1 Strategic Context

1.1 Introduction
Kilkenny is known as the medieval capital of Ireland and is characterised by beautifully restored old buildings and winding slipways. It is an ancient city with a vibrant outlook. It retains a unique character and has become one of Ireland’s most cherished urban environments.

This Draft Development Plan continues the tradition of previous Development Plans in seeking to balance the needs for redevelopment, expansion and growth in the environs with strong policies for the conservation and protection of the natural and built environment while ensuring a quality life for its inhabitants. It is the main public statement of planning policies for the development of Kilkenny City & Environ as seen by both local authorities. It seeks to provide a vision and direction for the City & Environ to continue to evolve, and to give the statutory context for guiding development, in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

This Development Plan is prepared jointly by Kilkenny Borough Council and Kilkenny County Council (hereafter referred to as the Councils) and continues the tradition of planning the City and Environs as a single entity. The Draft Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Report prepared in accordance with the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004) and the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004)

1.2 Plan Title
This Draft Development Plan shall be titled “The Draft Kilkenny City & Environ Development Plan 2008-2014”. Kilkenny Borough Council is the Planning Authority for the administrative area within the Borough boundary. Kilkenny County Council is the planning authority for the Environs area outside the borough boundary.

1.3 Legal Status
This Draft Plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part ll, Chapter 1, of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2004. The Planning and Development Act requires that a planning authority makes a development plan every six years

1.4 Plan Composition
The Plan consists of a written statement and accompanying maps and includes policies, strategies and actions for the City and Environs. The first nine chapters contain policies and actions in relation to specific policy areas. It must be noted that each chapter is not a stand-alone chapter, but should be read in conjunction with all other chapters and policies. In assessing any development in the City, the overall context will be informed by all relevant policies, including the settlement strategy, housing, community, economic, heritage and
infrastructure considerations, underpinned by the City Vision and Strategic Goals. Therefore, no one policy takes precedence over another, but rather all policies converge, founded as they are on the goal of sustainable development.

All policies should also be read in conjunction with Chapter 10: Requirements for New Development.

1.5 Sustainability
The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Bruntland Commission) agreed the following definition of Sustainable Development:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

POLICY
To integrate the principles of sustainability in all policies and they will inform all the actions of the Councils for the period of the Plan.

1.6 Policy Context
The preparation of a Development Plan is influenced by a series of international and national reports, guidelines and perspectives. The E.U. through the issue of official policy directives and financial support exercises a major influence in relation to the socio-economic development of the country, the region and Kilkenny city and county.

1.6.1 National Spatial Strategy
The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) was published in December 2002. The Strategy is a twenty-year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between centres. The Strategy seeks to renew, consolidate and develop existing urban centres keeping them as physically compact and public transport-friendly as possible to minimise urban sprawl while also achieving a high quality of design in new development. The NSS also sets a national context for spatial planning to inform regional planning guidelines and strategies including the statutory Development Plans.

Under the NSS, critical mass in the South East Region will be enhanced through Waterford performing as a gateway, supported by Kilkenny and Wexford as hubs. These three together form a nationally strategic ‘growth triangle’. Kilkenny City is designated as a Hub with a projected target population of 30,000+ by the year 2020.

1.6.2 National Development Plan 2007-2013
The NDP sets out a strong framework for the promotion of regional development with a particular focus on investment in the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). Strong urban centres are directly related to regional growth and development, affecting
employment, incomes and quality of life throughout the regions. The investment framework and strategy of the NDP will assist and enhance physical and spatial planning.

1.6.3 South East Regional Planning Guidelines
The Regional Planning Guidelines, developed by the Regional Authority, represent a planning framework for the period 2004-2020 designed to achieve a better spatial balance of social, economic and physical development throughout the region. It is intended that the Guidelines will strengthen local authority development plans.

The Regional Planning Guidelines expand on the NSS and identify critical enabling investment priorities for the region. The RPGs also establish a settlement typology identifying six classifications of population centres based on size and function, in line with the NSS.

1.6.4 Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development
The Kilkenny County Development Board produced a ten year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the City and County for 2002 to 2012. This document sets the framework within which Kilkenny County Development Board will operate over the period 2002 to 2012.

The mission of this strategy is to empower the Kilkenny community to take more control over the issues that impact on their daily lives and to recognise the positive mutual dependency and synergy between County and City, to encourage a broadening vision beyond the confines of single agencies and organisations and to encourage full public consultation and a spirit of true partnership. It also sets out to underpin all actions with an ethos of equity and access for all and to consolidate and increase the cultural and economic wealth of the County.

POLICY
To ensure that the policies and objectives of this plan support the County Development Board strategy.

1.6.5 The Aalborg Charter
Kilkenny Borough Council is a signatory to the Aalborg Charter. The Aalborg Charter is a commitment towards sustainable development of cities and towns and covers ten areas as follows:

1  Governance,
2  Local Management towards sustainability,
3  Natural Common Goods,
4  Responsible Consumption and Lifestyle Choices,
5  Planning and Design,
6  Better mobility, less traffic,
7  Local action for health,
8  Vibrant and sustainable local economy,
9  Social equity and justice, and
10  Local to Global.
The Aalborg Charter was approved by the participants at the European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns held in Aalborg, Denmark in May 1994 under joint sponsorship by the European Commission and the City of Aalborg and organised by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

By signing the Charter, European cities, towns and counties committed themselves to enter into Local Agenda 21 processes and develop long-term action plans towards sustainability. The full text of the charter is contained in Appendix A.

1.7 City and Environs Vision and Strategic Goals

Kilkenny Borough and County Councils will seek to develop the city as a centre of excellence for creativity in all sectors whilst ensuring the continued protection and enhancement of the city’s magnificent built and natural heritage, its thriving cultural and artistic base and its strong and dynamic services economy. This will ensure that the city will be a vibrant and attractive place for people to visit, work and live in as it fulfils its role as a Hub for the South East Region.

Strategic Goals

- To promote the sustainable development of the city so as to enable it to fulfill its role as a Hub within the South East Region
- To provide the highest quality living environment possible, to all the citizens of Kilkenny City & Environs
- To guide the location and pattern of development whilst ensuring that a relatively compact urban form is maintained.
- To promote balanced and sustainable economic development and employment by ensuring that a diverse range of economic sectors are developed.
- To develop an integrated transport strategy for the City & Environs linked to land use objectives, which facilitates access to a range of transport modes.
- To protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage of Kilkenny City & Environs for future generations.
- To promote the regeneration of the city centre, in particular the sites identified in the City Centre Local Area Plan, and to protect and promote the city centre as the commercial and cultural focus for Kilkenny City & Environs.
- To advance the redevelopment of the Bateman Quay site in accordance with the principles of the City Centre Local Area Plan.
- To provide for the development of sustainable communities through the preparation of Local Area Plans for the expansion of the City & Environs.
To promote Western Environs Local Area Plan and the Loughmacask Local Area Plan areas as major new neighbourhoods for the expansion of Kilkenny City & Environs.

To make provision for a hierarchy of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas and to use the river corridors of the River Nore, Breagagh and Pococke to provide open space for the City & Environs.

1.8 Mission statement
Kilkenny Borough and County Councils aim to work in partnership with the people of Kilkenny and relevant agencies to deliver quality services and to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development for current and future generations.