underpinned by skills, innovation and enterprise development. The RSES adopts a threefold approach: sustain what we have; transform our enterprise base for longer term resilience; and build on our strengths to be successful in international trade while managing external risks. The Assembly will work with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI), Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), Regional Skills Fora and other stakeholders to promote the development of skills and entrepreneurship, sites for high tech and high potential start-ups, smart city programmes and collaboration between public bodies, industry and research to leverage Regeneration, Disruptive Technologies and Climate Funds.

Guiding Principles for location of strategic employment

The Economic Strategy sets out Guiding Principles for the location of strategic employment areas that include access to; suitable locations (depending on the extent to which an enterprise is people or space intensive); serviced sites (based on infrastructure dependency); relocation opportunities (to facilitate the release and re-intensification of urban lands) connectivity (proximity to transport or international airport/port); proximity to third level institutes (access to skills and high potential growth activity) and; local strengths (a diverse sectoral mix, emerging clusters or cross industry value chains), see p.91 Draft RSES for Guiding Principles.

Rural economy

The Action Plan for Rural Development 2020 aims to promote investment in and the diversification of rural economies. EMRA supports the provision of serviced sites in rural towns and villages, co-working/incubator space and the development of sectors including agriculture and on farm/off farm activities, food products, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, solar and wind energy, energy storage, bio economy and low carbon construction.

The place-based approach is supported by regional policies to promote key opportunity sectors such as retail, tourism, marine, agriculture and low carbon/circular economy;

Retail

The retail sector is a significant employer that also plays a key role in creating attractive liveable places. The EMRA supports urban design and placemaking initiatives to promote town centre renewal and the preparation of a new retail strategy for the Region that reflects current economic conditions. Until such time, significant retail development shall be consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012 and the retail hierarchy for the region as expressed in Table 6.1 of the RSES.

Tourism

Our landscapes and heritage are key drivers for tourism in the region, which has three of the four Failte Ireland's regional tourism brands (Dublin, Ireland's Ancient East and Hidden Heartlands). The EMRA supports the preparation of local tourism strategies that seek to protect and enhance our natural and cultural tourism assets to drive experiential and activity-based tourism and drive investment in destination towns that serve as hubs for their rural hinterlands.

Marine

The marine sector is a growing sector that includes shipping and maritime transport, energy, tourism, fisheries, seafood, aquaculture and offshore renewables. The EMRA supports the preparation of the forthcoming National Marine Spatial Plan and will work with key stakeholders to promote integrated land and marine planning to align 'blue growth' with the sustainable use of shared marine resources.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a key sector in the Region, but which faces challenges from urbanisation, Brexit and CAP reform and in meeting climate obligations. There is an opportunity to support more sustainable farming practices such as local agri-food, biomass, permaculture, agri-forestry and anaerobic digestion to produce renewable energy from farm wastes.

Low carbon

The Climate Strategy sets out policies to accelerate a shift from fossil fuels to a range of low and zero-carbon sources, including renewable energy and secondary heat sources. The EMRA will work with enterprise development agencies, LEOs and other stakeholders to realise regional opportunities for a low carbon/circular economy and to support the development of green technologies.

7. Environment

Environment

The Strategy identifies a number of key Regional Strategic Outcomes which include: the need to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of our protected habitats and species including landscape and heritage protection; to identify protect and enhance our Green Infrastructure; to ensure the sustainable management of our natural resources and to build climate resilience and support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. The draft RSES addresses integrated land and marine planning; a clean and healthy environment; flood risk management; biodiversity and natural heritage; green and blue infrastructure; landscape and climate change.

Key drivers in the draft RSES are the need to create healthy and attractive places and to accelerate climate action in the Region including the need for both climate mitigation and adaptation measures. A clean well protected environment supports human health and wellbeing and provides a natural resource for our agriculture and tourism industries, for the development of the bio-economy and to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050.

We depend on our natural resources to protect public health, the environment, amenities and to sustain employment in sectors such as agrifood and tourism, particularly in rural Ireland.

