5 Economic Development

5.1 Introduction
The Planning Authority is limited in its actions in support of economic development, which will be determined in the first instance by market forces, and secondly by agencies with a remit for specific intervention in this area. The Planning Authorities can assist the development of all economic sectors by the implementation of policies relating to:

- The provision of an adequate and efficient transportation system;
- The zoning of sufficient and appropriately located lands for industrial and commercial development;
- The provision of sanitary services and other urban infrastructure;
- The provision, in conjunction with other agencies, of enterprise centre provision and training infrastructure related to small and medium sized enterprises (SME);
- The zoning of adequate residentially zoned lands and the creation of an attractive urban environment to facilitate residency of the projected labour force;
- Developing the public realm and amenities of Kilkenny so that the quality of life of employees and residents can be improved.

Factors that make a town attractive for both firms and their employees are the key to a successful economic development strategy. This chapter contains strategies and policies in relation to the economic development of Kilkenny City and its Environs including policies in relation to offices, industry, and retailing.

5.1.1 Policy Context
In the context of the National Spatial Strategy and the National Development Plan the economic development of Kilkenny City and county can no longer be viewed in isolation from the South East Region as a whole. Ireland has become an open economy and as a result the economic development of County Kilkenny, and in turn that of Kilkenny City and Environs, must now be considered in the context of regional, national and global influences.

The Regional Planning Guidelines state¹ that the provision of first class infrastructure and facilities in the Hubs and County town locations within the South East Region will help in the development of ‘critical mass’ in the region and the achievement of the nationally strategic ‘growth triangle’ between Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford City.

Critical mass of economic activity and opportunities is facilitated by:

- Business and Technology Parks – IDA Ireland
- County Enterprise Parks – Enterprise Ireland
- Development of quality industrial estates to accommodate small to medium enterprises – Local Authorities/County Enterprise Boards/Private Developers
- Development of higher education and training

¹ Regional Planning Guidelines page 90
It is envisaged by the RPG’s that the following elements need to be assembled at strategic locations such as in Kilkenny City & Environs to foster a wide range of enterprise activity and employment creation:

- integrated strategies for physical, economic and social development and environmental protection to guide and promote sustainable development, particularly with regard to planning, land use and transportation
- regional or national centres of learning
- clustering of businesses and firms, including those involved in interrelated activities and in high growth, knowledge intensive and technology—based specialisation
- a focal point for national, regional and local road and public transport systems, with good access to the national road and rail network and access to airports, with a range of well-timed and appropriate services facilitating business activity, and deepwater ports
- effective urban transport systems, including facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
- reliable, secure and cost-competitive energy supply
- effective telecommunications, including broadband
- regional cultural venues, such as theatres/galleries/arts and sports centres
- a high quality built environment, including parks, green spaces and other amenities
- adequate zoned and serviced land banks for uses such as residential and industrial development
- water supply, wastewater disposal systems, an environment capable of accommodating current water services requirements and major additional requirements into the future
- effective waste management structures and facilities.

The strategic goal of these policies is to make Kilkenny City & Environs a premier choice for indigenous and foreign direct investment across all sectors of the economy by developing a location that will attract and sustain indigenous and foreign direct job creating investment.

5.2 Creative Heart of Ireland

Kilkenny has a strong Arts and Crafts base which owes its origins to the establishment of Kilkenny Design Workshops in the 1960’s, which was a state funded body responsible for promoting product and graphic design in industry which operated to the 1980’s. The brand also draws on the very strong clusters of creative businesses in and around the city and county - everything from artists to craftspeople, musicians and graphic designers. The Crafts Council of Ireland (CCoI) has been centred here since 1998, which has consolidated Kilkenny’s position as the creative heart of Ireland. The CCoI is the national design and economic development organisation for the craft industry in Ireland. Its activities are funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment via Enterprise Ireland.

Approximately 10% of Kilkenny County Enterprise Board assistance has been directed towards the Craft Sector since 1993. As retailing is vitally important for many crafts people, the location of any proposed workspace is vital.
Kilkenny Local Authorities acknowledge the importance of the arts and the craft sectors to Kilkenny for tourism, employment and quality of life.

**POLICY**
- To support the development of the crafts sector and liaise with the Crafts Council of Ireland, the County Enterprise Board and other interested bodies to facilitate growth within this sector.

5.3 Education

Third level educational facilities include an outreach centre based in St. Kieran’s College associated with NUI Maynooth, which delivers a range of courses and programmes. NUI Maynooth recently published the Kilkenny Campus Strategic Plan 2007-2011 which sets out how the campus will grow to accommodate 450 students by 2011.

Institutes of Technology are located in Carlow and Waterford and Tipperary has an Institute of Education. There is an aspiration to have a university in the South East Region. It is important that access to good quality third level education is provided so that the social, cultural and economic life of the city and county is enhanced to the greatest extent possible. The Councils fully supports the ambition of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) to gain university status with the main campus located in Waterford City and other faculties in the other large population centres.

**POLICY**
- To facilitate and promote the development of the existing third level outreach facility in Kilkenny City to its maximum potential.
- To support the establishment of a university for the South East Region with its main campus located in Waterford City and faculty campus facilities in Kilkenny and other Hubs and County Towns within the Region.
- To support the provision of a third level/fourth level facility for the city which would include within it a creative academy.
- To develop a quality built environment to attract and sustain enterprise and employment.
- To strengthen the retail position of the city and to maintain a healthy city centre.
- To provide for a wide range of development opportunities in the City & Environs so as to foster a balanced economic structure.
- To assist and support the development of the most up to date telecommunications and broadband facilities for the City & Environs.
- To support Enterprise Ireland, Kilkenny County Development Board, Leader and relevant community support groups/agencies such as Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the promotion of economic development and indigenous enterprise.
- To support I.D.A. Ireland in the attraction of high value added manufacturing sectors and internationally traded sectors into Kilkenny.
• To provide improved road infrastructure from Kilkenny to other local urban centres and national centres, to support the provision of an improved rail service (freight and passenger) for the industrial, agricultural and service sectors having particular regard to access to and from Waterford Regional Airport and Belview Port.

