

CHAPTER 1. THE DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN CONTEXT

1.0. Introduction

This Draft County Development Plan recognises the important role that South Tipperary performs within the South East Region in terms of maintaining the economic competitiveness of the Region. South Tipperary County Council will strengthen the county through its promotion as an attractive place to live, work and invest.

A Shared Vision for South Tipperary;

South Tipperary will have an inclusive economy and an excellent quality of life. It will be a place where all families and individuals can prosper. South Tipperary will balance the demands of a vibrant economy with the demands of a healthy and sustainable environment.¹

Five key principles underpin the Draft County Development Plan;

- **Sustainability;** To enhance the economic, social and cultural potential of the County in a manner that will secure such aims for future generations.
- **Competitiveness;** To promote Clonmel as a regional growth centre supported by the existing hierarchy of urban and rural settlements, to maximise the County's strategic and central location at the junction of the N8 and N24 National Primary Roads and the Dublin-Cork and Limerick-Waterford Rail Links, and utilise these strategic transportation networks as a driver of economic prosperity. The Secondary Service Centres of Carrick on Suir, Tipperary Town, Cashel and Cahir will provide supporting roles to Clonmel but will adopt their own role as service centres offering an improved service provision in terms of retail, employment and community facilities to their own hinterlands.
- **Quality of Life;** To seek balanced communities in order to promote social, environmental and economic well-being.
- **Quality of Environment;** To ensure responsible guardianship of the natural and cultural heritage so that current and future generations can enjoy a healthy environment.
- **Social Inclusion;** To seek to promote social equality and engage the public to seek consensus on planning for the future.

The fundamental concept of sustainable development is that the economic, social and environmental components combine sympathetically and in harmony with each other so as to achieve a balance between human activity, development and the protection of the environment.

The Draft County Development Plan provides the strategic framework and policy context for guiding development within the administrative area of South Tipperary County Council. The principles contained in this Plan will provide a basis for the sustainable development of land in the interests of the common good, during the life of the County Development Plan 2009-2015 and beyond.

1.1 Composition of the Draft County Development Plan

This Draft County Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2007 and will replace the South Tipperary County Development Plan 2003 when adopted. The Draft County Development Plan consists of a written statement and maps.

¹ Vision as per the, "South Tipperary County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development" published by the South Tipperary County Development Board in 2002.

The written statement contains the following sections;

- **Section A; Strategic Context** including current trends and the Draft County Development Plan strategy and,
- **Section B; Policies and Objectives** to implement the Strategy including;
 - Location/pattern of development,
 - Housing,
 - Economy,
 - Amenity Environment and Heritage,
 - Infrastructure
 - Community and Social, and
 - Development Management.
- **Section C; Appendices**, supporting technical information;
 - Land Use Zoning Matrix,
 - Settlement and Architectural Conservation Area Design Guidelines,
 - Wind Energy Development,
 - Rural Design Guide for Individual Houses in the Countryside,
 - Record of Protected Structures,
 - Schedule of Protected Views,
 - Schedule of Natural Heritages Sites,
 - Schedule of Protected Trees,
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment, and
 - County Maps and Settlement Plans.

1.1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Council has to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, which requires an assessment of the effects of the implementation of the policies of the Draft County Development Plan on the environment. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive applies to the preparation or review of plans and programmes that take place on or after 21 July 2004. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The Draft Environmental Report is attached to the Draft County Development Plan as Appendix 9.

1.1.2 Maps

The maps and plans attached in Appendix 10 provide a graphic representation of the proposals of the Draft County Development Plan, illustrating land-use, conservation designations and other management standards together with the development objectives of the Council specific to each settlement. Should any conflict arise between the maps and the statement, the statement shall prevail.

1.2 The Draft County Development Plan, the Elected Members and the Community

The making of a Development Plan is the reserved function of the Elected Members of South Tipperary County Council. The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 provides that in making a Development Plan;

“the Members shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of the Local Authority and the relevant policies and objectives for the time being of the Government or any Minister of the Government.”