Flood Risk Management

In tandem with addressing general climate change impacts, dealing with flood risk is a key component of the environmental theme contained in the Strategy. Flooding is a natural process that plays a role in shaping the natural environment. Floods are a regular occurrence and the Region has experienced a number of severe flooding events in recent years, particularly on flood plains and in coastal areas, where flood risks will increase due to more frequent extreme weather events and sea level rise linked to climate change.

This area is addressed through the provision of Flood Risk Management Plans, Regional Flood Risk Assessment (prepared in conjunction with the SEA of the draft RSES) and through the provision of RPOs addressing issues such as the need for Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the implementation of CFRAM measures.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of interconnected natural, semi-natural and managed areas which can include rivers and canals, our coastline, regional parks, agricultural lands and amenity sites and which can deliver multiple benefits - conserving natural eco-systems, managing flood risk and providing health and leisure benefits to people. RPOs support the development of Strategic Green Infrastructure and a Strategic Greenway Network of walking and cycling routes.

The draft RSES identifies key Strategic Green Infrastructure elements in the Region and also provides Guiding Principles for Green Infrastructure Strategies to be incorporated by local authorities in the preparation of their strategies. Opportunities for flagship greenways in the Region are also identified in the draft RSES.

There are significant opportunities to develop a number of flagship greenways in the Region;

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▪ **Greenways;** The Dublin – Galway greenway offers potential to link the marketing of the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Ancient East and the Hidden heartlands and connect to the EuroVelo network of long-distance European cycling trails. Other regional greenways under development include the East Coast trail with potential to extend cross border to the Newry to Carlingford greenway and the Old Rail Trail between Athlone to Mullingar, which highlights the potential to develop disused railway lines in the Region. The Blessington Greenway. The Wicklow Way hiking route from Dublin to the Blackstairs Mountains would benefit from improved facilities and connections into the informal mountain walks in Wicklow Mountains National Park.
- **Blueways;** The development of navigable inland waterways in collaboration with Waterways Ireland including; the Shannon and Shannon-Erne connecting the islands of Lough Ree, Clonmacnoise and Shannon harbour; linking the Royal Canal with the Grand Canal along the River Shannon; the Barrow Way from Lowtown to Graiguecullen / Carlow; and the emerging Boyne Blueway. There is further potential to position the Dublin Docklands as a significant water-focussed amenity and develop the Grand Canal and Spencer Docks as the urban gateways to the Grand and Royal Canals.
- **Peatways;** There is potential in the midlands to develop a regional peatway interconnecting a range of biodiversity and cultural hotspots such as the Mesolithic (first settlers) site in Lough Boora, Co. Offaly and the Iron Age bog road in Corlea, Co.Longford. There is also potential to enhance access and link into trails in the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Ireland’s central plain.

Climate Change

Climate change informs regional policies and objectives in relation to flood risk management and surface water drainage, settlement strategy, transport, waste management, water services, energy, natural heritage, and green and blue infrastructure. A key element of the Strategy is the need to monitor progress towards achieving a low carbon, circular and climate resilient society.

Climate policy in the draft RSES reflects the global and national level which seeks to reduce GHG emissions, replace fossil fuels or high embedded carbon products with sustainable alternatives such as biobased products, and also enhancement of carbon sinks. Emissions in the Region largely come from energy supply, transport, residential and commercial buildings and industry. The need for climate mitigation and climate adaptation is also addressed in this chapter.

Addressing climate action is one of the three principles underpinning the development of the draft RSES. Therefore although there is a specific section on climate change in chapter 7, climate change issues influence and are dispersed through the whole Strategy and have been incorporated into the development of the growth strategy, the settlement strategy, the MASP and the economic strategy as well as elsewhere.

