

## Executive Summary

This report provides commentary on the progress made in achieving the key objectives of the CDP during the first two years of its implementation and following extensive engagement with all Directorates of the Local Authority. The report demonstrates that overall, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the Development Plan thus far.

Chapter 2 outlines the various initiatives and measures taken in relation to Climate Action including measures to improve energy efficiency in social housing and public buildings, transitioning the Council fleet to Electric Vehicles and raising awareness and capacity building. By April 2024 there had been a reduction of 31.1% in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions over the 2016-2018 baseline. There had also been a 42.1% energy efficiency improvement over the 2009 baseline. The report outlines the Council's progress in the integration of key land uses to reduce the need to travel, as well as implementing appropriate flood risk management strategies and promoting biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure in new developments. The WCC Climate Action Plan was adopted in February 2024. Its implementation includes buy in from all sections of the Council and it is a good example of cross departmental collaboration within the Local Authority.

Chapter 3 Core Strategy, together with the annual Core Strategy Monitoring Reports prepared for Years 1 and 2 of the Plan, shows that new residential development is generally taking place in accordance with the Core Strategy housing allocations to settlements and significant progress is being made in delivering compact growth. In the first two years of the Plan there were 2,202 house completions and 2,336 housing units granted planning permission. A recent report prepared by the Southern Regional Assembly shows that Wexford was the only Council in the Region where the number of house completions surpassed the County Development Plan targets in housing delivery.

Chapters 4 and 18 detail the progress made in the delivery of social and affordable housing. WCC Housing Section have delivered over 50% of the Housing for All Targets to date and the proposals for the remainder of the plan period, if delivered, will result in WCC surpassing their target of 1,155 no. units. The Council completed 315 energy efficiency retrofits on Council housing stock, achieving its target. The Council will continue to work with all stakeholders and infrastructure providers to deliver housing units across the County in addressing the wide range of issues impacting on housing delivery, which remains a key focus for WCC.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the development of a strong economy as outlined in Chapters 6, 7 and 17, with particular respect to investment in enterprise, jobs growth and tourism. Wexford's Local Enterprise Office are in the top five LEOs in terms of net new jobs nationally. In 2023 LEO Wexford supported 235 small businesses,

employing 1,940 people with a total of 328 jobs created. WCC are developing property solutions in the four main towns including Trinity Wharf in Wexford, the Hatch Lab in Gorey, Enniscorthy Technological Park and John Street Enterprise Hub in New Ross which are at different stages of their development or implementation. Planning permission was granted for 70,177sq.m. of commercial floorspace during the first two years of the plan period.

The Council continue to maximise opportunities in the Sustainable Construction sector in particular, as well opportunities presented by the planned new SETU Campus in Wexford Town and in the Marine Innovation and Offshore Renewable Energy sectors. In 2025 WCC will open a new (Enterprise Ireland supported) innovation space focusing on the Green economy with the Centre of Excellence in High Performance Building Alliance which will support SMEs in the South East Region and beyond. The inaugural meeting of the South East Offshore Wind Partnership, of which WCC are a partner, was held in January 2024. WCC will continue to work with all stakeholders to promote Wexford as a location of choice for economic development and support enterprise and job creation in appropriate locations.

WCC has initiated an ambitious programme of investments in the public realm, as detailed in Chapter 5, including at Crescent Quay and Monck Street in Wexford Town, Esmonde Street Public Realm Scheme and the funded EU Thrive Gorey Market House in Gorey, Enniscorthy Town Centre Project and High Hill Norman Park, Emigrant Park, Brennan's and Shambles Project in New Ross. There are 107 sites on the Derelict Sites Register and 3 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. 173 sites have been approved for activation under call 3 of the URDF. There were 189 applications approved under Croí Conaithe. The Council will continue to seek funding opportunities to implement additional projects to support the appropriate regeneration and rejuvenation of towns and villages across the county to make them an attractive location for people to live, visit and operate a business.

Chapter 7 outlines the progress made in Tourism projects including the proposed new Norman Experience Visitor Centre in New Ross, Viking Village at the Irish National Heritage Park, enhanced visitor experience at Hook Lighthouse, Enniscorthy Town Tourism Project/Town Centre Enhancement, Forth Mountain Outdoor Activity Centre and Duncannon Fort.

Chapter 8 outlines the progress made on the delivery of key transport infrastructure including the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme and Rosslare Europort Access Road which will enhance connectivity in the region, in particular to/from the Port. It also details the progress in delivering active travel infrastructure to reduce dependency on the private car and secure a shift towards sustainable modes of transport. In terms of cycle infrastructure, Phase 1 of the Wexford Pathfinder Scheme was completed in 2024 and further sections are due to be completed in 2025. Six routes

were completed under the Safe Routes to School Scheme in 2023 and 2024 and three more are planned for 2025. An e-bike scheme is operational in Wexford Town since May 2023, with c.120,000km travelled to September 2024, and an e-scooters pilot scheme (6-month trial) was rolled out in Wexford town in August 2024, with 9,000km travelled as of September 2024. Phase 1 of the South East Greenway was also completed and Phase 2 is underway. WCC will continue to work with transport providers and seek funding to ensure the delivery of public transport, active travel modes and roads projects throughout the County.

Chapter 9 reports on the significant investment in water and wastewater infrastructure, waste management facilities and flood relief schemes, as well as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Rainwater Management Plan and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy being prepared as part of the Wexford Town Urban Area Plan. Completed water infrastructure projects include the Gorey Water Supply and a new water treatment plant at Ballyminaun. Completed wastewater treatment infrastructure includes the Enniscorthy wastewater treatment plant upgrade and a new wastewater treatment plant at Arthurstown. Chapter 10 outlines the progress on implementing environmental management objectives including those relating to air and water quality.

Chapter 11 discusses the progress on landscape and green infrastructure objectives. Completed projects include Min Ryan Park, Gorey Town Park, South East Greenway, High Hill Park and Emigrant Park. Projects in progress include Enniscorthy Wellbeing and Activity Garden. A site has also been identified for a Neighbourhood Park in Bunclody. A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy is being prepared as part of the Wexford Urban Area Plan and will plan a network of spaces for recreation, amenity and biodiversity projects.

Chapter 12 outlines the progress made in securing objectives for Coastal Zone Management, including coastal protection works and monitoring of coastal erosion risk zones, as well as objectives relating to beaches, bathing waters, walking trails and the maritime economy. A number of upgrades were made to coastal beach accesses, facilities and walking trails. Coastal protection projects progressing since the adoption of the Plan include Courtown Coastal Protection and Beach Nourishment Scheme, Rosslare Coastal Erosion and Flood Relief Scheme and Seaview in Kilmore. WCC facilitated a number of meetings and made a submission on the Draft South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy as well as the Proposed Rosslare Europort Offshore Renewable Energy Hub. WCC will continue to work with DHLGH, DECC, MARA and other relevant stakeholders to implement the new Maritime Area Planning Act and the National Marine Planning Framework in relation to its new functions in the nearshore area.

In relation to Heritage and Conservation, Chapter 13 highlights a number of projects carried out utilising funds under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund, Community

Monuments Fund and Built Heritage Investment Schemes. This includes wetlands and tree cover surveys, dune restoration works, repair works at Fethard and Mountgarrett Castles, and various other projects. WCC intend to prepare a County Heritage Plan and a Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2025 and will continue to engage with and support communities in implementing heritage and biodiversity projects as resources and funding allows. WCC will also continue to promote and facilitate heritage-led regeneration in towns and villages across the county.

Chapters 14 and 15 outline the progress made in the delivery of accessible and inclusive social and community facilities and the provision of outdoor recreation amenities throughout the county. Completed projects include Wexford Arts Centre, Westgate Artist's Hub and a Family Resource Centre in Gorey, as well as a number of parks including Min Ryan Park, Gorey Town Park and a new accessible playground at Oylegate. WCC also secured €7 million under the EU and Southern Regional Assembly THRIVE Scheme for the redevelopment of Gorey Market House as a cultural and events space. WCC continue to invest in community infrastructure and to implement the actions contained in the Local Economic and Community Plan. WCC also continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills to ensure that the requisite school facilities are provided in a timely manner to meet the requirements of the existing and future population.

Chapter 16 details the progress on specific objectives relating to the Level 3a Settlements of Bunclody, Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane, Rosslare Strand and Castlebridge.

Finally, Chapter 19 reports on the progress made towards achieving the Renewable Energy target for the County to 2027. County Wexford is on track to achieve its targets with 125.9 MW of installed solar energy and 182.7 MW of installed wind energy. 45 planning permissions have been granted for ground mounted solar with an output of 693 MW.