

South East's 9.2 per cent IDA jobs boost is "stunning"

DESPITE ongoing calls for greater IDA support for the South-East, newly released figures show that the region recorded the largest increase in employment supported by the agency in 2017.

According to the agency's statistic on total employment in IDA client companies throughout Ireland, there was an increase of 9.2 per cent in such employment in the South-East in 2017.

The statistics show a total employment figure of 210,443 nationwide; with a figure of 14,918 in the South-East giving it the highest rate of growth of any region, including Dublin.

Other mainly rural regions performed strongly, including the West and Mid-West which each had a five per cent increase in IDA supported jobs.

Minister for Rural and Community Development Michael Ring said that the strong job creation statistics show there is a significant increase in job creation in Ireland's regions.

However, while welcoming the progress made, he said he was keen to emphasise the significant challenge that still exists in creating sustainable rural jobs.



Pleased: IDA Chief Executive Martin Shanahan

Cllr Mary Roche (Ind), who has been one of the most vocal Waterford Councillors calling for greater IDA focus on Waterford, said that despite the figures the agency is still under delivering.

"Reading their figures you'd think we're best in class down here but they are still under delivering," she said. "We just want our fair share, nothing more."

WIT lecturer Dr Ray Griffin noted that the IDA added 1,250 jobs to South-East or 7.08 per cent of national share which is up from 6.7 per cent.

He has described this as "a stunning performance" adding approximately €315m to regional income but agrees that there is still "vast ground" to make up.

Commenting on the new figures, Martin Shanahan, CEO of IDA said: "There are 210,443 people going to work in foreign direct investment firms every day in Ireland, and we know the knock-on employment impact on the economy is much greater than this. We have achieved this figure two years ahead of target. The targets that were set were hugely ambitious at the time, and I would like to pay tribute to the companies that have placed their confidence in Ireland, to my colleagues in IDA Ireland

who fight to win these jobs on a daily basis – they have worked tirelessly to achieve these numbers and also to all of those in the public and private sector who assist us in that effort.”

The Munster Express understands that new owners are being sought for a number of vacant properties on the Waterford IDA Industrial Estate, but concerns remain in relation to the current condition of these sites.

Numerous properties within the Estate, some of which are in the ownership of the IDA and some of which are privately owned, are lying idle and in an extremely poor condition.

Following concerns raised by local Councillors towards the end of 2017, IDA’s Regional Manager for the South East Brendan McDonald said the agency was striving to find new owners for such sites which are in its ownership.

The IDA has already successfully secured tenants for the first buildings completed under its Regional Property Investment Programme in Waterford, Athlone and Sligo.

The programme has been designed to win investments and jobs into regional locations with the objective of creating high-spec pre-built turnkey property options that businesses could move into at short notice.

IDA Ireland continues to roll out its building programme across the country with new buildings planned in Carlow, Dundalk, Limerick, Athlone as well as Waterford over the next two years.