This is expressed in the following areas:

- **Growth Strategy** - The Growth Strategy will, inter alia, support the continued growth of Dublin as our national economic engine, deliver sustainable growth of the Metropolitan Area through the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and will target Growth of our Regional Growth Centres of Athlone Drogheda and Dundalk as regional drivers.
- **People and Place** - The RSES seeks to facilitate growth that is directed towards a number of key designated settlements as part of an integrated land use and transportation strategy to achieve more co-ordinated and sustainable settlement and travel patterns across the Region. This will help to address the issue of GHG emissions.
- **MASP** - The MASP identifies and prioritises strategic development in the Metropolitan Area on the basis of the ability to deliver development at accessible strategic locations with the aim of the consolidation of urban development and the maximisation of return on public investment in infrastructure through the delivery of integrated transportation planning and a consequent reduction in GHG emissions.

- **Economic Strategy** - The economic strategy is one of smart specialisation, clustering, orderly growth and placemaking. It is underpinned by the transition to a low carbon economy and the use of clustering.
- **Green and Blue Infrastructure** - The support and provision of green and blue infrastructure is a key element of the draft RSES. The provision of such infrastructure will aid in mitigating climate change impacts through carbon sequestration and the delivery of alternative energy supply.
- **Connectivity** - The transport sector is one of the significant contributors to our national Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and so the need to transition to a low carbon society by reducing transport usage and transitions to lower carbon options, including transition to clean renewables is a key aspect of Ireland's response to climate change.

A key objective of the draft RSES is the integration of land use and transport which prioritises the development of lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport - including infill and brownfield sites.

Climate Action Regional Offices

A key element of the Strategy is the need to monitor progress towards achieving a low carbon, circular and climate resilient society. EMRA will work closely with the newly appointed Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO's) to achieve the RPOs outlined to support transition to a low carbon, circular and climate resilient region and to establish the first regional emission inventory and assign a series of sectoral remissions reductions targets.

Resilience of critical infrastructure

Critical infrastructure (CI) provides the essential functions and services that support European societal, economic and environmental systems. As both natural, including extreme weather events, and man-made disaster and crises situations become more common place, the need to ensure the resilience of CI so that it is capable of withstanding, adapting and recovering from adverse events is paramount. It is important that Local Authorities, as key decision makers and frontline actors in emergency planning, should be supported in identifying risks and vulnerabilities to key infrastructure to build capacity within their organisations and structures.

8. Connectivity

The transport themes of the draft RSES are dealt with primarily in Chapter 8, Connectivity, which sets out proposals to help to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes outlined in the NPF and the Vision Statement and Regional Strategic Outcomes contained in this draft RSES. The thematic approach taken in preparation of this RSES is underpinned by the cross-cutting priority themes of healthy place making, climate action and economic opportunity, all of which are influenced by the provision of a well-functioning, integrated public transport system.

The transport strategy put forward in the draft RSES is consistent with the National Transport Authority’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area which provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure.

Transport policies and objectives for the Midlands and County Louth, as well as the GDA are set out in this chapter, with a focus on:

- The on-going management and enhancement of the national and strategic road networks to address the Region’s intra-regional, inter-regional and international connectivity
- The maintenance of an appropriate level of rail service and enhancements
- Provision for enhanced regional and local bus services
- Improvements to walking and cycling provision in towns and villages; and
- Improvements to public transport provision in rural areas

Sustainable Transport

The transport sector is one of the significant contributors to our national Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and so the need to transition to a low carbon society by reducing transport usage and transitions to lower carbon options, including transition to clean renewables is a key aspect of Ireland’s response to climate change.

The RPOs outlined in the draft RSES seek to reduce the need for travel and to shift to more efficient modes, i.e. active travel modes and public transport. Transitioning existing fossil fuel vehicles to clean renewable vehicles is a vital further step. The draft Strategy provides a spatial framework to promote smart compact growth as an alternative to continued peri-urban sprawl around our cities and towns, with a resultant negative impact on the environment and people’s health and wellbeing due to increased commuting and loss of family and leisure time. This is supported by proposals for new and improved facilities in support of active transport modes and public transport, including walking and cycling routes, proposals for rail, bus, road improvements and park and ride for all parts of the Region.

A key objective of the draft RSES is the integration of land use and transport which prioritises the development of lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport – including infill and brownfield sites.