In order to fully involve the community and to ascertain the needs and aspirations of the people, the Planning Authority undertook extensive pre-plan consultations with all stakeholders, the public, elected representative (in workshops) and service providers.

1.2.1 Workshops with Elected Representatives

Workshops were held with the Elected Representatives regarding the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan on the following dates;

27th February 2007, 13th June 2007, 10th July 2007, 23rd July 2007, 25th October 2007 and 12th November 2007

The discussion on these dates and the agreed outcomes formed the basis of the development of the policies and objectives contained in this Draft County Development Plan. There were a number of key issues discussed including;

Population Projections	Settlement Strategy
Renewable Energy	Cluster Housing
Rural Housing Policies	Village Development
Economic Development	Housing need
Rural Design Guidelines	

These workshops were considered to be very useful and allowed for an increased involvement of the Elected Representatives at an early stage in the County Development Plan Review process.

1.2.2 Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

Meetings were also held with the Strategic Policy Committee regarding the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan on the following dates;

Date	Topic Discussed
21 st February 2007	Introduction to the Development Plan Review process
4 th April 2007	Economic Development
2 nd May 2007	Farming and the Rural Environment
4 th July 2007	Water Management and Water Conservation
12 th September 2007	Tourism
24 th October 2007	Settlement Strategy

The issues raised and discussed are reflected in this Draft County Development Plan.

1.2.3 The Community

The South Tipperary Community & Voluntary Forum is the nominating body for the voluntary and community sector onto 39 statutory and local development boards and committees. The Forum, in consultation with the network of community groups throughout the county, has actively engaged with the Council in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan and has carried out a survey of community needs as a means of informing the Draft County Development Plan review. The Planning Section held a series of public meetings in conjunction with the Community and Voluntary Forum around the County. Members of the Community and Enterprise Section facilitated workshops at these meetings on the following dates;

22nd May '07 – Carrick on Suir
28th May '07 – Cahir
29th May '07 – Tipperary
30th May '07 – Clonmel (two meetings, one afternoon, one evening)
31st May '07 – Cashel

The purpose of these meetings was to engage with individuals and communities across the County. All meetings were well attended and identified a wide number of issues relevant to the Plan. Some of the main themes were as follows;

- Need for coordinated village development of appropriate scale, density and design,
- Need for services to be delivered in tandem with residential development,
- Need to deliver new high quality recreational and amenity facilities,
- Need for improvements to the built and natural environment in some settlements and to continue to protect the environmental assets of the county,
- Need for improvements to our strategic route corridors, both road and rail,

- Need to attract both multi national employers to the county but also to encourage indigenous employers.

These issues and all the issues raised at the Public Consultation meetings have been fully considered in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan and have contributed to the formulation of the policies and objectives contained herein.

1.2.4 Service Providers

The Planning Authority consulted with as many service providers as practicable to obtain vital information as to their plans and programmes to ensure service provision and the policies of the Draft County Development Plan would be complimentary.

1.2.5 Pre-Plan Submissions

222 submissions and observations were received during the public consultation period, which ran from Monday 21st May 2007 to Monday 23rd July 2007. An analysis of each submission was carried out, followed by a systematic categorisation of the topics and issues raised. The submissions related to several issues, including;

- Zoning of land,
- Community concerns,
- Village housing,
- Heritage,
- The overall vision for South Tipperary,
- Transportation Networks, and
- Employment/Enterprise.

All submissions have been fully considered during the preparation of this Draft County Development Plan.

