

MID-WEST REGIONAL AUTHORITY

Regional Planning Guidelines Review 2010 – 2022



ISSUES PAPER February 2009



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1.0 Introduction

The Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted in May 2004. They were based on information drawn principally from the Census of 2002 and 1996. The Guidelines were intended to guide the development of the region based on a future view over a period of twenty years. Section 27 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires that new Regional Planning Guidelines be made every six years. It is now 2009 and the Guidelines have been in existence for a period of four years. It is necessary in law that a review of the guidelines be made beginning in 2009 for completion in 2010. Any review must be evidence-based and surveys and estimates of information are available for the region as a whole. With respect to spatial patterns of development within the region the Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA) is dependent principally on data derived from Census. The 2006 Census data is fully available at this time.



The **Mid-West Region** comprises the City of Limerick and Counties Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary.

By the time of the 2006 Census the Guidelines were in effect for exactly two years. Now, in 2009, it is unreasonable to expect to be able to discover from an analysis of census data, a change in the pattern of development within the region that could be directly ascribed to the influence of the Guidelines. It is equally unwise to ascribe any deviations from the proposed pattern of development to an unwillingness to conform with the Guidelines. At best, insofar as the pattern of development is concerned, the review must record the extant pattern and must comment on any adjustments that may be henceforth required in order to better align with the Guidelines.

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Guidelines shall address the following:

- projected population trends and settlement and housing strategies;
- economic and employment trends;
- the location of industrial and commercial development;
- transportation, including public transportation;
- water supply and waste water-facilities;
- waste disposal;

2.0 Current Regional Development Strategy

- energy and communications networks;
- the provision of educational, health care, retail & other community facilities;
- the preservation and protection of the environment and its amenities, including archaeological, architectural and natural heritage; and
- such other matters as may be prescribed by the Minister.

Following the adoption of the 2010 Regional Planning Guidelines, Planning Authorities must consider their existing Development Plans to assess whether changes are needed to bring them in line with the RPGs. Once adopted, the Regional Planning Guidelines will set the spatial context of future Development Plans and Local Area Plans in the Mid-West region. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government have indicated that a new Planning Bill is being drafted which may have an impact on the role of Regional Planning Guidelines and the impact of the Guidelines on Development Plans in individual Council areas.

For the purposes of the 2004 Guidelines the region was divided into nine zones. These comprise an inner and outer core and six peripheral zones. Zones One and Two comprise the inner and outer-core. The Economic Strategy for the development of the region focuses on Zone One. This zone, which comprises Limerick, Shannon and Ennis, and which is the largest concentration of employment in the region, was intended to drive the growth of economic activity.

Limerick City, together with its suburbs, Shannon, Ennis and Nenagh, being the largest concentration of business and public services, is intended to continue in that role. In all of the other zones of the region, the provision of additional services were intended to be promoted in at least one town in each zone. The benefits of economic and service development, accruing from the development of Zone One, will be made accessible to the people of the other zones by providing improved transport links.

This transport will be both private and public; by road, bus and rail (where appropriate) from the other zones to Zone One. Transport will be improved through Zone One and also from zone one to other adjoining "Gateways". The economic potential of Zone One will be promoted and enhanced by the provision of infrastructure; by the development of new enterprise sectors and by the integration of education and research with the needs of industry.

All development should harmonize the needs of environmental protection with the needs of development. Developments should also respond appropriately to the special needs of each of the Zones.

The 2004 Guidelines also proposed a number of specific outcome targets and indicators to be monitored and used to assess the success of the Strategy and the Guidelines. These are reviewed briefly here to act as a background for discussion of the issues.

3.0 Monitored Outcomes

POPULATION

- **The level of population growth in the region**

Population grew in the region by about 20,000 persons between 2002 and 2006. According to the CSO annual population estimates, the current (2008) population of the region is 371,000. This represents a growth of 10,000 in two years which may be compared with 20,000 in the four years 2002 to 2006. Despite this apparently significant growth, the region in fact obtained a lower share of the national growth during this period. Together with Dublin and the South West, the region performed well below expectation. By contrast, the mid-east, midland, south-east and border regions fared considerably better than national expectation.