Strategic Infrastructure Investment

The draft strategy seeks to protect and enhance existing strategic infrastructure assets in the Region such as Dublin Airport, the Dublin Belfast Corridor, sea ports and road and rail infrastructure whilst also providing for new and enhanced infrastructure such as Metro, Bus Connects and enhancements to rail infrastructure. The need for enhanced rural transport and universal access is recognised and provided for. RPOs outline transport investment priorities in this regard to ensure that future investment is directed towards these priorities.

International Connectivity

High quality accessibility to international gateways, located both within and outside of the Region, for people and internationally traded goods / services is of fundamental importance to economic competitiveness at regional and national levels. The achievement of this objective will be contingent on the development and improvement of critically enabling road and rail infrastructure, and public transport services, for the movement of people and goods. The draft RSES provides RPOs in relation to support for Dublin Airport, Dublin Port and regional ports.

Communications Network and Digital Infrastructure.

Access to broadband in the Region is improving but remains incomplete. Many rural and peripheral areas of the Region are poorly served by broadband and there is a need to increase the rate of investment in broadband, in particular in rural areas.

9. Quality of Life

Chapter 9 outlines policy objectives which underpin much of the content of the draft RSES and relate to the creation of healthy and attractive places and good quality of life for all people in the region. The availability of, and access to, services is key to creating healthier places. This includes access to adequate housing and employment choice, supported by good healthcare and education, quality public realm and access to nature, the arts and cultural heritage.

Placemaking

Placemaking is an essential link between spatial planning and facilitating improvements to people's quality of life and developing places that are attractive to live, work, visit and in which to invest. The key principle of healthy placemaking is a driver in this chapter to deliver Regional Strategic Outcomes on compact growth, regeneration, integrated transport and landuse, rural development, human health and creative places and to ensure alternatives to the car are provided for in the design of streets and public spaces and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking as active transport modes.

Housing and regeneration

The draft RSES seeks to support local authorities, approved housing bodies and other sectoral agencies in the provision of a greater diversity of housing type and tenure, including social and affordable housing and in the provision of a Housing Need Demand Assessment that will inform housing policy that provides for diverse housing demand in the Region.

A vital element of this chapter relates to the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites. The importance of the role of regeneration in the delivery of Project Ireland 2040 is acknowledged by the provision of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Urban regeneration and infill sites can contribute to sustainable compact growth and revitalisation of existing settlements of all scales.

The draft RSES states that Local Authorities, in their core strategies shall set out measures to achieve compact urban development targets of at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built up area of Dublin city and suburbs and at least 30% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built-up area of Regional Growth Centres, Key Towns and other settlements within the region.

Social inclusion

Over the lifetime of the RSES population growth and changing demographics will require a planning response to ensure positive healthy outcomes for older people, for children, families and young people and to support the integration of migrants and address social exclusion and isolation.

This chapter outlines priorities in relation to social inclusion to ensure all persons in a community are integrated in an equal manner by reducing barriers to social inclusion whereby as a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society. The importance of Local Economic and Community Plans in this regard is recognised in the draft RSES.

The provision of childcare, education – including primary, secondary, third level and life long learning, and access to social infrastructure, recreation and open space and health care are all recognised and provided for as is the importance of arts, culture, language and heritage, including heritage led regeneration.

Heritage Led Regeneration

Planning for the regeneration of a historic town needs an integrated approach that balances the protection of the built heritage and the sustainable development of historic urban areas with the needs of modern living and takes account of the concerns and aspirations of the community and key stakeholders. This requires the coordination and management of sometimes conflicting demands and interests of different stakeholders.

Local distinctiveness is key to each town having a unique selling point. The character and distinctiveness of the historic built environment are central to the future success of Irish towns. There are opportunities for Local Authorities and other stakeholders to target funding initiatives for heritage led regeneration.

10. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is addressed in chapter 10 of the draft Strategy. It addresses themes such as management of water, energy provision and waste management. The provision of infrastructure in line with population growth is critical to achieving the objectives contained in the RSES.