1.3 Relationship with other Plans/Guidelines

Ireland's planning system is described as a 'plan-led' system, based on a hierarchy of plans (see Figure 1.1 below). The plans lower down in the hierarchy must reflect the policy approach of the plans above it in the hierarchy. In preparing the Draft County Development Plan, the Planning Authority has had regard to all Ministerial Guidelines as well as the relevant policies and objectives set out in the following principle documents:



Figure 1.1 Illustration of Plan Hierarchy

1.3.1 National Spatial Strategy 2002

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a 20-year planning framework that aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across the Country supported by more effective planning. The strategy is based on a hierarchy of settlement; Gateways, Hubs and County Towns along with the need to support the role of smaller towns, villages and diverse rural economies.

1.3.2 National Development Plan 2007-2013

The National Development Plan (NDP) identifies investment funding for significant projects in sectors such as health services, social housing, education, roads, public transport, rural development, industry, water and waste services. The NDP is designed to strengthen and improve the international competitiveness of the Country so as to support continued, but more balanced, economic and social development in line with the NSS.

1.3.3 South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2004

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) for the South East were published in May 2004 and seek to achieve a better spatial balance of social, economic and physical development throughout the region. The South East Region covers five counties and six local authority areas in the South-East of Ireland - Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford City, Waterford County, and Wexford. The RPG's inform and influence the formulation of Development Plans at a county and local level, seeking the implementation of objectives and policies identified in the NSS. With respect to County Development Plans, the RPG's state that each of the Planning Authorities in the South-East Region have identified broadly similar goals and objectives for their functional areas. These can be summarised as follows:

- To ensure sufficient provision of public services to allow for orderly development.
- To facilitate the creation of jobs and industrial development to meet employment needs.
- To maintain and develop existing towns and villages.
- To develop and renew obsolete areas.
- To preserve and improve amenities.
- To regulate and control development in the interest of the common good.

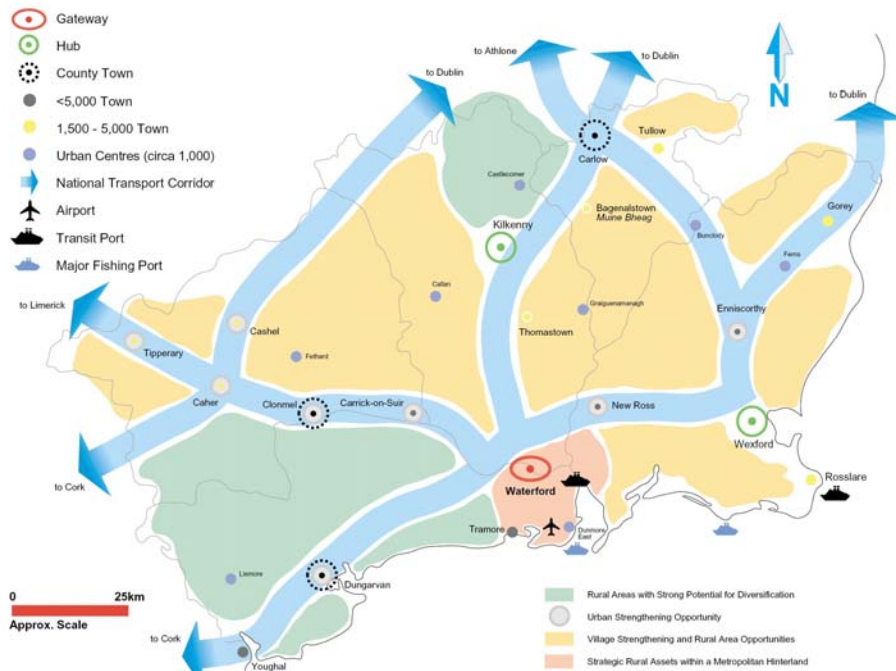


Figure 1.2 South East Region as defined in the NSS and RPGs

1.3.4 Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland 1997

In 1997, the Government published Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland. The Strategy provides the framework for the achievement of sustainability at the local level. It calls on Planning Authorities to incorporate the principles of sustainable development into their development plans and to ensure that planning policies support its achievement. The strategy highlights the need for Planning Authorities to take a strategic view of settlement patterns; avoiding development that results in the inefficient use of land.