• To facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations thereby promoting labour market participation among parents and supporting parents in accessing employment, training and education.

5.4 Key Sites and Areas as Economic Drivers

There are sufficient lands zoned for business and commercial opportunities within the City and Environs. The Integrated Area Plan 1998 identified a number of key sites for regeneration. A number of these areas have been brought forward through previous Development Plans and strategies and are at various stages of development. These include:

• McDonagh Station which comprises a major mixed use development which is due to open in the autumn of 2007,

• The former Kilkenny Cooperative Livestock Mart site which is currently the subject of a first phase planning application. (This site did not receive tax designation from Central Government.)

The Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan identified sites for action in both public and private ownership. These sites are:

- The former Kilkenny Cooperative Livestock Mart
- Bateman Quay
- Padmore and Barnes
- County Hall
- Wolfe Tone Street
- Fair Green
- John’s Green
- The Parade
- St. Mary’s car park
- Dean Street car park
- The Closh

The key sites as economic drivers for the city include the former Mart, Bateman Quay, County Hall and The Parade. The planning and development of these sites is ongoing.

Both the Western Environs and Loughmacask areas will become key economic drivers for the city and environs through the delivery of housing and critical physical infrastructure. This will be achieved through the implementation of Local Area Plans.

In order to encourage the bringing forward of key sites for redevelopment it is essential to create a development momentum sufficient to stimulate market confidence. This will be achieved in a number of ways by:
• The adoption of a plan-led approach by identifying such sites and preparing development briefs and urban design frameworks to guide development and stimulate the market.
• Seeking partnership arrangements between the local authority and the private sector and other state or semi-state agencies as appropriate to deliver the objectives for each site.

5.5 Offices
Office uses form an important part of the City’s economy and are particularly important to the vitality and vibrancy of the city centre. The presence of an office-based workforce in the city centre will stimulate demand for retail and other services. A distinction must be made between different types of office use which have different locational and floor space requirements and differing impacts. The definition of the office types are set out below.

5.5.1 Retail Offices
These are offices where financial, professional or other services are provided principally to members of the public. The primary location for such offices should continue to be the city centre due to the role they play in the centre’s economy. Retail offices may be acceptable in District and Neighbourhood centres if they provide a local service but will not otherwise be permitted in suburban areas.

POLICY
• To facilitate and encourage retail office development in the city centre and at District centres and Neighbourhood centres where the scale is compatible with the local service function.

5.5.2 General Offices
These provide financial, professional or other services combining a retail office function with a back office function, or administrative, financial and other services without a retail office activity and public administration offices. These are most appropriately located in the city centre.

Sequential Approach
The preferred location for general office development is within the City Centre area where practicable and viable. Where it is not possible to provide for the form and scale of development required on a site within the City Centre then consideration can be given to a site on suitably zoned land outside the City Centre subject to sequential testing of the proposal. Sequential testing will require that the applicant test all potential City Centre development options with regard to their size, availability, accessibility and feasibility of developing both site and premises for their purposes.

POLICY
• To focus general office development activity in the city centre as defined in the City Centre Local Area Plan on the sites identified.
To allow general office development outside the city centre area on suitable zoned lands subject to a sequential testing of the proposal.

5.5.3 Business and Technology Industries (Office based industry)
Recent years have seen the emergence of a new range of enterprises providing services and products in an office-based environment. These enterprises are engaged in activities such as information technology, software development, telemarketing, data processing, media activities. There are other activities, such as companies providing technical services to industry e.g. servicing the manufacturing or construction industry, who require large floor areas and large quantities of operational parking.

These types of enterprises cannot easily be accommodated in the city centre and are more appropriately located on business park type developments. It is proposed therefore to create a zoning objective to provide for technology office based industry to facilitate such developments.

The Council may consider exceptions to the office policies where the proposed development involves conversion to offices of a Protected Structure, where the Protected Structure will be rehabilitated to the highest standard, where the special interest character and setting of the building is protected and where the proposed use and development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

5.5.4 Light Industry and Related Uses
Light and general industry has traditionally played a key role in the economy of the city. Businesses in this sector provide employment opportunities for persons with low to medium skill levels and/or a low level of educational attainment. They also provide opportunities for start-up enterprises and provide essential services to other enterprises.

The Councils will aim to ensure that a range of sites in accessible locations are provided for light industry in the Plan. In addition to light industrial uses which involve the manufacture of products, the following uses will generally be acceptable in light industrial areas: - warehousing and distribution, wholesale, wholesale warehousing and showrooms that are ancillary to manufacturing, fitting and trade. Retail warehousing will not be permitted. Proposals for office development will not normally be permitted in light industrial areas unless they are ancillary to the primary industrial use.

5.5.5 Home-Based Economic Activity
Home-based economic activities are small-scale commercial activities carried out by the residents of a dwelling which are ancillary to the main use of the dwelling. There is a need to accommodate such activities where the nature and scale of the activity will not be detrimental to the amenities of the residential area.

This is a change from the existing policy of the 2002 Plan.
5.6 Retail Strategy

Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Borough Council adopted the first Kilkenny City and County Retail Strategy in 2002. A key recommendation was that the strategy be reviewed after 3 years. The first review was adopted in 2005. As part of the making of this Draft Development Plan a full review of the City and County Retail strategy has taken place.

An important part of the review was the updating of baseline information. This included the following:

- Review of population figures and forecasts
- Updating the floorspace survey
- New household and shoppers surveys
- A broad capacity assessment for the requirement of additional retail floorspace.
- Updating the health checks of Kilkenny City, Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamangh and Thomastown
- Updating the comparative review of similar counties.

