



**An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht**  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

**Planning and Development Act 2000**

**Section 25A Progress Report 2024**

**Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy  
for the Southern Region**

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

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## **1. Introduction**

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) for the Southern Region forms part of an integrated hierarchy of statutory spatial plans that are established in legislation, with the National Planning Framework (NPF) at a national level, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) at regional level, and individual city and county plans and local area plans at county level.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region provides a spatial and investment strategy for the sustainable growth of the region that builds on the overarching policy and investment framework set by Project Ireland 2040, which combines the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP). The RSE has a policy influence on development plans of local authorities in Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.

Since the adoption of the RSE, the Department (DHLGH) has undertaken a range of initiatives to secure the objectives of the RSE through the introduction of supporting legislation and regulation; development of funding and investment measures and facilitating the ongoing monitoring of RSE implementation (RSE Monitoring Report 2022), in accordance with Section 25A of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

This report provides an updated thematic overview of relevant measures and initiatives, supported through DHLGH, which assist with the continued delivery of RSE objectives since the initial 2022 monitoring report was prepared by the Southern Regional Assembly.

## **2. Investment and Oversight Structures**

The National Planning Framework, aims to achieve more balanced and sustainable regional development in Ireland and this is reflected in the Departments Statement of Strategy 2021-2025. In this regard significant supports have been put in place to support the objectives of the RSE, with a particular focus on strategic planning, the delivery of well-planned homes in vibrant communities, the sustainable management of our water resources, the nurturing of Ireland's heritage and the promotion of effective local government.

Investment in the Southern Region has continued across all areas of the department, but of particular note are the following investment schemes/oversight structures:

- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.
- Croí Cónaithe Scheme, for both towns and cities.
- Affordable Housing Fund to enable the provision of affordable housing.
- The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP) for social housing.
- Delivery of key water infrastructure by Uisce Éireann;
- Delivery of development by the Land Development Agency and the Housing Agency.
- Oversight by the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) and An Bord Pleanála.

### **3. Regional Demographics and Structural Housing Demand**

In order to give effect to the national and regional settlement strategies set out in the NPF and RSES and with the objective of supporting and improving the plan-making process, the Housing and Planning Divisions of the Department jointly engaged the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to undertake independent research into structural housing demand in Ireland to 2040. The findings of the ESRI work were published in December 2020 as a research paper on *Regional Demographics and Structural Housing Demand at a County Level*,<sup>1</sup> which provides a robust housing demand projection to inform policy and investment with regard to housing at national, regional and local levels. The ESRI projection model and paper remains the definitive source of information for Government. The research provides a consistent national methodology for translating population targets under the NPF and RSES into projected demand for new households.

Planning guidelines on *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning* were published in December 2020 under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The projected annual average requirement to accommodate the needs of more than 33,000 new households in Ireland from 2020-31, when disaggregated to each individual local authority area, forms the basis for an annual average Housing Supply Target to 2031. The inclusion of an appropriate Housing Supply Target, calculated in accordance with the guidelines, now comprises a key element of the core strategy of individual development plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Bergin, A. and G. Rodriguez (2020). Regional demographics and structural housing demand at a county level, ESRI Research Series 111, Dublin: ESRI, <https://doi.org/10.26504/rs111>

The Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, published in July 2022 provide further guidance in relation to the zoning of land to meet identified housing need that reflects the NPF and RSES priorities for brownfield and infill development and sustainable urban extension. Oversight of this process is provided by the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) as part of its statutory plan evaluation function.

### Census 2022

Taking account of the results of Census 2022, the ESRI are currently undertaking demographic and econometric modelling work to update previous research on structural housing demand and produce an updated range of scenarios for long-run new household demand in Ireland.

Any potential revisions to the population and housing forecasts will have regard to the early phase of implementation of the National Planning Framework, reflecting on the spatial distribution of population growth evident in the census results and also on the wider policy commitment to effecting balanced regional development and delivering on the potential of the Cities.

## **4. Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration**

The NPF and RSES include specific objectives to regenerate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale, and in particular to reverse the stagnation or decline of urban centres, including measures to reduce vacancy, re-use existing buildings and promote infill, sustainable compact development and area based regeneration.

Development Plans must meet the specific targets for 'infill' and 'brownfield' development in the Core Strategy. This focussing of growth within the existing built up area of cities and towns is a relatively new policy requirement under the NPF and is supported by a range of departmental initiatives, from funding for regeneration and public realm projects through the Urban and Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) to regulatory measures such as the vacant site levy, proposed Residential Zoned Land Tax, and simplifying requirements for change of use from commercial to residential in town centres.

A list of specific URDF projects is outlined later in Section 7 of this report.

To enable delivery of RSES objectives pertaining to sustainable growth, local authorities have been provided with a range of powers and mechanisms to deal with vacancy and dereliction in urban centres and to incentivise redevelopment and renewal.

Examples include:

- The THRIVE Town Centre First Revival Scheme launched in February 2024 provides grants for local authorities to transform publically-owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings within selected town centres through renovation, renewal and adaptive reuse.
- The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund provides a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties in towns and villages, with priority given to areas with high levels of vacancy or dereliction.
- The Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Fund launched in May 2022 seeks to increase the supply of owner occupier apartments in cities. The scheme is expected to deliver up to 5,000 additional apartments in the five cities including the Cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford. It will support the Government's objectives of compact growth and creating vibrant liveable cities. In addition to promoting city focused and compact growth the scheme seeks to increase the supply of owner occupier apartments and to provide those who wish to purchase a home with greater choice. Under the scheme a viability fund will support the construction of apartments for eligible schemes in the five cities by bridging the gap between what owner occupiers can pay and what it costs to build the apartments. The Government has allocated €450 million for the scheme up to 2026.
- The vacant site levy, introduced by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, empowers local authorities to compile a vacant site register and to apply a levy to properties listed on the vacant site register. The rate increased from 3% to 7% of the market valuation of relevant properties from 2019. Site owners became liable to pay from 2020.
- The Derelict Sites Act 1990 imposes a duty on every owner and occupier of land to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the land does not become, or continue to be, a derelict site. The Act also imposes a duty on local authorities to take all reasonable steps to ensure that land does not become, or continue to be, a derelict site;

- The Planning and Development (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2018 provide for an exemption from the requirement to obtain planning permission in respect of the change of use of certain vacant commercial premises, including vacant areas above ground floor premises, to residential use.

Note: In February 2022 Minister O'Brien signed the Planning and Development Act (Exempted Development) Regulations 2022, which extend the operation of the 2018 Regulations until 2025.

Under the National Vacant Home Reuse Strategy, the Vacant Homes Unit in the Department provided annual funding to each local authority to support the work of a Vacant Homes Office. Each office is tasked to support, implement and further develop, update, monitor and review the progress of local authorities' Vacant Homes Action Plans and actions to address vacant private housing; in addition to other core functions to identify and bring vacant homes back into use. In addition, under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, the Repair and Leasing Scheme and Buy and Renew Scheme were introduced to assist in bringing vacant stock back into use.

The importance of promoting urban renewal and brownfield regeneration is reflected in 'Town Centre First' policy, prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Department of Rural and Community Development and published in February 2022. The policy contains actions to provide towns with the tools and resources required to become more viable and attractive places and recognises the intrinsic importance that built and natural heritage contributes to this.

