

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT**

of the

**Kerry Local Economic
and
Community Plan (LECP)
2015-2021**



July 2015

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1 Introduction

'Putting People First, Action Programme for Effective Local Government' is the name of a policy document published in 2012 which outlined the Government's intention to continue the reform process of Local Government. Changes proposed in this policy were put into legislation by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (hereafter called the Reform Act). The Reform Act provides for a stronger and clearer role for Local Government in local economic development and community development. This is a key element in achieving the vision set out in the Government's 2012 *Putting People First* Action Programme. The action programme states that *"local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level, leading economic, social and community development"*.

Further to achieving this overall vision statement the Reform Act envisages Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) playing a key role in delivering economic and social development at a local level. The LECPs are six-year plans that outline the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant Local Authority (LA) area. This is to be achieved by respective LAs directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The LECP plan will therefore be used to focus the role of Local Government, State Agencies, Community Sector, Local Development Groups and other bodies that are involved in the development of the county. In fulfilling this requirement the Reform Act provides for the setting up of a Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in each LA area to assist co-operation and to focus the work of Local Government, State Agencies, Community Sector, Local Development Groups and other bodies towards the enhancement and development of their county. This committee includes both LA and non-local authority members. The LCDC's first major role is the development of a framework or plan, a LECP, which will guide the economic and community development for a period of 6 years. The LCDC will be overseen by the community element of the plan while the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (EDE SPC) will oversee the economic elements of the plan. It is a statutory requirement that each LA adopt the resultant integrated LECP for its administrative area.

Kerry County Council is now in the process of developing its LECP for a six year period from 2015-2021. The plan will be used to focus the role of Local Government,

State Agencies, Community Sector, Local Development Groups and other bodies that are involved in the development of the county. It is being guided by the newly established LCDC in co-operation with the EDE SPC of Kerry County Council. The process of drafting the Kerry LECP follows that outlined in guidelines provided by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in 2015 (see Figure 1-1).

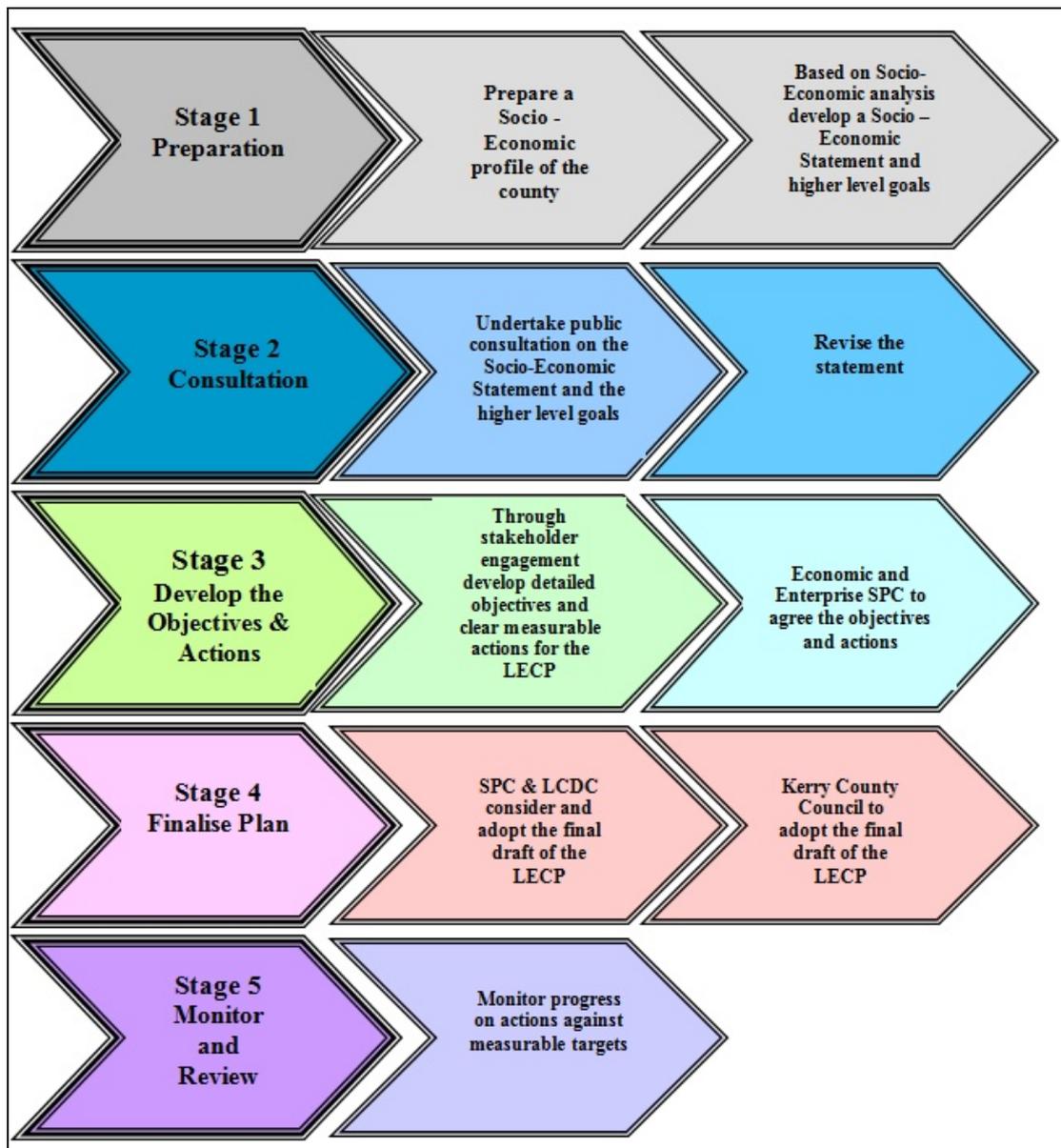


Figure 1-1 Stages in the development of a LECP.

1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process for ensuring that environmental issues are taken into account at every stage in the preparation,

implementation, monitoring and review of plans, programmes and policies (PPP). It is a process of evaluating the environmental consequences of a PPP ensuring they are fully assessed and addressed at the earliest stage in the decision making process and prior to their adoption. SEA also facilitates interested stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the PPP and keeps them informed throughout the decision making process. Once adopted any identified significant effects of a PPP on the environment are subsequently mitigated and monitored.

SEA is governed by the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes (P/P) on the Environment (commonly known as the *SEA Directive*). It was transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004), amended in 2011 via S.I. No 200 of 2011 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004 (SI 436/2004), amended in 2011 via S.I. No 201 and 265 of 2011.

The SEA process consists of a series of steps or stages that need to be undertaken as a PPP is drafted. The first step is screening. Screening is a process whereby it is decided whether a particular plan, for which an SEA is not mandatory, would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore require a SEA. According to Article 9(3) of SI 435 of 2004, as amended, *a competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment.* The LECP is not a plan that requires mandatory SEA under sub-article (1). Therefore Article 9(3) above applies. In this context it should be noted that the LECP is not a document that will set the framework for future development consents of projects. Rather the plan will adhere to and be in compliance with the recently adopted Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021 (KCDP 2015-2021) in this regard.

In screening any PPP the Competent Authority (CA) must consider whether or not the plan in question would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 and any submission or observation received in response to a notice under sub-article (5). Further to this Kerry's LECP will be screened in order to determine if significant effects on the environment are considered likely. The criteria set out in Schedule 1 are listed under

(i) characteristics of the plan and (ii) characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected (see Appendix 1). Article 5 of the above mentioned regulations, as amended, also outlines the requirements in relation to giving notice to the relevant statutory bodies as part of the screening process. This report records the screening process and determination in relation to the LECP for Kerry over the period of 2015-2021.

2 Description of the Study Area

The study area relates to County Kerry located in the southwest of Ireland. Information provided in this section of the screening report is predominately sourced from the recently published *County Kerry: A Socio-Economic Profile*, Kerry County Council, 2015. The socio-economic profile was written as part of the evidence based research required to inform the LECP. It was further supplemented by a collaborative study on '*Understanding Change in County Kerry 1991-2011*' by Dr. David Meredith, TEAGASC and Dr. Brendan O'Keeffe, University of Limerick.

Key findings of the socio-economic profile are summarised below in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Key findings from *County Kerry: A Socio-Economic Profile*, Kerry County Council, 2015.

Key finding for:	Summary Finding
Demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of Kerry has been increasing steadily since 1979 with a current recorded population of 145,502 (census 2011) • A growth of 4.1% was experienced in the period 2006-2011. • This growth was uneven, with high growth rates in some towns and town environs while a number of areas mainly in the south of the county experienced decline. • Kerry has the lowest population growth in the State but is the 8th most populated county nationally. • Over 35% of Kerry residents live in large urban towns, remaining 65% live in areas with a population of 1,500 or less. Kerry is considered predominately rural. • The demographic of the county diverges from the national trends in two ways. Firstly the county has a lower percentage of the 0-9 and 20-39 age groups indicating low birth rates and a move from the county after school/college. Secondly Kerry has a greater percentage of people over the age of 49, pointing to an older age profile. These trends suggest that many of those who leave the county eventually return to the county to establish long term residence.
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the economic crises of 2008 numbers unemployed grew by 160%. • Construction and Manufacturing lost 60% and 20% of jobs respectively. • The census also highlighted areas that grew in the period 2006-2011 such as Education, Public sector Administration and Agriculture. • Kerry's economy, a fifth of the size of the South West is heavily dependent on Wholesale and Retail, Tourism and Agriculture.

