

Chapter 4 Economic and Tourism Development

4.0 Introduction

Ireland is currently in the midst of a global recession and remains in an economically challenged position with limited growth including cutbacks in public spending and limited private sector investment. This situation is likely to continue for the next number of years and will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the rate of economic development and the pace at which many of the objectives of the Plan can be realised.

In this context, this Chapter looks at the employment structure in Tramore and economic development in terms of industry and enterprise, tourism, retail and office type development. Tramore's economic future requires the timely and adequate provision of land for employment needs including sites at suitable locations for industrial and enterprise uses. In addition, it requires a partnership approach to optimise the opportunities for the Town, particularly in relation to harnessing the tourism and enterprise potential. The Council aims to:

- Ensure the provision of adequate lands to expand the employment sector in Tramore;
- Strengthen the competitiveness of the local economy through balanced land use planning;
- Encourage the expansion of the Town Centre to allow for a mixed and extended range of retail outlets and services; and
- Harness the tourism potential of the Town.

4.1 Employment Structure

Tramore is primarily a dormitory Town with a high percentage of its population travelling to Waterford City and other urban destinations to work. The objective of the Council is to ensure that Tramore can function meaningfully as a satellite Town of Waterford Gateway. This includes offering a mix of employment opportunities relating to enterprise, local services, and tourism sectors. Over the period of the last Local Area Plan, Tramore witnessed some investment in the industrial/enterprise/retail sectors, specifically in the Riverstown Industrial Park and at Ballycarnane. In addition, the local community has been working with the Council and Fáilte Ireland to improve the tourism potential of the Town. There is a need to build on this progress in a sustainable manner.

An analysis of the labour force in Tramore under the 2011 Census is a useful indicator of where the residents of Tramore are employed. Of the 3,601 workers enumerated in Tramore, 2,247 or 63% of the working population are employed outside Tramore. The largest

employment location at present is the Riverstown Industrial Park. The daytime working population (resident and non-resident) of Tramore was 1,375 employees with commerce and trade being the largest source of employment.

4.2 Existing Industrial Development

Riverstown Business Park is a popular business location in Tramore. There is a need to consolidate industrial development around the Riverstown Business Park with the provision of additional industrial zoned lands adjacent to the park.

The last plan zoned substantial lands at Pickardstown, Ballinattin and Tramore Race Course. The purpose of this is to ensure that potential investors can be offered a range of employment sites in Tramore, whilst ensuring that the Town is planned in a sustainable way. Waterford County Council will continue with this policy.

4.3 Future Development Strategy

The Council is committed to harnessing the strengths of Tramore including improvement of the tourism base, sustaining indigenous enterprise and enabling the Town to attract a large scale industry to Waterford and to the Tramore area.

The Council recognises the importance of industrial and commercial development in terms of employment creation and the economic and social development of Tramore. Whilst the Local Area Plan cannot directly influence future industrial and commercial development, it can adopt a “*plan led approach*” by:

- Ensuring that sufficient and appropriate land is zoned and available for industrial and commercial development;
- Providing or facilitating the provision of infrastructure such as roads, drainage, water etc;
- Facilitating start-up/enterprise type development at appropriate locations such as former school sites at Stella Maris & CBS;
- Promoting Tramore as a viable location to work and live; and
- Supporting the development of the tourism product of the Town.



Policy ETD 1

To promote Tramore as a base for significant and appropriate industrial development through the zoning of appropriate industrial lands. Any zoning for industrial development should not be in conflict with the requirements of the Water Framework, Floods, Habitats, Birds, SEA and EIA Directives.

Policy ETD 2

To support the economic development initiatives of relevant agencies such as the IDA and Enterprise Ireland subject to the requirements of the Water Framework, Floods, Habitats, Birds, SEA and EIA Directives.

4.4 Office Development

The Council will actively promote the development of additional office and service uses in Town Centre locations and in appropriate industrial and commercial areas.

It is an objective of the Plan to ensure that there are sufficient zoned lands for commercial/retail and industrial development. It is therefore envisaged that over the coming years the employment structure of Tramore shall change considerably and shall lend itself to the positive reshaping of the Town.

Objective ETD 1

To promote appropriately scaled office type development in suitably zoned locations.

Objective ETD 2

To promote the reuse of vacant buildings and vacant upper floors of existing retail premises for office development where suitable.

Objective ETD 3

To facilitate and promote the provision of a telecommunications network infrastructure to address the socio-economic needs of the population and the various employment sectors.

Objective ETD 4

To work with the community to assess the potential for a community enterprise centre in Tramore.

4.5 Retail Development

Over the lifetime of the previous Plan, the retail floorspace of Tramore increased by approximately 4,000sqm providing for a Tesco & Lidl at Ballycarnane to the north of the

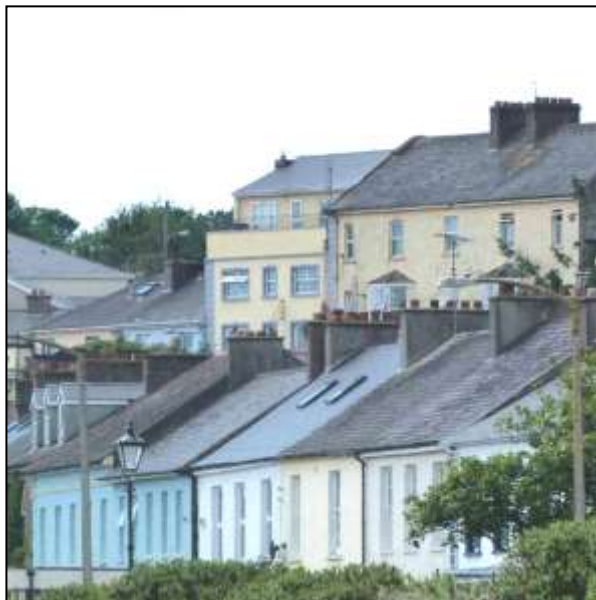
Town Centre. Permission was also granted for a number of smaller retail units at this location. Permission has recently been granted for a discount foodstore in Tramore (adjacent to Supervalu). These recent retail developments have considerably improved the retail offer and choice in Tramore and have reduced the leakage of retail expenditure to nearby Waterford City.

There is a need to consolidate this recent retail investment in the Town and further strengthen the Town Centre to meet the retail needs and aspirations of the local community and visitors. One of the strategic objectives of the Local Area Plan is the development of a strong and vibrant Town Centre for Tramore which meets the needs of the resident population and visitors alike. The extent of Town Centre zoning along the promenade has been scaled back and it is an objective of this Plan to consolidate Town Centre development primarily from Ballycarnane along Main Street, Queen Street and Turkey Road.

Through its zoning objectives, the Planning Authority will only allow appropriate uses within the Town Centre. Furthermore retail development at out of town centre locations will only be permitted where it is deemed not to detract from the vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre.

4.5.1 Townscape Character & Vitality

Tramore Town Centre with its sloping streets and sea views possesses a unique charm, however it is somewhat dislocated from the promenade and main tourist attractions. Improved linkages and signage are required to encourage pedestrian footfall from the promenade area to the Town Centre so as to improve vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre. It is considered that owing to its tourism potential, Tramore has the potential to attract boutique and niche type retailers to the Town Centre. Retail uses and related development that compromise the townscape character or amenity of the Town Centre will be strongly discouraged.



