

Variation No. 4

Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016

Variation number 4 to the Limerick City Development Plan 2010 – 2016, which was adopted by the elected members on the 26th January 2015 comprised of the Incorporation of the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan and Amendments to advertising policy relating to ‘Bus shelters/Other Stand Alone structures.

The variation consisted of changes to Chapters 2,3,5,7,12,13,15 & 16

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.

2030 Economic and Spatial Plan

The Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick sets out the medium and long term strategy for the development of Limerick City and County for the next 15 years.

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 in particular the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan.

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

Gateways					
Population					
	2002	2006	2010	2016	2022
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
*Limerick/Shannon	95,559	99,979	104,600	118,000	132,700
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
Total	1,758,831	1,858,235	1,970,900	2,144,300	2,343,800

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
2006	59,790		
2016		+ 10,978	70,768
2022		+10,472	81,240
Total		+21,450	

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 (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

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

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

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

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												
Regeneration		4800	5760	2,000	2,400	4,400	60.6	72.4	133.0						
Zoned Undeveloped Housing Lands *1															
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						
MIXED USE / BROWN FIELD *2															
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						
Total		21,780	10,815	9,110	4,507	13,617	272	135	407						

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. The Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan identifies seven City centre transformational projects. 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.

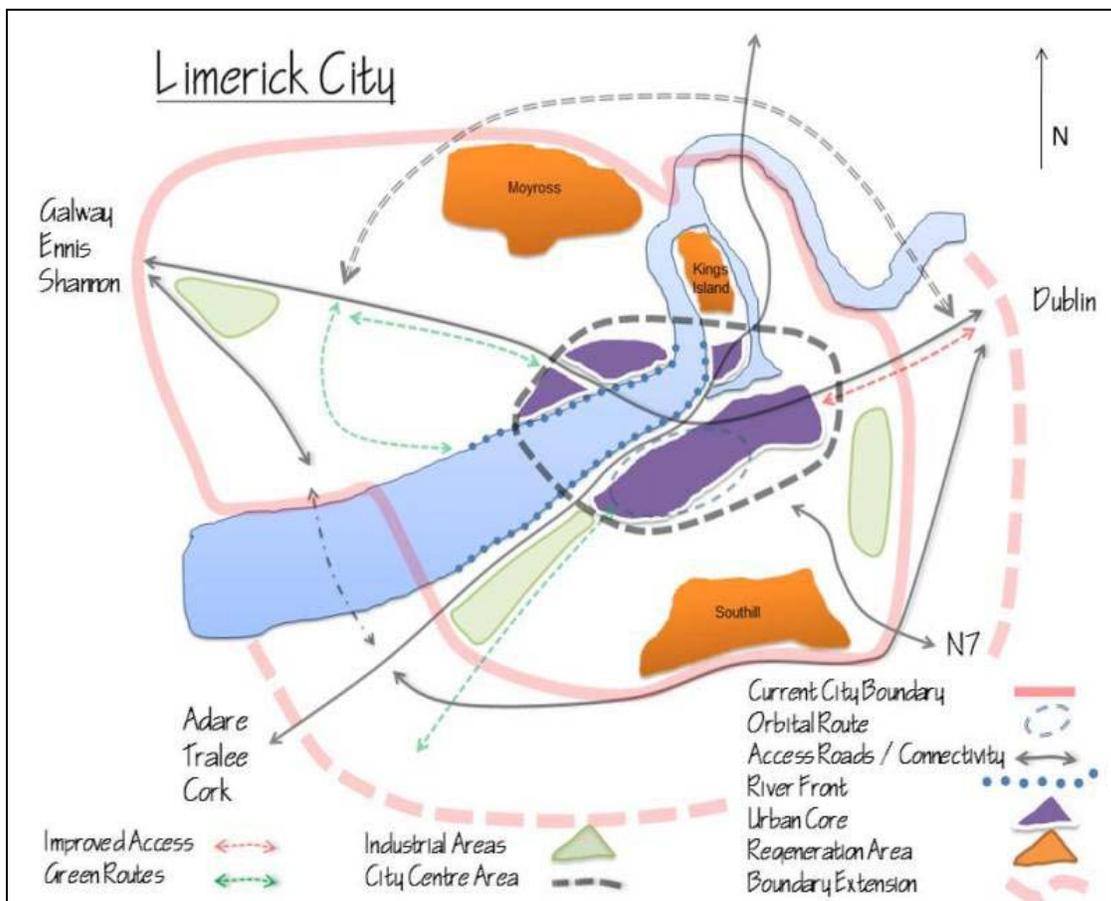
City Development Strategy

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 Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan.
- 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



Chapter 3 Economic Development Strategy

Introduction

This Chapter will set out the strategies and land use policies to guide the future economic development of the City. Cities are seen as the primary drivers of economic and social development. The recently published report '*Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness*' by the National Competitiveness Council of Forfas highlight the role that properly managed cities can play in increasing national economic growth.

