

2012

Economic Development Strategy for South Dublin County



South Dublin County Economic Development Strategy

1.0 Section 1: Introduction

1.1 This report sets out a coherent strategy for the maintenance and development of enterprise and employment in South Dublin County. This Council is committed to supporting the creation and retention of jobs in South Dublin County. The development of this economic strategy reflects the strengths and opportunities that exist in the County. Given the current economic climate a key consideration in framing this strategy is to make best use of the existing infrastructure and development potential within the County and the support of job creation and retention.

The delivery of this strategy will require a partnership approach between the public sector, private sector and local communities. Cooperation between these partners is critical to the successful implementation of this strategy.



1.2 This strategy is clearly framed against a severe economic downturn. The main economic challenges facing the County are:

- (a) the maintenance and improvement of a sustainable economic base
- (b) the retention of existing jobs
- (c) the creation of new employment opportunities.

In facing these challenges, the need to balance our natural environment with sustainable and appropriate development through the promotion of an economy that is adaptable and resilient to change, must be taken into consideration.

1.3 It is acknowledged that South Dublin County is not alone in facing significant economic challenges. This strategy sets a clear context for promoting economic development that is centred on a series of unique characteristics and opportunities that this County possesses.

1.4 The strategy has been informed by the policies and decisions of the elected members of South Dublin County Council and:

- A review of relevant national, regional and local plans and policies including the following:
 - *Action Plan for Jobs, 2012*, (Department Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)
 - *Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally, 2012* (Local Government Enterprise and Jobs Draft Strategy)
 - *A Guide to: Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government* (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012)
 - *South Dublin County Development Plan 2010-2016*
 - *An Integrated Economic Development Strategy for South Dublin County, Review, September 2010* (County Development Board).
- Consideration of the opportunities and challenges facing the promotion of economic development in South Dublin County.
- Identifying the unique and particular characteristics that support ongoing economic development in the County.
- The views of local business (gained through relationships with enterprise organisations (such as the CEB), business support



agencies (such as South Dublin Chamber¹) and the Sustaining and Developing Business Programme).

- 1.5 In considering how best to develop an economic strategy, making use of existing resources is key. Unique to South Dublin County are a series of particular areas of existing economic development. Each one has very distinct economic characteristics that allow for the identification of economic opportunity and action. The identification of these key areas allows for a structured context for the promotion of economic development in the County.
- 1.6 While each area has a spatial context, the purpose of these character areas is more to do with common economic characteristics. They provide opportunities to build on existing infrastructure that allows for future development potential. The five areas identified are:

A. Technology Crescent – based on Citywest Business Campus and Grange Castle Business Park. This is an area of significant inward investment and accommodates some of the largest industrial facilities in the County. It is an area with emergent bio-pharma and data centre clusters.

B. Tallaght as an Integrated Town Centre – this area is the location for significant developments such as the Institute of Technology Tallaght, the Square shopping centre and Tallaght Hospital. Tallaght is also the County town for South Dublin County and has significant potential for future development.

C. LUAS Corridor – running through the heart of the County. This area is centred on lands to the east of the M50 and the Cookstown area. This area is the location for



¹ To clarify, South Dublin Chamber refers to the County Chamber of Commerce.

significant economic development that is at present facing issues of evolutionary renewal including the matter of how best to utilise existing vacant buildings. In short, the area is in need of revitalisation and could be considered as a location for large scale economic development

D. Rail Corridor – running through the northern part of the County is the main rail line serving the south and west of the country. This important piece of infrastructure has been recently upgraded and significantly increased in capacity. This area has significant land holdings earmarked for future development as part of a national development designation.

E. Promotion of Villages – South Dublin County has a range of towns and villages, each with its unique character. They provide a diverse range of services which can



be transformed into economic opportunities, particularly in relation to the niche retail area, tourism, local produce, and events / festivals. A particular opportunity exists in the development of local events to further build on the existing niche retailing and services in these villages.

1.7 Running in conjunction with these character areas, the strategy sets out a number of cross-cutting themes. These are as follows:

- **Sustaining and Developing Business** – Revitalising and supporting local business and encouraging enterprise.
- **Further Education and Training** – Supporting opportunities for training and continuing education in the context of the changing nature

of work.

- **The Green Economy** – Promoting the Green Economy, including renewable energy, sustainable transport and green tourism.

The actions resulting from these cross-cutting themes need to be viewed in the context of the character area opportunities.

1.8 In short, this strategy is laid out as follows:

- A short profile of the County is set out, identifying the key economic strengths and challenges facing the County.

- Particular areas for economic development are outlined based on infrastructure and policy support that South Dublin County has pursued since its inception. This section will set out the characteristics for each area, outline the opportunities for economic development and identify resulting actions.



- Key cross-cutting-themes are set out as outlined above.
- A series of broad actions that flow from the strategy are identified for each section.
- An Action Plan containing a detailed series of actions under the heading of each broad action, has been prepared.

