### G5: Rural Economy Development – Actions

Kilkenny LECP aims to increase the resilience of the rural economy.

The impact of the economic recession has triggered many changes in rural town and village settings. It has resulted in the creation of empty retail spaces, eroding the attractiveness of villages. This impact has been further exacerbated by the changes that have occurred in the nature of retail activity, increasing the perception of remoteness, and the impact of dormitory lifestyles.

#### Rural Economy

The development of resilient local economies will be the point of focus. This approach references the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) Report *‘Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy’* noting that rural communities have experienced the most negative impacts of the current economic crisis due to their heavy reliance on declining employment sectors.

Whilst Kilkenny generally benefits from its strategic location and relatively easy access to centres of population, its rural settlements are placed under stress by the conflicting desirability of living in a rural location, and the reducing local employment opportunity. This rural reality creates an environmentally unsustainable situation, dimensions of which are addressed through the development of more resilient and self-sufficient local communities.

#### G5: Actions Summary

**A31:** Prepare and implement a Local Development Strategy for the next LEADER Rural Development Programme.

**A32:** Work with local businesses and representative organisations to support the regeneration/development of rural towns and areas by developing a strategic development plan for each key town centre (incorporating social and community development aspects and hinterland associations). These will include proposals to enhance the consumer experience and attractiveness of town centres and villages for shopping and visiting.

**A33:** Support the development of rural enterprise and diversification initiatives.

**A34:** Support the development of an agri-food-science network and identify and support employment creation potential.

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| **High-Level Goal** | **High-Level Outcome** | **Objective** | **Co-Ordinating Body** | **Key Partner Organisations** | **Timeframe** | **Project Milestones** | **Actions** |
| **G5:** Rural Economy Development | Focus on rural areas that are in decline to increase the level of economic activity and build sustainability. | **O5:** Increase economic activity and build sustainability into the rural economy. | KCC  KLEO | Kilkenny Leader Partnership | 2015-2016 | Publication of LDS Strategy. | **A31:** Prepare and implement a Local Development Strategy for the next LEADER Rural Development Programme. |
| Kilkenny Leader Partnership (**L**); Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce; Tidy Towns Groups | 2016-2019 | No. of area development plans produced.  Engagement of cross section of communities. | **A32:** Work with local businesses and representative organisations to support the regeneration/development of rural towns and areas by developing a strategic development plan for each key town centre (incorporating social and community development aspects and hinterland associations). These will include proposals to enhance the consumer experience and attractiveness of town centres and villages for shopping and visiting. |
| Kilkenny Leader Partnership (**L**); Teagasc; EI | 2016-2021 | No. of initiatives supported. | **A33:** Support the development of rural enterprise and diversification initiatives. |
| Kilkenny Leader Partnership; Teagasc; Kildalton College; Bord Bia | 2016-2019 | Establishment of network.  Action plan agreed.  No of jobs created. | **A34:** Support the development of an agri-food-science network and identify and support employment creation potential. |