Key finding for:	Summary Finding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wholesale and Retail sector dominates in terms of employment. This is followed by Health and the collective Public Sector (Health, Education and Public administration) which employs over a quarter of the workforce in both the South West and Kerry. • Over 90% of the active enterprises in the South West and Kerry employ less than 10 people. • Kerry's strong tradition in the Tourism and Agriculture sectors is reflected in the relatively larger proportion of the work force employed in these sectors in Kerry compared to the South West and the State. The opposite applies in the context of Manufacturing.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 1995-2011 early school leaving has fallen and third level attainment has increased. • Although progression to third level in Kerry is high the gap between the county and the State has widened. This indicates that people are leaving the county after college and not returning until later in life. • Social Science, Business and Law disciplines are the most popular among Kerry students. • The majority of Kerry students tend to study in Tralee Institute of Technology, University College Cork, University of Limerick and Cork Institute of Technology.
Health Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 90% of people in Kerry perceive themselves to be in very good or good health. • However, two trends are likely to emerge as key health issues in the coming years. Nationally the age profile is aging and it is estimated that the number of people over 60 will almost double by 2030. Public policy in the areas of health, housing and community supports will need to adapt to the needs of an increasingly older population. • Secondly, while life expectancy has increased, life style factors such as smoking, drinking and obesity continue to undermine the health of the population.
Nationality and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2011, 11.37% of Kerry's population were non-Irish nationals, slightly lower than the national average of 11.9%.

Key finding for:	Summary Finding
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.69% of Kerry's population is from the United Kingdom and 2.88% from Poland. Many other nationalities are resident in Kerry but in much smaller numbers. • In January 2015 there were 485 asylum seekers resident in Kerry. • In 2011 Kerry was also home to 860 members of the travelling community.
Gaeltacht and the Irish Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gaeltacht area covers a large part of the Corca Dhuibhne and Úibh Ráthaigh peninsulas. • The population of the Kerry Gaeltachtaí is 8,729 which represent c. 8.7% of the national Gaeltacht population. • Additional measures are needed to improve and grow the economy of Gaeltacht Communities if their contribution to the County's linguistic, social, and cultural tradition is to be maintained.
Deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the period 2006 to 2011, the relative position of Kerry has significantly improved from the 21st to the 16th most affluent local authority area in Ireland. • The Pobal HP Deprivation Index indicates the largest concentrations of areas which are marginally above average are, in general, located in the environs of Tralee, Killarney, Castleisland, an Daingean and Kenmare. • Smaller concentrations are located in the environs of Listowel, Ardfert, Cahersiveen, Waterville, Sneem, Killorglin Milltown and Rathmore. • Outside these areas the majority of the county is classified as being marginally below average including a large proportion of rural areas. • Over 10% of the county is classified as disadvantaged. The majority of disadvantaged areas are located in North Kerry and the Iveragh peninsula. • The most affluent parts of the county are situated primarily in the environs of Killarney, and to a smaller extent around Dingle Town and Tralee (excluding Tralee town).

Key finding for:	Summary Finding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 8 areas in the county classified as very disadvantaged. Five such areas are located in Tralee, two in Listowel and one in Castleisland.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of dwellings (73.1%) are owner occupied and 44.46% of these are owned outright with no mortgage attached. • The highest concentrations of properties owned without a mortgage tend to be in more rural areas. • Nearly 27% of dwellings were vacant on census night. This vacancy rate is significantly higher than the State vacancy rate of 14.5%. • The number of holiday homes (8,202) is partly responsible for high vacancy rates. • There are 3,862 Local Authority housing units in the county. There is significant demand for local authority housing with 4,925 households qualifying for Local Authority Housing.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerry has good air connectivity to other countries and major urban centres through Cork, Shannon and Dublin airports. • In the last two decades Kerry's access to the country's major motorways has also improved and travel times reduced. • Maintaining and improving ports will be important in the economic development of the county. • The Shannon Estuary provides a huge opportunity to develop marine-related industry and for the development of marine related tourism. • Through major improvements to the grid infrastructure and the development of renewable energy Kerry can provide a safe and secure energy source for existing and new economic enterprises. • However grid improvement in South Kerry is needed to ensure it can accommodate high energy users and

Key finding for:	Summary Finding
	capitalise on its capacity to produce renewable energy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="510 347 1666 384">• There is a deficiency of high quality telecommunication and broadband infrastructure.

3 Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2015-2021

3.1 LECP Overview

Guidelines on compiling LECP were issued to LAs in January 2015 from the DECLG. The guidelines set out in three parts how LECPs should be drafted. The guidelines state that the purpose of the LECP is to identify and implement objectives and actions to strengthen and develop the economic and community dimensions of each LA area over the six year period. This is to be achieved by respective LAs directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. Accordingly the LECP needs to be as action-focused as possible, recognising that delivery will be through the programmes of other stakeholders as well as the LA. The economic elements of the LECPs are to be developed by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development Enterprise while the Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) will develop the community elements. Both will be integrated into one plan which will be adopted by the LA.

The DECLG guidelines note that LECP must be consistent with the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and subsequently with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies and a new National Planning Framework. The LECP will also have to have regard to Government policy in relation economic development, specifically job creation, including economic development of rural areas. The DECLG guidelines also clearly state that LECP must be consistent with the statutory City/County Development Plan noting the LECP should support broad locational policies of the Development Plan and not present alternate or competing proposals that lead to inconsistency. This is key to the enhanced role of local government in economic development. It will ensure that the planning development role is focussed strongly towards pro-actively supporting and promoting economic development.

The DECLG guidelines outline the main components to be included in the drafting of the LECP. It will consist of high level *Goals* for the plan, supported by specific *Objectives* under the respective economic and community streams. Each of these objectives listed for economic and community elements will be achieved through the implementation of specific, time-bound and measurable *Actions*. The delivery of

specific actions should be assigned accordingly to either the SPC for Economic Development or the LCDC. It is envisaged that goals, objectives and actions for both elements are based on a shared analysis of an evidence-based, socio-economic statement. A list of what a shared evidence base is likely to include is provided in the DECLG guidelines. Briefly they are:

- A SWOT analysis in relation to economic and community development in the area,
- A high level review of aspects of existing Regional Planning guidelines and other economic strategies including those likely to evolve in the foreseeable future,
- A high level review of previous strategies and plans,
- EU 2020 targets and National targets in the National Reform Programme for Ireland,
- For the economic element – a comparative analysis of the economic situation of the area; detailed information about existing enterprises and a retail market analysis of the area.

The principles underpinning the LECP are:

- Promotion and mainstreaming of equality,
- Sustainability – promoting a more resource efficient, green and more inclusive economy,
- Maximising returns by cooperation, collaboration and avoiding duplication,
- Participative planning – ensuring meaningful community participation and consultation in the planning process,
- Community consultation and engagement,
- Community development principles – addressing social exclusion and providing supports for the most marginalised, and
- Accessibility and ownership – written in a straight forward style.

3.2 Economic Elements of the LECP

The formulation of the economic element of LECPs is part of a wider economic role envisaged for local government by National policy. Essentially economic development will become a “mainstream” function of LAs. Further to this 6 keys area in which LAs are envisaged to promote and support economic development are summarised in the DECLG guidelines. Briefly these 6 “Economic Action Areas” (EAA) are:

EAA 1: Formulating the economic development plan and advising on the economic components of the community elements of the LECP,

EAA 2: Promoting economic development through general local authority powers and functions,

EAA 3: Operation of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs),

EAA 4: Economic components of the local/community development role,

EAA 5: Action plan for Jobs and Labour Market Activation,

EAA 6: Further specific economic development action in line with regional priorities.

The economic element of the LECP will therefore reflect the above. Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) for Economic Development and Enterprise will take a lead role in preparing and developing the economic development elements of the LECP. The DECLG outlines the content of the economic element of the LECP. It notes the core drivers of LECPs to be

- 1) objectives - Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs), and
- 2) actions – identified to achieve the SEDOs. Actions will cover the full range of the 6 key EAAs outlined earlier.

3.2.1 Economic SEDOs and Actions

As previously stated the SEDOs and Actions should be evidence-based and be informed by broad principles based on analysis, coherence and consistency. SEDOs should identify key objectives which will need to be prioritised to make a significant contribution to achieving the overall economic development outcomes of the LECP. SEDOs are required to be specific, measurable, time-bound and should specify relevant outcomes and appropriate metrics in respect of each objective.

Actions will flow from SEDOs and are the specific and practical measures needed to achieve SEDOs. Timescales and other relevant performance indicators should be outlined in order to monitor progress in the implementation of actions and assessment of effectiveness as the LECP is implemented over its 6 year period. The effectiveness of the implementation of the Actions is reported in the DECLG guidelines as a critical aspect of the entire LECP process.

3.3 Community Elements of the LECP

The formulation of the community element of LECPs is part of a wider recognition of the role local government plays in community development at a local level. It is envisaged that this role will be strengthened and expanded. The newly established LCDCs will act as the primary vehicle for the coordination of local and community

activity with the LA area. They will be responsible for developing and coordinating the community element of the LECP as detailed in the DECLG guidelines. Briefly this will entail:

1. bringing a stronger focus on local and community development in terms of setting jointly agreed local and community development goals and objectives,
2. taking a strategic view of public-funded interventions and supports at local level,
3. bringing all the relevant public-funded agencies bodies together to target their resources in a way that delivers on the high-level LECP goals.

In identifying key priorities for community development the LECP requires specific objectives to be achieved and delivered. Similar to the economic element of the LECP, the community element will identify high level goals in its socio-economic statement. The LCDC will need to expend these goals to identify a number of Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs) (see Section 3.3.1).

The community element of the LECP has to be consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Core Strategy of the LA's County Development Plan. In addition the impact of the plan on a number of other priorities including sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age and disability will need to be considered. Essentially the community element of the LECP needs to:

- promote and mainstream equality;
- develop and implement sustainable objectives;
- maximise returns from available resources and reduce duplication;
- ensure meaningful participation by communities in the planning process, and consultation and engagement with communities generally;
- utilise community development principles in the LECP development process specifically and the work of LCDCs generally; and
- set the local context for mainstream funding programmes such as local development/social inclusion programmes, community services programmes, etc.

3.3.1 SCOs and Actions

SCOs are to be drafted by LCDC as part of the LECP. SCOs are aimed at enhancing the quality of life and well-being of communities. They must be drafted in a manner that is consistent with the overall regional and local planning framework of the LA area. Further to achieving this the LCDC must first map and profile local service provision. The expected output is a socio-economic perspective of the LCDC

area including a map of local service provision as well as services provided by voluntary bodies; a range of sustainable community objectives and high priority actions required to deliver the objectives.

