



## Variation 2:

This variation was approved by resolution of Limerick City Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012

Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016

**Replacement of Chapter 2 - overall strategy to include the preparation of a Core Strategy as required under the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2010**

## Chapter 2 Strategic Context

### Introduction

This Chapter sets out the overall strategy for the City for the period 2010-2016 and beyond and details the Strategic Context within which the Development Plan is framed with reference to National and Regional plans and policies. The main objectives of the **Mid-West Area Strategic Plan** are detailed as part of this chapter. Reference is also made to other local strategies which impact on the future physical development of Limerick. Recent and proposed changes to these policies are outlined for incorporation into the City Development Plan as they are adopted. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement for an evidence-based “Core Strategy” to be incorporated as part of any Development Plan. The purpose of a Core Strategy is to articulate a medium-to-longer term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the Planning Authority and in so doing to demonstrate that a Development Plan and its policies and objectives are entirely consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2022 (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 (R.P.G.'s).

This strategy addresses the issues of housing, employment and infrastructure. Key development areas are also identified and the broad development strategy concludes the Chapter.

### Strategic Context

The Development Plan has been prepared with regard to relevant National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines that impact on proper planning and sustainable development. The main elements of these plans are outlined below.

### National Policies & Strategies

#### National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)

The NSS is a 20 year plan for the Country which aims to promote a better balance of population, jobs and development between the regions. It has identified a number of Gateway Cities including Limerick which are the focus for population and economic growth in their region. Much of the focus of the City Development Plan is to set out the framework within which Limerick can further develop its role as a Gateway City for the Mid-West Region. It is noted that the NSS is currently being refreshed and the results of this will be incorporated into the new development plan when necessary.

The Atlantic Gateways initiative is based on the NSS and aims to mobilise the gateways of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway through interaction and collaboration to create a critical mass in the regions to balance that of Dublin.

#### National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP)

The NDP envisages a total investment of €184 billion over the next 7 years to ‘secure the further transformation of our country socially and economically within an environmentally sustainable framework’ (NDP pg. 10). As the third largest City in the Country, the challenge for Limerick is seen as accelerating growth and development, focusing on the regeneration of the City Centre and using NDP investment in the City’s infrastructure to act as a trigger for significant private investment. Limerick City Council has sought funding under this initiative mainly to improve the physical fabric of the City Centre to date.

### **Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, 1997**

This Strategy provides a framework for the achievement of sustainable development at local level.

#### ***It identifies 4 key ways development plans can contribute to the achievement of sustainability:***

- Encourage efficient use of energy, transport and natural resources through the careful selection of development locations;
- Promote the most effective use of areas already developed;
- Secure protection and enhancement of the natural environment;
- Accommodate new development needs in an environmentally sustainable way.

### **National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 (NCCS)**

The National Climate Change Strategy aims to reduce energy consumption and ensure Ireland reaches its target under the Kyoto Protocol to limit greenhouse gas emissions to 13% above 1990 levels by 2012. A **Regional Climate Change Strategy** has also been prepared for the Mid-West Region by the Regional Authority.

### **Statutory Guidelines**

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government regularly issue guidelines to Planning Authorities on aspects of planning policy. Limerick City Council will have due regard to all guidelines currently issued and that may be issued during the lifetime of this plan.

### **Regional Policies & Strategies**

#### **Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2020 (R.P.G.'s)**

The R.P.G.'s provide an overall spatial planning framework for the Region to 2020 taking the NSS objectives to a regional level and supporting the strengthening of the Limerick Gateway. The **Regional Planning Guidelines** were adopted by the Mid-West Regional Authority in September 2010. All Planning Authorities and allied service agencies have an obligation to be consistent with the provisions of the 'Guidelines & Strategies' in the preparation and execution of their prescribed functions. The strategy recognises that the Region is marked by a strong central core, embracing Limerick City, and the nearby centres of Shannon and Ennis. The presence of key infrastructure i.e. Shannon Airport, Educational Institutions, port, rail and road facilities in the area, together with considerable public capital investment serves as major opportunities for the City and the Region. Weaknesses include low population distribution, weak urban infrastructure, poor connectivity around the Region, commuting distance and travel times and the over elaborate local government administration needs of the area.

#### **Mid-West Area Strategic Plan 2010–2030 (MWASP)**

MWASP is designed to develop an integrated planning, land use and transportation strategy for the development of the Mid-West Region with a 20 year horizon.

#### **It is envisaged that such a framework will:**

- Identify the Region's strategic infrastructural requirements for the next 30 years.

- Inform future development plans.
- Inform the upcoming National Development Plan (NDP) review and future NDP, Regional Planning Guideline (RPG) and National Spatial Strategy (NSS) reviews.
- Support the sustainability of the Limerick, Shannon, Ennis triangle and outlying conurbations.

### **Strategic Context**

- Aid in identifying and securing National Government funding.
- Aid in informing National, Regional and Local Government Policy and include other relevant considerations for the Region into an overall sustainable development strategy.
- On completion and adoption the plan will be integrated into the development plan by way of variation if necessary.

### **Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region (2010 -2016)**

The retail strategy for the mid west Region was approved by Limerick City Council in 2010. The strategy reviewed the 2003 strategy and set out policy recommendations in respect of future retail development in the region. These policies are set out in more detail in Chapter 4.

### **Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities (2010-2016)**

Limerick City Council with Limerick and Clare County Councils have carried out review of the Housing Strategy in 2010. It has examined the need for coordinated housing policies between the local authorities to support the regeneration project and the populations targets set out the R.P.G.'s. The final Housing Strategy was adopted by Limerick City Council in 2011 and will be incorporated into the City Development Plan.

### **Policy SC.1**

*It is the policy of Limerick City Council to have regard to and be consistent with National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines in the development plan and implementation of the overall strategy for the development of Limerick City.*

### **Local Strategies**

#### **Regeneration**

Moyross, St. Mary's Park and Southill/Ballinacurra Weston have been identified by the Government as areas in need of radical social and economic regeneration. The Regeneration Agency was established in 2007 by the Oireachtas. A key objective for these areas will be the renewal and rebuilding of the existing public housing with a strong emphasis on management and enforcement. A further key objective is the creation of a much more balanced social mix of housing by the provision of private and affordable housing and the necessary social and economic infrastructure to support the economic needs of the communities. Limerick City Council is a key stakeholder in the process. Policies in respect of regeneration are set out in Chapter 7 of this plan.

### **City Centre Strategy**

Limerick, as the capital of the Mid-West, has a vital role at the head of the Regional Hierarchy for commerce, employment, shopping, leisure and cultural/social activities. The City Centre is the focus of much of this activity. The quality and sustainability of its continuing development is now vital in achieving the vision for the City Centre and the wider Gateway as a Region of world class excellence for learning, leisure and living. The role of this document is to set a context for the identification of development opportunities in the City Centre and to identify and make provision for consequent and necessary variations to the City Development Plan. The strategy was incorporated into the City Development Plan, 2004 by way of variation.

### **The Mid-West Task Force**

The Mid-West Task Force was established by An Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan TD, in February 2009, to consider and make recommendations concerning the implications of the serious economic downturn in the Mid-West on the socio-economic fabric of the Region, exacerbated by the announcement by Dell of the cessation of manufacturing in Limerick. The continuing economic slowdown will require innovative responses if the population targets set out are going to be served by sufficient employment opportunities. The final report of the task force will address these needs under a number of headings:

- Driving foreign inward investment and the development of enterprise;
- Examination of the contribution and inter- relationships of the economic development agencies;
- Targeting key investments to offset job losses in low skill manufacturing and the skill sets required for same;
- A Masterplan for the Greater Limerick Area;
- The potential of the Mid-West as an energy hub;
- Optimization of the potential of the Shannon Estuary;
- Tourism - development of a ten year plan;
- The potential of a major cargo hub at Shannon Airport.