The objective of the review was to ensure that the requirements of paragraph 36 of the Retail Planning Guidelines would be met in the Draft Development Plan i.e.:

- Confirmation of the retail hierarchy,
- Definition of the core retail area of town centres,
- A broad assessment of the requirement of additional retail floorspace,
- Strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development,
- Preparation of policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres,
- Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

5.6.1 County Retail Hierarchy

A review of the county retail hierarchy has taken place to incorporate the factors and influences that have changed since 2004. The revised County Retail Hierarchy is set out in Table 5.1 below.

The modifications recommended are the re-designation of Callan as a Tier 1 Level 2 Sub County Town centre from a Tier 2 Level 2 Sub County Town centre and Ferrybank from a Tier 3 District Centre to Tier 1 level 2 sub county town.
Table 5.1: County Retail Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Retail Function</th>
<th>Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1 Major Town Centre/County Town</strong></td>
<td>Kilkenny City &amp; Environs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 1 Level 2 Sub county town</strong></td>
<td>Ferrybank East Waterford City Environs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Callan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomastown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 2 Level 2 Sub County Town</strong></td>
<td>Castlecomer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graiguenamanagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3 Town</strong></td>
<td>No designated centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4 Village Centre</strong></td>
<td>As designated for Kilkenny City &amp; Environs and Waterford Environs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.2 Core Retail Areas

The review of the main centres within the county confirms that the Core Shopping Area is relevant only to Kilkenny City Centre and that the four District towns are of too small a scale to warrant such an approach. The core shopping area for Kilkenny City Centre and the 400metre edge of centre boundary are shown in Figure 5.1. The core shopping area comprises the following streets: Parliament Street/Market Cross; High Street; Rose Inn Street; and St Kieran’s Street.

The 2007 review confirms the conclusions of the 2004 review which was that the existing core shopping area should be retained in the best interests of the retail future of the City Centre and as such the City & County as a whole.

Key considerations in arriving at this conclusion include:

- The larger the defined core shopping area then the greater scope to diffuse the retail floor space around a wider area.
- This could bring policy conflicts and a potential wider distribution of floor space.
- The result could be a real threat of weakening, not strengthening, the prime shopping area.

5.6.3 Broad Assessment of the Requirement of Additional Retail Floor Space

This review covers the period 2008 to 2014 but also takes a longer term view to take into account the 2020 planning horizon of the National Spatial Strategy and South East Regional Planning Guidelines.

The inclusion of consideration of capacity up to 2020 is for the following reasons:

- Given Kilkenny City’s designation as a Hub under the NSS and the large increase in population projected over the period of the NSS to 2020, then it is important for strategic land use planning purposes that a longer term view/vision is taken; and
The review of the City and County Retail Strategy will become part of the City and County Development Plans, both of which have to have regard to the NSS and Regional Planning Guidelines which provide spatial and policy planning guidance to 2020.

One of the key requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines is that retail strategies should provide a broad assessment of the additional retail floorspace required in counties over the lifetime of their strategies. The Draft Plan takes account of: the changes to the population, population forecasts, updated information on expenditure, retail floorspace, extant planning permissions and the findings of the 2007 household and shopper surveys.

The assessment identifies the type and amount of additional floorspace that will be required to accommodate additional expenditure over the timescale of the Retail Strategy. At the same time allowance is made for:

- New retail outlets that are planned to come on-line identified by extant planning permissions.
- Increases in sales in existing forms of retailing - this includes e-retailing, mail order sales and market stalls. It excludes wholesale and car sales outlets as laid down by the RPG’s.

The key inputs and outputs to the capacity assessment are a derivation of the following:

- Step 1: Population and Expenditure Estimates
- Step 2: Turnover Estimates
- Step 3: Turnover Ratios
- Step 4: Gross Additional Expenditure Potential
- Step 5: Future Sources of Retail Sales
- Step 6: Capacity Potential.

From the estimates of gross additional expenditure potential and subtracting the expenditure accounted for by the extant planning permissions there will be very limited potential for additional mainstream comparison floorspace to accommodate key City developments until post 2014. As such, the objectives for strengthening the role of the traditional City Centre will not be delivered in the short and medium term timescale.

For this reason two scenarios to estimate the approximate floorspace required to accommodate the anticipated increase in expenditure were derived (a) one INCLUDING extant retail warehousing permissions and (b) EXCLUDING extant retail warehousing permissions.

Table 5.2 sets out the assessment of additional floorspace up to 2014 and 2020 including retail warehousing.
Table 5.2: Net Expenditure Capacity Growth in the County (’04 prices, €m) Including Retail Warehousing Extants

| Period     | Convenience | | | | | | Comparison |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|            | Low         | Medium      | High        | Low         | Medium      | High        |             |
| 2008 - 2014| 1,968       | 2,699       | 3,144       | -4,120      | -1,443      | -1,348      |             |
| 2014 - 2020| 4,274       | 5,119       | 6,649       | 27,899      | 32,021      | 38,739      |             |
| Total      | 6,242       | 7,818       | 9,794       | 23,780      | 30,579      | 37,392      |             |

Source: DTZ Pieda Consulting: Review of Kilkenny City & County Retail Strategy 2007

The table shows that there is potential for additional convenience floorspace in the County in the period 2008 to 2014 and a greater quantum post-2014.

With regard to comparison floorspace, the table clearly illustrates that there is no capacity for any additional comparison floorspace in the period 2008 - 2014. The position greatly improves post-2014. The lack of capacity over the timescale of the emerging City & County Development Plans is a concern, particularly in respect of delivering emerging proposals and objectives for further comparison floorspace in the City Centre, e.g. the Kmart site and Bateman Quay.