It is the objective of Limerick City Council:

- To develop an enterprising City based on a wide sector mix;
- To create and maintain a unique and attractive City region to attract foreign direct investment and employment;
- To provide for a diverse range of employment needs so that people with a diverse range of skills can find work in the City;
- To support sustainable growth of third level institutions in the City, in particular research and development, and to foster links with business;
- To provide balanced spatial employment to reduce the need for travel and also to provide balanced economic growth throughout the City, in particular in the regeneration areas;
- To maximise the use of available land, including the intensification and re-use of existing land and buildings;
- To ensure new locations for employment have access to public transport.

Strategic Context

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) & the National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP)

A key aim of the NSS is the development of Gateways as national engines of growth which will establish a spatial structure capable over time of changing previous development trends, such as the rapid development of the Greater Dublin Area. Limerick is identified as a Gateway City in the NSS and an engine of growth for the Region in terms of employment and population. The current NDP highlights a move towards more high value economic activities and industries, both foreign-owned and indigenous. It recognises that Limerick has a strong economic base with extensive Foreign Direct Investment in dynamic sectors such as Information, Communication & Technology, strong third level education facilities, a modern airport with recent significantly enhanced capacity, a large hinterland with regionally important towns and an outstanding natural setting. The challenge for Limerick is seen as achieving growth and development in the current economic climate.

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. An interim report was published in July 2009. This report made a number of recommendations in respect of the short term prior to publishing its final report. In its final report, the Task Force will focus on future development potential and recommend to the Government a development plan for the Mid-West Region. Some key themes have emerged during work on the Interim Report; the Task Force will now focus on the development of these themes, and related issues, leading to a blueprint for the development of the Mid-West Region.

These themes are:

- Driving foreign inward investment and the development of enterprise;
- Examination of the contribution and interrelationships 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;
- Optimisation 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 EDS.1

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to co-operate with all agencies in the region to facilitate the implementation of the economic and investment strategy, in co-operation with other institutions and the private sector, placing particular emphasis on seeking to secure the economic development of the City.

Strategic Employment Locations

The City Council will support the development of the City Centre as the strategic employment location. There is also significant potential for the Docklands area to develop as a major employment area. Within the suburban area it is acknowledged that the regeneration areas and the Coonagh/Clondrinagh areas also offer significant employment potential.

City Centre

The City Centre is the key driver of economic activity in the Region. The City Centre is the focus for retail, cultural and commercial activity and has the potential for significant expansion and intensification while recognising the need to respect the existing intrinsic historic character of the area in facilitating new development.

The City Centre has seen significant development over the last 10 years. The City Council has begun an ambitious programme of works targeted at improving the attractiveness of the City Centre which includes; the pedestrianisation of the central core, a riverside improvement strategy, and the introduction of an inner orbital route which combined with green routes will facilitate easier access to the centre. The 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick sets out the medium and long term strategy for the development of the City - see chapter 3.

Policy EDS.2

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate the sustainable redevelopment of sites identified in the 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick.

Docklands

Limerick Docks and adjacent lands represent an under-utilized asset for the future economic development not just of the City but also of the Region. The retention of the existing port and the development of an employment and residential hub shall be supported by this plan.

Policy EDS.3

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate the sustainable development of the Limerick Docklands as a Strategic Employment location within the City.

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 areas also contain a number of strategic assets which can, if developed appropriately contribute to the economic base of the City i.e. LEDP, Galvone Industrial Estate. More detailed policies in respect of the regeneration project are presented in *Chapter 7 Regeneration*.

Other

There are also a number of additional suburban locations particularly, Coonagh and Clondrinagh which can, through appropriate planning, provide a locational choice for potential employers.

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

- Optimum use is made of existing infrastructure, such as water, drainage, transport, services;
- Close to existing residential areas or are in planned mixed use areas so that people can walk or travel short distances to work, reducing the need to travel;
- These locations are already or are planned to be served by high quality public transport.

Policy EDS.4

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate the regeneration agency in accordance with an approved masterplan.

Facilitating Development

Limerick City Council has a strategic role to play in facilitating development through its Compulsory Acquisition powers under the Planning & Development Act, 2000-2008 and the Derelict Sites Act 1990. Limerick City Centre has seen substantial urban renewal over the past 20 years with the aid of various tax incentive programmes. Notwithstanding this, there still remain areas within the City in need of renewal and regeneration. The **2030 Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick**, identifies many of these areas and other key development sites. It is considered that in the lifetime of this plan other areas within the City will require to be redeveloped to meet the needs of a changing economy.

To secure the development of these sites Limerick City Council will:

- Actively engage with landowners and developers.
- Prepare design statements/development briefs.
- Use compulsory acquisition powers to secure the release of strategic blocks of land in order to facilitate the assembly of sites for the regeneration of the City Centre.
- Will extinguish public and private rights of way where necessary to secure the comprehensive development of an area.

Policy EDS.5

It is the policy of the City Council to actively promote the implementation of ongoing initiatives in Urban Renewal by the Government.

Policy EDS.6

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to mobilise the potential of brownfield sites in the City.

Policy EDS.7

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to prepare plans for urban renewal and sustainable development for areas in need of renewal and regeneration especially urban renewal of the City Centre and to pursue the implementation of that plan with the utmost vigour.

Infrastructure

It is acknowledged that there is a need to ensure that the City and the region are supported by an efficient high quality and secure energy and broadband infrastructure.

Policy EDS.8

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to support the development of a high quality energy and broadband network for the city and the region.

Derelict Sites

There are also within the City Centre a number of derelict sites which detract from the attractiveness of the City as a location for inward investment. The Derelict Sites Act 1990 provides a legal mechanism to seek the elimination of such dereliction that includes compulsory acquisition.

Policy EDS.9

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to maintain an up to date Derelict Sites Register and to implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990 to remove these sites from dereliction.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)

A Business Improvement District is a partnership between a local authority and the local business community to develop projects and services that will benefit the trading environment within the boundary of a clearly defined commercial area. BIDS are an internationally tested mechanism for the development of partnerships between the Local Authority and local businesses. The Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006 provides the legislative basis for the operation of BIDS in Ireland and to date one BID has been created in Dublin.

Policy EDS.10

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the City.

Offices

Office based employment forms an extremely important part of the City economy and provides a significant and growing amount of employment, particularly in the City Centre. It is therefore deemed necessary to differentiate between the different types and scale of office employment.

Retail/Public Offices

Retail offices are those where 'financial, professional and other' services are provided to visiting members of the public. The primary location for retail offices should continue to be the City Centre Commercial Core Area (CCA) as defined in *Chapter 15 Land-Use Zoning Objectives*. The City Centre is the most efficient and accessible location for such uses, having the best public transport links and therefore less need for parking requirements. The City Centre also provides complementary activities and amenities for workers and recent investment in regeneration, urban renewal and public realm works have served to enhance the image and attractiveness of the City Centre significantly. Retail offices providing a local service will be acceptable in district, neighbourhood and local centres at a scale compatible with the service function of the centre. This supports the concept of sustainability by providing a range of services to local areas. In

order to ensure an appropriate balance between shopping and other services the scale of such office uses permitted shall generally not exceed 150m².

Policy EDS.11

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate and encourage the development of retail offices in the City Centre and to support the development of retail offices serving a local function in District, Neighbourhood and Local Centres commensurate with the service function of the centre.

General Offices

General Offices provide a range of financial, professional, administrative and other services. In some instances they may be combined with a retail office in appropriate locations. The main focus for office uses in the City has traditionally been the City Centre Commercial Core Area, where the mix of retail office and general office activities support each other and are essential to the health and vibrancy of the City Centre. Recent years have seen a reduction in the demand for large scale offices in the City Centre. There is potential for these uses to be located in appropriately designed and laid out purpose built development on suitably zoned lands outside the City Centre. Such proposals shall be considered only where there are sufficient supports and complementary services available and where they can be served by sustainable public transport.

Policy EDS.12

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to support the development of the City Centre as the primary location for higher order general office development in the City and Region. Any scale of general office is acceptable in the Commercial Core Area, while general offices over 400m² will be acceptable in mixed use zones.

