



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kildare has been regarded as one of the best performing Irish counties in an economic sense over the last decade and a half. However, past performance is in itself not enough to ensure future good performance. With continuing globalisation and the enlargement of the EU, competition is increasing, which will affect every part of Ireland. As competitor countries and regions are constantly seeking to gain a competitive edge, Ireland and Kildare will need to respond to this continually changing environment.

Globalisation has the effect of reducing differences in key national location factors between countries, which implies that local factors are becoming more important. Thus, an increasingly important determinant of the economic and social well being of Kildare will be the activities of Kildare County Council in facing up to the key challenges. In order to better meet the challenges ahead, Kildare County Council commissioned this report to inform economic development policies in the County for the period to 2016, with the key aim to make Kildare the place to live, work and invest.

The key message from the analysis carried out as part of this study is that Kildare has to compete internationally rather than just nationally in order to attract and retain investment and skills to stay ahead. Simply being ahead of neighbouring counties will not be sufficient unless these are also ahead of the international competition. Kildare County Council can play an important role in facilitating or initiating the changes necessary to stay competitive. Importantly, Kildare County Council (KCC) cannot afford to be merely reactive, but has to become more proactive.

This requires that KCC listen to individuals and key business and community interests. In order to be proactive and to ensure that the complexities of the economy are properly considered a coherent strategy is necessary to manage this process. A key part of this strategy is a framework that allows the complex relationship between the different actors, growth drivers and policies to be considered in a dynamic way. This framework can be utilised to prioritise the actions of the County Council, therefore increase the effectiveness of the Council.

In contrast to other approaches such as competing only within Ireland the recommendation of this report to compete internationally, which requires a more global view of development, would be of substantial benefit to the country as a whole as it would help underpin the overall competitive performance.

In order to identify
the appropriate policies one
must understand how the
economy works





Kildare has experienced
tremendous change over
the last 15 years....