The sustainable growth of the Region requires the provision of services and infrastructure in a plan led manner aligned with the settlement strategy put forward to ensure that there is adequate capacity to support future development. High-quality infrastructure is an important element of a modern society and economy, it provides essential functions and services that support societal, economic and environmental systems at local, regional and national levels.

Sustainable water management

Ireland's abundant natural and environmental resources such as our water sources are critical to our environmental and economic wellbeing into the future. Conserving and enhancing the quality of these resources will also become more important in a crowded and competitive world as well as our capacity to create beneficial uses from products previously considered as waste, creating circular economic benefits. The key driver for this chapter is the key principle of climate action. The draft RSES has identified a number of key Regional Strategic Outcomes which include sustainable management of water and other resources, supporting the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050, building climate resilience.

A key priority for the Region is to ensure that the water supply and waste-water needs are met by new national projects to enhance the water supply and increase waste water treatment capacity for the Region. The draft RSES outlines projects that must be prioritised in this regard including the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the Greater Dublin Drainage Project as well as other projects throughout the Region. Surface water, in particular the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and improved storm water infrastructure are required to address flooding and to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plans.

Energy and waste management

The Region is the major load centre on the Irish electricity transmission system. The main urban demand centres are composed of a mix of residential, commercial and industrial demand, which is expected to grow up to 2025 and beyond. The draft Strategy sets out RPO's which facilitate development of the grid in the Region to enable the transmission system to safely accommodate more diverse power flows from renewable generation and also to facilitate future growth in electricity demand.

In relation to Regional Waste Management the strategy promotes managing waste as a valuable material resource and supports a move towards achieving a circular economy which is essential if the Region is to make better use of resources and become more resource efficient.



11. All Island Cohesion

Chapter 11 examines the issue of an All Ireland approach, addressing issues such as collaboration, the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, investment, tourism and environmental management.

The draft Strategy recognises the strong links between our region and Northern Ireland. Notwithstanding the presence of an international border and the future uncertainty surrounding that border, the Regional Assembly recognises the need to work together for mutual advantage in areas such as economic development and promotion, co-ordination of social and physical infrastructure provision and environmental management. In preparing the draft Strategy, the Regional Assembly have engaged in collaboration with local authorities and Government agencies in Northern Ireland. This chapter outlines the collaborative approach used in the support of an All Island approach. These relate to economic development, investment in infrastructure and environmental management

Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

The Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor, as the largest economic agglomeration on the island of Ireland, is identified as a nationally important spine connecting the two largest settlements on the island of Ireland via the regional centres of Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry. The corridor is also the national entry point to the island through its airports and ports with three major airports, Dublin Airport, Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport, and significant ports in Belfast and Dublin, with complimentary ports along the corridor.

The draft Strategy promotes the development of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor through targeted investment in transport infrastructure and services complementing and maintaining its function as part of the EU TEN-T core network.

Investment in Transport, Energy and Communications Infrastructure

This strategy supports the co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland to provide for enhanced transport connectivity between Ireland and Northern Ireland, to include cross-border road and rail, cycling and walking routes and support for development of blueways and greenways which offer potential for an enhanced all-island tourism offering.

Future enhancement of energy security and resilience to support a population of 8 million people will be supported through progression of north-south interconnection of electricity grids, the South-North gas pipeline, enhanced East-West interconnection between the island, wider UK and European gas networks and the development of a stable, innovative and secure digital communications and services infrastructure on an all-island basis in co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland.

Management of Our Shared Environment

In recognition that national and other administrative boundaries do not reflect the trans-boundary nature of the environment and its stewardship this Strategy seeks to ensure effective management of shared landscapes, heritage, water catchments, habitats, species and trans-boundary issues in relation to environmental policy in co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland.



12. Implementation and Monitoring

The primary objective of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a twelve year long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region. The success of the Strategy depends on its policy and programme delivery at national, regional and local level. Implementation of the Strategy requires streamlined governance arrangements and focused public capital investment priorities.

Implementation of the Strategy will be focused on policies, actions and investment to deliver the Regional Strategic Outcomes set out in the Strategy.