### **Policy SC.2**

*It is the policy of Limerick City Council to have regard to local strategies including the report of the Mid-West Task Force.*

### **Core Strategy**

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to articulate a medium-to-longer term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the planning authority and in so doing to demonstrate that the development plan and its objectives are consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines (R.P.G.'s) and especially as regards defining a coherent settlement strategy that sets out the hierarchy and role of Gateways, Hub towns, City towns, other towns and villages and rural areas outlined in the documents above; and

- The process of giving effect to the hierarchy above by setting regional and national population targets and associated requirements for housing land.

- Providing a transparent evidence-based rationale for the amount of land proposed to be zoned for residential and allied mixed use zonings in the development plan
- Providing a rationale for the quantum and location of employment zoned lands.
- Demonstrating that, in setting out objectives for retail development, the planning authority has had regard to the statutory Retail Planning Guidelines.

### Population

Part One of the City Development Plan, 2004 set out two possible demographic scenarios for the future growth of the City and explored the implications of these scenarios in terms of housing, employment, schools and other components. The City Development Plan, 2004 expected that the population of Limerick City and Suburbs would increase from 92,000 to between 97,000 and 101,000 by 2006, depending on the rate of employment creation in the City. It was also expected that the population of the area within the City Boundary would rise to over 55,000 concomitant on the above expectation and there being no increase in migration out of the City. However, according to the 2006 census the population within the City Boundary fell from 54,000 to 52,000 and the population of the City and Suburbs rose to a little over 95,000 persons. The implication of these trends is that there was a migration of more than 6,000 persons out of the City to elsewhere in the Region and very little of this migration settled in the suburbs of Limerick City. In fact there was also net out-migration from the City and suburbs of about 4,000 persons. The boundary extension of 2008 increased the population of the City to 59,790.

### Strategic Context

The failure of this part of the Limerick-Shannon Gateway to expand its population is a very serious concern and must be addressed if the full potential of the Gateway is to be realised in accordance with National Policy. In August 2009 the DEHLG issued revised population targets addressing the changed economic circumstances for inclusion in the Regional Planning Guidelines and city and county development plans, these are set out in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1 Minimum Population Targets for Gateways & Hubs for 2016 & 2022**

<b>Gateways</b>					
<b>Population</b>					
	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2022</b>
Letterkenny	15,231	17,586	20,300	23,000	25,700
Sligo	19,735	19,402	19,200	21,200	23,700
Dundalk	32,505	35,085	38,200	42,300	47,200
Dublin Metro.	1,182,892	1,242,709	1,306,300	1,392,200	1,486,800
Midlands	42,655	48,887	54,800	66,000	85,000
<b>*Limerick/Shannon</b>	<b>95,559</b>	<b>99,979</b>	<b>104,600</b>	<b>118,000</b>	<b>132,700</b>
Waterford	46,736	49,213	52,500	56,500	62,500
Cork Metro. (CASP)	257,355	272,645	296,600	336,600	381,500

Galway	66,163	72,729	78,400	88,500	98,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,758,831</b>	<b>1,858,235</b>	<b>1,970,900</b>	<b>2,144,300</b>	<b>2,343,800</b>

**Source:** Regional Planning Guidelines Review Gateway & Hub Population Targets (DEHLG August 2009).

Note: \* Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022.

The distribution of the target population for the Gateway is also set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines. This mandates the need to support the considerable future public investment in regeneration in the City by allocating up to 70% of the increase of the population for the Limerick/Shannon Gateway to the area of Limerick City Council with the balance to be distributed between the remaining relevant areas in Counties Limerick and Clare. The resulting target population for the City is set out in Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2 Population targets for Limerick City 2006 – 2022**

Year	Population	Increase	Target
<b>2006</b>	59,790		
<b>2016</b>		<b>+ 10,978</b>	<b>70,768</b>
<b>2022</b>		+10,472	81,240
<b>Total</b>		<b>+21,450</b>	

**Source:** Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022.

### **Context**

The projected increase in the population of the City of 10,978 in the lifetime of the plan will generate a demand for housing, employment, education and other services within the City. This plan sets out a range of policies that support this target in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

### **Housing Land Availability**

This proposed population target increase of 10,978 in 2016 combined with a reduced household size, which is estimated to fall to 2.4 persons per household (Housing Strategy for the Mid-west Region 2010-2017) will generate a housing demand of 9,149 units over the lifetime of the Plan. The existing undeveloped residential land bank within the City is 168.5 hectares (excluding regeneration areas) which in accordance with the density levels indicated in the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines of 22 – 35 units per hectare is capable of providing 5,679 units. The regeneration areas have an indicated capacity of 4,400 additional units provides a total capacity of 9,960 dwellings. Further capacity is also identified in the mixed use zones in the city including; the city centre, district centres and neighbourhood centres in particular. These are estimated to have a capacity for 3,538 units. The capacity of these areas in respect of population is set out in Table 2.3 below. These results indicate that there is sufficient land to meet the housing need for the lifetime of the plan. The development plan is in accordance with National Policy in respect of supporting the regeneration programme. These figures ignore brown field site redevelopment in the City Centre and in some suburban areas.

**Table 2.3 Housing Land Capacity**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Pop. Equivalent</b>
<b>Regeneration</b>	133	4,400	10,560
<b>Zoned Undeveloped Lands</b>	168.5	5679	13,628
<b>Mixed use land (including brownfield land)</b>	105	3538	8,492
<b>Total</b>	<b>406.5</b>	<b>13,617</b>	<b>32,680</b>

**Location of Land**

The majority of the residentially zoned undeveloped land consists of small pockets of land 0-4HA in size. There are a number of larger parcels in excess of 8 Ha and these are listed in Table 2.4.

**Table 2.4 Undeveloped Zoned Housing Land**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Units</b>
<b>Coonagh / Clondrinagh</b>	33	1,089
<b>Clonmacken</b>	23	759
<b>Former Racecourse</b>	36	1,188
<b>Corbally</b>	8	264
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,300</b>

**Phasing of Development**

These figures indicate clearly that there is an excess of land required possible for residential development to meet the population target assigned to Limerick City for the plan period. There is therefore a need to phase developments in a planned and sustainable manner. Table 2.5 sets out the quantum of land expected to be released in the plan period and to 2022 under the various zonings. Given the compactness of the city it is not possible to prioritise areas other than the regeneration areas. In this regard the regeneration agency have stated that in the plan period there will be 2,000 additional units provided and that the balance of 2,400 will be provided in the period after that. The balance of lands identified indicate a preference to seek the consolidation of the city centre through brownfield development and the diversification of the district centres to perform as more than just retail centres.

These figures indicate a slight under provision of land for the plan period. However reference should be had to the current economic climate, the current overhang in the market and the capacity that can be released should economic conditions change.

**Retail**

Chapter 4 of the plan sets out the policy of Limerick City Council in respect of retail development over the plan period. These policies incorporate fully the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region (2010 -2016) which has been adopted by Limerick City Council in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines

Table No. 2.5 Core Strategy

LIMERICK CITY CORE STRATEGY POPULATION LAND USE AND HOUSING UNIT REQUIREMENTS 2010 -2022	2006 Population	2016 Population	2022 Population	Phase 1 House No. Units Required by 2016 based on Households of 2.4	Phase 2 House No. Units Required by 2022 based on Households of 2.4	Total House No. of Units required by 2022 based on households 2.4	Phase 1 Land to be zoned in Hectares 2016	Phase 2 Land to be zoned in Hectares 2022	Total Land to be zoned in Hectares by 2022	90% of Housing Units (MWRA RPGs 2010-2022 *) @ 35 housing units per hectare of 168.5 hectares	10% of Housing Units (MWRA RPGs 2010-2022 *) @ 22 housing units per hectare of 168.5 hectares	Excess /Shortfall Zoned Lands 2016 Ha's	Excess /Shortfall Zoned Lands 2022 Ha's	Total Excess /Shortfall Units 2016	Total Excess /Shortfall Units 2022
Limerick City	59,790	70,768	81,240	9,149	4,364	13,513	272	135	407			-1.16	2.52	39	143
Increase		10,978	10,472												
<b>Regeneration</b>		4800	5760	2,000	2,400	4,400	60.6	72.4	133.0						
<b>Zoned Undeveloped Housing Lands *1</b>															
Coonagh/Clondranagh		1,618	1051	674	438	1,112	20	13	33						
Clonmacken		1212	566	540	236	776	16	7	23						
Former Racecourse		1778	1132	741	472	1,213	22	14	36						
Corbally		648	0	270	0	270	8	0	8						
Balance		4448	1092	1853	455	2,308	55	13.5	68.5						
<b>MIXED USE / BROWN FIELD *2</b>															
City Centre		3638	607	1516	253	1769	45	7.5	52.5			4.24			
Remaining Mixed use including Brownfield/Derlict Sites		3638	607	1516	253	1769	45	7.5	52.5						
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,780</b>	<b>10,815</b>	<b>9,110</b>	<b>4,507</b>	<b>13,617</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>407</b>						

## Notes

\*1 Residential Land Bank potential 168.5 hectares

Total Units = 5,678 units

\*2 Mixed Use /Brownfield

105 hectares

94.5ha x 35 units= 3307

units

10.5hax 22 units = 231

units

Total units =3,538

## **Strategic Employment Locations**

The City Council will support the further development of the City Centre as the primary strategic employment location in the region. The plan recognises the further potential that exists within the Docklands area, as well as suburban locations such as the regeneration areas Ballysimon and Coonagh/Clondrinagh to provide substantial employment opportunities. It is clear that in the current economic climate, development should be concentrated in these locations. The reports of the Mid-West Task Force and MWASP will inform the strategy into the future.

### **City Centre**

Forfas in its report '**Our Cities – Drivers of National Competitiveness**' concluded that: *'Successful countries and regions must have successful cities at their core. The evidence clearly demonstrates that cities drive economic growth and living standards with significant benefits for national living standards'*.

The National Spatial Strategy places strong emphasis on development of the City Centre as the key driver of economic activity. Limerick City Centre as a Regional Gateway will continue as the focus for retail, cultural and commercial activity and has potential for significant expansion and intensification while recognising the need to respect the existing intrinsic historic character of the area in new development. The City Centre has seen significant development over the last 10 years, however the vitality of City Centres retail base has been undermined by developments outside of the centre and the difficulties associated with land assembly and conservation within the City Centre. The City Council have begun an ambitious programme of pedestrianisation of the Central area and the introduction of an inner orbital route which combined with green routes will facilitate easier access to the centre. Chapter 3 of the **City Centre Strategy 2008** highlights a number of key development sites - Arthur's Quay and the Docklands are prime Brownfield locations with potential for very significant employment growth over the coming decades. Permission has been approved for the 'Opera Centre' retail development on Patrick Street. It is considered that the development of these sites, combined with the proposed improvements in the public realm and traffic management proposals contained within this plan will provide the necessary opportunities during the life of this plan.

The existing Limerick Docks provide a key piece of transport infrastructure in the context of short sea shipping. The protection of the existing docks as a logistical hub with the sustainable redevelopment of the adjacent lands as a significant employment and residential area within the City is an objective of this plan.

### **Regeneration Areas**

The proposed regeneration of Moyross, Southill/Ballinacurra Weston and Kings Island will provide significant employment opportunities during the construction and operational phases subject to funding being made available. The master plans require the approval of Limerick City Council to be fully incorporated into the City Development Plan. More detailed policies in respect of the regeneration project are presented in **Chapter 7 Regeneration**.