- **The distribution of population growth**

Table 1: Population Change by Zone

Zone	Population 2002	Population 2006	% Change	Actual Change
Zone One	174,153	185,895	6.23	11,702
Zone Two	40,000	43,644	9.11	4,004
Clare NE *	4,506	4,421	-1.89	-85
Clare NW	13,200	13,699	3.78	382
Clare SW **	16,230	16,686	2.81	456
Limerick W	32,300	34,572	7.03	2,272
Limerick E	16,300	16,810	3.13	510
Tipperary (Roscrea)	19,708	20,523	4.14	815
Tipperary (Thurles)	23,798	24,494	2.92	696
Region	339,591	360,651	6.2	21,060

* Original included part of Tipp North

** Original Differed

Zone One (including the City and Suburbs) had a population in excess of 174,000 in 2002. There was a population of 82,000 persons in the remainder of Zone One outside of Limerick City and Suburbs. Had the City and Suburbs grown as expected, and on the basis of previous trends, the population of Zone One outside of Limerick City and Suburbs would have declined slightly to 80,000. However, by 2006 the population of the whole Zone One had actually grown to over 185,000 persons and the area outside of the City and Suburbs grew by over 10,000 to 90,000 persons instead of remaining stable or declining.

During the period 1996 to 2002, Limerick City and suburbs whilst growing by 10% accounted for almost half (47%) of the total growth in population in Zone One. Ennis & Shannon while growing by 17%, accounted for 27% of Zone One growth. Thus the principal urban areas were accommodating about 75% of the growth, as would be expected in their role as gateway and hub.

Between 2002 and 2006 only 54% of the growth has occurred in the gateway and hub (as opposed to 75%) and the rate of growth in the city and suburbs fell to 3% in four years or less than one percent per annum. Whilst the Clare part of Zone One has retained its relative proportion of overall growth at 15% as opposed to 14%, the most dramatic change is evident in the remainder of the Limerick/Tipperary part of Zone One which has increased its share from 10% of total growth to nearly 30% of total growth.

- **The stability of the rural population;**

Population decline is usually associated with remote rural areas. About 120 Electoral Divisions declined in population between 02 and 06. A large number of the declining zones were rural but not all. In fact thirty six of these EDs were urban in character being either part of Limerick City or part of some other urban areas in the various counties. The total decline in the 120 EDs amounted to about 7,000 persons but 4,700 of this was accounted for by the thirty six urban zones. Thus the rural decline in eighty four EDs was only about 2,100 persons.

Only about 2,000 houses were built in all these 'declining' areas between 2001 and 2006 equally divided between urban and rural. The areas contained more than 6,000 unoccupied houses again equally divided between urban and rural.

- **The extent of housing development in the region**

In 2006 there were 126,000 occupied houses in the region and a further 25,000 were vacant. According to the Census there was an increase of 20,000 occupied houses in the region between 2001 and 2006. However more than 36,000 houses were actually recorded by the DOEHLG as having been built during the period.

- **The distribution of such development**

Again of these about 10,000 of the increase in houses was located in the principal Urban LAPs. It follows however that the remainder - *the other 50%* - were located in areas for which there are no urban plans

- **The availability of serviced land**

According to data published by the DOEHLG, there were 1500 Hectares of serviced, housing land located in the Urban LAPs of the region in 2007. Of this, more than 1,000 was located in Clare.

However, an examination of the Housing strategies of the various counties yields a different picture. The Clare Housing Strategy now yields 4,000 Ha., The Limerick Strategy yields 1092 Ha., Limerick City remains at 110 Ha and Tipperary yields 254 Ha. giving a grand total of nearly 5,400 Ha. This area of land could in theory accommodate 135,000 houses.

In 2006 there were only 126,000 occupied houses in the region and a further 25,000 were vacant. In the five-years from 2001 to 2006 a maximum of 36,000 houses were built occupying about 1,400 Hectares. There is therefore sufficient land zoned for twenty years construction at the rate of building which occurred between 2001 and 2006.

On the other hand if building were to proceed according to the pattern observed between 2001 and 2006 (where half of the building only was located in planned urban areas) then there is sufficient land zoned for more than 40 years demand. One third of all the zoned land is in Ennis.

ENTERPRISE

- **The extent of enterprise establishment within the region, e.g. net number of new enterprises**

Data on the number of enterprises is not currently to hand. However data on employment in industrial enterprises both Irish and Foreign owned is available for 2002 and 2007. During this period there was a slight increase in national employment in these sectors. In the mid-west employment declined slightly. The relative negative shift was shared with Dublin, the Mid-East and the South-West regions.

- **The extent of the increased economic activity arising out of the FDI sector in the region**

According to the Forfas annual survey of employment in 2007, there was a decline in employment in foreign owned businesses in the region from 20,700 jobs in 2001 to 17,400 jobs in 2007.

- **The distribution of enterprise throughout the region**

Based on the 2002 census POWSAR, 99,000 persons travelled to a fixed workplace within the region in 2002. 14,000 worked from home and 12,000 had no fixed workplace. 8,000 could not be coded. This gives a total of 132,000 persons working in the region. Sixty-seven thousand travel to work in Zone One and of these 55,000 also live there. Only 12,000 commute in from outside the Zone. A total of 72,000 persons are estimated to travel to work in the EDs associated with Urban LAPs

Almost every ED in the region contains a workplace to which someone travels. However fifty-two EDs in Clare have less than 10 employed; twenty-six EDs in Tipperary likewise, and twenty-nine in Limerick. Thus 107 EDs out of more than 411 have employment locations of less than 10 persons.

- **The extent of freight through Shannon International Airport**

Shannon Airport handled 31,000 tons of air freight in 2006.

- **Freight tonnage through Foynes and Limerick Docks**

In 2007 the Shannon Estuary handled 11 M Tons and this represents an increase from 10M Tons in 2002.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

- **The changes in social deprivation indices in the region**

The aggregate total change in the score between 1991 and 2006 for the Urban LAPs was -481. More than 221 EDs dropped score. These contained 75% of the population, nearly 90% of the employment locations and also two-thirds of the new housing and 75% of vacant housing stock. Within Limerick city there are ongoing issues of social exclusion and associated criminality. The Fitzgerald report was commissioned in 2006 by the Government to identify actions which could address these problems and facilitate positive change. Consequently, the Limerick Regeneration Agencies were set up by Government.

The report noted that while only a tiny minority of residents were involved in criminality, their behaviour was having a negative impact on the image of certain neighbourhoods and on the city as a whole. One hundred and seventy eight zones increased score. These however contained only a little over 25% of the population although they accounted for 35% of the increase in population and only about 10% of the employment. They contained about one third of the unoccupied houses and about 25% of the new built housing stock.

- **The amount of research resources attracted by the region's third-level institutes**

A total of 21M in research grants was attracted in 2007 to UL. This represents 5th out of 7 universities and about 25% that of Cork University.

TOURISM

- **The passenger movements through Shannon International Airport**

In 2007 Shannon Airport handled 3.6 million passengers. This represents an increase from 2.4 million visitors in 2003.

- **The number of tourism visitors and visitor bed-nights**

In 2003 there were 1.8 million tourists to the region generating 454 Million in revenue. By 2007 the number of visitors had risen to 2.0 million and the revenue had increased to 517 Million.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **The extent of the development of renewable energy projects**

By 2025, peak demand for electricity is expected to increase by 60% (estimated in 2007). The region is expected to have up to 440 MW of wind generation and 75 MW of wave generation. An additional investment of approximately €315m in regional transmission network is required. Networks supplying the large urban centres of Ennis and Limerick must be upgraded. Over 250 km of existing networks must be up-rated to facilitate higher capacity power flows. The transmission capacity across the Shannon Estuary must be strengthened. Without these investments, within the next five to ten years there will be no capacity in the network to cater for new customers and the reliability of supply to existing customers will fall below normal international standards. There will be no capacity in the network to allow further renewable generation to be connected which will have severe consequences on the ability of Ireland to meet its renewable targets and its long-term sustainable energy supplies.

4.0 Implementation Outcomes

The guidelines identified that a comprehensive implementation structure with standing- and special-interest groups intended to supervise 26 different Actions as set out below would be required if the co-ordination and collaboration identified in the Guidelines and Economic Strategy were to be put in place. The Guidelines also recognized that the Planning Authorities were constrained to ensure that the Development Plans adopted by them had regard to the Guidelines but also recognized that other important regional and local bodies were not thus constrained.

An overall Steering and Monitoring Committee was established and met a number of times. The group identified and agreed the areas that should be the initial focus of implementation and then, from time to time, to consider progress and any changes in the external environment. However, given the relatively short period of time for the RPGs to have effect, no specific output monitoring tasks were undertaken, though the group did receive reports from the various Implementation Committees.

The key actions requiring a collaborative approach were identified in the RPGs as follows –

1. Landscape Policies
2. Wind Energy Policies
3. Mineral Extraction Policies
4. Protection of water bodies and flood plains
5. Protection of archaeological and architectural items
6. Major Road Development
7. Design characteristics of non-national principal regional roads
8. Identification of SDZ
9. Transport Plan for Zone 1
10. Identification of regional facility needs
11. Identification of national facilities that could be located within the region
12. Co-ordination of third-level institutes with enterprise needs within & beyond the region
13. Broadband provision
14. Rural and regional public transport
15. Regional Tourism Development
16. Development of service centres
17. Rail system development
18. Development of economic potential of Zones
19. Provision for the needs of particular sectors
20. Shannon Estuary SA
21. Lough Derg SA
22. Galtees/Ballyhoura SA
23. Burren SA
24. Slieve Aughty SA
25. Zone 1
26. Atlantic Coast

The Regional Authority recognized that the Guidelines and Strategy had a time horizon of 2020 and that it was unlikely that resources would be available to be devoted immediately to the wide range of co-ordination actions that were required.

It was decided, therefore, that an attempt would be made to address one each of the three categories of action that had been identified in the RPGs – co-ordination of the development of geographic areas; adoption of common planning policies in cross-boundary areas that had a particular environmental character; and the making of decisions regarding strategic developments.

Three working committees were established, therefore, by the Regional Authority to address a range of different action types -

1. The Zone One Committee addressed Action 26 and sought to develop a coherent strategic approach to the area identified as Zone One in the guidelines, which zone included the Gateway, the Hub and the areas in-between. This Committee faced the most challenging of the areas under consideration since it was asked to address the complexities of coordinating by consensus the management of the development of a large and complex area. It was inevitable that tangible outcomes from this group would be somewhat longer in being arrived at than some of the more focused groups. Among the topics addressed by this group and with which it assisted were –
 - a. The Atlantic Gateways project
 - b. A review of the Mid-West regional retail strategy
 - c. MWASP
 - d. Mid West Housing Strategy
 - e. Atlantic Way private sector initiative

Many of these projects are at various stages of development and completion. It is anticipated that a Committee such as the Zone 1 Committee will continue to be required.

2. The Strategic Development Zone Committee addressed Action 8 and was established to consider whether, where and what for what purpose a SDZ might be identified within the Region. After a considerable number of meetings this Committee completed its remit and decided that the SDZ model would not be a mechanism that would be beneficial to development in the Mid West Area. It was then considered that this Committee might consider issues relating to the overall economic development of the Region. The work of this Committee will flow into the review of the regional economic strategy as part of the RPG review process.
3. The Renewable Energy/Landscape Management Committee addressed Actions 1 & 2 and sought to develop consistent policies with regard to renewable energy projects in cross-county upland areas. This Committee pursued the development of a Climate Change & Energy Balance Strategy for the Region. It has been very successful in that regard and the issues have been progressed substantially under the guidance and promotion of the Committee. This Committee is also overseeing the preparation of a regional Bio-energy Strategy to be finalized in February 2009.