The Regional Assembly also has functions in relation to European funding and programming as well as a permanent presence in Brussels with the Irish Regions EU Office. It is a stated objective of the Assembly to have an increased role in the management of European funding post 2020 in line with that of the other two Regional Assemblies. Furthermore, the Regional Assembly's functions can be expanded with a significant role in the delivery and application of investment under Project Ireland 2040, which includes the National Planning Framework 2040 and a detailed capital investment plan the National Development Plan 2018-2027.

The launch of Project Ireland 2040 links planning and investment for the first time in Irish history through simultaneous publication of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan to provide for Government policy and investment to facilitate social and economic progress in the coming years.

New Regeneration and Development Funds

Project Ireland 2040 includes four new funds totalling 4 billion designed to stimulate renewal and investment in rural and urban areas, the environment and innovation.

The four new funds are as follows:

- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund
- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
- Climate Action Fund
- Disruptive Technologies Fund

The draft RSES represents a key strategic and policy framework for accessing these funds, as well as the other funds identified in this Chapter including the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund, Enterprise Funding Schemes, European funding programmes and the European Investment Bank and Council of Europe Development Bank.

RSES Implementation Group

EMRA will establish a RSES implementation group who will meet on a regular basis to monitor and review implementation of high level policy objectives and progress towards achieving identified Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) of the RSES.

MASP Implementation Group

The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan is a key policy tool for the consolidated growth of Dublin. The MASP has been prepared in conjunction with the constituent Local Authorities and a number of stakeholders, who will be critical in the delivery of the RPOs. Following adoption of the RSES the EMRA will establish a RSES implementation group to oversee progress on the implementation of the MASP for Dublin.

Evidence Based Policy Making and Evaluation

The EMRA is strongly committed to the preparation of evidence-based strategies and plans and this is demonstrated in the baseline data gathering and the preparation of Regional Profiles, which informed the development of the draft RSES. As part of this commitment EMRA will make available the baseline data as a shared evidence base for the Region and encourages other public bodies and local authorities to use this data, particularly to inform the preparation and implementation of County and City Development Plans, Local Area Plans, and Local Economic and Community Plans.

13. Public Consultation

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly prepared the draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the period 2019-2031, as required under section 24 (4) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2018.

An Environmental Report has been prepared in accordance with the SEA Directive and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations S.I. No. 436/2004 (as amended), accompanied by a Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report. A Natura Impact Report (to inform the Appropriate Assessment) has also been prepared in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, the Planning and Development Act 200-2018, and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations S.I. No. 477/2001 (as amended).

These documents are placed on public display and a copy may be inspected during normal office hours from 5th November 2018 to 23rd January 2019 at the following locations:

- Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, 3rd Floor North, Ballymun Civic Centre, Main Street, Ballymun, Dublin, D09 C8P5
- The Planning Counter in all of the twelve constituent local authorities of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, please check locally with your Council regarding opening hours

The documents may also be inspected online at www.emra.ie

The draft RSES provides a Strategic Planning and Economic Framework for the future physical economic and social development of the Eastern & Midland Region.

Submissions or observations on the draft strategy or associated environmental reports will be received between 5th November 2018 and 23rd January 2019 (both dates inclusive) through one of the following media:

- Online: www.emra.ie/rses
- Email: rses@emra.ie
- Mail: Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, 3rd Floor North, Ballymun Civic Centre, Main Street, Ballymun, Dublin, D09 C8P5

The Regional Assembly will consider all submissions made in writing within the stated period before adopting the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

All submissions will be acknowledged but it will not be possible to issue individual responses. Please include your name and address as part of your submission, and if you are representing another person, company or organisation, their full name and address. Please note that public submissions may be published on our website and subject to Freedom of Information.

The Assembly will also be hosting events at Strategic Planning Area level throughout the region where key stakeholders will be invited to presentations on the Strategy.

We look forward to meeting with all the relevant stakeholders in the region on the preparation of this strategy, which will guide and shape the future of our region for generations to come.

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Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly