

Q & A Report

Pre-Draft Development Plan consultation Webinar on Economy, Agriculture and Education

Date: August 20th 2020

Question: Will the County Development Plan address the existing 3bn a year opportunity in undersupply in private investment from the past across housing, tourism, retail as no point having a plan that doesn't unlock that opportunity as a priority??

Answer: The city and county development plan will transpose the strategic policy objectives as set out in national and regional policies and in particular the Waterford City Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area. The development will facilitate growth by being clear and risk averse and provide a realistic schedule to align development with infrastructure provision. We need to ensure that the plan makes the city and county an attractive place to live. Place making and investment in public infrastructure, public realm and facilities are important elements of the plan. It is also vital that the strategic environment assessment and appropriate assessments assist in facilitating sustainable investment.

Question: Will the County Development Vision & Plan be ambitious; the city is weak, the delivery is poor on the previous plan so can we ensure we lead, not follow other city-regions, as the last decade has seen Waterford fall behind by some 65,000 jobs v's others relative to the other city-regions? Can we put in place a dedicated taskforce to drive delivery given the last ten years of under delivery as it should fall on Council for delivery, who have no accountability for delivery in itself?

Answer: We have set out a draft vision in the strategic issues paper which we would certainly welcome comment on. Delivery is a principle issue and it is important that the development plan provides a foundation on which specific projects can be based in terms of land use, policies and environmental factors. A mechanism for delivery of infrastructure and broader implementation of the MASP is also required as set out in the RSES. In this regard the structure put in place to implement the MASP will be critical to securing the vision for the city and broader region.

Question: The RESS / Southern Assembly strategy wasn't ambitious and was political by constraining the boundary and constraining the growth to only 50% by 2040 which is less than current population growth and didn't address the 50,000 young who left in the past 10 years; why are we planning on constraining the growth of the largest city-region when we've the opportunity to bring back the missing generations lost to Dublin and that talent is vital to growth of communities & trade?

Answer: The targets regarding population growth will only be realised by the provision of appropriate jobs across the city. This is a critical issue and it is important to remember that

the targets in the NPF and RSES are only targets and will be subject to review over time as necessary.

Question: Where can we see the "preliminary" baseline reports?

Answer: These are currently being assembled and will be available as we progress to the draft plan, likely forming part of the appendices of the draft.

Question: If Waterford City becomes a regional city of scale of 50% growth, it sees not 89,000 population, but 150,000 people population. Why are RESS and Council using only 36,000 people, as 89,000 means 3 times more growth BUT it means the CITY growth slows relative to other cities; that's a plan for failure. WHY is this being chosen by Council as it's a plan that sets us for losing share of the country, which is a vision & plan of failure for commerce & trade? This cannot be the baseline or the basic assumption for growth, as it effectively sets up the city for failure. WHY?

Answer: The NPF and RSES have assigned additional growth targets for the city and MASP area which are above the observed population growth rates to date. These targets have been appropriated evenly across the regional cities. Any development plan is obliged to be consistent with the targets of national and regional policy. The critical issue to determine if we can meet the NPF targets will be the supply of jobs across the city. It is also worth remembering that the NPF and RSES targets can be reviewed during their lifetime as necessary and the key determinant for city growth will be MASP implementation.

Question: Great presentations but could you not have engaged with other a diversity of perspectives that you need to engaged with for the duration of this plan, its legacy and the vibrancy of the city? In the summer of 2020- during a pandemic- I am disappointed that you selected only while middle-age men- sorry.

Answer: If it's any consolation, I'm female. I am white, I have a mixed race family, but I'm not claiming the middle age category.

Question: Will the Waterford City and County Development plan address the necessary investment in broadband for commercial use which will address the significant deficit in upload capacity in the City?

Answer: The development plan implementation is not aligned with budgetary provisions and therefore the full implementation of its policy objectives and actions can never be fully assured. That being said the plan will support the higher level regional growth enablers identified in the NPF and RSES and the necessary service provision to implement them over time. It is also an important issue to ensure the viability of rural areas of the county.

Question: Limerick delivered 65,000 MORE jobs than Waterford did in the past 10 years, and it's a smaller city-region. Why is the 65,000 jobs not being rolled forward into the Waterford plan as a target, rather than see 65,000 left out of the forward plan; are the

under delivery of jobs from the last 10 years being rolled forward into this new plan, or simply "discounted", as that's the quantum of ALL jobs in Waterford today?

Answer: It is not a direct function of the development plan to deliver jobs but it will provide the context for investment in all sectors of the economy through strategic policy, service delivery and zoning of suitable land in order to remove the risk from decision making and delay in project delivery. The plan needs to explore other diverse opportunities in sectors around tourism, the marine and agriculture.

Question: Moderator is not answering the questions, as RESS is flawed, and the 3bn undersupply is not mentioned or explicitly mentioned. If we don't put in the "targeted population growth" correctly, businesses like mine won't invest to create and fund the job, as it sets Waterford plans lower growth than other cities, which makes it uninvestable. Rob Cass. North Quays.