Again actions are the interventions deemed necessary to achieve the specific objectives. Responsibilities for actions should be assigned to the relevant delivery body/agency. The actions will in turn inform the key elements of various operational plans of the delivery bodies/agencies. Once actions have been agreed outputs, outcomes and impacts for each SCO have to be assigned by the LCDC. Performance indicators and progress milestones will need to be specified so that will enable monitoring of progress in implementing the actions and ultimately the effectiveness in achieving the SCOs.

3.4 Kerry LECP 2015-2021

Kerry County Council (KCC) is presently drafting its LECP for the 6 year period of 2015-2021. The drafting process is following the phased approach shown in Figure 1-1. The newly established LCDC is overseeing the development of the Community Elements of the Plan and the EDE SPC is overseeing the development of the Economic Elements of the Plan.

To date Stage 1 has been completed and Stage 2 - public consultation - has recently been undertaken. Stage 1 involved several elements. A socio-economic profile of the county, needed to inform the LECP, was undertaken. Additional research on the profile of labour force, industry and education in the county, called *Understanding Change in County Kerry 1991-2011* was undertaken by University of Limerick and Teagasc. On foot of this information stakeholder engagement commenced with workshops and an Advisory Steering Group was established. This process culminated in the drafting of a socio-economic statement and higher level goals for the county. Three themes were identified:

Economic Development & Job Creation: to promote a robust and diverse economy, supported by a well-developed education and training model, enabling a sustainable population and vibrant communities throughout the county,

Quality of Life: to promote a high quality of life, based around a clean natural environment, good quality local services, a strong sense of place and culture and meaningful participation in decision making.

Community & Social Inclusion: to promote social and economic inclusion and reduction of social inequalities, particularly targeting areas and communities in Kerry experiencing social disadvantage, marginalised groups or those at risk of exclusion.

For each of the three themes higher level goals were identified and agreed by the LCDC and the EDE SPC. The information was compiled into a *Draft Framework Consultation Document* which outlined the themes and corresponding higher level goals. These themes and goals are presented below in Table 3-1 - Table 3-3.

The *Draft Framework Consultation Document* and other research material formed the basis of Stage 2 (public consultation) of the LECP process and were placed on public display for 4 weeks from 29th May until June 30th, 2015. Submissions were invited from interested stakeholders, other agencies/organisations and members of the public. Several *Community Facilitated Events* were also undertaken throughout the county over the consultation time period.

Table 3-1 Theme 1: Economic Development & Job Creation specific higher level goals

1.1 Supporting Existing Business in Kerry	Strengthen existing base – supporting a strong business environment for local business services /Home working/Micro enterprise & SMEs.
1.2 Attracting Investment to Kerry	Support & Sustainably Develop Workspace Centres for significant FDI & indigenous investment (Tralee/Killarney hub).
1.3 Sustainably Maximise Growth Opportunities for Kerry	Identify areas of growth – Tourism, Food, Engineering manufacturing, renewable energy, ICT, Services & Retail, Creative Sector, Arts, Sports and Cultural Activities.
1.4 Diversifying the Kerry Economy	Maximise diversity in economic activity/seasonality/eco-tourism/health /language/ arts/sports /cultural/tourism in a sustainable manner.
1.5 Marketing	Market Brand Kerry/promotion as a location to invest.
1.6 Skills Development	Target Skills deficit/Matching skills base to economic opportunities.
1.7 Smart Technology	Sustainably develop ICT infrastructure/smart town network.
1.8 Networking/Collaboration	Promote Networking & collaborative practices between public sector and businesses, businesses & business & business & education to maximise economic activity.
1.9 Natural Resources	Maximise the economic potential and development of natural resources in a sustainable manner while ensuring no significant adverse effect on the environment. (Forestry & Renewables/Fisheries and Aquaculture/Agriculture/Env & Tourism).
1.10 Energy	Increase competitiveness of doing business in Kerry by developing initiatives to access low cost energy.
1.11 Connectivity	Maximise connectivity of the county through investing in sustainable communication and transport infrastructure in appropriate locations.
1.12 Social Enterprise	Develop social enterprise to strengthen the fabric of rural communities.

Table 3-2 Theme 2: Quality of life specific higher level goals

2.1 Natural Environment	To work with stakeholders in order to protect the landscape and natural environment of the County as a major economic asset and an invaluable amenity which contributes to the quality of people's lives.
2.2 Communities of Place	To strengthen and support communities to enable all residents to act on the development of social, cultural, economic and environmental actions to build a sense of identity, belonging and pride.
2.3 Accessibility to Services	To devise practical locally appropriate responses to address difficulties in accessing services in consultation with stakeholders.
2.4 Engagement & Participation	To Ensure that inclusive citizen engagement is promoted and supported at all levels so that people and communities affected by a decision or a policy are part of the decision making process.
2.5 Health & Well-Being	Promote population health & well being both mental and physical and drawing on the social determinants of health (covering social aspects including education, environment, sport & physical activity, housing, economic status).
2.6 Culture & Heritage	To enhance access to and to recognise the social and economic role of the arts, and culture in Kerry by promoting and encouraging artistic expression, cultural awareness and participation.