Table 5.3 sets out the assessment of additional floorspace up to 2014 and 2020 excluding retail warehousing.

Table 5.3 Net Expenditure Capacity Growth in the County (’04 prices, €m) Excluding Retail Warehousing Extants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 2014</td>
<td>1,968</td>
<td>2,699</td>
<td>3,144</td>
<td>8,886</td>
<td>11,563</td>
<td>12,439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,242</td>
<td>7,818</td>
<td>9,794</td>
<td>37,566</td>
<td>44,365</td>
<td>51,959</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DTZ Pieda Consulting: Review of Kilkenny City & County Retail Strategy 2007

This scenario excluding retail warehousing has no implications for convenience floorspace potential. As with the first scenario, there is limited potential for any significant additional convenience floorspace from 2008 to 2014.

However, the exclusion of the extant retail warehousing permissions has a considerable effect on the comparison capacity potential for the period 2008 to 2014. The assessment identifies that there is potential for additional comparison floorspace which would facilitate continuing improvement in the City Centre’s offer over the period to 2014.

5.6.4 Strategic Guidance on Location

The following have been identified as being of particular importance in examining strategic location in the review of the retail strategy:

i. Providing the retail land use and planning policy framework to ensure that the City and County fully play their role in achieving the objectives and targets of the NSS and SERPG;

ii. Current and pending strategic infrastructure investment;
iii. Ensuring that the current strength and importance of Kilkenny City and Environs in County, Regional and national shopping patterns is sustained and enhanced;
iv. The strengths and weaknesses of the City and County against both competing and comparable counties and centres are harnessed and addressed;
v. That the increasing outflows of both convenience and comparison expenditure are redressed by providing the means to improve the attractiveness of the City and County’s retail offer for residents of the City and County;
vi. That the decreasing inflows of convenience expenditure are addressed through the enhancement of the City and County’s convenience offer;
vii. That the increasing inflows of comparison expenditure from visitors to the County from neighbouring counties and further afield are sustained and enhanced;
viii. The foundations for the future of retail planning in the City and county are strong and defensible in respect of the emerging City and County Development Plans and the timeframes of the NSS and SERPG to 2020.
ix. The vitality and viability of the Scheduled Towns and the measures required to sustain and enhance this;
x. The role of retail warehousing in the City’s retail offer.

5.6.5 Overview of Progress
The previous Development Plan (2002-2008) identified key locations for additional major new retail floorspace as:

- Kilkenny City and Environs; and
- Waterford City Environs.

In respect of the four Level 2 Sub-County Town Centres, these were not anticipated to have significant market interest or development of major additional retail floorspace during the plan period.

During the Plan period 2002-2008 proposals were advanced in a number of the key locations identified for additional major new retail floorspace. These are:

I. Kilkenny City: McDonagh station – construction is underway
II. Kilkenny City Environs: Smithsland and Ormonde Retail Parks – retail floorspace has been delivered and is trading.
III. Waterford City Environs: Ferrybank – construction is underway.

Additionally, and contrary to what was anticipated, a large quantum of new retail space was introduced in Callan and Thomastown and considerable interest has been shown in additional new floorspace in both these centres.

5.6.5.1 Kilkenny City & Environs

In reviewing the potential of the City and its environs, the structure is provided by the Sequential Approach:

a) City Centre;
b) Edge of Centre; and
c) Out of Centre.

a) City Centre
The starting point in the appraisal of retail potential for the City Centre is consideration of its role and importance in the hierarchy and the need for it to be the priority location for additional floorspace. The review of potential sites and locations conducted confirmed the findings of the 2001 Strategy and the 2004 Review, namely:

- There are no sites or buildings of any substantial size available for retail development within what is termed the Core Retail Area
- The Architectural Conservation Area policies covering the City Centre effectively remove any potential now and in the future for major redevelopment of space within the City Centre
- There is potential for improvement and enhancement of the City Centre offer, both retail and leisure, by utilisation of vacant floorspace, conversions and gap infilling and this can be addressed under normal development control policies and procedures.

Bateman Quay
The above noted, Bateman Quay is the only site/area within the City Centre that is of key importance in terms of enhancement of the retail attraction of the City and County. This site has been identified as a prime City Centre retail location since 2001. It has been earmarked for civic and cultural uses but there has been increasing recognition of the site’s potential in the consolidation and expansion of City Centre retailing. The redevelopment of the site with a mixture of civic and retail uses will help to counter balance the emerging McDonagh Station and Kmart schemes thereby helping to protect the vitality, viability and attraction of the City Centre as the premier location for shopping in the City.

Over the timescale of the 2008 - 2014 City & Environ Draft Development Plan, the development and delivery of mixed use proposals for Bateman Quay – including a large component of higher order comparison and speciality shopping - will be a priority retail planning objective of the local authorities.

The Parade
An additional area, which to date has not been given due recognition of its importance as having potential to deliver any significant quantum of retail floorspace, is the Parade. This is an established honey pot for local people and visitors alike in view of the nationally and internationally renowned profile anchor of the Kilkenny Design Centre. There is scope to build on this by ensuring that planning policies provide the framework and mechanisms for this to be achieved.

b) Edge of Centre
Given that the McDonagh Station scheme is now underway, the only other key edge of centre site is the Kmart site. As identified in the 2002 Plan, the Kmart site with the McDonagh Station site provide the potential for the expansion of the City Centre and meeting the demand and need for additional retail floorspace and other City Centre activities and uses. This objective was incorporated into the City Centre Local Area Plan 2005. The identification and zoning of the two sites underpins the objective of no one
site dominating the retail landscape of the City or providing an alternative to the City Centre/Core shopping Area.

The Kmart site was identified as providing the basis for the second phase expansion of the City Centre and this position is confirmed in this Plan.

c) Out of Centre
Within the City's environs, over the timescale of the City and County Development Plans, issues and opportunities are identified in respect of:

- Convenience floorspace
- Bulky goods/retail warehousing floorspace.