A new funding scheme launched in 2024 and delivered through the Regional Assemblies, 'THRIVE Heritage Revival Scheme', supports and promotes a local authority and community-led approach to planning and design under the Town Centre First framework and will fund the renovation, reuse and adaptive reuse of publically owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings.

THRIVE will provide local authorities with funding of between €2m and €7m to renovate, refurbish and adapt vacant and derelict heritage buildings in their town centres. Heritage buildings under the scheme are classified as structures that form part of the architectural heritage and have unique architectural, historical, archaeological or artistic qualities, or are linked to the cultural and economic history of a place.

## 5. Housing

Under Housing for All, the Government plans to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 per year over the next decade. This includes the delivery of 90,000 social homes, 36,000 affordable purchase homes and 18,000 cost rental homes by 2030. Housing for All is supported by an investment package of over €4bn per annum, through an overall combination of €12bn in direct Exchequer funding, €3.5bn in funding through the Land Development Agency and €5bn funding through the Housing Finance Agency.

### Social Housing

In September 2021, Social Housing delivery targets were issued to each local authority for the period 2022 to 2026. A key action of Housing for All is that local authorities will develop and submit Housing Delivery Action Plans. The plans set out details of both social and affordable housing delivery over the period 2022 to 2026. All local authorities have submitted their Housing Delivery Action Plans and the Department is now working closely with local authorities to review and finalise the plans, having regard to the targets and policy objectives set out in Housing for All.

**Table 1.1: Social Housing by Local Authorities through Build, Acquisition and Leasing Streams 2018-2023 (Q3)**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023 (Q1 - Q3)</b>
<b>Carlow</b>	157	212	170	240	138	85
<b>Clare</b>	232	154	148	232	289	85
<b>Cork city</b>	458	694	399	249	731	165
<b>Cork county</b>	410	619	546	489	662	116
<b>Kerry</b>	289	325	294	270	297	188
<b>Kilkenny</b>	185	299	183	226	184	136
<b>Limerick</b>	280	263	193	323	455	57
<b>Tipperary</b>	212	265	193	177	251	109
<b>Waterford</b>	303	269	292	366	254	175
<b>Wexford</b>	287	278	277	299	382	77
<b>SRA REGION</b>	<b>2813</b>	<b>3378</b>	<b>2695</b>	<b>2871</b>	<b>3889</b>	<b>1193</b>



The Department also publishes the Social Housing Construction Status Report which provides details of social housing developments across the region that have been completed, are under construction or are progressing through design and pre-tender processes. The most recent publication for Q3 2023 is available on gov.ie. The latest Construction Status Report (Q3 2023) shows that 9,782 social homes were onsite at the end of Q3 2023, with an additional 13,822 homes at design and tender stage.

The Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP) supports the delivery of social housing by providing financial support to local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) for the leasing of houses and apartments. These properties are either privately owned or owned by AHBs. Properties made available under the programme are used to accommodate households from local authority waiting lists.

**Table 1.2: Spending under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme\***

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>End Q3 2023</b>
<b>Carlow</b>	€2,763,834	€3,135,425	€4,661,136	€6,872,553	€5,606,273
<b>Clare</b>	€3,484,952	€4,267,469	€5,241,381	€6,210,771	€5,335,401
<b>Cork city</b>	€5,351,366	€9,846,298	€12,898,438	€19,738,299	€18,739,329
<b>Cork county</b>	€4,850,275	€6,074,676	€9,638,133	€10,389,369	€11,766,816
<b>Kerry</b>	€2,957,614	€5,102,181	€7,797,848	€9,427,815	€7,880,183
<b>Kilkenny</b>	€1,614,842	€2,894,685	€4,019,232	€4,605,503	€3,634,929
<b>Limerick</b>	€2,144,675	€2,712,760	€5,284,141	€10,266,104	€8,932,867
<b>Tipperary</b>	€3,188,813	€3,564,335	€4,403,176	€4,890,226	€3,981,770
<b>Waterford</b>	€2,265,080	€4,043,093	€4,287,868	€8,438,725	€7,322,270
<b>Wexford</b>	€3,543,358	€4,190,438	€7,246,073	€9,364,505	€8,714,921
<b>SRA REGION</b>	€32,164,809	€45,831,360	€65,477,246	€90,203,870	€81,914,759

The following schemes are currently supported under SHCEP:

- properties leased and owned by AHBs, including properties funded under CALF, and delivered under payment and availability agreements;
- direct leasing by local authorities from private owners;
- properties in the Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS);
- AHB Mortgage to Rent (MTR) and the expanded MTR scheme;
- properties leased to local authorities and AHBs from NARPS;

- Unsold Affordable Dwellings;
- Enhanced Leasing; and the Targeted Leasing Initiative (TLI).

### Affordable Housing Fund

Within in the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) area, €116.6m has been approved to date by way of public investment across 38 projects to subsidise the delivery 1,550 new affordable homes for purchase or rent by eligible affordable housing candidates.

The Affordable Housing Fund is available to local authorities as a direct subvention on local authority housing development costs at current rates of €50,000, €75,000, €100,000 and €150,000 (cost rental only) per affordable unit depending on the density of housing units per hectare achieved on the development, and its location. A total of 95% of the subsidy approved comes from the Exchequer and 5% from a local authority's own funds. The subsidy enables local authorities to make affordable homes available to approved affordable housing applicants for purchase, on a shared equity basis, or for rent under a cost rental arrangement. Affordable homes are offered at prices and rents significantly below market rates. This means at least a 15% reduction for affordable purchase and 25% reduction for cost rental homes.

### LDA Project Tosaigh

LDA's Project Tosaigh, a key initiative of Housing for All, is a framework to initiate development on privately held sites that have planning permission but have not commenced, or are not proceeding quickly enough, and capturing that development into the affordable housing net. The initiative has the dual intended effects of enabling development and accelerating the new affordable housing tenures. It will also provide the State with a coherent, consolidated channel for engagement with the private sector which had been happening on a more fragmented basis. (Full details of LDA developments are outlined within Section 12 'Other Bodies' of this report).

## **6. Rural Development**

The National Planning Framework and RSES supports the concept of the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging their growth and prosperity while also seeking to arrest the decline in areas that have experienced low population growth in recent decades.

Chapter 5.3 'Planning for the Future Growth and Development of Rural Areas' of the NPF includes several specific national policy objectives that aim to support the sustainable development of rural areas and deliver strengthened and diversified rural communities.

Town Centre First policy reflects the challenges faced by towns and villages in rural areas and their need to function as viable and vibrant locations for people to live and work. Investment for the development of rural Ireland is available through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, both administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Underpinned by significant NDP funding, the RRDF provides an opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a sustainable impact in rural communities, and to address depopulation in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the NPF and RSES relating to Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities.

In addition to the funding schemes administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development; the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), which is under the aegis of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, has commenced a Farm Plan Scheme which supports landowners to deliver actions that benefit habitats and species in Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

## 7. Urban Regeneration

The RSES objectives emphasises the importance of regeneration and placemaking as a driver of change to revitalise urban areas and notes that placemaking is critical to sustained socio-economic vibrancy. High quality placemaking has been supported by the Department through the implementation of Project Ireland 2040, particularly through the establishment in 2018 of a €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) under the National Development Plan.

Under the URDF's first 2 calls for proposals funding has been provided to support applicant led projects to target run down and underused urban centres, ensuring that more parts of our urban areas can become attractive and vibrant places in which people choose to live and work, as well as to invest and to visit.

