### G3: Visitor Experience Enhancement – Actions

#### Tourism Development

In 2013, Kilkenny achieved recognition as the *Best Tourist Town in Ireland*, one of the *Friendliest Cities in Europe*, the *Cleanest Business Town* and the best *Gathering Festival*. All of this reinforces the sector as a major revenue generator for the local economy of very great regional significance within the sector.

In 2011 the South-East attracted approximately 14% of domestic tourism. Kilkenny has traditionally benefited from the domestic tourism market, particularly for short visits and this market is likely to become increasingly important.

The LECP will support the development of sustainable tourism as an essential component of the local economy. This will be achieved through co-operation between Fáilte Ireland, Kilkenny County Council, Kilkenny Tourism, the LEADER Implementer and neighbouring counties in the South East Region.

The attributes for tourism in the county include the nature conservation areas, parks, public realm open spaces, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland and the built environment of the villages, towns and urban areas. In this context, the LECP is designed to ensure that sustainable tourism development should not only increase revenue for the sector, but should also deliver on conservation, environmental and social goals.

The LECP provides for actions that will sustainably increase the volume of visitors, revenue per visitor, their average length of stay and seasonal spread; whilst protecting the built heritage and green infrastructure that form the resources on which the industry is based.

The LECP will support the implementation of the Strategic Marketing Plan for Kilkenny Tourism, the Fáilte Ireland Destination South East, and the Destination Kilkenny Development Strategies.

#### G3: Actions Summary

**A21:** Undertake an analysis of business tourism potential in Co. Kilkenny with reference to conferences, business and major tourism entry points (such as Rosslare Port and Waterford Regional Airport), marketing and PR and Ireland’s Ancient East campaign. This action will closely link with other regionally-focused actions.

**A22:** Improve the visitor experience and business capability of outdoor activity providers active in tourism. Initiatives to include analysis of the potential for: linking activity hubs and amenities; and the development of the County’s river assets for fishing, boating and blueway trails.

**A23:** Undertake an Asset Mapping exercise across the county to develop: area based specific tourism strategies. This will also include initiatives focused on delivering a quality international tourism experience around the Ireland Ancient East Brand. In particular, the potential to develop international “stand-out” products based on Kilkenny’s comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage. This action will include the development of the Medieval Mile Museum as a potential *‘hero site’* within *Ireland’s Ancient East*.

**A24:** Continue development of the ‘Medieval Mile' and develop an action plan that links complementary visitor attractions across the county aimed at prolonging and enhancing the visitor experience.

**A25:** Design a county marketing and communications strategy to include activities around the design and distribution of marketing materials, cluster initiatives, signposting and historical and cultural information signs. This action is aimed at increasing visitor numbers, sustaining the quality of the visitor experience and prolonging the visitor's stay in the county. This action will also include maximising the potential of digital marketing, and use of tourism apps, video promotion and social media.

**A26:** Develop a strategy for Festivals as an economic driver, building on the very successful range of existing festivals programmed throughout the year in County Kilkenny.

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| **High-Level Goal** | **High-Level Outcome** | **Objective** | **Co-Ordinating Body** | **Key Partner Organisations** | **Timeframe** | **Project Milestones** | **Actions** |
| **G3:** Visitor Experience Enhancement | The goal will encourage the spread of the sectoral impact across the county beyond the established honey-pots.  It will also attract FDI and business start-ups in the county by reinforcing a positive image encompassing history, culture and the natural and built environment. | **O3:** Support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential. | KCC  KLEO | Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Kilkenny Tourism | 2016-2017 | Analysis Completed and Action plan agreed, locally and regionally focused. | **A21:** Undertake an analysis of business tourism potential in Co. Kilkenny with reference to conferences, business and major tourism entry points (such as Rosslare Port and Waterford Regional Airport), marketing and PR and Ireland’s Ancient East campaign. This action will closely link with other regionally-focused actions. |
| Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Kilkenny Tourism | 2016-2019 | Action plan agreed. | **A22:** Improve the visitor experience and business capability of outdoor activity providers active in tourism. Initiatives to include analysis of the potential for: linking activity hubs and amenities; and the development of the County’s river assets for fishing, boating and blueway trails. |
| Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; | 2016-2017 | Asset mapping complete.  Strategy established. | **A23:** Undertake an Asset Mapping exercise across the county to develop: area based specific tourism strategies. This will also include initiatives focused on delivering a quality international tourism experience around the Ireland Ancient East Brand. In particular, the potential to develop international “stand-out” products based on Kilkenny’s comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage. |
| Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Heritage Council | 2016-2017 | Phased Action Plan agreed. | **A24:** Continue development of the *‘Medieval Mile'* and develop an action plan that links complementary visitor attractions across the county aimed at prolonging and enhancing the visitor experience. |
| Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism; Heritage Council; Connect Ireland; IDA | 2016-2019 | Strategic Plan agreed. | **A25:** Design a county marketing and communications strategy to include activities around the design and distribution of marketing materials, cluster initiatives, signposting and historical and cultural information signs. This action is aimed at increasing visitor numbers, sustaining the quality of the visitor experience and prolonging the visitor's stay in the county. This action will also include maximising the potential of digital marketing, and use of tourism apps, video promotion and social media. |
|  |  |  |  | Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Failte Ireland; Kilkenny Tourism | 2016-18 | Strategy established. | **A26:** Develop a strategy for Festivals as an economic driver, building on the very successful range of existing festivals programmed throughout the year in County Kilkenny. |