Two further points are worth making regarding collaborative actions that addressed issues identified in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

Firstly, the Committees that were established to address a particular issue were often used to address other associated issues also, so that the range of issues addressed was greater than the number of committees established.

Secondly, there were other actions identified in the RPGs that were addressed by a variety of ad hoc structures, some of which were established under the auspices of the Regional Authority and some of which were established through other processes. It may well be said, therefore, that the RPGs had an indirect impact on decision-making and strategy development in the Region as well as the direct effects which were specifically pursued under its remit. Therefore, progress was made with regard to the actions outlined below, through the mechanism identified.

Table 2: Implementation Outcomes

Action	Structure	Outcome
Landscape Policies	RPG Committee	None specifically with regard to this matter
Wind Energy Policies	RPG Committee	Mid-West Energy Balance & Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
Major Road Development	NRA	Ongoing work on a variety of major routes. Representation to the DoT on all routes. Cooperation with SERA in preparation of the N24 Prioritisation Study
Identification of SDZ	RPG Committee	Decision that an SDZ was not an appropriate mechanism for development in the Region
Transport Plan for Zone 1	MWASP Committee	Brief for Mid West Area Strategic Plan addressing land-use and transport needs
Co-ordination of third-level institutes with enterprise needs within and beyond the region	Enterprise Ireland and the Atlantic University Alliance	Enterprise Ireland Projects
Broadband provision	Shannon Broadband Company	MANS and a variety of community broadband initiatives

Action	Structure	Outcome
Rural and regional public transport	Rural Transport Initiatives	Improved Ennis-Limerick rail service
	Iarnrod Eireann	Proposal for Sixmilebridge-Shannon Link. Shannon Rail Link Study completed
	West on Track	Project to provide new station at Sixmilebridge
		Rural Transport Services Development of Ennis – Athenry rail service
Regional Tourism Development	Ad hoc group led by the Regional Authority	Mid West Tourism and Economic Plan
Rail system development	Iarnrod Eireann	Improved Ennis-Limerick service
	West on Track	Proposal for Sixmilebridge-Shannon Link Project to provide new station at Sixmilebridge
Lough Derg SA	Shannon Development and Local Authorities	Lough Derg - Sustainable Marina, Recreational & Tourism Development Strategy
Burren SA	BurrenConnect including Clare County Council, Shannon Development, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, Geological Survey of Ireland and Burrenbeo.	A visitor management and environmental protection strategy Burren signage plan
Zone 1	RPG Committee	A variety of inputs to a range of issues

As well as these specific achievements, the 'ad hoc' Senior Planners' Group, meeting under the auspices of the Regional Authority, has kept a range of environmental protection and planning policies under review.

It can be seen, therefore, that there has been a considerable amount of implementation with regard to matters that were identified in the RPGs. Not all of these took place under the direct supervision of the RPG and its structures but they did, nevertheless, address issues identified in the RPGs.

It is clear the implementation of collaborative actions is a time-consuming and difficult process and that it can take considerable time when the co-ordination of a wide range of actors is involved. This will continue to be a challenge in the future and the commitment of all actors and organizations will be required in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Two significant types of challenge remain –

1. The development and implementation of common policies that will be included in individual development plans and that have a regional rather than a county or city focus
2. The identification of joint projects that will benefit the region as a whole but that need to be pursued together by a number of different interests.

It is suggested that the overall approach used up to now be continued but that clearer objectives and anticipated outcomes be developed for the groups.

It is also suggested that a number of issues be referred to the Region's planners group for consideration and for reporting back to one of the Sub Groups or the Steering Group.