**Convenience Floorspace**
The environs of the City are rapidly expanding and there is a need to ensure that convenience and local services needs around the area are met in an efficient, equitable and sustainable way. The 2001 Strategy recognised that the Western Environs Area would require a Neighbourhood centre. This has been planned for in the 2004 Western Environs Local Area Plan. The potential remains for the Neighbourhood Centre to grow into a District Centre but this should be considered in the wider context of the City & Environs.

A further neighbourhood centre is planned for the Loughmacask area which will be subject to a Local Area Plan.

For the foreseeable future, in view of the residential development that is taking place, the location for additional neighbourhood centres is in the western environs rather than the eastern suburbs of the City.

**Bulky Goods/Retail Warehousing Retail Parks:**
A range of sites and locations for expansion of existing retail parks and new retail parks were identified in the 2002 Development Plan as reviewed.

The 2001 strategy restricted the size of retail parks. This was adjusted in the 2004 review in the light of the following considerations:

- It constrained the potential of retail warehousing in and around the City and County.
- It was not consistent with the approaches in neighbouring counties and therefore had the potential to weaken the competitiveness of the City & county.
- It was not consistent with the RPG’s which did not set a cap on the size of retail parks.
- Responding to market demand, the cap inhibited securing the necessary anchor tenants to attract other operators
- According to consumer demand in 2004 some 25% of the County’s residents were travelling to other locations to meet bulky goods retail needs.

The removal of the cap was adopted as policy. The sites identified in the 2004 review were considered in terms of their immediate, medium and long term development. The priority sites for delivery of retail warehousing floorspace were identified as Smithland
and Ormonde Retail Parks. These proposals have now been delivered or are on course to be delivered. They have resulted in the City significantly improving its retail warehousing offer.

However, no further bulky goods floorspace should be granted in and around the City for the foreseeable future for the following reasons:

- There are constraints on the expenditure capacity for additional comparison floorspace over the period 2008 - 2014.
- New comparison floorspace should be located in the City Centre and edge of centre sites to enhance the attraction and competitiveness of the City and County in the National and Regional retail hierarchies.
- There is an over-representation of bulky goods floorspace in the comparison offer of the City & Environs.
- The concerns that the retail warehousing floorspace is competing with the comparison offers of the City Centre and the District Towns.
- The issue of saturation of the retail warehousing market around the City and concerns that not all of the space will be built out.

Exceptions to this policy will only be considered where it can be proven that a proposal unequivocally introduces uniqueness and innovation to the city & county’s retail offer which cannot be met in the City Centre or on edge of centre locations.

The policy in the 2002 - 2008 Development Plan of establishing retail warehousing parks in each quadrant of the city and environs still holds true but the timescales have been revised to take account of greater focus on the City Centre and the issues of expenditure capacity for additional retail floorspace.

**POLICY**

- Over time, but unlikely to be in the timescale of this Draft Development Plan, retail warehousing parks should be located in all quarters of the City’s Environs
- Provision of infrastructure to ensure traffic impacts are minimised should be a key determining factor in the selection of appropriate sites, with public transport and other modes of access also being achievable
- Relocation and upgrading of existing operations should be encouraged

5.6.5.2 Waterford City Environs

The 2002 County Development Plan identified a requirement for a district centre in the Ferrybank area of the Waterford City Environs to meet the needs and potential of this significant expanding suburb of Waterford City. This scheme is now under construction. Under this review the centre has been redesignated from a level 3 district centre to a Tier 1 level 2 town centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. However the redesignation of the centre does not resolve the issue of what is an appropriate size for it. This potential requires to be set in the context of a Regional Retail Strategy.

It is the policy of the Council to engage with the other local authorities in the South East Region in the preparation and adoption of a joint retail strategy for the greater Waterford area.
5.6.5.3 The District Towns

The review of the retail strategy has identified the need to provide a framework for ensuring that the vitality and viability of the four District towns is not only sustained but enhanced. The health checks carried out for the towns identified that there are some key opportunities for the reuse of existing town centre buildings/sites which will serve to consolidate their retail offer and more importantly provide the mechanism for the effective regeneration of these profile sites. It is not envisaged that other sites would be precluded from development but that each site should be considered on its individual merits and potential contribution to sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the towns.

Strategic Response

Every retail planning strategy must be clear as to its purpose and what it is intended to achieve. The objectives and policies set out in this Draft Development Plan seek to consolidate and build on the 2002 strategy with a specific additional objective for the District Towns.

The objectives of the strategy set the framework for the strategic policies and specific proposals. They give a clear definition of what is intended to be achieved in the City and across the County over the period 2008 – 2014 and beyond to 2020.

Objectives:

**Objective 1:** To sustain and improve the retail profile and competitiveness of Kilkenny City and County within the retail economy of the South East Region and beyond.

**Objective 2:** To provide the retail land use and planning policy framework that responds to the potential of Kilkenny City’s role as a Hub within the national and regional economies and to ensure that the City and County fully play their role in achieving the objectives and targets of the NSS and the Regional Guidelines.

**Objective 3:** To confirm a hierarchy which assists in achieving the Regional Settlement Strategy and its objectives and provides clear guidance on where major new retail floorspace would be acceptable.

**Objective 4:** To ensure that the retail needs of the City and County’s residents are met as fully as possible within the County, taking due cognisance of the Regional Retail and Settlement Hierarchy.

**Objective 5:** To address leakage of retail expenditure from the County by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer.

**Objective 6:** To ensure an equitable, efficient and sustainable spatial distribution of main centres across the County.

**Objective 7:** To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the role and potential of the four District Towns and to ensure that this is not compromised by the growth of Kilkenny City and Environs or any other competing centre.