Tramore Streetscape

In terms of enhancing the character of Tramore Town Centre, improvements to the public realm such as street furniture, landscaping and paving will make an important contribution. During the lifetime of this Plan the Council will undertake a Public Realm Enhancement Programme and is to consider streetscaping for pedestrian linkage from the beach area to

around the Town. It is anticipated that the resultant urban form (e.g. articulated streets and other spaces) will facilitate residents and visitors which should enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

It is also important to recognise the role of traditional shop fronts and their contribution to the character of the Town Centre. The Council will encourage the retention of shop fronts of quality and promote the repair of traditional shop fronts. This will not preclude proposals which are contemporary in design, provided that such proposals do not have a negative impact on the surrounding townscape, and such that the designs are sympathetic to the overall character of the Town Centre.

4.5.2 Living Over The Shop

There is significant potential in the reuse of vacant upper floors for residential use, creating the possibility of accommodating an increase in population without displacing existing uses. The provision of accommodation here will also contribute to the viability and vitality of the Town Centre.

4.5.3 County Retail Strategy

The County Retail Strategy is due for review. It is anticipated that this review will commence imminently with a Joint Retail Strategy being prepared for Waterford City and County. A Joint Retail Strategy's primary purpose is to support the statutory plan making process and ensure that adequate provision is made for new retail development in the most appropriate locations and to ensure that excessive provision of retail space is avoided.

Policy ETD 3

To promote and encourage the enhancement and expansion of the retail floorspace and Town Centre functions of Tramore and to develop its competitiveness through a plan led approach, consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.

Policy ETD 4

To address leakage of retail expenditure from the Town and its catchment through the appropriate zoning of land for retail/commercial development.

Policy ETD 5

Promote the reuse and regeneration of derelict land and buildings in Tramore for retail development where appropriate.

Policy ETD 6

To consolidate the traditional Town Centre and to strengthen linkages between the retail areas of the Town and between the promenade and the Town Centre.

Policy ETD 7

To promote the sustainable use of vacant upper floors of Town Centre buildings for residential use.

Policy ETD 8

Require a high standard of design for all new Town Centre development and the refurbishment of existing properties, taking account of the natural and built heritage of the Town to ensure developments enhance and respect the character and setting of Tramore.

Policy ETD 9

The Council shall have regard to the County Retail Strategy (or any revision of same), the Retail Planning Guidelines and accompanying Retail Design Manual (2012) when guiding retail development in Tramore.

Objective ETD 5

To undertake a Public Realm Enhancement Programme to include streetscaping and linking of the Main Street/Town Centre and sights of interest.

4.6 Tourism

Tramore has strong tourism potential and a long standing reputation as the premier seaside resort of the south east. Indeed, the long sandy beach surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean is a tremendous asset to the Town. However, sole dependency on the beach as Tramore's tourism product limits the tourism potential of the area. To remain as an attractive tourist destination Tramore shall have to provide the range of services and facilities that holidaymakers now expect. Such facilities could include a high quality 5 star hotel and associated conference centre, a range of all weather activities, a variety of quality restaurants and holiday packages. It is an objective of this Plan to facilitate and guide the development of additional attractions within the Plan area in order to diversify the tourism product and increase tourism generated expenditure in the Town.



Tramore Coastline

Over recent years, Waterford County Council, working with Tramore Tourism and Fáilte Ireland has promoted Tramore as a family friendly resort. The Council will continue to support this policy, however there is significant scope to develop Tramore as a resort for a range of interests, including activity tourism, interpretation of the natural and built heritage and marine tourism.

Tramore has an extensive tourism product that has been largely unexploited. Tramore offers great opportunities for walking tours, surfing, golfing holidays, horse riding etc. The close proximity to Waterford Airport and Waterford City is an advantage to the Town as it provides for good transport networks and linkages making Tramore an accessible location within the South East Region.



Waterford County Council will work with the tourist industry and the local community to improve the experience of visitors to Tramore. This will focus on:

- Supporting investment in the range of tourist activities, products and services;
- Improved interpretation of Tramore;
- Development of the amenities in Tramore including the Town Park, the gardens at Tramore House and the services provided at the Coast Guard Station; and
- Linking Tramore with the tourist attractions in the area and region, including the Copper Coast UNESCO Geopark, and joint marketing with Waterford City.