Table 3-3 Theme 3: Social Inclusion specific higher level goals

3.1 Social Deprivation	To raise awareness of social deprivation issues in Co Kerry and develop an active multi faceted and multi policy response working with individuals, communities and agencies.
3.2 Education	To provide education opportunities, through the concept of life long learning, by improving access, supporting retention and developing relevant training/skills for current and future job opportunities.
3.3 Unemployment	To promote access to quality employment for job-seekers, economically inactive and under-employed people.
3.4 Children & Young People	To secure improved outcomes for children & young people including more effective service delivery and better opportunities, by working with them and the appropriate agencies.
3.5 Older People	To promote Kerry as an age-friendly county and strengthen collaboration between statutory agencies and voluntary & community organisations to improve the health, wellbeing, safety and participation of older people.
3.6 Marginalised communities	To create change through developing participative processes and structures which include and empower marginalised and excluded groups in Co Kerry.
3.7 People with disabilities	To create an environment where people with intellectual and physical disabilities can participate in communities with equal rights to live life to their full potential.
3.8 Social & Community infrastructure	To ensure that appropriate needs based social and community infrastructure is prioritised in creating sustainable communities and a sense of belonging for both new and more established areas throughout the county.
3.9 Regeneration	Support the sustainable regeneration of urban & rural areas, through the development of integrated plans, community capacity building and targeting investment to develop vibrant sustainable communities.

4 Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Environmental Effects

The criteria for determining likely significant effects of a PPP are set out in Schedule 1 of SI 435 of 2004, as amended (Appendix 1). The criteria are listed under (i) characteristics of the plan and (ii) characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected (see Appendix 1). Article 9(5) of the above mentioned regulations, as amended, also outlines the requirements in relation to giving notice to the relevant statutory bodies of the competent authority's screening process and determination in relation to same. The following assessment on determining the likely significant effects of the LECP has been conducted in accordance with Schedule 1.

4.1 The Characteristics of the Plan

The characteristics of the LECP are detailed in Section 3.4 of this report. Briefly the purpose of the LECP is to identify and implement objectives and actions to strengthen and develop the economic and community dimensions of each LA area over a six year period. This is to be achieved by respective LAs directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

The DECLG guidelines outline the main components to be included in the drafting of the LECP. A LECP will consist of high level *Goals*, supported by specific *Objectives* under the respective economic and community streams. Each of these objectives listed for economic and community elements will be achieved through the implementation of specific, time-bound and measurable *Actions*.

At this stage in the LECP planning making process, as outlined in Figure 1-1, the high level strategic goals for three themes have been identified (see Section 3.4). They are present in Table 3-1-Table 3-3 and formed part of a *Draft Framework Consultation Document*. Further to the LECP consultation process more specific actions will be drafted in due course. As noted the objectives and underpinning actions to be identified will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021. The KCDP 2015-2021 was subject to a SEA which informed the drafting of the plan. Therefore any actions that flow from the Kerry LECP will also have to be in compliance and consistent with the KCDP 2015-2021 which was informed by SEA.

4.2 The degree to which the Plan set a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.

The LECP is not a document that will set the framework for future development consents of projects. Rather the LECP will adhere to and be in compliance with the recently adopted KCDP 2015-2021. The DECLG guidelines also clearly state that LECPs must be consistent with the statutory City/County Development Plan noting the LECP should support broad locational policies of the Development Plan and not present alternate or competing proposals that lead to inconsistency. In addition, the DECLG guidelines state that the LECP will need to be in full compliance and consistent with the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and subsequently with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies and a new National Planning Framework. This includes compliance with the recently adopted Core Strategy that forms part of the KCDP 2015-2021.

4.3 The degree to which the Plan influences other plans including those in a hierarchy.

The LECP is not a land use plan and therefore does not sit within a formal hierarchy of land use plans. Rather the LECP will target economic and community development which in turn will need to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and other hierarchical plans such as the Regional Planning Guidelines and the National Planning Framework. It is likely that new Local Area Plans will be informed to some degree by the LECP but again any Local Area Plan will need to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and its policies and objectives all of which have undergone a SEA as part of the KCDP 2015-2021 review.

4.4 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The Kerry LECP lists a number of themes that are of relevance to the high level objectives recorded in Table 3-1-Table 3-3. All three themes have high level goals that to some degree promote sustainable development particularly as it relates to protection of the environment including landscapes. The LECP is therefore informed by sustainable development and aims to promote sustainable development through

its implementation. Any economic or social development that is promoted in the plan will need to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 which has been written to promote proper planning and sustainable development.

4.5 Environmental problems relevant to the plan.

As stated above the LECP aims to promote sustainable development both economically and socially. In relation to the former economic development can by its nature significantly affect the environment. However, the LECP will only promote development that is in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021. The KCDP 2015-2021 has previously undergone a SEA and further to the mitigation proposed and integrated into the KCDP, no significant effects on the environment were identified. Equally the LECP will promote community and social development that, where applicable, is in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 including its Core Strategy. The community element of the LECP will also have to ensure it meets the requirements of the Reform Act 2014 by being assessed for the impact of the plan on a number of other priorities including sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age and disability. Further to this no environmental problems that may have a significant effect on the environment are identified as being relevant to the LECP.

4.6 The relevance of the plan for the implementation of EU legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection).

