

PART 1 - PREFACE TO THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MANAGING WASTE IN LIMERICK/CLARE/KERRY

A high quality environment is indicated by clean water, fresh air and clean soil, by the level of noise and the quality of light – all of these natural resources come under pressure in a society that is increasingly concerned with cycles of production and consumption, mobility, and economic expansion.

Managing waste in a *sustainable* manner is one of the key challenges for the Region, and one in which every citizen has a role to play. How we manage our waste says a lot about how highly we value our environment. There is consensus that we should minimise impact on the environment; this can be achieved by working to minimise the amount of waste we generate, and managing the waste we do create in the best manner possible.

Between 1996 and 1999 the counties of Limerick/Clare/Kerry prepared separate Waste Management Strategy Studies, which set out to replace a system that relied on landfill disposal with a new approach based on integrated waste management. In 1998/99 the four Local Authorities in the Region, Limerick County Council, Clare County Council, Limerick City Council and Kerry County Council, agreed to jointly prepare a Regional Waste Management Plan. The first Regional Waste Management Plan was adopted in 2001. The Local Authorities agreed to review the Plan in June 2004, and the first formal Review of the Plan has taken place during 2004-2006.

In the intervening period significant progress has been made throughout the Region, in particular the increased levels of recycling by all householders and businesses. Nevertheless, many elements of the Plan remain to be fully delivered. Further effort is required in the challenge to prevent, minimise and reduce waste. There are still gaps in the collection and recycling systems. Delivery of infrastructure to achieve energy recovery and waste disposal capacity is behind schedule. This underlines the need for urgent and co-ordinated action to continue to improve waste management across the Region in the years ahead.

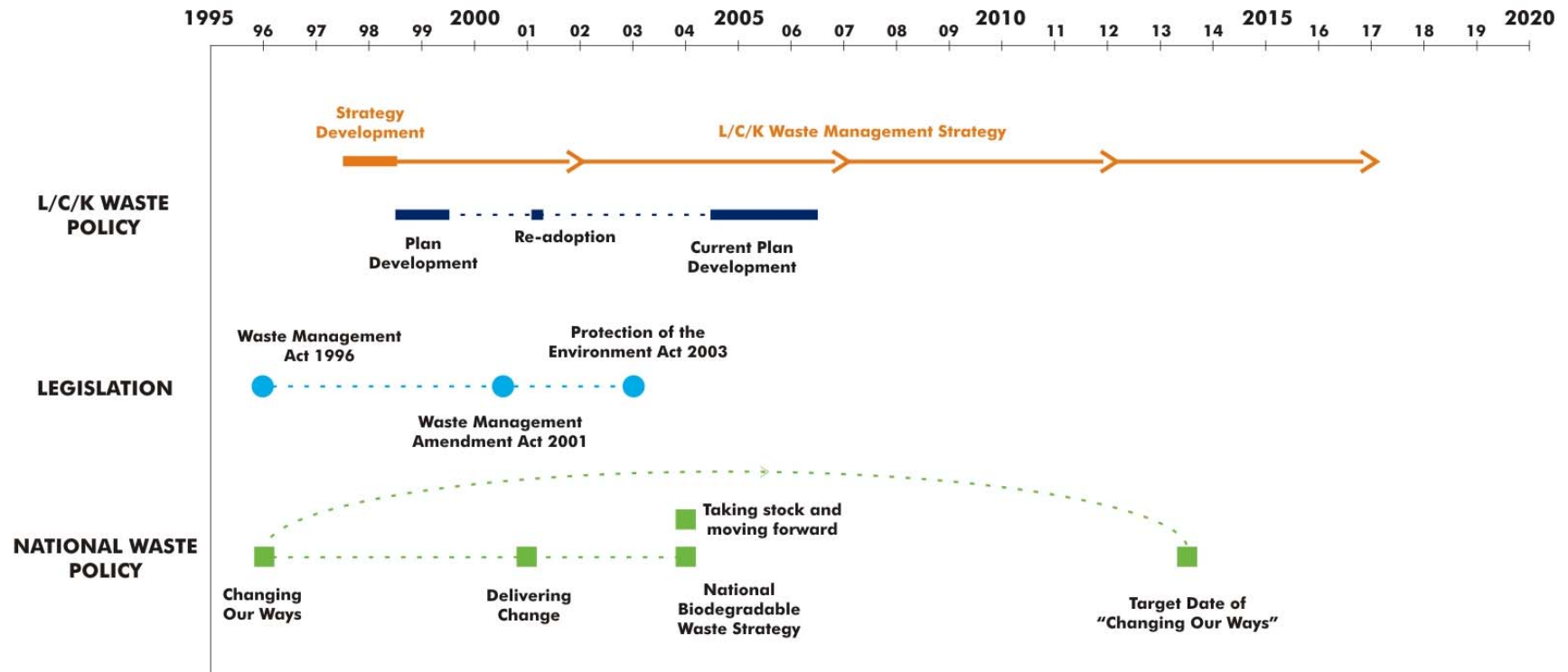
This Waste Management Plan sets out a policy to implement a balanced, sustainable and affordable waste management system in the Region.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this Plan is to answer a number of simple questions as follows:

- **Where are we now?** - Detail current performance in waste management and outline areas for improvement
- **What are our options?** - Consider recent and future developments in waste management and how the Region can benefit from these
- **Where are we going?** - Outline the future strategy for managing waste in the Region, detailing the policies and objectives to be pursued
- **How will we get there?** - Set out the roles and responsibilities in Plan Implementation, including those of the Local Authority and the private waste management sector, as well as the means of financing the strategy
- **How will we monitor progress?** - Set targets for the future and identify the mechanisms by which these will be monitored.

Figure 1.1 Overview of Limerick/Clare/Kerry Waste Policy Development



Overview of Limerick/Clare/Kerry Waste Policy Development

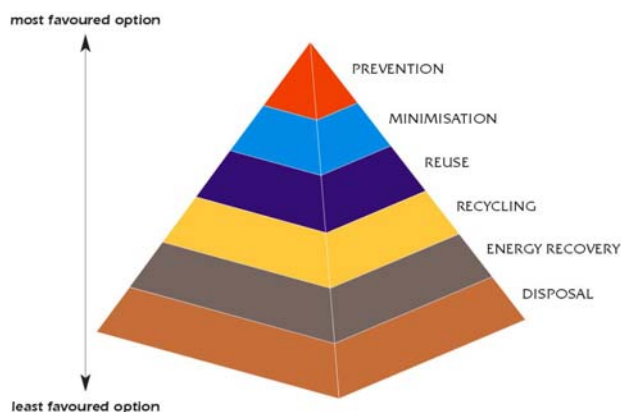
1.3 CONTEXT OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Plan can be viewed in two overlapping contexts: the waste management policy context and the planning and development context, see Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Waste Management Context

In terms of Waste Management Policy, the Plan falls into a hierarchy of policy handed down from EU and National Level, and complies with national legislation on Waste Management Plans.

EU waste management policy is set out in a series of Directives and more recently 'Thematic Strategies'. The EU Landfill Directive of 1999 sets the agenda for much of the changes in municipal waste management. Directives such as the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive and the End Of Life Vehicle Directive require a new producer responsibility approach to be implemented across all Member States. Much of the EU policy can be conveniently abbreviated by the 'waste management hierarchy' picture:



Irish Waste Management Policy has been set out in a series of Policy Statements, starting with *Changing Our Ways* in 1998, which has been expanded and updated by *Delivering Change* (2002) and *Taking Stock and Moving Forward* (2004). *The National Biodegradable Waste Strategy* of 2006 also sets new goals and objectives for municipal waste management. It is these policies that provide the overall waste planning framework, supporting the Regional waste management approach and other key concepts such as implementation of the 'polluter pays principle'

and the 'producer responsibility' framework for several key waste streams.