4.6.1 Activities



Tramore offers a wide range of tourist activities to seasonal visitors. The greatest attraction to Tramore is undoubtedly the long sandy strand which is also used for water based activity sports such as surfing and kite surfing. Tramore Race Course offers an exceptional recreational facility within the Town, with the Tramore Races attracting large numbers during the summer race week in August. Tramore also boasts its own 18 hole golf course.

It is anticipated that the development of a town park and playground around the boating lake area will be undertaken during the lifetime of the Plan. This will

provide a new amenity area adjacent to the existing promenade. The development of the proposed Japanese Gardens at Tramore House should also provide an additional focal attraction point in the Town.

The establishment of a National Surf Lifeguard Training Centre in Tramore will further develop the water safety/activity training sectors and provide a base for year round beach related activities.

Permission has recently been granted for an indoor skate park, retail units and a café/bar at the former Hydro site on the eastern end of the Promenade. This development should enhance and compliment the water and skate-boarding activities that currently take place in Tramore.

4.6.2 Tourism Accommodation

The main form of accommodation in Tramore is holiday home/caravan park accommodation to serve the huge influx of seasonal visitors. There are 5 hotels within Tramore (3 of which are currently closed) and these cater mainly for the holidaymakers in the vicinity of the beach area.

The development of a good quality hotel in Tramore would assist efforts to promote Tramore as a family friendly, year round tourist destination. The provision of a conference centre within the Town could also attract large numbers of business people and may create a spin off effect for the Town in general.

4.6.3 Promotion and Marketing

The need to promote Tramore as more than solely a seaside resort is imperative to its future success. Exclusive dependency on the attractive beach is not conducive to the expansion of a tourism product for the Town. Promotion and marketing are core components to the future development of Tramore as a quality tourist and activity location.



The Doneraile Walk

It is considered that in order to capitalise on tourism potential in Tramore the following areas should be explored as part of delivering a more diversified tourism product in the Town:

- Promotion of sustainable heritage tourism, appropriate walking trails and sustainable marine tourism;
- Improved promotion and marketing of Tramore as a surfing destination in tandem with the National Surf Lifeguard Training Centre, (particularly as ‘best in class’ novice surfer location);
- Promotion of new activities, attractions and festivals, (e.g. Surfing Festival & Festival of the Sea);
- Build upon the physical setting and history of Tramore as the backdrop for spa retreat type holidays, walking holidays and weekend breaks;
- Improved public realm creating a café culture supporting boutique and niche style retailing in the Town Centre; and
- Improved linkages to the Town Centre from the Promenade.

Policy ETD 10

To continue to work with relevant tourist and community bodies to promote and support the extension and diversification of the range of sustainable tourist facilities and attractions in Tramore.

Policy ETD 11

To support the diversification of a range of a tourist facilities and attractions through the area, while protecting the surrounding natural environment of Tramore.

Objective ETD 6

To encourage the establishment of a 5 star hotel with an associated leisure facility and conference centre within the Town to provide up market accommodation and to serve the needs of year round visitors.

Objective ETD 7

To encourage a mixture of sustainable tourist related uses with a specific focus on year round activities.

Objective ETD 8

To continue to maintain Blue Flag status for Tramore beach and to monitor water quality to achieve this aim.

Objective ETD 9

To investigate the feasibility of extending the promenade eastwards subject to the availability of resources and likely environmental impacts.

Objective ETD 10

To support the establishment of a range of sustainable and appropriate water based tourism activities in Tramore subject to the requirements of the Water Framework, Floods, Habitats, Birds, SEA and EIA Directives.

Objective ETD 11

It is an objective of the Council that a masterplan shall be prepared for development/redevelopment of the entire promenade and seafront having regard to the development of the new town park and permitted redevelopment of the former Hydro site.