The LECP results from the Reform Act of 2014. It is in response to evolving National policy on reforms to Local Government. The plan has no significant relevance to the implementation of EU legislation on the environment. However as stated the plan will promote sustainable development that is tied to compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and therefore will have to adhere indirectly to EU environmental legislation.

4.7 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

The effects of the plan are ultimately to promote local economic and social development. Ultimately the overall characteristic of the effect is for the positive development of the county economically but also socially particularly in relation to social inclusion and the creation of a healthy local economy. Considering the broad nature of the high level goals the economic and social development of the county is likely to have different effects. However, as all social and economic development is

to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and will be limited to the policies and objectives of that plan, no significant effects on the environment are considered likely.

The LECP relates to the county of Kerry and the entire administrative area governed by Kerry County Council. The area that will be affected is the entire county.

4.8 Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The LECP will be implemented over 6 years as required under the Reform Act 2014. The plan as detailed in Section 3.4 requires objectives to be drafted from which will flow specific actions. The actions need to be monitored as the plan progresses. Therefore the probability of the plans effects occurring are considered high as the plan will be monitored through its implementation. This increases the likelihood that actions will be followed through and undertaken. The duration/frequency as stated will be over a 6 year cycle. Considering the aims of the LECP is to promote sustainable economic and social development it is envisaged that the effects, by intension, will not be reversible as they will aim to be of long term and permanent benefit to local communities.

4.9 The cumulative nature of the effects.

The economic and community development that will ultimately be promoted in the plan will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 policies and objectives. The document has previously been assessed under the SEA Directive which included an assessment of cumulative effects. Further to proper planning and sustainable development, cumulative effects should not occur if the LECP adheres to the policies/objectives screened in the SEA of the KCDP 2015-2021.

4.10 The transboundary nature of the effects.

It is not envisaged that the Kerry LECP will result in any significant transboundary effects.

4.11 The risks to human health or the environment (due to accidents)

No significant risks to human health or the environment are envisaged through the adoption of the LECP. All economic and community development promoted in the

plan will be in adherence to proper planning and sustainable development as outlined in the KCDP 2015-2021.

4.12 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects

The effects of the plan are ultimately to promote local economic and social development. This has the potential to take various forms and the magnitude of those effects will vary accordingly. Equally the spatial extent of the effects will vary from county wide to specific communities or areas, depending of the actions undertaken. Ultimately the overall characteristic of the effect is for the positive development of the county economically but also socially particularly in relation to social inclusion and the creation of a healthy local economy. As all social and economic development is to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and will be limited to the policies and objectives of the plan, no significant effects on the environment are considered likely due to the magnitude or spatial extent of the effects.

4.13 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

4.13.1 Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

The plan relates to the county of Kerry. The county is designated under various environmental designations at European and National level including Natura 2000 sites and landscapes of high scenic value. The county has a significant archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage value including the World Heritage Listed Skelligs Monastic Settlement and several Gaeltacht areas.

All of these designations could be vulnerable to inappropriate development – economic and to a lesser extent social. The LECP however will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 including settlement policies and the core strategy. This will ensure proper planning and sustainable development.

4.13.2 Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values

Environment quality standards/limit values are not expected to be exceeded by the implementation of the plan. The LECP can only promote economic and community development that is in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 which will ensure that all environmental considerations, further to proper planning and sustainable

development, are taken into account. No exceeding of thresholds or other quality standards is considered likely from the implementation of the plan.

4.13.3 Intensive Land Use

The LECP is not a land use plan and will not zone lands for any type of land use including intensive land use. Local Area Plans, in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 will form the main vehicle for future zoning.

4.13.4 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

The county is designated under various environmental designations at European and National level including Natura 2000 sites and landscapes of high scenic value listed in the KCDP 2015-2021. The county has a significant archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage value including the World Heritage Listed Skelligs Monastic Settlement. Any economic or community development encouraged in the LECP will have to be undertaken in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021.

5 Screening Determination

Further to the above screening process undertaken against criteria for determining likely significant effects of a PPP as set out in Schedule 1 of SI 435 of 2004, as amended, it is determined that the Kerry LECP 2015-2021 will not have a significant effect on the environment. A SEA is not required.

It should be noted that this determination is based on the Kerry LECP 2015-2021 as drafted in July 2015. The LECP process however will continue to evolve over the proceeding months as outlined in Figure 1-1. The LECP therefore will be screened at each stage in order to determine if as the plan evolves, significant effects on the environment are considered likely.

6 Consultation

Article 9(5) of SI 435 of 2004, as amended, outlines the requirements in relation to giving notice to the relevant statutory bodies of the competent authority's screening process and determination in relation to same. Further to this requirement the following Statutory Consultees will be forwarded the screening determination:

- EPA
- Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government

- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht

A submission or observation in relation to this determination can be made for a 4 week period from Friday 14th August until 5pm, Friday the 11th of September, 2015.

Submissions/observations should be made to:

Cathy Fisher

Environmental Assessment Unit

Planning Department

Kerry County Council

Rathass

Tralee

Co Kerry

Or via email at: cathy.fisher@kerrycoco.ie.