It is necessary to have a range of locations for offices to provide choice and to cater for the varying needs of different types of businesses. For this reason offices will also be permitted in industrial zones in the suburbs of the City provided each office unit is greater than 400m² in area, in order to encourage smaller office uses to locate in the City Centre. These zones are well dispersed throughout the City and will provide a range of employment locations. The development of high quality public transport services will be a key factor in the capacity of these zones to take additional high intensity office uses.

General office uses will also be open for consideration in District Centres, provided they are in scale with the overall size of the specific District Centre. Specific policies and objectives for general offices which may be open for consideration in district and other centres are outlined in *Chapter 15 Land-Use Zoning Objectives*.

Policy EDS.13

It is the policy of Limerick City Council that general office units over 400m² will be acceptable in principle in suburban industrial zones, with due consideration given to the development of high quality public transport in determining the capacity of these locations to take more intensive office development. General offices will be open for consideration in District Centres, to a scale appropriate to each centre.

Technology Industries

Traditional industries are being replaced by new categories of business which provide a range of products and services in an environment which is frequently similar to a modern office environment. These businesses are sometimes known as office based industry. They include activities such as software development, information technology, telemarketing, commercial research and development, data processing, publishing, and media recording. These uses

frequently locate in business parks such as those at Raheen and Plassey Technology Park. There is scope for the expansion of these activities and the City Council will support their development, particularly in regeneration areas. This is also an acceptable use in the City Centre. As these are high intensity employment uses similar to offices, the provision of high quality public transport will be a priority to facilitate the development of these sectors in suburban locations.

Policy EDS.14

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to support the development of high technology businesses in the Commercial Core Area and Docklands.

Science Parks/Research & Development

Research Development is seen as a key component in the creation of sustainable employment. Research and Innovation have received additional support following the announcement of the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment Investment Strategy (€3.8 billion) for Science, Technology & Innovation 2006-2013. Third level institutions play a critical role in fostering research and development through their research programmes.

Policy EDS.15

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to support the development of research and development activities linked to higher level education activities in the City.

Light Industrial & Related Uses

There continues to be a need for a diverse range of employment opportunities in the City despite the increasing move towards 'knowledge based' activities particularly in the context of high levels of unemployment in particular areas. Manufacturing industry employs in the region of 20% of people in the City and while it is acknowledged that there will be an ongoing decline of the traditional manufacturing sector, it is considered that there should continue to be provision for light industrial activities. A Light Industrial building is defined in the Planning & Development Act 2000-2008, as 'an industrial building in which the processes carried on or the plant or machinery installed are such as could be carried on or installed in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit'. There is a need to protect existing light industrial uses due to development pressures and perceived lower costs in the case of retailers. This can best be done effectively through zoning. The general strategy is to retain existing light industrial areas, apart from those areas specifically identified for alternative uses or renewal. Offices or office based industry will not be permitted in these areas unless they are ancillary to the primary industrial uses.

The light industry zoning objective allows for light industry and a range of related uses that would be suitable for location on industrial estates within the City, as it is not possible to zone for all types of uses separately. Therefore, as well as light industry, a range of other uses are also open for consideration in light industry zones to include trade warehousing and distribution, wholesaling, trade showrooms, showrooms (where ancillary to manufacturing, fitting and trade) and incubator units. Pure retail, retail warehousing and retail showrooms will not be permitted in these areas.

Policy EDS.16

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to protect sufficient areas for light industry in order to maintain an adequate supply of light industrial space and employment in order to help ensure a diverse range of employment opportunities in the City.

General Industrial Uses

There are a number of General Industrial uses in the City that have the potential to adversely impact on the amenities of residential areas but are necessary to the operation of the City. There is a need therefore to identify locations where such uses would be acceptable.

Commercial Leisure

Commercial leisure facilities are those run on a profit basis and include cinemas, family entertainment centres such as bowling, indoor children's play centres, fitness centres, gyms swimming pools etc. hotels, restaurants and public houses. Commercial leisure facilities generate a high level of movement and are best located in places that offer the highest levels of accessibility to a range of transport modes, in particular public transport. However, it is also important to protect the amenities of the City Centre. It is therefore the policy to control the location, size and activities of entertainment uses that are likely to attract large numbers of people, in particular 'super-pubs' and night clubs, in order to safeguard residential amenity, environmental quality and the established unique character and function of parts of the City Centre.

Policy EDS.17

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to ensure that all significant commercial leisure developments are located in accordance with a sequential test approach. The priority will be City Centre locations, followed by edge of centre, then district centres and neighbourhood centres. The availability of a choice of transport modes will be essential.