1.3.5 Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities 2007

Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, provides an overarching vision to guide the development of the Irish housing sector over the next ten years. It seeks to deliver better quality housing through more strategic methods, with a primary focus on the building of sustainable communities. The policy statement sets out a range of actions geared at:

- Building sustainable communities;
- Responding to housing need in a way that improves choice and encourages individual responsibility within communities. There is a clear emphasis on a services approach – one that tailors supports to households taking account of their position in the life cycle; and,
- Effectively delivering housing programmes, to get better outcomes for the households supported, and better value for money for the tax-payer.

1.3.6 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 (DEHLG) have identified a number of key policy requirements to be considered in any development plan. These include:

- (i) To ensure that the needs of rural communities are identified in the Development Plan process and that policies are put in place to ensure that the type and scale of residential and other development in rural areas, at appropriate locations, necessary to sustain rural communities is accommodated; and,
- (ii) Pressure for overspill development in rural areas generated from larger urban settlements should be managed.

The Guidelines suggest that the key aims of the development plan should be to:

- (i) Encourage development which is needed to sustain and renew established rural communities in both smaller rural towns and villages and the wider countryside areas;
- (ii) Guide residential and other development to the right locations in rural areas in the interest of natural and man-made assets in those areas; and,
- (iii) Tailor planning policies to respond to varying local conditions and circumstances.

1.3.7 National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012

The strategy seeks to reduce dependence on the use of fossil fuels for energy production, increase use of low and zero carbon fuels and improve building efficiency. The Council is committed to ensuring that the measures and commitments identified in the Strategy will be implemented throughout the life of the draft County Development Plan.

1.3.8 The Water Framework Directive 2000

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out a framework for comprehensive management of water resources in the European Community. It addresses inland surface waters, estuarine and coastal waters and groundwater. The fundamental objective of the WFD aims at maintaining “high status” of waters where it exists, preventing any deterioration in the existing status of waters and achieving at least “good status” in relation to all waters by 2015. Member States will have to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is adopted for the achievement of the objectives of the WFD and for the implementation of programmes of measures for this purpose. Irrespective of political boundaries, the river basin is the natural unit for water management; Ireland is divided into 8 River Basin Districts. South Tipperary County Council lies within 3 River Basin Districts (RBDs) (see Figure 1.3 below); the largest part of the county is in the South Eastern RBD, but small parts of the county are in the Shannon RBD and the South Western RBD. In June 2008 a draft River

Basin Management Plan will be published. This will detail the management strategies and policies required to achieve “good status”.