**Objective 8:** To encourage and facilitate the preservation and enhancement of the retail role of smaller villages and centres around the County.

**Objective 9:** To encourage and facilitate innovation and diversification in the County’s retail profile and offer.

**Objective 10:** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail uses, with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach as indicated in the RPG.
Objective 11: To promote and sustain the importance of retailing in the County’s tourism economy.

Objective 12: To provide the criteria for the assessment of retail development proposals.

5.6.6 Strategic Policy Framework

The strategic policy framework is set by:

- The retail hierarchy;
- The core retail areas;
- The sequential approach;
- Spatial distribution of new retail development;
- Consideration of need; and
- Responding to the implications of the NSS and Regional Guidelines.

5.6.6.1 Retail Hierarchy

As set out in section 5.5.1 above the retail hierarchy for the County is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Retail Function</th>
<th>Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Major Town Centre/County Town</td>
<td>Kilkenny City &amp; Environs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 Level 2 Sub county town</td>
<td>Ferrybank East Waterford City Environs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Callan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomastown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2 Level 2 Sub County Town</td>
<td>Castlecomer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graiguenamanagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Town</td>
<td>No designated centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 Village Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>As designated for Kilkenny City &amp; Environs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Waterford Environs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hierarchy needs to be monitored and reviewed in the next review of the retail strategy.

5.6.6.2 Core Retail Areas

The core retail area remains the same as in the 2002 Development Plan and is dealt with in detail in section 5.5.2.

5.6.6.3 The Sequential Approach

In meeting the aims of the Strategy, policies and proposals in respect of the location of retail development must be in accordance with the principles set by the **Sequential Approach** in the RPG. It defines that:
5. Economic Development

- The preferred location for new retail development, where practicable and viable, is within a town centre (or district or major village centre);
- Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within a town centre then consideration can be given to a site on the edge of the town centre so as to encourage the possibility of one journey serving several purposes. An edge of centre site is taken to be one that is unlikely to be more than 300 - 400 metres from the edge of the prime shopping area, and less in smaller settlements. The distance considered to be convenient will however vary according to local circumstances; and
- Only after having assessed the size, availability, accessibility and feasibility of developing sites and premises, firstly within a town centre and secondly on the edge of a town centre, should alternative out of centre sites be considered where it can be demonstrated that there are no town centre or edge of centre sites which are suitable, viable and available.

In formulating specific policies and proposals, it is recognised that in general retail warehouses do not fit easily into town centres given their size requirements and the need for good car parking facilities and ease of servicing. As such, in some instances it may be possible to locate retail warehouse groups on the edge of town centres.

5.6.6.4 Spatial Distribution of New Retail Development

The City and County Retail Strategy, in accordance with the RPG, provides the strategic policy framework for the spatial distribution of new retail development. The emphasis is on strategic guidance on the location and scale of major retail development. The Strategy does not seek to inhibit small scale retail development in centres around the County, particularly in smaller centres. It should be taken to be implicit in the aims of the Strategy that such developments should be encouraged and facilitated to enhance the sustainability, vitality and viability of smaller centres, including smaller main centres in the County Retail Hierarchy. The following provides guidance on how the Retail Strategy defines the distribution of strategic and non-strategic retail floorspace within the Retail Hierarchy:

Level 1: Major convenience and comparison
Level 2: Middle order convenience and tourism related comparison in sub county towns and major convenience and middle order comparison
Level 3: No centres are currently identified at this level in the county retail hierarchy
Level 4: Predominantly additional convenience but not excluding tourism related comparison.

Additionally, the Strategy recognises the need to ensure that local needs, primarily convenience shopping and local services, are met in an equitable, efficient and sustainable way in major existing or new residential areas in and around main settlements through the designation of locations for Neighbourhood Centres in development plans.

5.6.6.5 Consideration of Need

The capacity assessment has identified that quantitatively there is scope for additional convenience floorspace but no potential for additional comparison floorspace over the
period of the plan 2008 to 2014. Post 2014 the potential for both additional convenience and comparison floorspace considerably improves, particularly in respect of comparison floorspace capacity.

One of the main reasons why there is a lack of capacity for additional comparison floorspace is the quantum of retail warehousing which has been granted planning consent in accordance with the 2002 Development Plan strategy. However, this review identified that retail warehousing captures the gross expenditure potential which effectively curtails the delivery of any significant quantum and quality of new mainstream/high street comparison floorspace in the City Centre/edge of centre until post 2014.

This is not a position which can be endorsed or adopted in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the City and County.

Table 5.3 illustrates that when retail warehousing extant permissions are excluded, there is potential for a considerable quantum of mainstream comparison floorspace. The removal of retail warehousing from the capacity assessment is necessary as its inclusion results in there being a lack of potential for any new mainstream comparison floorspace in Kilkenny City Centre until post 2014. As a consequence, the long held objectives of securing the regeneration of the Kmart site and the development of Bateman Quay would not be delivered. This is clearly not consistent with the policies and objectives of the City and County Retail Strategy particularly in respect of:

- Sustaining and improving the retail profile and competitiveness of the City & County.
- Delivering the retail planning framework that responds to the City’s role as a Hub in the regional and national economies and ensuring that the City and County play their full role in achieving the targets and objectives of the NSS and SERPG;
- Ensuring that the retail needs of the City & County’s residents are met as fully as possible in the County;
- Addressing the leakage of comparison expenditure from the County by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer.

Consistent with the RPG’s, while a capacity assessment should inform the guidance on the additional quantum of floorspace required, other factors should also be taken into account with need, market interest, regeneration and strategic policy objectives being considered on the whole more important planning issues.

The City must continue to improve and renew its offer and attraction in the light of the new schemes emerging in competing centres and further afield. There is therefore, a need for additional convenience and mainstream/high street comparison floorspace in the City Centre/expanded City Centre over the period of the 2008 – 2014 Development Plan.