Education & Health

Major Health & Education Institutions

Education and Health sectors are now two of the major employers in Limerick City. They have a major role to play in the further training of the workforce and also in further research. It is therefore important to support their appropriate expansion and operation. Medical services contribute significantly to the economy of the City. The retention of these health institutions in the City is supported by this plan.

Policy EDS.18

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to recognise the contribution of the major education and health institutions in Limerick City to the overall economy of the City and their role in training, innovation and research and to support their continued operation and, where appropriate, expansion.

Smaller Scale Health Services

Small scale GP practices and other small scale local medical service providers provide an invaluable local service and will be open for consideration within the residentially zoned areas, provided general planning issues such as access, parking and impact on amenities are acceptable. There is a growing trend for provision of local health care services in Primary Health Care Centres, where a range of health services, including GPs and related services are grouped together in one location. The preference will be for these to be located in District, Neighbourhood or Local Centres, where they can link in with other local services, including pharmacies and other shops and services, in order to reduce the need to travel and to help support a range of local services in each area. Only in exceptional circumstances and if it is shown that there is no capacity within these centres, will Primary Care Centres be open for consideration in residential zones.

Policy EDS.19

It is the policy of Limerick City Council that specialist medical services should be located in the City Centre or District, Neighbourhood or Local Centres and will not normally be permitted in other locations.

Protection of Existing Employment Uses

The City Council is committed to ensuring that there is a mixture of employment uses around the City, for reasons of accessibility and sustainability and to ensure ease of access to a range of employment opportunities for those living in areas of high unemployment. Change of use of existing industrial uses (outside industrial zonings) to non-employment uses will be discouraged and where they can be shown to require redevelopment due to functional obsolescence, the preference will be for them to be redeveloped for a mix of appropriate employment and residential uses. One way of achieving this would be to develop specific 'live-work' units.

Protection of Existing Uses

To protect existing sites in industrial use, from pressure for alternative development (apart from sites identified for other purposes in the plan). Where industrial sites in predominantly residential areas require redevelopment due to functional obsolescence, the City Council will consider their redevelopment for a mix of uses including residential.

Non-Conforming Uses

In relation to change of use, expansion and intensification of uses which do not conform to the zoning objectives for an area, the City Council will consider each case on its own merits, having regard to the impact on the surrounding environment.

Policy EDS.20

It is the policy of Limerick City Council where a use exists as non-conforming use, to facilitate their continued operation provided they do not seriously detract from the zoning objectives for the area or from residential or other amenities in the vicinity of the development.

Home-Based Economic Activities

Home-based economic activities are small-scale commercial activities carried out by residents of a dwelling which are ancillary to the main use of the property as residential accommodation. The City Council accepts the need to accommodate these activities and recognises their importance in terms of employment creation and sustainability. Such uses might include small scale childcare provision (such as a crèche, or playschool), art-based activities (such as painting or craft workshops), and single person offices (such as professional services where public access is not a normal requirement). These activities can take place within existing buildings or in new live-work units specifically designed to accommodate home-based economic activities. The latter form of development would be appropriate in locations within the City Centre/Docklands and in or close to District/Neighbourhood or Local Centres.

Policy EDS.21

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to permit home-based economic activities where, by virtue of their nature and scale, they can be accommodated without detriment to the amenities of residential areas.

Policy EDS.22

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote and encourage the development of 'Live-work' units capable of accommodating home-based economic activities in areas around the City Centre and other sustainable development locations.

Chapter 5 Transportation

Introduction

Limerick City Council and the Mid-West experienced strong growth in car ownership and longer journey times to work over the lifetime of the 2004 City Development Plan and as a result most of the City's road network is at full capacity.

The challenge in this plan is to embrace the principle of sustainability and deliver on the growing demand for travel by sustainable forms of transport such as bus, train, cycling and walking. In the past a lack of co-ordination between land use and transportation has contributed to today's longer journey times and traffic congestion. The integration of land use and transportation has a key role to play in delivering social, economic and environmental sustainability and to deliver on this, the Mid-West local authorities have commissioned the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP).

In Limerick City & its Environs this has happened in the context of:

- A rapid growth in population and households, leading to increasingly dispersed travel patterns.
- An increase in employment leading to a large increase in the demand for travel in the peak hour.
- Increasing car ownership resulting in additional commuting by car, which is economically inefficient and environmentally unsustainable.
- Slower than expected delivery of public transport enhancement projects in Limerick City.