2.0 Section 2: Profile and Characteristics of South Dublin County

- 2.1 The administrative area of South Dublin County is 223 sq. kilometres in extent and it is located approximately 16 kilometres south-west of Dublin City Centre. The County extends from the River Liffey in the north to the Dublin Mountains in the south and includes urban centres such as Brittas, Clondalkin, Edmondstown, Lucan, Newcastle, Palmerston, Rathcoole, Rathfarnham, Rockbrook, Saggart, Tallaght and Templeogue.
- 2.2 In the 2011 Census, the population of South Dublin County was recorded as 265,205 persons. This is an increase of 7.4 % on the population in 2006.
- 2.3 The County has a number of strengths that will continue to give it a competitive edge when it comes to doing business and promoting economic development. These are set out below.

2.4 Location

2.4.1 South Dublin County Council is an integral part of the metropolitan area of Dublin. This is a core economic strength. Significant numbers of residents commute to work in the city centre and other parts of the Metropolitan Area. Conversely, job creation in the County provides opportunities for residents of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) to commute to work in the County.



2.4.2 The edge-of-city location of the County and the availability of large brownfield and greenfield landholdings give the ability to provide opportunities and play host to a variety of uses that could not easily be accommodated in an urban area.

2.5 Transport

- 2.5.1 South Dublin County is well situated to access the national road network. The N7 (serving the South), N4 (serving the West) and N81 (serving the South East) all intersect with the M50 in the east of the County, which in turn gives access to other arterial routes from Dublin to other parts of the country.
- 2.5.2 The section of the Kildare route railway line (to Cork/Limerick/Galway) which runs through the County has been upgraded to provide a high quality commuter service to the city centre. The LUAS Red Line serves areas between Tallaght and the city centre and the recently opened extension serves residential communities in Fortunestown and Saggart and employees in the Citywest business park.
- 2.5.3 Smart travel projects to encourage sustainable alternatives to car travel are being piloted in homes, schools and workplaces in Lucan and Clondalkin.
- 2.5.4 The local permeability projects seek to encourage walking and cycling by improving access from residential areas to schools, shops, community and leisure facilities, etc. through the identification and improvement of established but informal walking and cycling routes.

2.6 Economic Base of the County

- 2.6.1 The County has a strong and diverse economic base that is well connected both to the rest of the country and wider international markets. Several blue chip national and multi-national corporations are located in the Grange Castle Business



Park and Citywest Business Campus including Takeda, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and SAP. Many large Irish companies are also represented in the

County including Kerry Foods, IAWS, and Independent News and Media.

2.6.2 Tallaght, the County Town, plays host to a number of major institutions which are also large employers. In addition to providing valuable services to residents and workers, the presence of these institutions also adds a critical mass to the Tallaght Town Centre, reinforcing its position as County Town.

- Tallaght Hospital (The Adelaide and Meath Hospital Dublin, incorporating the National Children's Hospital and St. Loman's) provides child-health, adult, psychiatric and age-related healthcare on one site. It is a provider of local, regional and national specialities. There are 625 beds in the hospital and almost 3,000 people are employed there. It is one of the two main adult teaching hospitals of Trinity College.
- Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT Dublin) is the only higher education institution in South Dublin County. The student population of the Institute is over 4,600 (full-time and part-time). ITT Dublin attracts students from a wide area of Greater Dublin and surrounding counties and promotes itself as the Institute of choice for students in the immediate catchment areas of Tallaght and Clondalkin.
- South Dublin County Council's headquarters is located at County Hall, Tallaght.
- The head office of County Dublin VEC is located in Tallaght town centre.

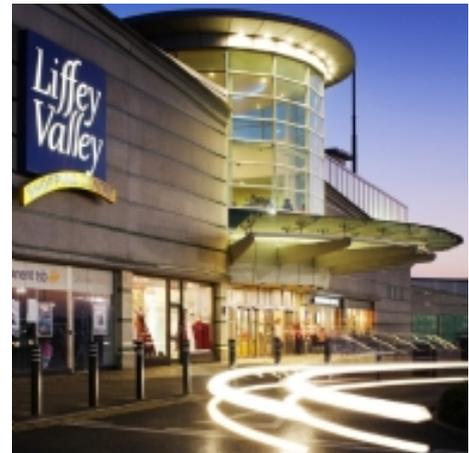


2.6.3 There are 39 industrial estates and 46 business parks accounting for approximately 2,200 firms. Large employment centres are located in 16 major industrial estates and 2 international business parks at Grange Castle

and Citywest. The National Digital Park is situated in the Citywest Campus.

2.6.4 To date the key economic sectors in the County are bio pharma, information technology, communications, electronics, hospitality, transport, internationally traded services and prepared food.

2.6.5 Retailing centres in the County such as The Square in Tallaght, Liffey Valley Centre in Quarryvale, the Mill Centre in Clondalkin, Rathfarnham Shopping Centre, Fortunestown Shopping Centre and Lucan Shopping Centre are significant sources of economic activity and employment and provide opportunity for further development and employment.



2.6.6 Analysis of rates data for 2011 shows 6,684 business premises in the County. By far the largest category is industrial uses which accounts for 3,475 units. The second largest sector is retail which comprises 1,602 units. This is followed by office with 938 units.