The governing legislation for waste is provided by the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended by the Waste Management Amendment Act 2001, and the Protection of the Environment Act, 2003. The 1996 Act was brought into effect by the making of a series of Regulations, covering aspects such as waste collection, authorisation of waste facilities, transfrontier shipment of waste and specific waste streams such as packaging and farm plastics. The format and content of Plans is governed by the Waste Management (Planning) Regulations 1997.

Planning and Development Context












The National Spatial Strategy sets out the overall strategic framework for Ireland's development over the period 2002-2020. Development needs to be co-ordinated at a Regional level, and a series of 'Regional Planning Guidelines' (RPGs) have been prepared.

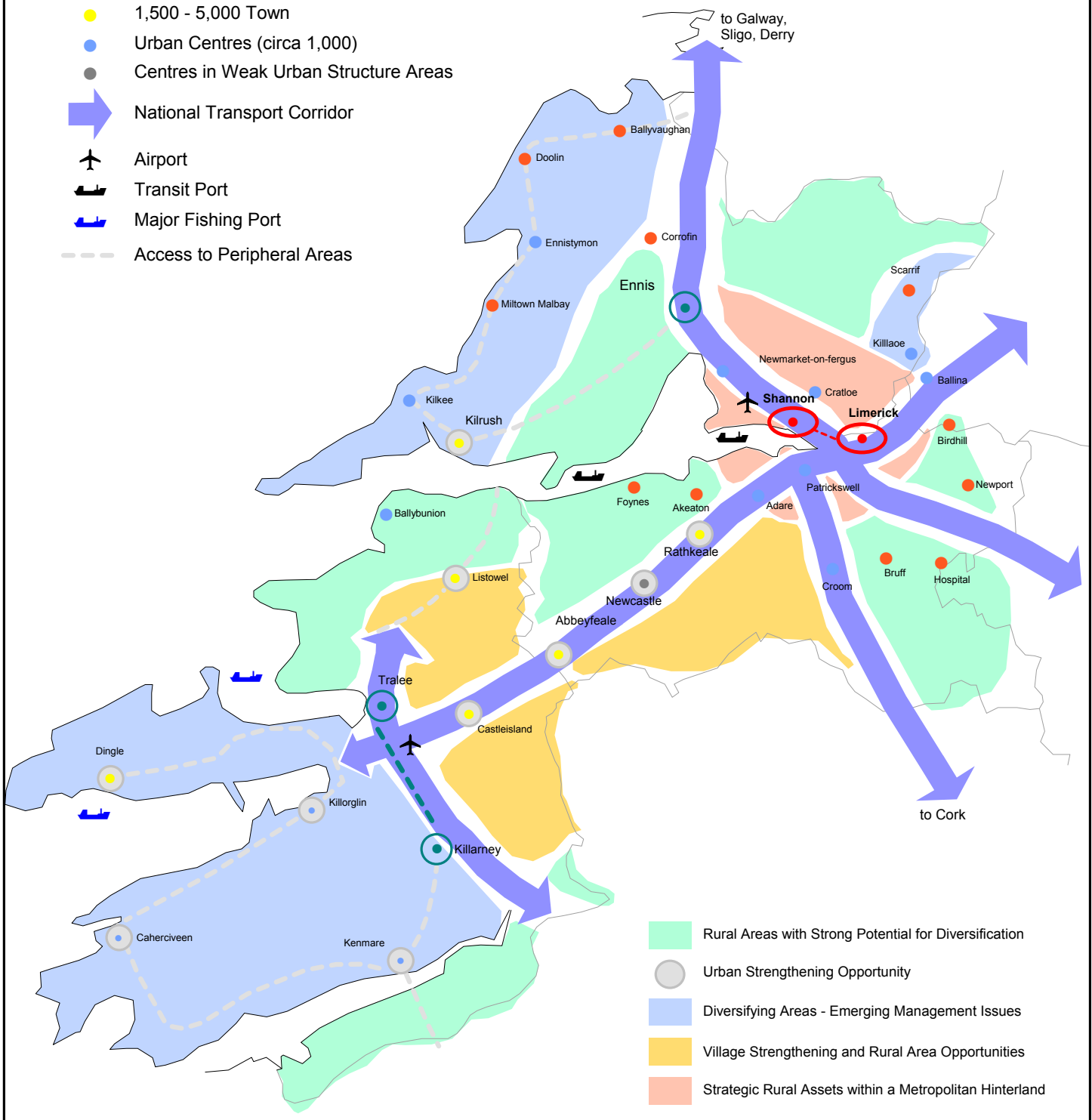
These Guidelines inform and guide Regional development including key infrastructural considerations, setting the overall objectives for the Region and helping to shape the City and County Development Plans of individual Local Authorities. The City and County Development Plans have also been taken into account, and regard has been had to the following strategies and plans:






- Limerick City Development Plan 2004-2010
- Limerick County Development Plan 2005-2011
- Clare County Development Plan 2005-2011
- Kerry County Development Plan 2003-2009
- National Climate Change Strategy 2000
- National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (EPA) 2001
- The Seven EU 'Thematic Strategies' (see next Section).

The Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region is split between the Mid-West (Limerick City and County and County Clare) and South West (County Kerry) Regional Planning Guidelines. **Map 1** outlines the Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region as set out in these Regional Planning Guidelines.

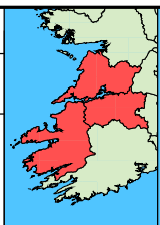
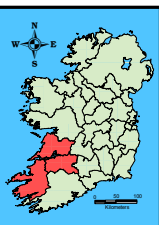


The Guidelines make a number of specific recommendations in terms of waste management, namely:

-  Gateway
-  Hub
-  < 5,000 Town
-  1,500 - 5,000 Town
-  Urban Centres (circa 1,000)
-  Centres in Weak Urban Structure Areas
-  National Transport Corridor
-  Airport
-  Transit Port
-  Major Fishing Port
-  Access to Peripheral Areas



-  Rural Areas with Strong Potential for Diversification
-  Urban Strengthening Opportunity
-  Diversifying Areas - Emerging Management Issues
-  Village Strengthening and Rural Area Opportunities
-  Strategic Rural Assets within a Metropolitan Hinterland



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- *Investment in waste infrastructure and measures to reduce waste generation is critical to economic growth*
- *Investment in an integrated approach to the provision of waste management infrastructure must continue*
- *Energy recovery must be built into the system along with polluter pays, proximity, precautionary and shared responsibility principles.*

The Regional Waste Management Plan therefore aims to fit into the RPG framework and to satisfy this element of the overall spatial planning policy of the Region.

The primary purpose of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* is to establish a legal framework within which the planning system can operate efficiently. In relation to waste management, the *Planning and Development Act 2000* altered some elements of Section 98 of the EPA Act 1992 to further encourage sustainable development and environmental protection.