The MWASP will be a planning, land use & transportation strategy that will aim to:

- Strengthen and enhance the functionality of the Limerick-Shannon Gateway as identified in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020.
- Provide guidelines for the promotion of a more balanced regional settlement pattern through a more structured dispersal of population.
- Identify Limerick and the Mid-West strategic requirements for the next 30 years.
- Inform future social, physical, educational and economic infrastructural spending programs.
- Inform the current and future National Development Plans, Regional Planning Guidelines and National Spatial Strategy areas.
- Aid in securing National funding.

The key features of a more sustainable form of spatial development for the Limerick Area are:

- Development that is concentrated rather than dispersed allowing for it to be served more efficiently by public transport.
- Improved access to locations of employment, education, health, leisure and residence through the provision of a high quality sustainable public transport system.
- To develop new residential neighbourhoods and employment zones that can be adequately served by public transport.

Integrated Transport

Limerick City Council wishes to create a transport system that offers real choice so that more sustainable transport alternatives are available. The availability of real choice in transport modes will only serve to help aid social integration, economic growth and environmental sustainability of the City as a whole. To improve accessibility and reduce congestion especially on over reliance on private motor cars we must work to improve the quality of public transport and promote cycling and walking as safe sustainable and healthy transport options. To achieve these goals

Limerick City Council has commissioned a Public Transport Feasibility Study for Limerick that will make recommendations for the optimisation of existing transport infrastructure and the provision of new infrastructure where required. The plan will also have the objective of achieving a more integrated and managed approach to the provision of transportation in the City that will encourage modal shift from private car journeys to public transport, cycling and walking.

An integrated transport system will include the following elements:

- Will tackle congestion;
- Promote better public transport;
- Deliver vital missing links in the transport network;
- Quality public transport corridors including bus, cycling and walking facilities.

Policy TR.1 Strategic Transportation Issues

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to implement the objectives and strategies of the National Development Plan, Transport 21, Smarter Travel and any other transport plans that may arise during the lifetime of this development plan including the proposals contained in Mid-West Area Strategic Plan and Public Transport Feasibility study.

- Limerick City Council will co-operate with Limerick County Council, Clare County Council, Tipperary-North County Council, The Department of Transport, other Government Departments and The National Roads Authority in the delivery of an integrated transport system for Limerick and the Region as a whole.
- Develop specific plans and timetables for the delivery of MWASP implementation mechanisms.
- Prioritise and promote essential schemes so as to inform reviews of the National Development Plan and Transport 21.
- Work with adjoining authorities and other national implementation agencies to deliver the relevant transport infrastructure to develop Limerick's potential and position it for sustainable growth subject to Appropriate Assessment screening under the Habitats Directive in compliance with European Directives.

Smarter Travel

Smarter Travel is a new government policy which sets out a long-term plan to achieving a sustainable transport system for Ireland. The plan outlines how this can be achieved through a range of actions such as encouraging modal shift away from the car, promoting fuel efficiency and new technology, and improved planning.

The plan recognises that current transport and travel trends in Ireland are unsustainable, and that if we continue with present policies, congestion will get worse, transport emissions will continue to grow, economic competitiveness will suffer and quality of life will decline.

The goals of Smarter Travel are to:

- Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and, in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport.
- Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks.
- Minimise the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car.
- Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels.

The key targets of Smarter Travel are to reduce work-related commuting by car from 65% to 45%, and increase other modes such as walking, cycling, public transport and car pooling to 55%.

Smarter Travel includes 49 actions which can be grouped into:

- actions to encourage smarter travel
- actions to deliver alternative forms of travel
- actions to improve the efficiency of motorised transport
- actions to ensure integrated delivery of policy

Actions to encourage smarter travel include aligning spatial planning and transport, aligning employment policy with transport planning, mobility management, encouraging efficient movements of goods and introducing fiscal measures to influence travel behaviour.

Actions to deliver alternative forms of travel including bus priority measures, high frequency services, investment in the national cycle network, integration of cycling and public transport, establishing car sharing websites, integrated ticketing.

Actions to improve the efficiency of motorised transport includes encouraging plug in and hydrogen field vehicles, promotion of efficient driving.

Actions to ensure integrated delivery of policy include the introduction of a sustainable transport and travel bill, establishment of a national sustainable transport office, empower local authorities to prepare transport plans to complement their development plans, establish and support a national competition to deliver sustainable transport in towns and rural areas.