Answer: The development plan must be consistent with the national and regional growth targets. The growth targets identified in the NPF and RSES have been applied in a formulaic manner to deliver national growth targets proportionally across the regions and their cities which are envisaged to act both as a counter balance to the primacy of Dublin while supporting Dublin in its role. The growth targets are based primarily on the 2016 census data for each and the core objectives are to deliver balanced, effective and sustainable regional growth which is infrastructure led. It is worth noting that national and regional policies are statutory in nature and while they both set out reasonably well defined growth targets, both are subject to monitoring and change during their respective implementation periods. Development plans are required under statute to be consistent with the NPF and RSES.

Question: Richard, isn't it that a Fully funded University HAS to be delivered by 2022-2028 to help us slow the brain drain, as the brain drain is the biggest issue AND the biggest opportunity in the region at 1bn a year for Waterford, or 10,000 jobs a year. It's a demand to get it delivered, not an ask, right?

Answer: A comprehensive university of international standing is an absolute necessity if Waterford city, county, and the wider South East is to achieve its potential. Such an entity is not cheap; it must be funded properly.

Question: Are we not lucky to have Richard Hayes for clarity regarding the contribution of education (& all WIT's research groups) in the region to the local economy ? If Richard had 3 wishes for the legacy of the Development plan, what would they be?

Answer:

- (i) The development plan must offer an ambitious vision for the future of the city and county. WIT's contention is that this ambition should centre on an education- and knowledge-centred proposition.
- (ii) It would be encouraging if by 2028 the city was known nationally and internationally not just as Ireland's Oldest City, not just as the home of Waterford Crystal, not just as a Viking city, but as Ireland's innovation capital.
- (iii) That proposition builds on a long tradition in the city of an outward-looking attitude, an openness to new ideas and ways of doing things that is linked to the city's history as a trading centre. It would be tremendous if by the end of the plan the city was demonstrably closer to being known for its advocacy of diversity and equality with an evidently global rather than a parochial perspective on culture, society and the economy.

Question: No mention of older people as contributors to the overall development of Waterford city and Council? How can the Plan facilitate the development of the inshore fishery through harbours under the jurisdiction of Waterford Council - quays, services etc?
Ray McGrath

Answer: Some of this was covered in the other meetings/ presentations this week - Tues night was 'Environment & Heritage', last night was 'Local Placemaking'. It would be worthwhile setting out some specific locations and ideas in terms of harbours and quays and make a written submission in this regard. We have engaged with the OPC and are engaging with the PPN in terms of the needs of older people among other issues.

Question: How do we set a target of 50% reduction in Emissions by 2030, rather than pander to lobbyists in Agri? 2% growth in herd, domestic tree planting and 30% power from Solar adds about 5% growth rate to Waterford GDP and 50% emissions by 2030, but renewables is 15k an acre a year income rather than marginal in beef on high emissions?

Answer: The development plan is obliged to be consistent with national policies and ministerial guidance issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (PDA), as amended. The development plan is required to transpose the national and regional policy to the local context across all sectors of the economy and while the development plan is required to directly provide policy objectives relating to climate change, it is important to stress that climate change considerations must be considered in the round with particular emphasis on the location, design and layout of development as required by Section 10(2)(n) of the PDA.

Question: Could Richard clarify what he means by "making the city the campus" of WIT? The Cork Road campus feels quite disconnected from the city, with many staff and students driving in from surrounding counties and never really engaging with the city, or indeed Co Waterford at all. The Granary is better connected to the city, but it just houses one department.

Answer: The challenge for many universities with suburban campuses (like the Cork Rd campus) is to connect more meaningfully with the city centre and indeed with the wider community. I suggest we need to look at hard infrastructure that will connect the city and campuses in a way that is more obvious -- designated pedestrian/cycle ways for instance. More importantly WIT needs to work (with the support of other agencies) on bringing the community into the campus. There are myriad examples worldwide of cities where it is impossible to tell where the city ends and the campus begins: this should be our vision.

Question: Is there any future for Irish agriculture / horticulture if we are not prepared to pay the producers more, more expensive food is essential?

Answer: There is an inherent challenge for society here. In difficult economic times many households have to focus on budgeting for food costs. This has given many retailers significant power particularly where they bulk buy produce. Cheap food isn't necessarily good nutritious food and certainly food quality, with regard to nutrient content, has declined. There is a strong growing quality food culture throughout County Waterford and this is where our focus should be. I also think there is great opportunity for horticulture production because we import significant amounts of fruit and vegetables that could be produced here at home. There is tremendous interest in ongoing training for horticulture production with some courses being oversubscribed.

Question: How many are on this webcast? How do we get the 10,000 YOUNG 18-40 engaged in the plan, as it's their future? If 5 are online but it's 110,000 people in communities, how do we get more involved?