To date over €1.6 billion has been provisionally allocated in respect of 132 successful proposals, comprising of over 400 projects. URDF supported projects are now active in every local authority area in the country.

The Southern Regional Assembly Area has benefitted from the URDF with funding of €806 million allocated towards 141 individual projects (details below).

Many of these URDF supported projects are acting as a catalyst for wider longer term local authority led transformative regeneration and development initiatives that will ultimately result in further significant additional investment in the urban locations involved.

In January 2023, Minister O'Brien announced a third round of funding under the URDF which is specifically tailored to address long term vacancy and dereliction, helping to deliver the objectives of Housing for All, Town Centre First and the new Vacant Homes Action Plan. Another €56 million in URDF support was allocated to the local authorities in the Southern Region under this call.

County	Proposal Name and Description	No. of projects	Amount Awarded (€)	Stage of Proposal
Carlow	<p><b>Carlow Town</b> - Funding for master plan for Carlow town centre. The vision for Carlow Town is to be a high-functioning, inclusive, compact and accessible town underpinned by a robust and diverse local economy.</p>	1	580,000	Complete
	<p><b>Public Realm and Pedestrian Linkage Project in Carlow Town</b> - This project will provide Carlow Town with plentiful, accessible and exciting public spaces which will improve town centre linkages and increase pedestrian mobility from the town centre to Carlow College and the Railway Station.</p>	6	17,085,027	Detailed Design Stage
Clare	<p><b>Shannon Town Centre Masterplan</b> Funding for the Strategic masterplan to enable planning for future projects in this area, including the One Shannon Hub, which is an extension of the current Shannon Town Centre Masterplan funding, to commence and advance with the preliminary concept design phase of the One Shannon Hub &amp; Public Realm projects as strategic projects of the masterplan.</p>	2	611,789	On Site

	<b>Parnell St. The Lanes and Bow Ways</b> - Proposal represents Stage 2 of an overall rejuvenation and enhancement programme for Ennis as part of the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration. The proposal consists of two integrated and physically connected elements located at the heart of Ennis, Parnell Street and the extensive network of Lanes and Bow-Ways that characterise the Town and its Medieval core.	1	4,002,867	Completed
	<b>Barrack Sq. Old Barrack St O'Connell St High St</b> - Funding for design of physical works in the area to give a high quality connected public realm.	1	389,209	Complete
<b>Clare</b>	<b>Ennis Town Centre PR Regeneration</b> - The project forms the next phase of works that will contribute to the realisation of an overall vision for a high quality, pedestrian focussed public realm in the medieval core of Ennis Town centre.	1	8,744,275	On Site
<b>Cork City</b>	<b>Beamish and Crawford/Grand Parade Quarter</b> - This project relates to the regeneration of the Beamish & Crawford/Grand Parade Quarter. Funding relates to the preliminary design phase for projects e.g. access and public realm works. The City Plan identifies the "Beamish and Crawford / Grand Parade Quarter" as one of these transformational areas, with a specific objective to regenerate the quarter as part of the revitalization of	1	916,000	On Site

	<p>the wider city centre. It will address existing vacancy, dereliction and underutilisation of brownfield land.</p>			
	<p><b>Cork City Docklands -</b> This project is complementary to the Port of Cork project and will facilitate enabling infrastructure for the Cork Docklands and relates to: a) the Eastern Gateway Bridge, and b) Land acquisition of City Docks north and south Quays. The project also consists of a new bridge over the River Lee linking the Lower Glanmire Rd (N8) at the “Skew Bridge” on the northern side to Monahan’s Road beside Páirc Uí Chaoimh on the southern side.</p>	1	450,000	Complete
	<p><b>Cork City Docklands Call 2 -</b> This project will unlock Cork City Docklands potential to develop as a vibrant, high quality district that will attract investment in relation to mixed use development, leisure and cultural facilities.</p>	15	357,917,013	Preliminary Design Stage
	<p><b>Grand Parade Quarter Call 2 -</b>The development of the Grand Parade Quarter will be transformative and will combine with other complementary developments in the area to create a vibrant quarter where culture and learning acts as a catalyst for business and tourism.</p>	3	46,050,000	Preliminary Design Stage

<b>Cork City</b>	<b>Port of Cork, Tivoli Docks</b> - This project and the Cork City Docklands project are complementary. This relates to the proposed relocation of the Port and funding relates to preparatory programme for relocation and redevelopment of Tivoli Docks. This application refers to Tivoli and the proposed interventions to release this site for redevelopment.	1	1,312,500	On Site
	<b>Kent Station Yard (Site Enabling)</b> - Funding for remediation works to allow for future site development.	1	750,000	On Site
<b>Cork County</b>	<b>Carrigaline Western Relief Road</b> - This project is for the development of a Relief Road for the town of Carrigaline. This project will allow vehicular traffic by pass the main street and it is intended to link the new pedestrian/cycle routes to a series of informal and formal walks and public spaces for interactions.	1	7,095,374	Complete
	<b>Midleton Main Street Public Realm Improvements</b> - This application specifically relates to the implementation of the Public Realm Improvements in Main Street Midleton, Co. Cork. Phase 2 of the Midleton Main Street Public Realm Improvements projects is part of an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning.	1	1,921,985	Detailed Design Stage



	<p><b>Midleton Permeability Package of Proposals -</b> This relates to initial support for two projects that will facilitate the growth of Midleton, and cover design work, value for money assessment and potential land acquisition.</p>	2	187,500	Tender Stage
	<p><b>Cobh UEA - Public Realm - Diaspora Centre -</b> The funding relates to the Ballynoe Urban Expansion Area (UEA) and public realm improvements in Cobh and a Diaspora centre. Funding relates to design and feasibility studies.</p>	2	277,500	Detailed Design Stage
<b>Cork County</b>	<p><b>Carragaline Public Realm -</b> This is associated with the Carrigaline Western Relief road, and forms part of wider plans to improve the public realm in the town. Scheme is currently at concept and feasibility stage and funding will bring it to detailed design stage.</p>	2	423,750	Detailed Design Stage
	<p><b>Carrigtwohill -</b> This relates to a suite of proposed transport/movement/public realm works in Carrigtwohill. Funding relates to scheme design and planning.</p>	1	562,500	Detailed Design Stage
	<p><b>Mallow Town Regeneration -</b> Support towards the advancement of projects as part of the Mallow Town Regeneration Plan and Works Programme.</p>	3	1,480,500	Complete

	<p><b>Passage West - Ringaskiddy - Carrigaline Harbour Cluster</b> - This project covers project planning and design and the initial site assembly that will facilitate the future delivery of a suite of co-ordinated and linked transformative projects targeted at the towns of Carrigaline and Passage West which together with Ringaskiddy form a key spatial cluster adjoining Cork Harbour.</p>	1	506,250	Detailed Design Stage
	<p><b>Mallow Town Centre Regeneration Call 2</b> - The overarching aim of this project is focussed on stimulating town centre renewal and creating more liveable and attractive town centre.</p>	3	4,706,700	Detailed Design Stage
Kerry	<p><b>Phase 1 Tralee Town Centre - Rock Street, Russell Street and Bridge Street</b> - Support towards public realm works in Tralee Town Centre - Rock Street, Russell Street and Bridge Street to address structural issues, congestion, social disadvantage, improved public realm, potential high quality office, civic and community development and improved residential amenity.</p>	2	2,969,509	Complete
Kerry	<p><b>Smarter Travel Killarney (Link &amp; Public Realm)</b> - Funding for construction of Killarney inner link road between New Street and High Street and public realm improvements as part of project to consolidate town core and improve traffic management.</p>	1	1,000,000	On Site

	<p><b>Áras Phádraig Masterplan</b> - Funding for master plan for Aras Phadraig site and adjoining public car park at Lewis Road Killarney, an area which is important to the economic regeneration and urban fabric enhancement of the town.</p>	1	112,500	Complete
	<p><b>Destination Killarney</b> - The project seeks to interweave the fabric of the Urban Core of Killarney seamlessly with its natural amenities through a series of interrelated transport and public realm improvements and a traffic management strategy that removes as far as possible transitory traffic from the urban core.</p>	3	16,068,429	Detailed Design Stage
	<p><b>Tralee Regeneration Positioning Tralee as a Regional Economic Driver and Destination</b> - This project supports major areas of intervention for Tralee in relation to its economic growth.</p>	9	15,936,717	Detailed Design Stage
<b>Kilkenny</b>	<p><b>Abbey Quarter</b> - The regeneration of the Abbey Quarter (AQ) presents an opportunity to restore a significant brown field site in the heart of Kilkenny City. This funding is for a number of 'shovel ready' public realm, community and cultural infrastructure projects that are essential to stimulate and enhance commercial development on the Abbey Quarter.</p>	12	6,462,215	On Site

<b>Kilkenny</b>	<b>Abbey Quarter Phase 2 (Advancement Project)</b> - This URDF supported project involves a number of public realm, community and cultural infrastructure projects that are essential to stimulate and enhance commercial development in the Abbey Quarter.	4	13,536,000	Detailed Design Stage
	<b>Kilkenny City Centre Enhanced Liveability Project</b> - This project will increase the attractiveness, liveability and connectivity of Kilkenny at its urban core for locals and visitors alike and will transform the quality of place by radically improving the streetscape and accessibility of the Kilkenny's historic core.	5	6,641,000	Detailed Design Stage
<b>Limerick</b>	<b>O'Connell St</b> - The O'Connell Street Urban Centre Revitalisation Project is part of a wider initiative, the Great Streets Programme, to create a world-class environment to support the sustainable development of the city centre in Limerick. This project involves public realm works on O'Connell Street, from the end of Patrick Street to below the junction with Cecil Street. This includes junctions and tie-ins on side streets, and an extended area along Thomas Street as far as the junction of Thomas Street and Little William Street.	1	4,500,000	On Site

<b>Limerick</b>	<p><b>Digital Collaboration and Virtual Reality Centre -</b>  The project is to develop a Digital Collaboration and Virtual Reality Centre in Cecil Street Limerick. The works supported by the URDF include survey and design and planning to bring project to procurement stage, and including initial enabling works. This state of the art Digital Collaboration and Virtual Reality Centre in Cecil Street Limerick seeks to maximise the benefits and strengths arising from collaboration and co-location of disruptive technology expertise to support all levels of regional technology activity in the Mid-West.</p>	1	937,500	Complete
	<p><b>Worldclass Waterfront -</b>  The funding is for the feasibility and design costs for the development of a world class waterfront along the River Shannon in Limerick. The World Class Waterfront Project is part of a wider initiative to create a world-class environment supporting the sustainable development of the City Centre in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Framework. The World Class Waterfront is identified as one of seven transformational projects in the Limerick 2030 – An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick</p>	1	350,000	On Site

<b>Limerick</b>	<p><b>Social and Economic Model</b> - Funding for technical assistance to develop a model for the economic and social impact of the Limerick 2030 programme. The model will address the development of the Opera Site. The Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan 2013 set out the blue print for the economic, social and physical transformation of Limerick City Centre and the wider county/mid-west region. The Opera Site development is identified as a strategic component of the plan. The Local Authority commenced using the Social and Economic Model in 2022, to consider the impacts of funding proposals throughout Limerick, as funding proposals are prepared.</p>	1	103,668	Complete
	<p><b>Living Georgian City Programme</b> - The Living Georgian City Programme will focus on targeted interventions to renew vacant and underutilised stock, to increase the level of residential use in the city and show case the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient city. Funding is to advance this programme, including feasibility and demonstration projects.</p>	1	1,200,000	Detailed Design Stage

	<p><b>Opera Project (Site Enabling)</b> - This is part funding of the “Opera Centre” development in the heart of Limerick. Central to the delivery of the vision for the area, is the development of some key strategic sites. Funding is required for the non-commercial elements of the development in particular the cultural and civic components of the development, the public library, enabling works and the public realm</p>	9	41,883,500	On Site
Limerick	<p><b>Living Limerick City Centre Initiative</b> - This project is an integrated programme of urban development that will be underpinned by a programme of innovative collaboration.</p>	4	35,047,930	Preliminary Design Stage
	<p><b>Worldclass Waterfront Call 2</b> - This URDF supported project involves the development of a world class waterfront along the River Shannon in Limerick.</p>	3	40,924,260	Tender Stage
	<p><b>University of Limerick Digital District</b> - This funding is to support a renewed focus on the development of a digital district hub within the Georgian core of Limerick City.</p>	1	750,000	Complete
Tipperary	<p><b>Liberty Square Thurles</b> - The enhancement of Liberty Square in Thurles, Co. Tipperary will knit together previous public realm initiatives and result in the completion of the infrastructural element of the Place-making initiatives being undertaken for Thurles Town Centre as</p>	2	5,390,291	On Site

	part of its Town Centre Initiative.			
	<b>Clonmel</b> - As part of the Clonmel 2030 Transformational Regeneration a series of projects are envisaged including the regeneration of Kickham Barracks and a Clonmel Regional Sports Hub.	2	10,594,961	Complete
	<b>Nenagh, Sustainable Energy Centre of Excellence</b> - As part of the Clonmel 2030 Transformational Regeneration a series of projects are envisaged including the regeneration of Kickham Barracks and a Clonmel Regional Sports Hub.	2	9,525,000	Complete
<b>Waterford</b>	<b>Waterford City Centre Regeneration</b> - This project consists of the important regeneration of the Historic Core/Strategic Public Realm Plan based on a series of planned city centre brownfield proposals including cultural, re-use, business hub and brownfield redevelopment sites.	22	27,514,993	Detailed Design Stage



	<p><b>Tramore Town Centre -</b> This project proposes to transform the town centre into a destination by creating a new identifiable core with shared surface and good public realm linkages to the beach area and transport hub on the Lower Branch Road.</p>	1	2,710,752	Complete
	<p><b>Waterford City and Environs - North Quays (Infrastructure enabling) -</b> The proposal is to transform City and Regional access and mobility and provide for game changing development on the North side of Waterford, enabling a natural extension of Waterford City Centre, to the North side of the river, as well as opening up the North side of the City for development in unparalleled fashion.</p>	3	100,600,000	On Site
<b>Wexford</b>	<p><b>Trinity Wharf Project -</b> This URDF supported project covers the first phase development of an access road and initial enabling works in advance of the next phase of the wider Trinity Wharf Project.</p>	2	2,028,000	On Site
	<p><b>Trinity Wharf Call 2 -</b> This URDF supported project will develop Trinity Wharf as a new mixed-use urban quarter to include retail, cultural, hotel and commercial office development. The development has the potential to bring significant economic and social benefits, and position Wexford as a superior location to work, live and visit.</p>	5	18,485,076	Preliminary Design Stage

Table 2.1 – URDF Funded Programmes in the Southern Regional Assembly area

## 8. Heritage

Heritage Ireland 2030 is Ireland's National heritage plan. It is built around a vision of our heritage being at the very centre of local and national discourse, valued by all and cared for and protected for future generations. At the heart of this framework are three themes: communities, leadership and partnerships. The Department provides financial support for the protection of heritage buildings and historic structures through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS); the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) and the Community Monuments Fund (CMF) for conservation and other works at national monuments.