### **Other**

There are also a number of additional locations in the suburbs and in particular Coonagh/Clondrinagh and existing industrial lands which can, through intensification of use, provide a choice of locations to meet employment needs.

***The advantages of these City locations over more dispersed areas are that they:***

- Make optimum use of existing infrastructure, such as water, drainage, transport, services;
- Are close to existing residential areas or in planned mixed use areas, where people can walk or travel short distances to work, reducing the need to travel;
- They are currently or are planned to be served by high quality public transport.

**Infrastructure**

The provision of adequate infrastructure to support the needs of an expanding population is considered essential. The detailed requirements in respect of transport and services are currently under review in the **Mid-West Area Strategic Plan**. Policies in respect of their management are set out in **Chapters 5 Transportation** and **12 Environmental Infrastructure & Management**. Critical to the attraction of inward investment is the need to create an attractive and easily accessible City Centre. In this regard both the orbital route and the pedestrianisation strategies are underway and funding of these projects is critical. It is also acknowledged that a successful economy must have a modern and reliable energy infrastructure. In this regard the contents of the Government White Paper, **Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland 2007 – 2020** and the subsequent Grid 25 Transmission Strategy 2008 (Eirgrid Plc) are noted.

**Boundary Extension**

The promotion of the balanced social and economic development of Limerick in a balanced and environmentally sustainable way is the goal of this development. It is the belief of Limerick City Council that this can best be achieved in the context of an enlarged administrative area. The case of Limerick City Council is grounded squarely on the concept of effective and convenient local government, defined by the City Council as embracing aspects of quality, quantity and cost of service provision to the public. The concept also incorporates the principle of equity of provision to all consumers regardless of their location.

***In addressing the concept of effective and convenient local government, the City Council bases its case on the following considerations:***

- Limerick City is a designated gateway in the National Spatial Strategy. The partitioning of the Gateway mitigates against the achievement of a City of sufficient and functional scale.
- The promotion of Limerick requires a sense of vision for the City, the realisation of which requires an integrated set of direct and indirect strategies, best achieved by a single urban authority.
- There has been population decline in the County Borough and population growth in the City Environs with diffusion in the provision of services resulting in a lowering of quality and efficiency.
- The extended boundary will assist in securing the long term financial base for the City.
- There is insufficient land available within the County Borough to accommodate the coordinated and sustainable functioning and growth of the Gateway.
- In terms of planning and development the entire Limerick City area performs as a single, complex entity. To ensure that needs and changes in the urban system are controlled and directed in the most effective and convenient manner, it is essential to have a single urban authority.
- Social imbalance resulting from rural depopulation is universally recognised. Less obvious is the imbalance caused by loss of population to the periphery, such as has

been experienced in Limerick and manifested by urban obsolescence and social deprivation. These problems can be best addressed in a balanced way by a single local authority.

- In terms of enfranchisement, only the City Council can have the City as a whole as its sole policy focus, thus ensuring equity for and accountability to the entire urban electorate.
- The provision of local services by three autonomous local authorities within a single urban area militates against uniformity in quality, economies of scale and equity in distribution.

### **City Development Strategy**

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the development strategy for the City for the period of the plan.

#### ***The main elements which are developed further in the plan are:***

- The need to extend the administrative boundaries of the City to provide more coherent and focussed policies to support the Gateway.
- The regeneration of the Moyross, Southill/Ballinacurra Weston and Kings Island areas of the City in a sustainable manner.
- The development of a strong and vibrant City Centre in accordance with the policies set out in the City Centre Strategy, 2008.
- The support of the existing district centres as identified in the retail strategy and the existing employment areas as identified.
- The completion of the inner orbital route and fourth river crossing together with the introduction of green routes throughout the City to improve access to the City Centre and other critical nodes within the City.
- Support for the Atlantic Corridor project to link the gateways along the Atlantic seaboard.

Figure 2.1 CORE STRATEGY