Since the adoption of the guidelines in 2004, many assessments of economic strategy have been undertaken by independent bodies. The results of the assessments that are available form part of this review. Regional development policy has been a core focus of national economic strategies for several decades. There is wide scale acceptance of the need for regions to enhance their competitiveness in order to remain relevant to the twenty first century global economy. These assessments broadly confirm that the core thrust of the Mid West regional policy in using Zone One as a driver of economic development, remains valid.

The majority of the world's population now lives in cities and cities are forecasted to continue to grow rapidly over the next fifty years. In recent years people have become more mobile and firms more selective about where they locate. In this context 'competitive' cities have emerged as magnets for talent and investment. It is the view of the National Competitiveness Council that the principle guiding regional development should be about maximising the inherent growth potential of each region, not redirecting economic growth away from Dublin. The thrust of policy debate must move away from 'balanced regional development' and towards the 'development of competitive cities and regions'.

Again, according to the National Competitiveness Council, competitive cities are both 'attractive' and 'inclusive' and these characteristics are nurtured when disparities are minimised and social exclusion is avoided. Sustained support and assistance is necessary for social and cultural infrastructure as well as support and assistance for urban regeneration projects at national and local level. This is necessary to ensure the objectives of these projects, i.e. such as Limerick Regeneration, are achieved and the potential for positive change in traditionally socially excluded urban areas is maximised.

Within Limerick city there are ongoing issues of social exclusion and associated criminality. The Fitzgerald report was commissioned in 2006 by the Government to identify actions which could address these problems and facilitate positive change. The report noted that while only a tiny minority of residents were involved in criminality, their behaviour was having a negative impact on the image of certain neighbourhoods and on the city as a whole.

Population Futures

In January 2006, the DEHLG published regional population targets to be used in the review of the guidelines. The following table summarizes these targets in comparison with other work by the CSO and previous regional guidelines.

6.0 Key Issues arising from the Review of Outcomes

Table 3: Population Targets

Source	2008	2010	2016	2021 Low	2021 High
DEHLG Jan '09	371900	383800	427200	462300	475000
CSO Dec 08	371900	(389000)	416000	394000	439000
CSO Dec 08 (No Ext Migration)	371900	373000	386000	394,000	403,000
Current Mid- West Guidelines	371900			375,000	400,000
Previous DEHLG Advice (‘06)	371900			424,552	444,975

The DEHLG targets anticipate that between 68,000 and 81,000 people will migrate into the region in a period of twelve years up to 2021. (about 5,500 to 6,500 in each year). Using the CSO projections as a base (since they correspond reasonably to the current regional targets) the following table sets out the implications for the region in terms of some basic demands such as housing, employment and school places.

Table 4: Some Implications of the Targets

Demands	Base Scenario	DEHLG Migration Scenario
Jobs	30,000	58,000
Houses	33,000	56,000
Primary School Places	4,000	13,000
Secondary School Places	2,000	7,000

It is clear that the differences between these scenarios are considerable. Expected demands on services could be doubled or trebled if the migration scenario is to be realised.

Economic Development Issues:

- Economic growth is not being driven by locally based industry which has declined.
- Given the declining trend experienced by the ICT Hardware sector nationally, the long term sustainability of dependence on the sector is questionable.
- Efforts to identify alternative economic drivers have so far been inconclusive.
- Zone one is providing a commuting focus for the remainder of the region.
- A review of the Retail Strategy for the Region is in progress.

Population & Settlement Issues:

- The decline in 'urban' populations is a matter for concern.
- There is sufficient land zoned to double the population of the region.
- Half of all houses being built are not being built in zoned areas.

Social Infrastructure Issues:

- The regeneration of the most deprived urban areas has been initiated.

Physical Infrastructure Issues:

- Extension of a commuter Rail Link to Shannon needs further exploration.
- A Land Use and Transport study has been proposed and is seeking funding.
- Both water supply and water treatment and their current capacities will impact on where future population can go in the short and medium term.