To ensure that there is both consolidation and expansion of the City centre, the Kmart site and Bateman Quay are identified as the priority locations for the development of new comparison floorspace over the short and medium term.
The loss of the two sites due to capacity issues would not serve the long term planning of the City as the alternative would be that shopping needs would require to be met in purpose-built out of town shopping centres.

**POLICY**

No further bulky goods floorspace will be granted in and around the City & Environs due to constraints on the expenditure capacity for additional comparison floorspace over the period 2008 - 2014.

Exceptions to this policy will only be considered where it can be proven that a proposal unequivocally introduces uniqueness and innovation to the City & County’s retail offer which cannot be met in the City Centre or on edge of centre locations.

5.6.6.6 Responding to the NSS

**The City as a Hub under the NSS**

Three elements are key to the City achieving the objectives of both the NSS and SERPG in respect of retail expansion and policy:

- There are three major sites (McDonagh Station, the Kmart site and Bateman Quay) that will enable substantial expansion of the City Centre,
- A framework for a network of district, neighbourhood and local centres to meet the needs of the residential expansion of the City’s environs and
- Key strategic locations have delivered retail warehouse parks around the City and Environs.

The 2002 Development Plan identified the need to significantly enhance the quality and quantum of the City and County’s retail warehousing offer in the interests of both sustaining and enhancing their competitiveness in the regional and national hierarchies. This has now been achieved and the priority over the period of this plan is focusing on the enhancement of the City and County’s mainstream/high street comparison offer if the City is to continue to sustain and enhance its regional and national competitiveness.

**Waterford City Environs**

The Waterford City Environs within County Kilkenny are a key part of Waterford achieving its potential and targets as a Gateway under the NSS and the SERPG. A policy of the 2002 Plan was to work with the other local authorities in the South East Region in the preparation of a Regional Retail Strategy in accordance with the RPG’s which identify the Greater Waterford Area as an area where comprehensive retail and policies should be prepared by the constituent local authorities.

This is important in setting the Ferrybank area squarely in its wider Waterford Gateway context. Given that the Waterford Environs Area is growing significantly there is a need to establish a retail strategy for the greater Waterford area.

**POLICY**

To engage with the other local authorities in the South East Region in the preparation and adoption of a joint retail strategy for the greater Waterford area.
5.7 Specific Policies and Proposals

The specific policies and proposals of the City and County Retail Strategy are designed to facilitate achievement of the aims of the Strategy. They are formulated to ensure:

- The policy framework is in place to address existing or emerging issues in the City and County’s retail profile,
- The City and County have the policy framework to ensure strategic and local convenience and comparison shopping needs are met and the competitiveness of the County’s main centres is enhanced
- The expenditure capacity potential for additional floorspace is harnessed over the timescale of the Strategy.

5.7.1 Kilkenny City & Environs

A holistic approach and vision for the City and its future is required to achieve further enhancement of the City’s retail importance. This includes:

- Expansion of the City Centre;
- Continuing improvement in the quality and quantum of its retail offer;
- Continuing improvement of its cultural, arts and tourism/supporting tourism infrastructure;
- Introduction and implementation of road programmes and traffic management initiatives;
- Signage and linkage;
- Environmental improvements;
- Heritage and interpretation strategies;
- Working in partnership.

POLICY

- Over the timescale of the 2008 – 2014 City and Environs Development Plan the development and delivery of mixed use proposals for Bateman Quay – including a large component of high order comparison and speciality shopping - is a priority retail planning objective in order for the City Centre to retain its role as the premier shopping destination in the City and County.
- The realisation of the McDonagh Station site, the Kmart site and Bateman Quay is a key objective of the retail strategy.
- That there is an equitable distribution of new retail floorspace and town centre uses between McDonagh Station, the Kmart site and Bateman Quay to ensure that no one site dominates the retail landscape of the City or provides an alternative to the City Centre/Core shopping Area.
- To carry out environmental improvements to The Parade, Rose Inn Street and Canal Square.
- To continue progress with the programming and implementation of strategic road proposals.
- To implement the car parking strategy in the City Centre Local Area Plan 2005.
• To develop a heritage and interpretation strategy linked to environmental improvement/enhancement proposals to ensure an integrated approach is adopted.

• To work in partnership with local businesses, business and trade organisations, other agencies and groups and local people to deliver the expectations and targets of the City’s designation as a Hub.

• That planning permissions for retail warehousing floorspace will contain clear planning conditions restricting the sale of non-bulky goods as defined within the Retail Planning Guidelines. The compliance with such planning conditions will be monitored and strictly enforced.

• To implement the provisions of the City Centre Local Area Plan 2005.

5.7.2 District Towns

The 2007 Review identifies the need to facilitate the enhanced vitality and viability of the four Scheduled Towns. To achieve this, the following is recommended:

i. **Callan:** the continued expansion of the town’s retail offer should be encouraged and facilitated. The priority will be to consolidate retail activity within the town centre. However, this may not always be possible in view of the size of site and parking requirements of modern convenience operators. There is a need to consider better meeting the local shopping and services needs of the growing residential areas to the north of the King’s River. This should doubly serve to help regenerate Bridge Street. In parallel, it is recommended that an environmental strategy is prepared for the town centre which helps to create a sense of place and space.

ii. **Castlecomer:** requires to witness a substantial improvement in its retail floorspace and have as its objective over the timescale of the emerging City and County Development Plans achieving designation as a Tier 1 Level 2 Sub County Town Centre and, thus, parity with Callan and Thomastown in the County Retail Hierarchy. To achieve this, enhanced awareness of the market potential of the town and its hinterland is required. Castlecomer should harness its tourism potential which will serve to enhance the town’s attraction as a place for living, working, leisure and shopping. Key building blocks are its proximity to Kilkenny City, the Dunmore Caves and Jenkinstown Park with the asset of the Castlecomer Estate Yard being the catalyst for further retail and tourism supporting infrastructure. This recommendation should be pursued in conjunction with Kilkenny Tourism Board.