2.7 Natural Amenities and Cultural Opportunities

2.7.1 South Dublin County has a variety of natural amenities including the Liffey and Dodder River Valleys, the Grand Canal and the expansive mountain



area in the south. In the context of building on and developing our tourism infrastructure and facilities there is great potential for further exploitation of these resources. In addition to providing spectacular natural settings, our natural amenities provide great recreational opportunities for those who live

and work in the County and tourism opportunities for visitors. There is also an extensive network of parks and green spaces including regional parks with facilities such as children's play areas. Quality of life is recognised as an important element in attracting and sustaining employment opportunities.

2.7.2 Feasibility studies are due to commence on several heritage projects including a walking and heritage trail in the Slade Valley which would link Rathcoole and Brittas via Saggart; and a study to assess and review the location for an aviation museum with national status within South Dublin County. The Slade project is being carried out in conjunction with communities in Rathcoole, Saggart and Brittas, while the aviation museum project is a joint initiative between the Air Corps and South Dublin County Council. The intention is to seek LEADER funding for both projects.

2.7.3 South Dublin County has a number of cultural venues including Tallaght Civic Theatre and Rua Red arts venue in Tallaght; Áras Chrónáin Irish cultural centre in Clondalkin; and the Pearse Museum in Rathfarnham and Rathfarnham Castle.

2.7.4 There are seven libraries offering citizens a range of services, including the County Library in Tallaght town centre and a mobile library service. In addition to traditional book-borrowing, services include a village history site with cultural and heritage walks (apps are being developed for this); a heritage mapping facility; and a large range of free cultural events programmed every year including the *Red Line Book Festival* held in November 2012 and which will continue to be an annual event.



2.8 Energy, Utilities and Services

2.8.1 In collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, the Council has initiated an

Energy Savings SME Programme. Using its contacts with the business community, five companies have participated in a pilot project to identify energy usage and savings. It is anticipated that this project will yield significant savings.

2.8.2 South Dublin County has been designated a Sustainable Energy Community by SEAI and the Council is involved in an EU Leadership in Energy Action Planning (LEAP) project which will result in the preparation of the South Dublin Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP). The Plan, which is at first draft stage, will identify targets and policies in the energy sphere including increased use of renewables.

2.8.3 In 2012, in conjunction with the Council's sign-up to the European Covenant of Mayors' Protocol, the Council hosted a week long '*Connect with Energy*' initiative, the purpose of which was to raise awareness of energy issues amongst homeowners and businesses.

2.8.4 There is a proposal for the siting of a County fibre ring including identification of capacity within the existing Council infrastructure.

2.8.5 The Council continues to develop water and drainage schemes (e.g. Boherboy scheme) to further enhance the capacity of our services to support economic development.

2.9 Relationship with Business

2.9.1 South Dublin County Council has a good working relationship with business in the County. It has worked closely with the IDA to develop Grange Castle Business Park and has been a key player in the success of attracting foreign direct investment to the County. This Council has also worked with Enterprise Ireland in developing enterprise centres and assisting local businesses within the County.



2.9.2 In conjunction with South Dublin Chamber, a Sustainable Business Executive was appointed in May 2011. The post involves working closely with business to assist in sustaining and creating jobs in the County.

2.9.3 As part of the budgetary process for 2011, South Dublin County Council approved a Business Development and Sustainability Initiative. Outcomes identified include promoting strategic and foreign direct investment in partnership with the IDA, business sustainability collaboration with South Dublin Chamber and supporting urban villages.

2.9.4 In recognition of the difficult economic circumstances affecting businesses, the Council adopted a reduced ARV (Annual Rateable Valuation, i.e. 0.162) for South Dublin County Council for 2012 and this in turn has reduced the cost of commercial rates for ratepayers. This is the third consecutive year that the Council has reduced the ARV as part of the annual budget process and this has delivered savings of 5.3% on the cost of commercial rates to businesses since January 2010. As part of the 2013 annual budget the Council has maintained the same ARV rate.



2.10 Challenges

2.10.1 The positive attributes set out above give the County a competitive edge as a place to do business and promote economic development. However, there are also a number of challenges that must be faced.

2.10.2 The general economic downturn nationally and internationally, including lack of credit and lack of consumer confidence, creates a more difficult environment for local economic regeneration.

2.10.3 There is a consequent lack of funding for strategic infrastructural projects e.g. Metro West and additional LUAS lines.

2.10.4 There are high levels of unemployment, particularly in disadvantaged areas of the County. The number of people on the live register at the Tallaght Social Welfare Office in July 2012 was 12,088. This compares with a figure of 3,990 five years previously in July 2007 which gives a stark impression of the marked change in circumstances for the County, its residents and workforce.

2.10.5 There are high levels of vacancy across all business sectors. The rates data show an overall vacancy rate of 16.5% in 2011 and vacancy rates of 17.2% and 25.6% respectively in industrial and office and 11.4% in retail. However, the real levels of vacancy could be higher due to a lag effect between vacancies occurring and manifesting themselves in rates records. An on-the-ground survey of the Cookstown industrial area in Tallaght carried out in late 2011 showed vacancy levels exceeding 25%.

2.10.6 Many of the older established industrial estates in the County suffer from a degraded physical environment which contributes towards vacancy and dereliction. The challenge of increasing occupancy



and developing a programme promoting the upgrading of the environments of older industrial estates will be an important issue for this Strategy.

3.0 Section 3: Character Areas

3.1 This section of the report sets out the identified character areas. As stated previously they are not 'islands', but instead represent unique areas for a range of economic activity. This will further enhance the diversity of economic activity in the County and allow for a structured approach for the development of key activities to underpin existing and future economic development.

3.2 Technology Crescent

3.2.1 *Economic Characteristics*

This is an area with significant potential centred on the Citywest Business Campus and Grange Castle Business Park. Significant amounts of foreign direct investment have located in both areas with Grange Castle being a particular



location for technology firms and bio-pharma. To date, the largest facilities have located on standalone sites mainly in Grange Castle with a wider range of specialised industrial types located in the Citywest area. The area, particularly Grange Castle, has the capacity to accommodate the largest types of industrial development. There is a full range of services and utilities and good connections available with public transport facilities in close proximity to the north and south of the general area. Park and ride facilities are being considered along both the rail line and Luas, such as at Fortunestown. This area has recently seen the emergence of a cluster of data centres reflecting the latest wave of inward investment.

3.2.2 *Economic Opportunities*

This area has significant potential for accommodating further inward investment. Upgrades have taken place in the power infrastructure, public transport facilities and amenity facilities. While to date foreign direct investment has concentrated on large-scale single-user developments, there is



significant potential to consider developing smaller more intensive commercial / industrial developments at particular locations within the area. This would be in line with the latest developments in FDI. As part of this, there is significant opportunity to consider more service-based economic developments given their location served by public transport and other permeability projects. In conjunction with the physical development potential of this area there is the opportunity to further enhance the use of the existing hotels in the area as locations for the accommodation of business travellers and to support ancillary leisure activities. The emerging cluster of data centres offers significant opportunity – particularly in two areas – the development of a green power ESCO (i.e. energy service company) but also in the promotion of serviced-based development linked to an improved fibre connection. This must be balanced against the significant power demands that these data centres have.

3.2.3 *Actions*

- Continue to support IDA initiatives to market this area as a location for FDI.
- Maintain the capacity to accommodate large-scale industrial facilities.
- Develop infrastructure services and utilities to support the emergence of serviced-based employment.

- Consider the development of a renewable energy ESCO to deliver power to data centres.
- Support business park management in developing communities of practice to make more efficient use of resources in support of the wider green economy.
- Investigate the development of high order broadband facilities in conjunction with data centre operators.



3.2.4 Actors

South Dublin County Council, IDA, County Enterprise Board/ Local Enterprise Office, Chamber of Commerce, Telecoms providers, EirGrid.

3.3 Tallaght as an Integrated Town Centre

3.3.1 *Economic Characteristics*

Since the 1960's, Tallaght has been identified as a location for the accommodation of significant population. Over the intervening decades significant efforts have been made to develop an



appropriate scale of services to accommodate this population. This work has been reinforced by the location of South Dublin County Council headquarters in Tallaght, following the splitting up of Dublin County Council into three constituent local authorities in the early 1990's. Successive County Development Plans have earmarked lands in Tallaght as the County Town where large-scale development would be accommodated. Furthermore, significant efforts have been made to develop this area as an integrated town centre; this has included the provision of Luas. This area accommodates large-scale developments including Tallaght Hospital, Institute of Technology Tallaght, the Square shopping centre, and County Hall campus incorporating the County Library, the Rua Red Arts Centre and Tallaght Civic Theatre.

The area is the subject of an integrated Local Area Plan, is well served by public transport and has significant opportunity both for future development and the promotion of linkages between existing large-scale developments.

3.3.2 *Economic Opportunities*

There is significant underutilisation of the existing built retail developments in this area. Addressing this problem would have the effect of further improving the retail offer and services available in the area. This should be coupled with

the potential for renewing the Square, linked with wider developments in the area and integration with the Luas and other existing commercial and civic facilities. Given the scale of Tallaght Hospital, there is the capacity to consider the development of a medical quarter making use of existing vacant developments. There is potential for linking such development with the ITT and their Synergy Centre. Given the scale and close proximity of large energy users, capacity exists for the development of local energy initiatives and the promotion of improved use of renewable energy.



3.3.3 Actions

- Consider how best to support the renewal of the Square Shopping Centre as a retail destination.
- Investigate and support the development of a medical quarter to make use of exiting vacant developments in close proximity to the Hospital.
- Support the development of links between the Institute of Technology Tallaght and Tallaght Hospital.
- Continue to support the development of improved permeability and linkage throughout the town centre lands.
- Continue to develop Tallaght as an area for the use of renewable energy.
- Develop local renewable energy initiatives particularly between Tallaght Hospital, County Hall, Institute of Technology Tallaght and The Square.

3.3.4 *Actors*

South Dublin County Council, Tallaght Hospital, Institute of Technology
Tallaght, Chamber.

3.4 Luas Corridor

3.4.1 Characteristics



This area runs through the heart of the economic / industrial area of the County, particularly to the east of the M50 but also including a significant area around Cookstown, north of Tallaght Town Centre. The area is characterised by large-scale industrial and commercial activity with a wide range of activities ongoing. It has slowly evolved over the decades and there are a wide range of development types and land uses located therein. Currently the areas could be considered to be in general transition. There is significant underutilisation of existing industrial facilities. However the area is in close proximity to the City centre, large population centres and the national road and rail network. The area is essentially industrial in both appearance and nature.

3.4.2 Opportunities

The location of existing developed industrial land in close proximity to the City centre which is underutilised gives rise to the capacity for the development of more intensive forms of economic activity. Given the scale of the area, this can take place in an evolutionary manner which would allow for the character of the area to alter slowly over time. Access has been greatly improved in this area and there is the further opportunity to improve linkage through the development of new links and Luas stops, particularly in the vicinity of the Long Mile road / N7 junction. The introduction of more service-type activity would allow for smaller more intensive activities to be introduced that would build on the location and transport advantages of the area. Re-use and development of this area would result in a reduction in the levels of vacancy and the consequent issues of dereliction. The County Development Plan has

revised the zoning approach in this general area with the introduction of a new zoning objective (EP1) which seeks to promote and assist in the development of more intensive development at appropriate locations.

3.4.3 Actions

- Continue to support economic development in this area.



- Consider the future development of the areas identified EP1 (Enterprise Priority One) in the South

Dublin County Development Plan 2010-2016. This should be based on the promotion of more serviced-based activities.

- Investigate the development of improved services in the area, particularly telecoms infrastructure.

3.4.4 Actors

South Dublin County Council, South Dublin Chamber, telecom service providers, Rail Procurement Agency.

3.5 Rail Corridor

3.5.1 Characteristics

Running through the centre of the County is the key national rail line serving the south and west of the country. In the last number of years this has been doubled in capacity as far as Hazelhatch. In conjunction with this work,



significant land holdings have been earmarked for development, the bulk based on a national development designation (i.e. Clonburris and Adamstown Strategic Development Zones). This area forms a key movement corridor in the County. While the area is predominantly residential in nature this is not exclusively the case. Furthermore the area is in close proximity to both the technology crescent and the Luas corridor with direct linkage to Heuston Station in Dublin City and planned linkages with Metro West at Clonburris.

3.5.2 Opportunities

This area has significant land holdings which are identified and planned for substantial development. Their location in close proximity to the rail corridor; the amenity corridor along the Grand Canal and the enterprise lands of the technology crescent reinforces the continued opportunity for their development particularly as part of the development of the green economy. Substantial public investment has been made in improving the rail line with the separation of national and local trains. However the potential of this rail line is significantly underutilised. As part of the wider development of the County, there is a clear need for the identification of an appropriate stop for national rail services in the County. The rail corridor is in close proximity to the lands at Grange Castle

and wider enterprise lands, as well as lands identified for other forms of development. Linking national rail services to development opportunities in the County would assist in the development of a coherent approach to the green economy.

3.5.3 *Actions*

- Seek regular stopping of national rail services within the County.
- Continue to build on improving linkages between the rail line, amenity corridor and the rest of the County.
- Maintain support for the continued development of the Strategic Development Zones.

3.5.4 *Actors*

South Dublin County Council, IDA, South Dublin Chamber, National Transport Authority.

3.6 Promotion of Villages

3.6.1 Characteristics



While each town and village has its own unique attributes, they can generally be classified as hubs for local services and retailing. They further act as centres for local community and civic activity and have been at the centre of civic

improvements by the local authority. It is a core development plan objective to consolidate, strengthen and improve our existing villages.

3.6.2 Opportunities

Particular opportunities exist for future development in each village building on the unique selling points of each one and to further build on existing strong voluntary efforts for initiatives such as the Tidy Towns. Key opportunities include; temporary occupation / uses of both buildings and spaces; identifying and developing key local characteristics; public events to confirm the values of linkages, urban space and local services; and the development of local energy initiatives which may include improved energy efficiency, small-scale renewable energy facilities and exploring the area of energy sharing. There is a particular opportunity in a number of towns and villages for linking of tourism with local festivals and events and the exploration of local food production linked to local services and retailing. Through the development of unique selling points which take account of visitor attractions, there is the opportunity for a wider approach to be taken to the development of local and international



tourism and the development of our towns and villages as ‘gateways’ to the natural amenities of the County.

3.6.3 Actions

- Identify in conjunction with stakeholders unique attributes of each village.
- Produce locally-based village plans to assist in the improvement of the public realm and the quality of life.
- Initiate the development of free Wi-Fi in town and village centres in order to increase footfall.
- Further develop a programme of local events / festivals.
- Investigate the development of local energy initiatives.
- Work with local business to develop pop-up shops / temporary uses.
- Facilitate the development of links between local food producers and local restaurants.
- Consider opportunities to support niche retailing.



3.6.4 Actors

South Dublin County Council,
 South Dublin Chamber and
 affiliated local chambers, local
 stakeholders.



4.0 Section 4: Cross-Cutting Themes

4.1 A key factor in developing an economic strategy for the County is the consideration of particular issues which cut across a range of areas. These include the development and support of local business; the need for the support of further education and training, particularly in the context of the changing nature of work; and the development of the green economy.

4.2 Crossing-Cutting Theme 1: Sustaining and Developing Business

4.2.1 South Dublin County has a wide range of economic activity, the development of which should be maintained and supported. It is important that this sector is not overlooked in the drive to introduce new business. The existing



businesses have displayed a resilience and determination to succeed, simply by the fact that they still exist in 2012. Although recovery in the economy has not officially begun, these businesses have shown that they can take control of their own destiny by identifying markets and adjusting to suit the new economy.