This year 590 heritage projects across every county in the country have benefited from a combined sum of €8m under BHIS and HSF.

The National Built Heritage Service have supported the Southern Region through the following capital grant schemes for the conservation of heritage buildings:

Table 3.1: Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS):

Local Authority	2022		2023	
	Total No. of Projects	Total Grant Funding	Total No. of Projects	Total Grant Funding
Carlow,	4	€81,640	3	€43,848
Tipperary	10	€126,400	15	€147,777.00
Waterford	20	€193,965	20	€209,660.00
Wexford	9	€104,821.75	10	€117,382.18
Kilkenny	12	€153,947.55	13	€177,910.20
Cork City	15	€152,000	13	€142,700.00
Cork County	11	€108,666.56	15	€146,490.77
Kerry	8	€67,917	12	€96,000
Clare	9	€86,000	7	€78,656.75
Limerick	21	€208,800	24	€264,323.00
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>€1,284,157.86</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>€1,424,747.76</b>

Combined total for BHIS across the 2 years: 251 projects with funding of **€2,708,905.76**

Table 3.2: Historic Structures Fund (HSF):

Local Authority	2022		2023	
	Total No. of Projects	Total Grant Funding	Total No. of Projects	Total Grant Funding
Carlow,	3	€126,658	2	€133,000
Tipperary	2	€41,450	3	€69,800
Waterford	5	€339,755	3	€294,000
Wexford	0	€0	1	€3,178
Kilkenny	4	€125,820	1	€37,000
Cork City	0	€0	2	€240,000
Cork County	6	€430,0000	5	€387,500
Kerry	1	€50,000	2	€70,500
Clare	2	€192,000	2	€48,000
Limerick	3	€109,263	5	€210,500
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>€1,414,946</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>€1,493,946</b>

Combined total for HSF across the 2 years: 52 projects with funding of **€2,911,892**.

The Built Heritage Policy Unit is engaging with local authorities on new policy initiatives including Heritage Ireland 2030, the National Policy on Architecture and the New European Bauhaus. It has also made recommendations for the long-term protection and sustainable development of towns and places through heritage-led regeneration to combat dereliction and vacancy, and contribute to climate action, vernacular architecture and cultural landscapes. In partnership with the Heritage Council the Department supported a number of pilot projects to inform new policies and urban renewal programmes. The dissemination of research is through the Collaborative Town Health Check Programme, project managed by the Heritage Council, and through the OPR's training remit.

### Biodiversity

Ireland's 3<sup>rd</sup> National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) outlines a suite of objectives, targets and actions which aim to ensure that biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored.

In the period since the Plan launched, significant progress has been made in implementing the actions in the NBAP, including:

- DHLGH published '*Development Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' in 2022, supporting integrated planning for green infrastructure within statutory land use plans, in line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework.
- NPWS awarded funding, through the Heritage Council, for the appointment of biodiversity officers in each County Council in order to develop Biodiversity Plans for their area; advise the local authority on biodiversity related issues and the authority's obligations in relation to protecting biodiversity; and to help local authorities to fully integrate biodiversity conservation into all of their policies, plans and actions, through training and provision of expert advice.

The NPWS Farm Plan Scheme supports landowners to deliver actions that benefit habitats and species in Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, to support farmland biodiversity more generally, and to provide a platform for trialling new conservation approaches which can be delivered on a wider scale. NPWS led on the preparation of the current (covering the period 2021-2027) Prioritised Action Framework for Ireland ([https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/files/Prioritised-Action-Framework-\(PAF\)-for-Natura%20-2000-in-Ireland.pdf](https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/files/Prioritised-Action-Framework-(PAF)-for-Natura%20-2000-in-Ireland.pdf)).

## **9. Architecture and Design**

Places for People, a new National Policy on Architecture was launched in May 2022, and promotes quality in architecture and the built environment for increased environmental, economic and social sustainability and resilience. The policy vision emphasises the power of architecture and design to support a more sustainable and resilient society based on knowledge and creativity and driven by leadership and inclusive participation.

The policy supports the implementation of architectural and built environment priorities in the NPF, the Climate Action Plan 2021, Housing for All and Town Centre First. In the European context, policy direction and funding mechanisms stem from the European Green Deal, including the Renovation Wave, Just Transition and the New European Bauhaus.

## 10. Water Services

The Programme for Government commits to funding Irish Water's capital investment plan for drinking water and waste water infrastructure on a multi-annual basis, and this is supported through the National Development Plan. Other funding sources include a combination of non-domestic revenue, excess usage charges and non-domestic borrowings and capital contributions. As well as significant investment to improve compliance with public health and environmental standards, the plan specifically aims to ensure that water services investment supports the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Recently updated water services capacity registers have also assisted in this regard.

The current Uisce Éireann (UÉ) Strategic Funding Plan sets out the capital and operational costs expected to be incurred by UÉ over the period of 2019 to 2024. The current plan identifies an overall funding requirement of €11bn to 2024, comprised of a €6.1bn investment in infrastructure and assets and €4.9bn in operating costs. UÉ is currently finalising its submission for the overall funding requirement from 2025 to 2029, comprised of investment in infrastructure, assets and in operating costs.

The Programme for Government commits to funding Uisce Éireann's capital investment plan for drinking water and waste water infrastructure on a multi-annual basis, and this is supported through the National Development Plan (NDP). Other funding sources include a combination of non-domestic revenue, excess usage charges and non-domestic borrowings and capital contributions. As well as significant investment to improve compliance with public health and environmental standards, the plan specifically aims to ensure that water services investment supports the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Uisce Éireann's 'Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme (STVGP) is intended to provide capacity primarily in wastewater treatment plants to cater for growth in smaller settlements which might otherwise not be provided for in the larger scale investment plan. An overall budget of €98 million was allocated to the programme over the five years to 2024. The programme is directed at settlements with a population of less than 2,000 persons, with identified capacity constraints. The programme offers the potential for housing development in settlements in rural areas as an alternative to one-off developments.

To date Uisce Éireann has confirmed that projects are progressing at 25 settlements in the Southern Region which have been nominated and ranked by the local authorities. Of these

19 are being funded directly through the STVGP with a further 6 being progressed through other programmes. Furthermore, the water main rehabilitation program is strategically planned to reduce interruptions from water main bursts, improve water quality and replace end-of-life assets.

Funding under the Rural Water Programme provides for investment in the rural water sector where public water services provided by Uisce Éireann are not available or planned. Capital funding is made available through a multi-annual programme which comprises of a range of measures aimed at improving the quality, reliability and efficiency of the rural water services serving households. Funding is also available under the Rural Water Programme for an annual subsidy payable to group water schemes towards their operational and management costs of supplying water for domestic use. Demand led funding is available for improvements to private wells and domestic waste water treatment systems.

Uisce Éireann is committed to a balanced regional development in accordance with the NDP and the NPF. UÉ strategies and planned projects take account of the expected growth projections out to 2040 and beyond. An example of this is the recently completed National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) which sets out UÉ's 25-year strategy to identify how they will provide a safe, sustainable, secure and reliable water supply to their customers while facilitating future growth and development. The reports for the South-West and South-East region are available on the Uisce Éireann website at the following location:

[www.water.ie/projects/strategic-plans/national-water-resources/](http://www.water.ie/projects/strategic-plans/national-water-resources/)

The development of the Regional Water Resources Plan South West (RWRP-SW) will allow Uisce Éireann for the first time to review water supply needs collectively for the entire South West region and across the spectrum of risk including quality, quantity, reliability, and sustainability. It allows UÉ to consider local options to resolve these needs and larger Regional Options that can address needs across multiple supplies. The RWRP-SW has now been adopted, and accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement and an Appropriate Assessment Determination. A consultation report summarizing feedback has also been published.

The outcome of the RWRP-SW includes:

- Reducing the number of Water Resource Zones in the South West region from 174 to 92.
- Development of larger interconnected Water Resource Zones for the urban areas in the region.
- Upgrading 137 existing water treatment plants to reduce water quality risks across all WRZs.
- Interconnecting supplies via 644 km of trunk mains.
- Development of 17 new water treatment plants.
- Eventual decommissioning of 90 water treatment plants.
- Reducing leakage to 23% of regional demand through pressure management, active leakage control and targeted asset replacement.

As with the RWRP-SW, the development of the Regional Water Resources Plan South East (RWRP-SE) will allow Uisce Éireann for the first time to review water supply needs collectively for the entire South East region.

The outcome of the draft RWRP-SE includes:

- Merging water supply systems within the zone to form 12 larger interconnected Water Resource Zones, reducing the number of Water Resource Zones in the South East region from 111 to 58.
- Upgrading 13 existing water treatment plants (WTPs) to reduce water quality risks across all WRZs.
- Increasing the capacity of 24 (of the remaining 56) WTPs to address the current supply deficit and to meet forecast growth
- Interconnecting supplies via 455 km of trunk mains.
- Development of 13 new water treatment plants.
- Eventual decommissioning of 63 water treatment plants.
- Reducing leakage to 24% of regional demand through pressure management, active leakage control and targeted asset replacement.

In relation to the target of 50:50 split Uisce Éireann will endeavour to achieve this wherever possible but it should be noted that they prioritise projects firstly based on risk while working within their annual capital allowance. In the period 2022-2024 capital spending in the GDA and East Midlands amounted to approx. 55% of the UE budget over these 3 years with 45% of the budget spend across the rest of the country. This split will vary year on year as projects progress through the construction phase.

In relation to the MyProjectIreland tracker, the Database-Projects tab records individual projects with a value over €20m. At present this tracker has 44 UÉ projects listed nationally in the Design, Planning, Construction and Approval Phases of which 19 (43%) are in the Southern region alone. Some of these projects are listed as “subject to appraisal” where the details are to be finalised. An example of this is the Cork City Wastewater Network where UÉ are currently engaged in the production of approximately 35 feasibility reports and designs which is expected to identify an investment requirement of up to €1bn for the city.

The MyProjectIreland tracker however does not fully reflect the extensive works ongoing in both Water and Wastewater which fall under the headings of programmes and consist of treatment plant and network upgrades which are below €20m in value. Examples of these are upgrades currently ongoing and planned at the Glashaboy and Inniscarra Water Treatment Plants in Cork City, the recently completed upgrade to the Adamstown Water treatment plant serving Waterford city with a further upgrade of this plant currently at construction stage and the current project to extend the Limerick City Water Supply to Croom and Adare to facilitate growth in those areas. A feasibility study is also being developed now for the future expansion of the Clareville Water Treatment Plant in Limerick to cater for the growth identified in the National Water Resource Plan.



**Table 4.1: Wastewater Programmes and Projects expenditure >€1m for the period 2022-2023**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Programme/Project title</b>	<b>Current stage</b>	<b>2022 €m (actuals)</b>	<b>2023 €m (forecast)</b>	<b>Total €m</b>
<b>Carlow</b>	Muinebheag and Leighlinbridge Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.0	4.2	4.2
<b>Carlow</b>	Tullow Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	5.9	0.7	6.5
<b>Clare</b>	Capital Maintenance Programme (WWBG)	n/a	1.5	0.1	1.6
<b>Clare</b>	Clarecastle Wastewater Network	Stage 3	1.3	0.7	2.0
<b>Clare</b>	Kilfenora Wastewater Treatment Plant	n/a	3.9	1.1	5.0
<b>Clare</b>	Kilrush Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	7.4	1.8	9.2
<b>Clare</b>	Liscannor Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	3.4	0.4	3.7
<b>Cork</b>	Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme (Wastewater)	n/a	0.2	1.1	1.3
<b>Cork</b>	Ballycotton Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.2	5.5	5.8
<b>Cork</b>	Bandon Watermain and Sewer Network Upgrade	Stage 3	1.8	0.5	2.3

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Programme/Project title</b>	<b>Current stage</b>	<b>2022 €m (actuals)</b>	<b>2023 €m (forecast)</b>	<b>Total €m</b>
<b>Cork</b>	Boherbue Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	1.8	6.0	7.8
<b>Cork</b>	Castletownbere Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	1.4	0.2	1.7
<b>Cork</b>	Castletownsend Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	2.6	5.4	8.0
<b>Cork</b>	Inchigeelagh Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	3.1	0.3	3.5
<b>Cork</b>	Mallow Sewerage Scheme - Network	Stage 3	4.3	-0.2	4.2
<b>Cork</b>	Mallow Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	8.4	1.5	9.8
<b>Cork</b>	Network Extensions (Wastewater) - Midleton	Stage 3	5.0	7.4	12.4
<b>Cork</b>	SG - Support Social and Economic Growth	n/a	0.2	0.9	1.1
<b>Cork</b>	Whitegate/Aghada Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	7.3	6.0	13.3
<b>Cork City</b>	G&D - WWBG Growth	n/a	4.2	3.0	7.2
<b>Kerry</b>	Kenmare Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.5	3.3	3.9
<b>Kerry</b>	Kilcummin Wastewater Network	Stage 3	2.1	6.6	8.7
<b>Kilkenny</b>	G&D - CDS	n/a	0.2	0.9	1.0

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Programme/Project title</b>	<b>Current stage</b>	<b>2022 €m (actuals)</b>	<b>2023 €m (forecast)</b>	<b>Total €m</b>
<b>Limerick</b>	G&D - LIHAF/MUHDS	n/a	0.5	1.9	2.4
<b>Tipperary</b>	Ballina Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.1	5.3	5.4
<b>Tipperary</b>	Cahir Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.1	1.4	1.5
<b>Tipperary</b>	Nenagh New Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.7	0.6	1.3
<b>Tipperary</b>	Newport (Tipperary) Wastewater Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.1	2.9	2.9
<b>Waterford</b>	G&D - CDS	n/a	0.3	2.9	3.2
<b>Wexford</b>	Arthurstown, Ballyhack and Duncannon Wastewater Treatment Plants	Stage 3	6.8	1.6	8.4
<b>Wexford</b>	Enniscorthy Main Drainage	Stage 3	0.2	1.4	1.7
<b>Wexford</b>	Kilmore Quay Village and Environs Waste Water Outfall	Stage 3	5.1	6.8	11.9