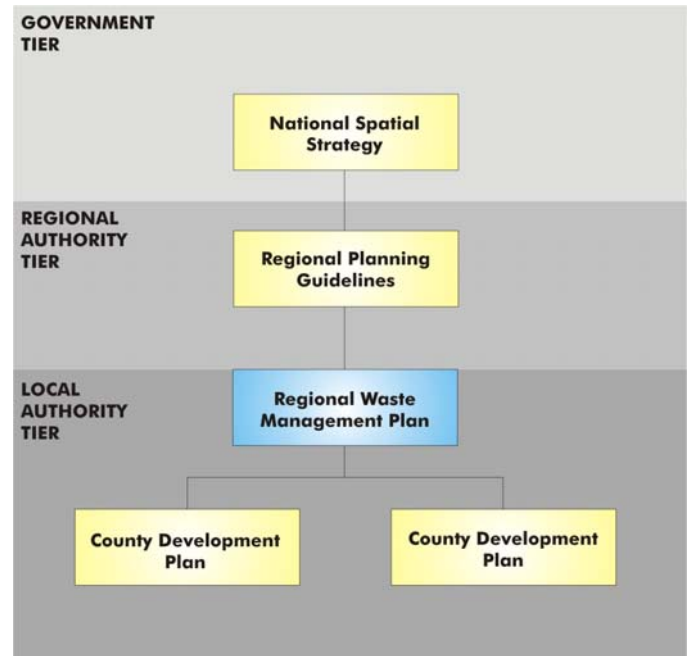
In terms of Planning and Development Policy, under the *Protection of the Environment Act 2003* ('the Act') the Waste Management Plan plays a significant role in terms of future development of waste infrastructure. The Act set out to redress some uncertainties that had emerged in a range of recent environmental legislation, which includes changes to the *Planning and Development Act 2000* and the *Waste Management Acts 1996-2001*. Previous uncertainties had led to planning decisions which highlighted barriers to the development of waste management infrastructure.

Section 26 of the Act makes the review, variation or replacement of a Waste Management Plan an executive function of the city or county manager, rather than a reserved function of the elected members. Policies in the Waste Management Plan become de-facto planning policies, and in cases where conflicting objectives are found, the Waste Management Plan effectively supersedes the County/City Development Plan. This places extra importance on setting clear policies within the Waste Management Plan.

Figure 1.2 illustrates the current planning framework in Ireland. Whilst the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning

Guidelines are not binding in law, this Waste Management Plan has where appropriate taken the relevant policies and objectives into account.

Figure 1.2 Planning Contexts



1.4 EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The EU Sixth Environment Action Programme sets out objectives in the shape of Europe's future environment at the start of the 21st century. This vision "Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice" has the following aims.

- To decouple generation of waste from economic growth by establishing more sustainable consumption patterns
- Waste generated should present very low risks to the environment and our health
- We should maximise recycling and bring "final disposal to an absolute minimum"
- Waste should be treated as close as possible to where it is generated ("proximity principle").

A number of Thematic Strategies were proposed to deal with the environmental challenge of waste. The most advanced of these currently is the Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste. Among

the many issues discussed were the development of material based recycling targets in articulation with end-of-life products based targets, the use of economic instruments (e.g. plastic bag tax in Ireland) and to ensure that recycling is both easy and clean to maximise the resource value of waste.

In 2000 the Lisbon Strategy set out an ambitious agenda of economic and social reforms to create a highly dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy. In 2001 a broad Strategy for Sustainable Development was founded by the European Council in Gothenburg and in 2002 its external dimension was defined in Barcelona ahead of the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development. On 9th February 2005 the EU Commission presented a Communication in the 2005 Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The Sustainable Development Strategy and the Lisbon Strategy share the same ultimate goal, namely to improve welfare and living conditions in a sustainable way for present and future generations.

Among the issues of relevance to the Regional Waste Management Plans in the 2005 Review of the Sustainable Development Strategy are the following: -

- Managing our natural resource – protecting our water, air and land from threats to our biodiversity
- Protecting public health and environment
- Minimising poverty and social exclusion
- Tackling priority waste streams setting targets and monitoring performance
- Identifying policies to encourage creation of markets.

Opportunities exist to maximise waste prevention and recycling in partnership with community networks to maximise resource recovery and provide employment thus minimising social exclusion. To maximise recycling markets at home, the pursuance of “green procurement policies” need to be encouraged in the Plan to help create sustainable markets. We also need more recycling centres to collect household commercial and selective industrial waste. (e.g. construction/demolition, electronic, packaging and end of life bulky items).