4.2.2 The wide range of businesses that exist to provide a mutually beneficial system in which employment is provided for a wide range of people from within the County – with varying degrees of education and skill levels. This in itself is invaluable, and should be encouraged as it is important that the enterprise is developed for the benefit of the County and its residents.

4.2.3 Following consultation with businesses over the past few years – through relationships with enterprise organisations (such as the CEB), business

support agencies (such as South Dublin Chamber) and the Sustaining and Developing Business Programme, a range of issues facing business has been identified. These issues are set out below:

4.2.3.1 Helping to influence consumer and business confidence

This is an area of widespread concern that is regularly highlighted by people in business. Businesses are operating in an environment of constant negative press regarding the economic climate from the national media in addition to government messages that can easily be interpreted as negative.

4.2.3.2 Encourage local spending and local business

A key area to be supported is the continued development of tourism in the County. In particular, this



involves building on the success of South Dublin County Tourism in attracting events to the County and in developing links between hotel events and other facilities, such as Tallaght stadium. The ongoing promotion of tourism is being linked to our towns and villages to support local business and spending. In addition, initiatives such as ‘Think Local’ have played a role. This is an initiative of the South Dublin County Development Board to create and develop community awareness of the advantages and benefits of supporting local business and community facilities.

4.2.3.3 Tendering and procurement processes

SMEs have issues with the perceived and (sometimes) real complexity of public procurement. There has been some work done on this (two procurement events in association with SDCEB and SD Chamber).

4.2.3.4 *The Shadow Economy*

The Shadow Economy is having a significant negative impact on business and trade. Although this area falls under the remit of the Garda Síochána and Customs, more co-operation between all players as well as public information / awareness on the impact of this for consumers could help. This is particularly relevant to the retail sector within the County.

4.2.3.5 *Retail Sector*

The retail sector needs particular support because it provides a wide range of jobs for people of varied skill levels, in addition to recycling money directly back to the local economy through rates, sales, local spending as well as employment.



4.2.3.6 *Costs of Doing Business*

The costs of doing business are a continuing concern. There are areas that local government can influence including rates, utilities (water, waste, and energy), application and other costs. As stated earlier, it is of note that for the third consecutive year, the Council has reduced the ARV (Annual Rateable Valuation) as part of the annual budget process and that this has delivered savings on the cost of commercial rates to businesses.

4.2.3.7 *ICT and Social Media*

Businesses require assistance with keeping up to date with ICT and social media, particularly utilising the skills and information available within the local authority

4.2.4 A core supporting initiative is the development of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO). This will bring together the range of activities being carried out by state actors, such as the Council and the County Enterprise boards, to support local

enterprise. The LEO under the auspices of the Council will act as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for small and micro business in the County. They will provide a range of services such as advice, information on accessing public procurement, access to supports and funding and support for the progression of high growth companies to appropriate Enterprise Ireland supports. Work is ongoing on putting in place the LEO framework and building on the South Dublin County Enterprise board located in County Hall.

4.2.5 Actions

- Develop the Local Enterprise Office to act as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for advice and support for business in the County.
- Help to influence consumer and business confidence.
- Encourage local spending and local business.
- Support the continued development of tourism, with particular focus on the potential of the County’s villages.
- Provide assistance for SMEs with tendering and procurement processes.
- Raise awareness and promote cooperation between relevant agencies to combat the shadow economy.
- Provide support to the retail sector.
- Work towards reducing the costs of doing business.



- Provide assistance to businesses with ICT and social media, particularly utilising the skills and information available within the local authority.
- Build on the existing good working relationship between the Council and the Chamber.

4.2.6 *Actors*

Local business, South Dublin Chamber, South Dublin County Council, Local Enterprise Office, South Dublin County Tourism.

4.3 Cross-Cutting Theme 2: Further Education and Training

4.3.1 To ensure that South Dublin County can compete in the knowledge economy and in other emergent economic sectors, education, skills and training will be an important priority. There have been some positive developments in this area – between 1995 and 2010, the proportion of South Dublin County’s population with third level education increased from 12.6% to 30.8%, a growth slightly above that which occurred nationally during the period.

4.3.2 However, the disadvantaged areas of the County in particular continue to be characterised by low levels of educational attainment. The challenge here is twofold: (a) to provide employment in the County that matches the



education and skill level of its citizens and (b) to upskill people in order to increase their capacity to be employed and enable them to access better quality employment. Increasing the accessibility of job opportunities for residents will have the effect of improving life for those who want to work but are currently constrained, and expanding the productive labour resource of the County.

4.3.3 Upskilling requires a greater alignment between the further education and training sector and the labour market in the County. In this regard, it is vital that the areas of current and future skills shortages such as those identified by the *Expert Group on future Skills Needs* – Link Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) - Home are taken into consideration.²

4.3.4 Education and skills plans should be developed, that would better link workplace skills requirements / opportunities for education and training,

² The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland’s enterprise and employment growth.

helping to deliver people with the right skills to employers and improve the employment prospects of residents. As part of this, improving the accessibility of third level and further education across the County is a vital measure. The development of a wide variety of courses and options is to be encouraged such as PLCs and local training initiatives. The specific needs of employers and employees should be defined. Informal training courses that match the business needs of various sectors should be provided.