Answer: The web content developed for the purposes of the pre-draft development plan consultation phase has focussed on making the process as open as possible and the information relevant to this stage of the process. The portal is designed to make engagement with the strategic issues paper easy and straight forward, allowing people to dip in and out and build a submission over time. The message is being pushed through our social media accounts and we would anticipate further submission will be forthcoming in the last few weeks of the consultation period. As we move towards the preparation of the draft development plan and this is placed on public display we would anticipate that there will be greater interest in how we proposed to forge the future development of the city and county at that time.

Question: Has John any feedback from the webinar today -led by MEP, Ciarán Cuffe- on the Green Deal and its implication for the Plan?

Answer: I didn't participate in that webinar earlier today but many aspects of the Programme for Government were based on key objectives of the EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy. We have also met with our Waterford MEP Grace O'Sullivan to focus in on some of the key issues facing the farming sector in coming years.

I think WIT is well positioned to up-skill farmers as agriculture becomes much more mechanical. Agreed - and it not just the mechanical side. The TSSG is leading research in key areas where data handling and management can be practically used for the benefit of food producers on the ground. I would add that TSSG is increasingly active in the smart agriculture domain and has been leading European thinking on the application of information technology in farming. In parallel with the research work spoken about in the presentation that is carried out by terrifically innovative researchers in the EIRC and other research groups makes WIT an amazing asset for the agricultural sector in the city, county and region.

Question: Thank you, Richard for a focused vision of the role of WIT in Waterford. What do you think about the impact of shifting culture on the city and its economy? Moreover, how specifically do you see the contribution of WIT in this area?

Answer: Part of our role is to act as a custodian of culture as well as a critical analyst of increasingly rapid cultural change. WIT has a key role both in assisting the development of new technology and its application and in critically appraising the impact of such technology on human life. I would also like to think that WIT has a role in critiquing on an ongoing basis the over-concentration on economic development in policy and practice and to restore to the centre of policy (including the development plan) quality of life.

Question: Jenny mentioned the smarter travel initiative as leading on to the success of the Greenway. The concept of cycling as a form as recreation has been very successful, but has Dungarvan been successful in promoting cycling as a form of transport? I feel this has been lacking in Waterford City. Are there lessons on this that we in the city can learn from Dungarvan?

Answer: There is a very good culture about using bikes for work and school. Again this was through Smarter Travel which spent about 5 years trying to help the shift in mentality. Also we have great bike paths (in addition to the Greenway), there are other paths making it a safe place to cycle. Employers too really got on board and offer shower facilities and bike parking to employees. The bike to work scheme was really popular and helped all the pieces connect well.

Question: Jenny - I think less car parking is a great idea - the square in Dungarvan would be beautiful without cars!! Do you think this would be a runner?

Answer: I think it couldn't happen all at once, but I do think recent moves have helped people see it as more than a car park

Question: Why not connect your idea Jenny to local entrepreneurs -like GIY? If the tourist office closed in Limerick, has Waterford the demand/capacity to have more? Please expand on the education model mentioned as unclear.

Answer: Connect which idea to GIY? Is it the study hub or the stepping stone education model you are asking about? Also the Tourist Office - is this the tourism hub you are referring to?

Question: A series of very interesting presentations- thanks to all the presenters. Gerald's presentation framed the challenge. Taking up his 'most important slide' - I see the most pressing regional need being the relative weakness of urban core of the region/county, and issue tightly linked to higher education.

I would encourage the Council to go beyond simply accepting the imposed statistical/political hinterland of the city in the plan to also address the lived-functional hinterlands using multiple methods. The core urban isochrone of 14.9km isochrone should be emphasised over all others, recognizing Tramore as a full suburb (its study work/daytime commuting pattern show it has a similar relationship to the city as the Dunmore road for example), it also brings the city into scale with the other regional cities. The other thing to emphasise should be 45min/1hr drive time as this is the functional ring for worker commutes, acute healthcare, retail/entertainment/arts and higher education. The M9 and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge bring both Kilkenny City and Wexford into the 45 minute isochrone of the city. Establishing the lived/functional usage of the city-region is central to facilitating the necessary massification needed for urban level services.

Answer: It is recognised that the relationships between Waterford City, Tramore and the broader city catchment are important issues which need to be addressed in the next unitary city and county development plan. The new development plan will address the strategic issues relevant to Tramore such as core, housing and retail strategy, land-use zoning, SEA and AA, while the more details proposals relevant to the town will be further developed in the forthcoming Local Area Plan to be prepared once the city and county plan is made in early 2022.

Question: If you set a low target, and others set higher targets, we're setting the city & county to grow 2-3 times slower than other cities. Why?

Answer: This question has been responded to above.

Question: Do you think Tramore should have been included in the MASP area? Would this be a pro or a con for Waterford city?

Answer: As per the response to the query above, it is intended to look carefully at the relationship between Waterford City and Tramore as part of the new unitary city and county development plan. As stated in the strategic issue paper, one of the important elements in this relationship is a balanced implementation of the housing strategy across Waterford City and Tramore, along with ensuring a tiered approach to land-use zoning

which facilitates development that is either serviced or can be serviced during the life of the development plan.