iii. **Graiguenamanagh:** a holistic approach to the regeneration of the town is required and the framework for this is set down in the 2006 Graiguenamanagh – Tinnahinch Development and Economic Study jointly commissioned by Kilkenny County Council and Carlow County Council. The catalyst for the regeneration of the town centre is identified as being tourism market driven. The key assets are the town’s heritage, its annual festivals and its location on the Barrow Navigation and two National Waymarked Ways. Graiguenamanagh is identified as having potential to develop as a ‘commercial services centre or hub’ within the local and regional tourism economies. Through this means, there will be greater inflows of spend to help sustain and enhance the town’s retail offer and attraction. An important recommendation is the need for environmental improvement and heritage interpretation strategies which provide the springboard for regeneration.
iv. **Thomastown:** the continued expansion of the town’s retail offer should be encouraged and facilitated to ensure that Thomastown fulfils its role in the NSS and as a designated District Town in the SERPG. The priority will be to consolidate retail activity within the town centre and secure the re-use and regeneration of key buildings and sites. However, this may not always be possible in view of the size of site and parking requirements of modern convenience operators. For the town to sustain its shopping and market attraction there requires to be continued investment in the public realm and the streetscape.

### 5.7.3 General Policies

In addition to the specific policies and initiatives, a range of general policies incorporated into the strategy are summarised in Table 5.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corner Shops and Smaller Villages/Crossroads</td>
<td>To retain, encourage and facilitate the retail role of corner shops and small villages around the County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of Towns and Villages</td>
<td>To encourage and facilitate the enhancement and environmental improvement of the County's towns and villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Use and Regeneration of Derelict Land and Buildings</td>
<td>To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailing in Tourism and Leisure</td>
<td>To encourage and facilitate the development of retailing within the tourism and leisure sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation in the City and County's Retail Offer</td>
<td>To encourage and facilitate innovation in the City and County’s retail offer and attraction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.7.4 Criteria for Assessing Future Retail Proposals

All applications for significant retail development should be assessed against a range of criteria. Different thresholds were set in the 2001 Retail Strategy for Kilkenny City and its Environ and the four sub County Towns. These will remain as follows:

**Kilkenny City and its Environ/ Waterford City Environ:** Developments of 1,000m² (gross) convenience and 2,000m² (gross) comparison will be tested by the criteria.

**District Towns/Other Settlements:** Proposals for 500m² (gross) convenience and comparison developments should be considered against the criteria.

The criteria to be considered in the assessment of significant applications will include:

- The expenditure capacity within the relevant catchment area, taking account of all extant planning permissions and development proposals/opportunities identified in the City and County Development Plans, including those for the District Towns and other settlements;
- The impact on town and village centres, including cumulative impact;
• The baseline information and capacity/impact assessment is fit for purpose and transparent;
• There is demonstrable need for development;
• The relationship of the application to any development plan allocation;
• Its contribution to town/village centre improvement;
• Its contribution to site and/or area regeneration;
• The quality of access by all modes of transport and by foot and bicycle;
• Its role in improving the competitiveness of the County, in particular Kilkenny City Centre;
• Its role in sustaining rural communities;
• The extent to which it is relevant to consider the imposition of restrictions on the range of goods permitted for sale; and
• Any other relevant development plan policies and allocations.

All significant development shall also be subject to an assessment that follows the Sequential Approach. The objectives of this approach to development have been summarised previously and the following is added to that summary:

— In all cases, to select the site which offers the optimum accessibility options by all transport modes, including walking and cycling.
— Particularly if a town centre site is not being promoted, to demonstrate that all town centre development options have been fully evaluated and that flexibility has been adopted in regard to the retail format.

If the retail proposal, whether significant or not, accords with Development Plan policies and proposals in all material respects it should expect to meet with approval. In accordance with the RPG, in such instances, it should not be necessary for the applicant to provide additional supporting background studies. However, the onus is on an applicant to demonstrate convincingly that the proposal does comply closely with the Development Plan. Where there is doubt on any aspect of a planning application, the local authorities will require a detailed justification related to the matter that is questionable.

5.7.4.1 RIS/RIA Guidance to Applicants

The Borough and County Councils wish to ensure that retail proposals which accord with the relevant Development Plans and the City and County Retail Strategy proceed as expeditiously as possible through the planning process. To assist in achieving this, as part of the review of the Retail Strategy, the Councils requested that guidance notes be prepared for applicants on what should comprise a Retail Impact Statement (RIS)/Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) and what the sought outputs are. These guidance notes are provided in Appendix A of the Retail Strategy.

5.7.5 Monitoring & Review

The review was part of the making of the new County and City Development Plans and was commissioned in recognition of the fact that the retail sector is one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy and trends, influences and information change over time. This commitment to monitoring and review requires to be endorsed to ensure that:
• The Retail Strategy and its baseline data are kept as up-to-date as possible;
• There is a means of monitoring progress with the implementation of policies; and
• There is a mechanism that can enable change that is responsive to emerging trends and opportunities.

To ensure that the Strategy and its policies remain valid and up-to-date, it is the policy of the Councils to:

- Carry out annual monitoring of expenditure and population forecasts.
- Monitor planning permissions for both new retail floorspace and change of use to keep the floorspace data up to date.
- Review the Retail Strategy’s policies and objectives again in 3 years.
- Update the household and shopper survey data at the next review
Fig. 5.1
Core Retail Area

Legend

- Core Retail Area
- 400m Isochrone

Based on Ordnance Survey of Ireland Map, Licence No “Kilkenny/CCMA/03/07”