4.3.5 Reducing the requirement to travel to training opportunities can facilitate upskilling. In order to do this, locally-based training programmes need to be developed, potentially located in community facilities throughout the County. Liaison between industry and training agencies needs to be facilitated in order to justify and develop an increased number of locally-based courses.

4.3.6 The enterprise agenda, including social enterprise, should be developed in schools, third level education facilities and communities in the County. Effective actions which inspire people to consider self employment – such as talks by local entrepreneurs – will contribute to raising the rate of entrepreneurial activity in the County. Social economy projects should be explored and supported.



4.3.7 The County has two major institutions which in addition to being large employers also play a key training role in the County – Institute of Technology, Tallaght and Tallaght Hospital.

4.3.8 *Institute of Technology Tallaght*

Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT Dublin) is the sole higher education institution in South Dublin County. The student population of the Institute is over 4,600 (full-time and part-time). ITT Dublin attracts students from a wide area of Greater Dublin and surrounding counties. Over eighty percent of full

time students come from the main Dublin and South Dublin County postal districts and ten percent of this cohort comprises mature students. According to ITT's *Strategic Plan 2009-2014*, these figures 'reflect the relationship the Institute has developed with schools, employers and communities in the region who see the Institute of Technology Tallaght as their preferred third level college'.



ITT Dublin is also now a leader in research and innovation in the Institute of Technology sector. Research activity has continued to grow since it reached critical mass in the early 2000's. The Institute has developed a portfolio of

prioritised research areas with an applied or translational focus, with an appropriate level of underlying fundamental research. The Synergy Centre in ITT Dublin is the innovation centre of South Dublin County, providing office space and business supports to early-stage enterprises. The Synergy Centre focuses on the high technology and knowledge intensive sectors. Their aim is to enable industry and academia to interact to create viable enterprises for South Dublin County that will secure the County's future in terms of job creation, innovation and export potential. The identification, protection and exploitation of intellectual property arising from this research are also key activities, as is further development of the Institute's enterprise development activities.

4.3.9 Tallaght Hospital

The Adelaide and Meath Hospital Dublin, Incorporating the National Children's Hospital and St. Loman's, is a landmark development in Ireland's acute hospital service and was the biggest healthcare project ever undertaken by the state. It provides child-health, adult, psychiatric and age-related healthcare on one site. There are 600 beds in the hospital and almost 3,000 people are



employed. The Hospital is a provider of local, regional, supra-regional and national specialities. It is also a National Urology Centre, a Regional Dialysis Centre and a Regional Orthopaedic Trauma Centre. The Hospital is one of the two main teaching hospitals of Trinity College.

4.3.10 Actions³

- Improve links between higher education and enterprise, in particular involving Institute of Technology Tallaght Synergy Centre and Tallaght Hospital.
- Build the availability of third level education in the County through the development of outreach facilities.
- Ensure that education and training match employment needs, particularly in emerging economic sectors.
- Develop integrated education and skills plans, up skilling the workforce.
- Continue to take action to address the barriers that prevent residents taking up employment, education and training.
- Develop and encourage the enterprise agenda, including social enterprise.
- Provide locally-based training opportunities in areas throughout the County.

³ It is understood that the Socio-Economic Committee Structure will form the basis for the actions under Cross-Cutting Theme 2 – Further Education and Training.

4.3.11 Actors

South Dublin County Council, Institute of Technology Tallaght, Tallaght Hospital, South Dublin Chamber, County Enterprise Board/ Local Enterprise Office, Innovation Enterprise Network, Local Development Companies, Fás/Solas, South Dublin County Childcare Committee, VEC, Department of Social Protection, schools.

4.4 Cross-Cutting Theme 3: The Green Economy

4.4.1 Introduction

The term ‘*green economy*’ covers a wide range of commercial activities which contribute to a reduced carbon footprint and better use of energy and resources. A number of factors such as increasing fossil fuel prices, environmental legislation, consumer preferences and targets for renewable energy and reduction of emissions have contributed to create significant opportunities worldwide for growth and employment in these green sectors. The green economy brings benefits to all – businesses stand to make great savings through engaging in more sustainable practices (e.g. transport, energy); while there are also significant business opportunities in the area of renewable energy technologies. This section sets out a strategic approach to considering how best to maximise the opportunities the green economy has to offer for South Dublin County Council.



While broad, the green economy can be broken into three general areas of activity:

- Improved efficiency of processes resulting in reduced carbon use and output. This area includes the use of renewable energy, improved insulation, more efficient production and transport. In short this category is about more efficient use of resources and the controlling of costs.
- The creation and manufacturing of new and improved equipment and services such as wind turbines or particular software that allows for more efficient energy use. In short this category is about a product or service that is produced and sold.
- The development of sustainable communities that link efficient use of land in a coherent fashion that limits the use of carbon and improves resilience to climate change and energy costs.

This section will deal with each in turn. However, all three strongly overlap. Furthermore, it aligns with the Government's 'Action Plan for Jobs' (February 2012) which identifies key sub-sectors of the green economy as including renewable energy; smart grid development; energy efficient products and services; lower carbon transport; waste/wastewater treatment; waste management, recovery and recycling; environmental consultancy; green financial services; and green tourism.