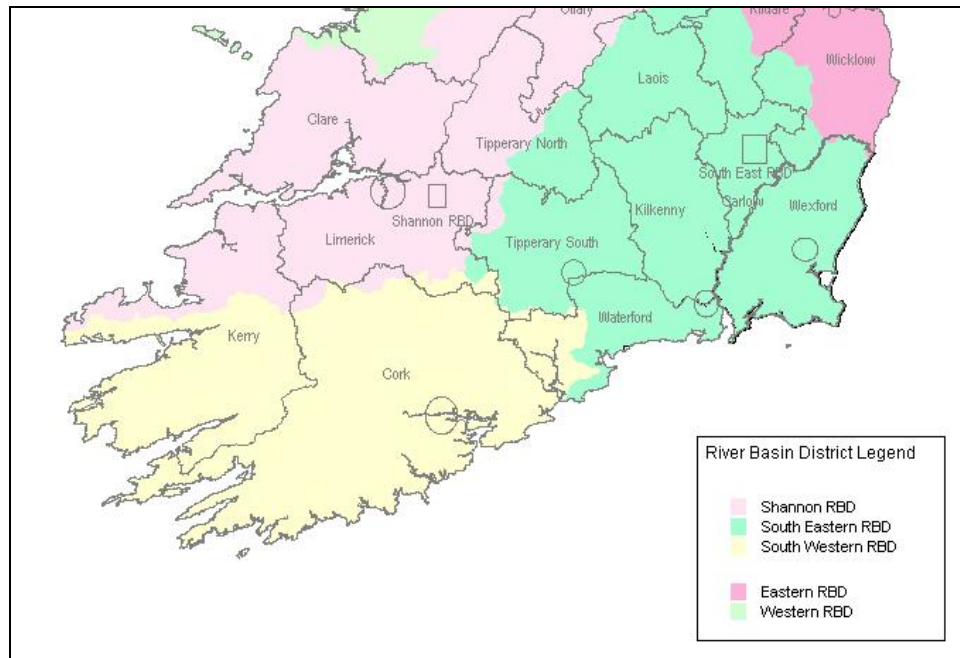


Figure 1.3 River Basin Districts

1.3.9 Other Strategies and Policy Documents

The following strategies and policy documents have also been consulted in preparing the draft County Development Plan:

- (i) Development Plans and Local Area Plans of adjoining Counties;
- (ii) Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region 2006;
- (iii) South Tipperary County Retail Strategy 2003 and the Draft Strategy Review 2008;
- (iv) South Tipperary County Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development 2002;
- (v) Review of County Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development and 2005-2008 Action Plan Priorities;
- (vi) South Tipperary County Spatial Strategy 2002
- (vii) Housing Strategy Review 2004-2009 and the Draft Housing Strategy 2009-2015;
- (viii) Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008;
- (ix) South Tipperary County Council Play Policy 2003;
- (x) South Tipperary Arts Strategy 2002-2005;
- (xi) South Tipperary County Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005 – 2008;
- (xii) South Tipperary County Heritage Plan 2004 – 2008;
- (xiii) National Inventory of Architectural Heritage 2007; and,
- (xiv) Urban Archaeological Survey of County Tipperary South Riding 1993.

1.4 South Tipperary in Context

South Tipperary is an inland county in the Southeast of Ireland and it is 2,258 km² in area. There are 5 significant urban areas in South Tipperary, four of which have their own statutory Development Plan;

- Clonmel Town and Environs Development Plan 2008.
- Carrick on Suir Town Development Plan 2008
- Tipperary Town and Environs Plan 2007
- Cashel Town and Environs Plan 2003 (currently under review)

While Cahir has its own Local Area Plan -Cahir Local Area Plan 2005.

1.4.1 Geographical Features

The River Suir flows through the County in a south to south-easterly direction. The centre of the County comprises a plain formed by valleys of the Suir and its tributaries. This plain is fringed by the Comeragh and Knockmealdown mountains to the south, the Galtee Mountains to the west, the Hollyford and Slieveardagh hills to the north and Slievenamon to the east.

1.4.2 National Infrastructure in South Tipperary

The National Primary Roads N8 (Dublin to Cork) and N24 (Limerick to Waterford) traverse the County, as do the National Secondary Routes N74 (Cashel to Tipperary) and N76 (Clonmel to Kilkenny). The single-line Waterford to Limerick railway serves Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Cahir and Tipperary carrying passengers and freight. This line intersects with the main Dublin to Cork twin-track line at Limerick Junction. The Waterford to Limerick rail line is severely under-developed and it is an objective of this draft County Development Plan to highlight the importance of this transportation network in the future development of the County, providing interlinkage with the Gateways of Limerick and Waterford, for passenger/commuter traffic, freight along with rail access to deep water ports.

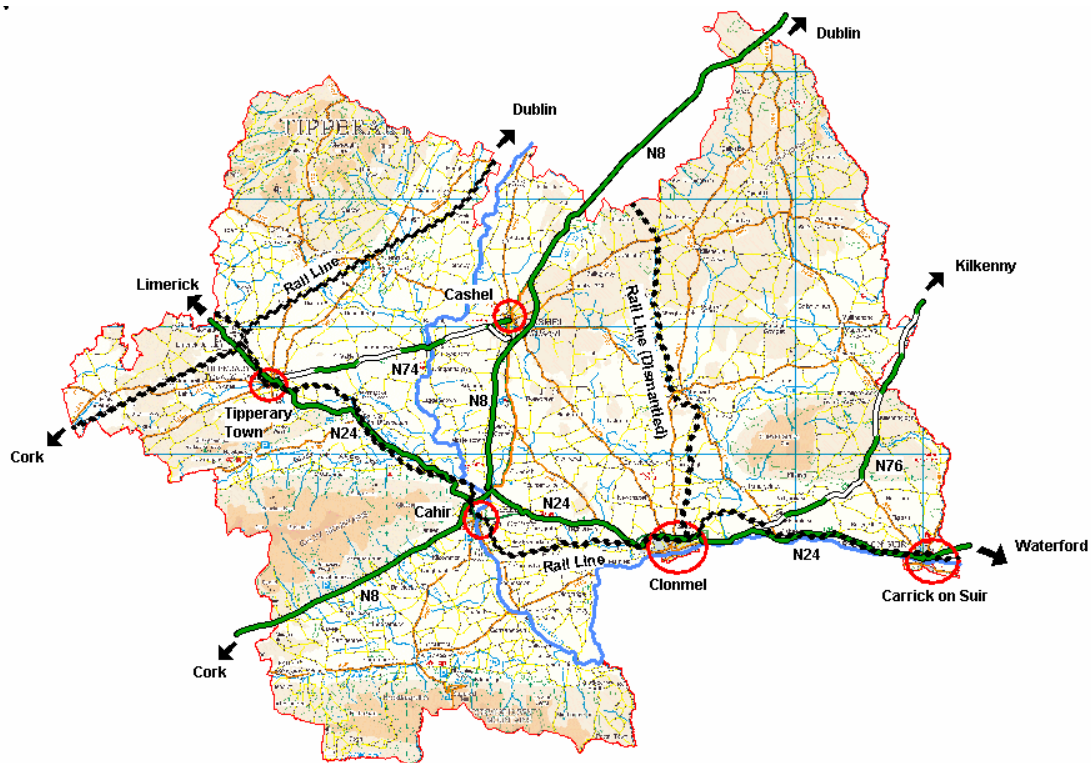


Figure 1.4: South Tipperary's Physical Features and National Infrastructure

1.5 The Atlantic Gateways Initiative 2006

The publication of the National Spatial Strategy in November 2002 represented a comprehensive statement of Government policy on regional development. The NSS furthermore recognised the combined development potential of Cork, Limerick-Shannon, Galway and Waterford – otherwise known as the Atlantic Gateways – in establishing a metropolitan zone in the western and southern parts of Ireland with the critical mass of population, infrastructure, connectivity and competitiveness capable of acting, in development terms, at the international level. Furthermore, the NSS envisaged the Atlantic Gateways complementing the emerging metropolitan corridor on the eastern side of Ireland and encompassing Dublin to Belfast. The Atlantic Gateways Initiative report of September 2006 sets out in more detail the proposals for the Atlantic Gateways. Since 2006, an implementation team comprised of representatives of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the relevant Regional and Local Authorities, Shannon Development and private sector interests has been focused on driving forward the implementation of the Atlantic Gateways concept.

The National Primary Road, N24, and the Waterford-Limerick Rail line form the key east-west transport corridors for the region, linking the two 'Atlantic Gateway' cities of Waterford and Limerick via Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Cahir, Tipperary and Limerick Junction. The corridor extends to the north, north east and west of the N24 principally. South Tipperary will continue to support the Atlantic Gateways Initiative.



Figure 1.5 Illustration of the Atlantic Gateways Initiative.