*Note - Stage 3 is at final business case stage and approval to proceed*

**Table 4.2: Water Programmes and Projects expenditure >€1m for the period 2022-2023**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Programme/Project title</b>	<b>Current stage</b>	<b>2022 €m (actuals)</b>	<b>2023 €m (forecast)</b>	<b>Total €m</b>
<b>Carlow</b>	Rathvilly Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Stage 3	4.3	5.2	9.5
<b>Cork</b>	Glashaboy Water Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.3	2.5	2.8
<b>Cork</b>	Jones Bridge Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Stage 3	1.2	4.8	6.0
<b>Cork</b>	W_NK_N_Inniscarra to Clonakilty Phase 1	Stage 3	8.7	7.4	16.1
<b>Cork City</b>	Cork City Water Supply Scheme - Churchfield Reservoir Roof Repair	Stage 3	0.7	3.2	3.9
<b>Cork City</b>	Cork City Water Supply Scheme - Eastern Strategic Link	Stage 3	4.4	0.2	4.7
<b>Cork City</b>	Cork City Water Supply Scheme - Lee Road Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Stage 3	5.8	-0.6	5.1
<b>Cork City</b>	Cork City Water Supply Scheme - Upgrade of Shanakiel Rising Main	Stage 3	10.6	1.5	12.1
<b>Cork City</b>	Cork City Water Supply Scheme - Western Trunkmain	Stage 3	2.6	0.5	3.1

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Programme/Project title</b>	<b>Current stage</b>	<b>2022 €m (actuals)</b>	<b>2023 €m (forecast)</b>	<b>Total €m</b>
<b>Kilkenny</b>	Kilkenny Regional Water Supply Scheme - Upgrade of Troyswood Water Treatment Plant	Stage 3	14.3	15.5	29.7
<b>Limerick</b>	ECl Programme	n/a	1.1	0.3	1.3
<b>Tipperary</b>	Goatenbridge Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Stage 3	0.4	1.7	2.1
<b>Wexford</b>	Newtown Water Treatment Plant	Stage 3	0.6	3.7	4.3
<b>Wexford</b>	Enniscorthy and Sow Regional Water Supply Scheme	Stage 3	0.6	1.4	1.9

*Note - Stage 3 is at final business case stage & approval to proceed*

## 11. Marine Planning

Key developments since the adoption of the RSES have been the publication of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), and the enactment of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. The NMPF was launched in July 2021 and represents the proposed approach to managing Ireland's marine activities to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources to 2040. This single framework, bringing together all marine-based human activities, and sets out objectives and planning policies for each activity. Those activities include offshore renewable energy; fisheries; ports, harbours and shipping; safety at sea; sport and recreation; tourism; and wastewater treatment and disposal. The NMPF will be the key decision-making tool for Government departments, state agencies, regulatory authorities and policymakers for decisions on marine activities.

## 12. State Bodies

A number of other bodies under the remit of the Department have also contributed to supporting the objectives of the RSES, an outline of which is set out below.

### **Office of the Planning Regulator**

The OPR has sought to secure the objectives of the RSES via the three statutory functions of the Office, namely (a) assessment of statutory plans (b) reviews of local authority planning functions and (c) education, training and research and awareness. The OPR carries out an assessment and evaluation of statutory plans to ensure consistency with national and regional planning policy. These include City and County Development Plans (including Variations) and Local Area Plans (including Alterations). The OPR makes submissions at the different plan stages, as appropriate.

The OPR is implementing a programme of reviews of the systems and procedures used by local authorities across the county to delivery their planning functions, including forward planning operations. The programme is focused on identifying good practice and achievements, promoting learning between organisations, as well as highlighting any areas for improvement. The overall intention is to embed a culture of continuous improvement in the Irish planning sector, which will contribute to the effective implementation of the objectives for the SRA area by the relevant authorities.

During the 2022-2024, the OPR made a total of 53 submissions on various plans in the SRA region as part of its statutory plans evaluation function, which assesses development plans and local area plans for consistency national / regional policy including Regional Policy Objectives contained in the RSES for the SRA.

These include submissions on the material alterations to the following development plans:

- Carlow
- Clare
- Cork County
- Cork City
- Kerry
- Limerick City and County
- Tipperary
- Waterford City and County
- Wexford

Following the OPR's evaluation of the adopted development plans for the above local authority areas, the OPR made recommendations to the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to issue a Draft Direction in relation to the adopted development plans for Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry and Limerick City and County.

The prescribed steps contained in the final directions that were issued to the five local authorities related to breaches of national / regional policies related to national roads, flood risk, compact growth and sequential development and renewable energy.

The Office also made submissions regarding the preparation of local area plans for the following designated key towns:

- Clonmel (draft LAP and material alterations to draft LAP)
- Nenagh (draft LAP and material alterations to draft LAP)
- Thurles (draft LAP and material alterations to draft LAP)
- Newcastle West (Issues Paper and draft LAP)
- Wexford Town (Issues Paper)
- Tralee Municipal District (Issues Paper)
- Killarney Municipal District (Issues Paper)
- Carlow-Graiguecullen (Issues Paper for Joint Urban Area Plan)

In addition, the Office made a submission to the issues paper for the Shannon Town & Environs LAP.

The Office is encouraged with the progress made in advancing statutory plans for the designated key towns and commends the relevant local authorities in this regard. The Office would like to highlight some important issues that have arisen from its evaluation of local area plans for key towns more generally.

Firstly, some local authorities have prepared draft LAPs without the necessary supporting strategies / studies such as a local transport plan (LTP) or settlement capacity audit, or have not integrated the recommendations / measures from same into the LAP.

RPO 11 of the RSES for the SRA requires the preparation of a LTP for all key towns in the region. LTPs are also important for achieving modal shift consistent with RPO 91 and integrating land use and transport consistent with RPO 151.

Secondly, the Office has made recommendations requesting the omission of peripheral sites zoned for residential and employment which are not sequentially peripheral and are remote from public transport.

In some instances, there has been a lack of clarity between the core strategy housing allocation for the town and the extent of land zoned for residential development over the plan period. In such instances, it is important that surplus lands are identified having regard to sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 of the Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) and the housing yields from infill and regeneration sites are accounted for.

It is evident from the OPRs assessment of various plans across the SRA region, that there is a need for acceleration in housing delivery within the three MASPs and in the Key Towns. Local authorities, with the support of regional assemblies, are undertaking initiatives and planning work. Nevertheless, in a lot of cases, the current levels of housing delivery will not deliver on the population targets set out in the NPF and RSES, as is also the case in the other two regions.

The OPR is pleased that the Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies for the Waterford and Limerick-Shannon MASPs were completed in 2022, which means that all three MASPs have a supporting transport strategy in place. The continued implementation of the projects and initiatives contained in the three Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies will be of critical importance in terms of supporting growth and unlocking the potential of key strategic sites within the MASP areas.



## **Land Development Agency**

The Land Development Agency (LDA) was established on an interim basis in September 2018 by way of an Establishment Order made under the Local Government Services (Corporate Bodies) Act 1971. The Land Development Agency Act 2021 was enacted in July 2021 and following commencement of relevant provisions, the Land Development Agency Designated Activity Company was incorporated in December 2021. Following the dissolution of the interim entity, the LDA has been established as a commercial state body. The agency assists implementation of RSES objectives by coordinating appropriate State lands for regeneration and development, opening up key sites which are not being used effectively for housing delivery, and driving strategic land supply and assembly for housing.

LDA projects prioritise good placemaking. Strategic projects in particular follow a plan-led approach with land-use planning documents at various stages of production across the sites. 2023 has been a pivotal year for the LDA wherein over 1,000 new homes were delivered. In 2024, the LDA have at least 5,000 additional homes delivered or under construction. To achieve this purpose LDA deploys two primary delivery mechanisms: The first is direct delivery on lands sourced from the State or on lands purchased by the LDA. The second is through the Project Tosaigh initiative, launched in 2022, whereby the LDA partners with homebuilders.

Project Tosaigh is an initiative whereby the Agency steps in to purchase or co-develop stalled or unviable housing projects and then makes the homes available as either cost rental or affordable purchase. Under this scheme, the LDA is on course to deliver 5,000 homes by 2026 with a known pipeline of at least 2,500 already contracted or in negotiations; the LDA has contracted with home builders to deliver hundreds of affordable homes in the southern region, including affordable purchase and cost rental in Clonmore, Co. Cork, Kilbarry, Waterford and Castletroy in Limerick.

Furthermore, in support of the LDA's statutory remit, a Report on Relevant Public Lands (the 'Report') was published in March 2023. This report identifies 24 parcels of public land across the three main cities in the southern region with potential for delivery of affordable housing development over the medium and long term. The Report identifies the potential to utilise well located public land to deliver not just affordable housing but to contribute to the creation of sustainable communities and support the vitality and viability of our cities and towns. The Report is a strategic approach and important first step in identifying the potential for the future use of public land in the public interest. The report is being considered by Government currently.

Current LDA Projects within the Southern Regional Assembly Area:

### Cork City & Surrounds

#### *St. Kevin's Hospital*

St. Kevin's Hospital Construction is underway at this key brownfield site in Cork City which involves adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the former St Kevin's hospital along with development of the wider site to deliver 265 no. new homes and supporting facilities. This is a key brownfield site in a Cork City context and offers the opportunity to deliver new homes at a sustainable and formerly vacant site whilst also retaining the former hospital building and using it to accommodate new homes.

#### *Tivoli*

In 2023, a collaborative working group was established between the LDA and Port of Cork Company to progress work on lands in Cork Port/Tivoli. The LDA is in the process of establishing a tri-partite governance framework between the LDA, Cork City Council and the Port of Cork Company that will oversee work-streams to deliver on the regeneration ambitions at the site. This long-term project would see the relocation of the port and the redevelopment of the port land at Tivoli as a mixed-use urban neighbourhood. This contributes to the objective in the RSES to grow Cork City by 50-60% by 2040.

#### *Kilbarry*

In 2023, discussions with the IDA have progressed relating to the extent of land proposed for transfer to the LDA for development as a residential-led mixed-use neighbourhood in Kilbarry. The lands form part of the Blackpool-Kilbarry Expansion Area where compact growth is planned as part of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-28. The LDA is engaging closely with the City Council regarding the proposed Framework Masterplan for the wider Kilbarry-Blackpool Area in accordance with Policy Objective 10.79 of the City Development Plan 2022-28. The LDA is also seeking to engage with the NTA and Cork City Council regarding the potential route of the Northern Distributor Road in terms of alignment, access and movement for the Kilbarry framework and wider area.

### *Cork City Docklands*

The Land Development Agency and Cork City Council established the Delivery Office for Cork City Docklands in late 2020 to oversee the unlocking of the regeneration potential at the Docklands. The Delivery Office and Cork City Council are preparing a Framework Masterplan for the Docklands and the LDA is a key stakeholder in the preparation process with the ESB and Bord na Mona lands in the South Docks identified for transfer to the LDA under the Government's 'Housing for All' Plan (2021).

The LDA is engaging with the respective landowners and undertaking due diligence and feasibility analysis to inform their future redevelopment and integration with wider regeneration proposals.

### *Wilton*

The LDA has also appointed a design team to prepare a planning application for lands located at Wilton and is working with the ESB to devise proposals for new homes on this residential zoned site.

In accordance with the NPF and RSES objectives, the development of lands at St. Kevin's, Tivoli, Kilbarry, Cork Docklands and Wilton will contribute to addressing the compact growth target of 40% of future housing development being located on brownfield and infill sites.

### Limerick-Shannon Area

#### *Colbert Quarter*

In 2022, the Colbert Quarter Spatial Framework (CQSF) was formally approved by LDA. CQSF is referenced in specific objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 which support good placemaking. It supports the structural change required to deliver up to 2,800 new homes in Limerick City centre which contributes to the objective in the RSES to grow Limerick City by at least 50% by 2040. In 2023, building on the CQSF, a draft of the St Joseph's Hospital Masterplan was consulted on. This adds further detail to part of the site covered by the CQSF, proposing to address the compact growth target of 40% of future housing development being located on brownfield and infill sites.

The Masterplan proposes development of 600 housing units at 98dpa. Given the considerable planning constraints of the site (e.g. proximity to prison and significant protected structure and security of HSE healthcare campus), this has been viewed positively by stakeholders including LCCC. In 2024, the St Joseph's Hospital Masterplan will be finalised, and work will progress

on appointing a design team to prepare a planning application. In addition, work will progress on appointing design teams to prepare planning applications for Carey's Road, another site within the CQSF, and the Gas Networks Ireland/ERVIA site on the Dock Road.

### *Mungret*

In 2023 the LDA has been working with Limerick City and County Council to support progressing proposals for residential development for 181 units subject to planning during 2024.

### Waterford City

#### *St Otteran's Hospital*

In 2023, the LDA commenced work on a masterplan for St Otteran's Hospital. This infill site has the capacity to deliver new homes adjoining existing healthcare facilities and supporting infrastructure. It has the potential to contribute to the compact growth target of 40% of future housing development being located on brownfield and infill sites.

The LDA recognises the importance of balanced regional development. The LDA's portfolio of strategic planning projects includes sites in all three of the Southern Region's Metropolitan Areas. Colbert in Limerick and Tivoli in Cork represent two of the largest development projects in both cities. The LDA has a key role to play in delivering balanced regional development and close coordination with local planning authorities must continue and improve in the future. The creation of UDZs following the enactment of forthcoming legislative reforms offers a potential opportunity for addressing some of the more challenging, complex and large-scale brownfield sites in our cities and the LDA leading this process.

### Housing Agency

The Housing Agency works with the Department, local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) in the delivery of housing and housing services. The agency is involved in delivery of a wide range of actions, including policy development through the provision of data analysis and research and the publication of best practice guidance. It also supports local authorities and AHBs through project feasibility and development of housing, procurement and contracts preparation and advisory services on Part V delivery, turnkey delivery, and design and build tenders. A recent major project that the agency has been involved in includes the phased development of the Cork North West Quarter Regeneration.

## **An Bord Pleanála**

Under Section 143 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, An Bord Pleanála is required to have regard to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy in the performance of its functions. Section 37 of the Act provides that where a planning authority has decided to refuse permission for development on the grounds that a proposed development materially contravenes the development plan, the Board may grant permission where it considers, inter alia, that permission for the proposed development should be granted having regard to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the area.

Furthermore, under Section 37A, strategic infrastructure developments are dealt with directly by the Board in cases including where the scheduled development would contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any of the objectives in the RSES.

## **13. Conclusion**

As demonstrated, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has made a significant contribution to supporting the objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region in the period since its adoption. The RSES continues to play an important role in transposing the national policy objectives of the NPF to regional level and has been a key policy influence for the newly adopted development plans across the region. The Department looks forward to working with the SRA over the remainder of the lifespan of the strategy to achieve balanced and sustainable regional development.

[gov.ie/housing](http://gov.ie/housing)

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
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