7 Appendix 1: Schedule 1 of the SI 435 of 2004, as amended.

Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme (or modification thereto) is likely to have significant effects on the environment

1. The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification, having regard, in particular, to:

- the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification, influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification,
- the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - (a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - (b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - (c) intensive land-use,
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

8 Appendix 2: Screening of the Kerry LECP High Level Strategic Goals.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOB CREATION HIGHER LEVEL GOALS	Environmental Parameter							
	Biodiversity	Population/ Human Health	Geology/ Soil	Hydrology	Air/ Climate	Material Asset	Cultural Heritage	Landscape
1.1 Supporting Existing Business in Kerry	Strategic goal to support a business environment. No significant effects identified on key environmental parameters as a result of this “soft” measure.							
1.2 Attracting Investment to Kerry	Strategic goal to support but also develop centres for investment. Possible local impacts depending on where centres are developed. However, this will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and proper planning and sustainable development.							
1.3 Sustainably Maximise Growth Opportunities for Kerry	Strategic goal to identify areas of growth for various industries. Each industry depending on the types of supports/developments could have significant effects on the environment but any development will have to be in compliance with the existing KCDP 2015-2021. In relation to Renewable Energy, Kerry adopted a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) in 2012. The RES underwent SEA and AA and any proposed development of RE will have to adhere to the policies and objectives of that document.							
1.4 Diversifying the Kerry Economy	Strategic goal to support a diverse business sector. Possible local impacts depending on where businesses are promoted and/or developed. However, this will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and proper planning and sustainable development.							
1.5 Marketing	Strategic goal to support marketing of the county. No significant effects identified on key environmental parameters.							
1.6 Skills Development	Strategic goal to develop skills in the county. No significant effects identified on key environmental parameters. Likely to be of benefit to populations as it will aim to match skills with appropriate locally based employment.							
1.7 Smart Technology	Strategic goal to develop IT infrastructure. Possible local impacts depending on where infrastructure is developed. However, this will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and proper planning and sustainable development							
1.8 Networking/Collaboration	Strategic goal to support collaboration and networking between stakeholders within county. No significant effects identified on key environmental parameters.							

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOB CREATION HIGHER LEVEL GOALS	Environmental Parameter							
	Biodiversity	Population/ Human Health	Geology/ Soil	Hydrology	Air/ Climate	Material Asset	Cultural Heritage	Landscape
1.9 Natural Resources	This goal aims to develop strategies that will sustainably manage the county's natural resources. This has the potential to significantly effect the environment including biodiversity, hydrology, soils/geology and material assets. However, any management of natural resources will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and the RES as adopted in November 2012.							
1.10 Energy	Strategic goal to develop initiatives to access low cost energy, depending on what actions are proposed this could significantly effect the environment but any developments on foot of this goal will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and the RES as adopted in November 2012.							
1.11 Connectivity	Strategic goal to develop connectivity in the county including transport and communication infrastructure. Possible impacts depending on where infrastructure is developed. However, this will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and proper planning and sustainable development							
1.12 Social Enterprise	Strategic goal to develop the social fabric of rural communities, no significant effects on the environment considered likely. Likely positive effect on local communities.							

QUALITY OF LIFE HIGHER LEVEL GOALS	Environmental Parameter							
	Biodiversity	Population/ Human Health	Geology/ Soil	Hydrology	Air/ Climate	Material Asset	Cultural Heritage	Landscape
2.1 Natural Environment	Strategic goal that aims to protect the natural environment including landscapes. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters.							
2.2 Communities of Place	Strategic goal that aims to build communities. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters.							
2.3 Accessibility to Services	Strategic goal that aims to provide access to services. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters particularly population/human health.							
2.4 Engagement & Participation	Strategic goal that aims to improve participation of community in local issues. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters particularly population/human health.							
2.5 Health & Well-Being	Strategic goal that aims to improve health and well-being. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters particularly population/human health.							

SOCIAL INCLUSION HIGHER LEVEL GOALS	Environmental Parameter							
	Biodiversity	Population/ Human Health	Geology/ Soil	Hydrology	Air/ Climate	Material Asset	Cultural Heritage	Landscape
3.1 Social Deprivation	Strategic goal that aims to address social deprivation. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters particularly those associated with population/human health.							
3.2 Education	Strategic goal that aims to improve access to all levels of education. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters.							
3.3 Unemployment	Strategic goal that aims to address access to quality employment. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters.							
3.4 Children & Young People	Strategic goal that aims to address improve outcome for children and young people. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters particularly those associated with population/human health.							
3.5 Older People	Strategic goal that aims to address improve outcomes for the elderly. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters particularly those associated with population/human health.							
3.6 Marginalised communities	Strategic goal that aims to improve participation of community in local issues especially marginalised members of society. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters.							
3.7 People with disabilities	Strategic goal that aims to improve participation of the people with disabilities in society. Positive goal that is likely to improve environmental parameters.							
3.8 Social & Community infrastructure	Strategic goal to support social and community infrastructure. Possible local impacts depending on where these are promoted and/or developed. However, this will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and proper planning and sustainable development.							
3.9 Regeneration	Strategic goal to support regeneration of urban and rural areas. Possible local impacts depending on areas that are regenerated. However, this will have to be in compliance with the KCDP 2015-2021 and proper planning and sustainable development.							