Policy TR.2 Integrating Land Use & Transportation Policies

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote and deliver a sustainable and integrated transportation and land use management system for Limerick City. Limerick City Council will complete and implement the recommendation of the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP).

- The City Council will seek to align land use development along corridors in the City that can be serviced by a reasonable level of Public Transport provision including rail lines, bus lanes, cycle lanes and walking paths. Therefore higher development densities are required at locations with access to public transport and new business where large workforces can be located close to public transport facilities.
- Reservations for public transport should be protected in the design of new developments.
- Developments should be phased to maximise the utility of existing public transport and their upgrades.
- Neighbourhood centres should be located close to public transport modes/facilities.
- The design of new development should reflect the importance of walking and cycling as transportation modes by providing safe and direct access to local services and to Bus Lanes.
- Provide road improvement schemes to facilitate the Integration of Land Use and Transportation.
- Provide for small park and ride sites and bicycle parking facilities in developments close to public transport stops.

Policy TR.3 Development of a High Quality Public Transport System

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to co-operate with all Public Transport agencies in developing a high quality public transport system. Limerick City Council will safeguard lands required or likely to be required for the transportation needs of the city, including lands required for new roads, bridges and railway lines.

- To fully implement the recommendation of the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP). The public transport feasibility study and the Green Route corridor selection study to provide better public transport infrastructure so as to enable the public transport operator to provide for a high quality and frequency of service on these routes.
- To work closely with all public transport providers to provide the required level and frequency of service on each public transport corridor.
- To work closely with all public transport providers to provide a high quality central bus station in Limerick City so as to enhance the travel experience and to provide high quality bus stop facilities and bus priority measures where required.
- To work closely with all public transport providers to promote the provision of real time information systems at bus stops and rail stations.
- To provide high quality park and ride facilities at strategic locations around the City as recommended in the Public Transport Feasibility Study.
- To encourage a modal shift from private car use towards more sustainable travel choices such as Public Transport, cycling and walking.

Policy TR.4 Transport Interchange/Hubs

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote public transport interchange at strategic locations throughout the City. An interchange can be a very high quality facility that facilitates the transfer between modes of transport such as bus, taxi bicycle and rail at Colbert Station or it can be physical locations that provide access to the public transport system.

- Interchanges should be given high priority in local land use planning and should be orientated to maximise the density of activity near interchanges.
- Interchange should be provided with good pedestrian access and cycle access.
- Provision should be made where possible for safe business parking at transport interchanges.
- Provision should be made for bus access and operational requirements.
- Provision should be made for passenger waiting facilities including seating, lighting, shelter, information and security.
- Access to or provision of interchange facilities should be addressed in project mobility plans.
- Park and ride facilities should be designed in connection with high quality interchange facilities.

Policy TR.5 Enhancement of Road Infrastructure

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to maintain and enhance the planning, design and maintenance of the transportation and roads infrastructure in the City to ensure improved safety, promote economic growth, social inclusion and amenity for all road users.

- To provide new road infrastructure and improvements to existing road infrastructure and to promote higher standards of road design and construction so as to ensure that all new roads and road improvement schemes will meet projected traffic, public transport, cycling and pedestrian demand for the future.

- To acquire by agreement or by compulsory purchase orders all necessary lands for road and public transport development purposes to facilitate the proper planning and sustainable development of the City.
- To provide linkages, where necessary, to the national and regional road networks and to rail and port infrastructure that will encourage the economic development of the City.
- Work with the Department of Transport, the National Roads Authority, Clare County Council and Limerick County Council to provide a northern distributor road for Limerick City with facilities for car based, freight, public transport, cycling and pedestrian traffic.
- To work with the National Roads Authority and the adjoining Local Authorities to promote the full construction of the Atlantic Way Motorway/Dual Carriageway scheme.
- Deliver all road objectives shown on *Map 3. Transportation Objectives*, Appendix I.
- The Planning Authority may seek a Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA) or Road Safety Audit (RSA) where necessary as part of the planning application process.
- Limerick City Council will have regard to all policy documents relating to road related issues.

Policy TR.6 Mobility Management

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to require a Mobility Management Plan for any development that the Council considers will have significant trip generation and attraction rates at peak hours or throughout the day and where the utilization of existing or proposed public transport may be employed to good affect.

Mobility Management Plans are deemed to be a suitable mechanism by which development can manage the mobility needs of the user by providing facilities to achieve balanced modal split for trips to and from the destination.