4.4.2 *More efficient energy use*

This area encompasses both the use of energy on the one hand and the limiting of energy expenditure on the other. The key areas relate to the development and use of more sustainable forms of energy and the promotion of improved mobility that is not as reliant on fossil fuels. It seeks to improve resilience to fluctuations in the price of fossil fuels, reduce reliance on imports whilst tackling wider issues of greenhouse emissions.



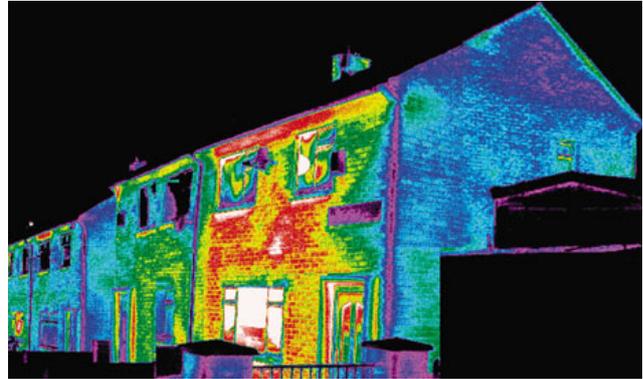
South Dublin County Council has embarked on a series of policy initiatives in this area to give practical support to tackling the above issues. These include:

- In collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, the Council has initiated an Energy Savings SME Programme. Using its contacts with the business community, five companies have participated in a pilot project to identify energy usage and savings.
- South Dublin County has been designated a Sustainable Energy Community by SEAI and the Council is involved in an EU Leadership in Energy Action Planning (LEAP) project. In this regard the Council is working on:
 - Investigating the development of a renewable energy ESCO (energy services company) to deliver power in Tallaght town

centre and in the Grange Castle Business Park.

- o Smart travel projects to encourage sustainable alternatives to car travel are being piloted in homes, schools and workplaces in Lucan and Clondalkin.

Other areas that will be explored are the areas of improved insulation both for commercial and residential developments and the area of considering improved logistics movements through the more efficient use of HGVs. The Council will continue to develop conduits for the practical application of more energy efficient methods of working and travelling.



4.4.3 *Development of 'Green' products and services*

While improved processes do bring economic benefits both to the user and the County, there is the opportunity to build on our existing economic base to lever further added value. This County has significant advantages to attract and support enterprises in the green economy. The national need for the development of a cluster of green companies has been identified. Given the location of Grange Castle proximate to sustainable communities and amenity areas but with significant capacity and a proven track record for delivery of projects, it does have the potential to become a 'green' business park. This would allow for the demonstration of particular technology approaches in areas such as energy use, building technology and water use, while allowing for the development of appropriate production facilities. The potential for development of this concept will be explored.

4.4.4 *Supporting Sustainable Communities*

The green economy is clearly not isolated from the rest of society. Indeed for its potential to be fully utilised, the green economy must be intimately linked to societal actions. This gives rise to the question of how the green economy can be further integrated into wider societal development. South Dublin has unique existing advantages to so do. In close proximity are Grange Castle and the wider industrially zoned lands, two Strategic Development Zones, the main national rail corridor and the amenity corridor of the Grand Canal. This area is surrounded to the south and west by open countryside which could be used for the growing of locally produced food, or the development of carbon offset mechanisms.

While this concept would appear to be broad in nature, the main building blocks are in place and well developed. It would further enhance the development of the green economy and give a practical demonstration of the intimate links between improved process, production of goods and services and the wider demonstration of sustainable living.



4.4.5 Summary

While the concept of the green economy is broad there are practical steps which can be taken to implement certain aspects. There are opportunities at the micro individual level to install more efficient processes that reduce the use of carbon and limit costs. In addition, at the larger scale there are opportunities through the promotion of locations that support the development and manufacturing of goods and services that in turn allow for more efficient processes and more sustainable living and working.

4.4.6 *Actions*

- Continue to develop best practice models emerging from local projects such as the LEAP and SEAP but also those emerging from the Innovation Dublin Initiative⁴.
- Support the development of the green economy particularly in the areas of mobility, energy and water usage and sustainable communities.

4.4.7 *Actors*

SDCC, SEAI, South Dublin Chamber.

⁴ Innovation Dublin is an annual festival that celebrates the innovative spirit of the City. Activities include talks, lectures, debates, performances, screenings and other diverse events that highlight the role of creativity and innovation in the daily life of Dubliners.

5.0 Section 5: Conclusion

5.1 This strategy sets out a clear platform for the continued economic development of South Dublin County. Through use of the character areas and cross-cutting themes as a prism, there is a clear rationale to support a range of economic development approaches. It also sets out to support the creation of robust and sustainable jobs as a priority. In short, this strategy gives the basis for the development of South Dublin County that is sustainable, resilient and adaptable to a changing world while building on the relationship between agencies and business in the County and enhancing existing collaboration.

5.2 This Council is ambitious in its support of economic development; this is articulated through the strategy outlined above⁵ and will be further supported by the subsequent action plan which will drive the delivery of identified outcomes.



⁵ This document should be read in conjunction with the action plan.