Energy & Communications Issues:

- According to Eirgrid, without appropriate investment, within the next five to ten years there will be no capacity in the network to cater for new customers and the reliability of supply to existing customers will fall below normal international standards.

Environment & Heritage Issues:

Some of the key issues raised are:

- water quality problems
- biodiversity loss
- adaption to climate change through investment in flood management
- management of drinking water resources,
- producing energy from climate-proof sources
- meet legal obligations of Kyoto and the Climate Action Plan of the EU through reduction in emissions.

Rural Development Issues:

- Since the 2004 Guidelines were written two key policy documents have been published by the Department- Sustainable Rural Housing 2005 and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2008 (which contains a section on rural villages) and a Circular issued by the Department on foot of a formal notice from the European Commission. The new Guidelines will need to take these policy directions into account.
- Almost every Electoral Division in the Region contains a place of work to which people travel to work. The Guidelines need to consider the planning issues emerging from a changing rural economy and what policies can help support sustainable rural economies.
- Sustaining rural communities and meeting their needs is a challenge of balance and this is an important issue. The Guidelines need to consider whether there is a role to give general guidance across the Regions on this issue



7.0 The Next Stages

This is the first stage of a year long process to prepare new Regional Planning Guidelines for the Mid-West region. This public consultation phase, in advance of preparing the new Guidelines is an opportunity to gather the many opinions and issues that are out there and to bring them into the process- assisting in setting out where the focus of the Guidelines should lie. The public consultation sits alongside consultation with each of the individual Local Authorities in the Mid-West region and with state bodies which impact on the Guidelines- such as the Shannon Development, the National Roads Authority and Forfas.

Following the closure of the public consultation, a report will be prepared summarizing the issues (called the Directors Report) and this will be presented to the Steering Committee of the Regional Planning Guidelines and to the elected representatives of the Regional Authorities. This document will provide a solid base of issues from which the new Guidelines will be written, along with the statutory documents that the Guidelines will comply with- not least the National Spatial Strategy.

Following the writing of a new Guideline it will be discussed and finalised with the assistance of the Steering Committee and the elected representatives and be placed on public display for a second phases of public consultation. Opinions will be sought on new draft and what changes, if any, should be made to make it a better document. No precise dates are yet available for when this second consultation will take place, but is it currently scheduled for Autumn 2009.

Following completion of this second consultation the submissions will be considered and changes made to the draft Guidelines and a final new Regional Planning Guideline for 2010 to 2022 will be adopted by the Regional Authorities.



The following table summarizes the next steps:

Table 5: Summary Timetable

Statutory Function	Period	Elected Members Consideration
Finalize Draft Issues for Review	February 2009	Draft Issues to Members February Meeting 2009
Advertise Issues for Public Consultation	February to April 2009	
Directors Report on Submissions Received	May 2009	Report to be considered by Members May meeting 2009
Preparation of Draft Guidelines	May to August 2009	
Draft Guidelines Considered by Members	September 2009	Draft Guidelines to be considered by Members September meeting 2009
Draft Guidelines on Public Display	October to December 2009	
Directors Report on Issues Raised from Public Display	January-February 2010	Report to be considered by Members and Formal adoption of the New Guidelines at March Meeting 2010

8.0 Submissions

Local Authorities, state agencies, public and private agencies, interest groups and the public generally are invited to make submission regarding the development of the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Regional Economic Strategy before **5.00pm, Tuesday 14th April 2009.**

These submissions will be taken into consideration prior to the preparation of the Regional Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. In order to facilitate the plan preparation process you are asked to please make your submission, in writing, as early as possible.

Submissions and observations should be marked Regional Planning Guidelines and should state your name and, where relevant, the body represented and should be addressed to:

Director,
Regional Planning Guidelines,
Mid-West Regional Authority,
Friar Court,
Abbey Street,
Nenagh,
Co. Tipperary.

Submissions and observations may also be made by e-mail to the following address: info@mwra.ie.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE WILL BE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES LATER ON IN THE PROCESS FOR YOU TO FURTHER EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS AND MAKE ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS.