



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

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Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly notes the publication of the Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 and sets out hereunder observations on behalf of the Assembly. The submission has been prepared by the executive and approved by the members of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly at the meeting of 12th February 2021.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Council will be aware of the finalisation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region which was made on 28th June 2019. The RSES, prepared in accordance with the National Planning Framework, sets the context for each local authority within our Region to develop their county and city development plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align. The RSES 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 spatial planning and economic development throughout the Region.

In this regard, The Assembly welcomes the publication of the Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan which enables the coordinated and timely incorporation of Project Ireland 2040 - the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), thus ensuring full alignment between local, regional and national planning policy.

Legislative Context

As required by Section 11(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Regional Assembly received notice from the Council on December 21st 2020, of the preparation of the Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Whilst the various themes that are addressed within the draft county development plan are fully noted, the scope of this submission mainly focuses on issues directly linked to the Eastern and Midland Region.

Submission

1.0 Consistency and Alignment with Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

The Regional Assembly note the inclusion of Section 1.6 that details related policy context. In particular, sections detailing the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region are welcome. This is supported by Section 4.2 of the Draft Plan which states that the Development Plan and its Core Strategy seeks to achieve consistency with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and Statement of Strategy of the Southern Assembly's RSES, and

furthermore that The County Core Strategy is based on projections contained in both the NPF's Implementation Roadmap and Appendix 1 of the Southern Assembly's RSES.

County Kilkenny borders the Eastern and Midland Region and therefore shall be cognisant of the long-term strategic planning and economic framework of the adjoining Eastern and Midland Region as it is expressed in the EMRA RSES.

2.0 Inter-Regional Matters

2.1 Laois- Kilkenny Reinforcement Project

The EMRA welcome the inclusion of Section 10.3.1 of the Draft Plan which outlines that the Council will support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan. Specifically referenced is the Laois-Kilkenny Reinforcement Project to increase the quality and security of supply to an area which includes Counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Wicklow and Laois.

This is in keeping with RPO 10.23 of the EMRA RSES which seeks to support EirGrid's Implementation Plan 2017 – 2022 and Transmission Development Plan (TDP) 2016 and any subsequent plans prepared during the lifetime of the RSES that facilitate the timely delivery of major investment projects subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process, including the Laois-Kilkenny Reinforcement Project to strengthen the network in large parts of the Midlands and provide additional capacity for potential demand growth in the wider region and strengthen the Region's transmission network by improving security and quality of supply and ensuring there is the potential for demand growth.

2.2 Sustainable Connections

It is considered that the inclusion of the following as part of the Draft Plan, support regional policy objectives contained in the EMRA's RSES and enhance cross boundary and inter-regional partnerships that contribute to the sustainable and economic development of these areas;

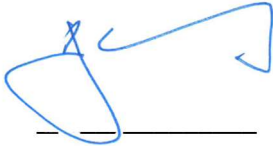
- The protection of the Kilkenny-Portlaoise former railway line and spur to Castlecomer from encroachment, following a historical feasibility studies for a greenway, in conjunction with Laois County Council, Trail Kilkenny and Abbeyleix Community Development. This is in keeping with the EMRA RSES's Guiding Principles for Green Infrastructure which outlines that Green Infrastructure Strategies should be designed to function at different scales and across boundaries, and integrate built and natural heritage.
- The recognition of the role that the River Barrow provides for recreational opportunities, including an interconnecting network of routes for walking and cycling. This includes support for proposals to enhance the tourism and recreational potential of the area and an ongoing feasibility study of a walk connecting St. Mullins to New Ross, which would link the Barrow Blueway to the South East Greenway. This is in keeping with Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) of the EMRA RSES (namely RPOs 4.76 and 6.19) which reflect the amenity potential of a Barrow Greenway/Blueway.

Conclusion

It is considered that the Draft Kilkenny and City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 can achieve consistency with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031 by addressing the recommendations and observations set out above.

The Regional Assembly welcomes the Draft City and County Development Plan 2021-2027, which marks the beginning of the alignment of planning policy at county and local levels with Regional and National Policy. It should be noted that the officials of the Regional Assembly are available to discuss the matters raised above and the Assembly welcome further opportunities to engage in the statutory process of the making of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan.

Regards,



Jim Conway

Director

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

16th February 2021