Development for which Mobility Management plans should be applied includes the following:

- Office developments
- Office based industry
- Other industry
- Retail centres
- Retail warehousing
- Factories
- Hospitals
- Places of education
- Mixed use developments
- Residential developments >12 units.

A Mobility Management Plan must take the form of a formally published document which outlines proposals, targets, measure and monitoring controls.

Policy TR.7 Traffic Management

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide an efficient traffic management control system for Limerick City as part of an integrated and sustainable transport system by:

- Continuing to expand and improve the urban traffic control system installed since 2002.
- Providing systems for monitoring and controlling traffic.
- Introduce the City Centre Orbital Route System as recommended in the City Centre Orbital Route Report.
- Review junction capacity on congested junctions and provide more efficient junctions and junction management systems.

- Provide where necessary and implement recommended localised traffic studies for the relief of congestion.
- Update the Limerick City Traffic Management Report to take account of developments and policy changes.

Policy TR.8 Traffic Calming

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to implement traffic calming measures in appropriate areas throughout the City.

- Calming cells will be introduced following consultation with elected members, residents and agencies such as the Gardaí and bus companies.
- Traffic calming schemes will be designed to enhance the environmental appearance of residential areas with an emphasis on a more creative approach to design.
- The City Council will make use of guidelines for traffic calming and where possible emphasis will be placed on horizontal rather than vertical traffic calming measures.
- In relation to new and proposed developments the City Council will work with the proposals to ensure that road design makes its proper contribution to traffic calming from the outset.
- All planning applications for new residential schemes shall include traffic calming measures where appropriate that will provide for average traffic speeds of 30km/h.

Policy TR.9 Cycling & Walking

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to prioritize the provision of safe facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists throughout the City.

- Promote cycling and walking as healthy modes of transport.
- Implement the measures contained in the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) and the Smarter Travel Policy Framework produced by the Department of Transport.
- Establish a complete network of cycleways throughout the City.
- Update and implement the Limerick Cycle Strategy.
- Design a city cycle network with emphasis placed on promoting safety and shortening journey time. The cycle network will be a combination of dedicated cycle lanes on the road and dedicated off road cycle-lanes. The network will be clearly identifiable through signposting and road marking.
- Continually upgrade the condition of existing footpaths and cycleways.
- Provide controlled crossings at location where they are warranted.
- Limerick City Council will provide secure cycle parking at locations around the City.
- Will require that secure covered cycle parking facilities be provided close to building entrances for new office blocks, apartment blocks, schools, shopping centres etc.
- Require planning applicants to demonstrate that their development proposals will be easily accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- Require planning applicants where appropriate to submit detailed designs of the facilities required by cyclists.
- To facilitate the extension, improvement, and development of the riverside walkways and footpaths along the Shannon River and its tributaries while ensuring the conservation value of the designated River areas are maintained.

Policy TR.10 Limerick City Inner Orbital Route & City Centre Pedestrianisation

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to construct the inner orbital route to facilitate the efficient movement of traffic around the City Centre and streetscape enhancement works including street pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority schemes.

The completion of the Inner Orbital Route will greatly facilitate the following:

- The implementation of the Riverside Strategy.
- The creation of a high quality road network having regard to the existing layout of streets.
- Major streetscape upgrading works to create pedestrian streets and streets with a high level of pedestrian priority.
- Enhancement works on junction, footpath and streetscape to enhance the visual appearance of streets.
- The provision of all necessary facilities at appropriate locations along the orbital route for the safe crossing of pedestrians.
- The provision of facilities along the route to facilitate and enhance the street functions required by businesses and residents along the route including public transport, cycling, parking, loading bays, taxi ranks etc.

Policy TR.11 Traffic Management Control

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to enhance the traffic management provision by:

- Updating and expanding the Urban Traffic Control System for managing traffic flow through the City Centre.
- Installing CCTV on all major intersections in the city to assist with the monitoring and control of traffic flow.
- That all traffic management and traffic calming schemes be designed and constructed as per Department of Transport guidelines embracing the philosophy of catering for all road users by managing the road network so that fair access is afforded to all.
- That special speed limits be provided where deemed necessary to enhance road safety and contribute to more efficient traffic management.

Policy TR.12 Controlled & Non-Controlled Crossings

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to enhance the traffic management provision by:

- Ensuring that controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at all major crossing points have an audible signal and tactile paving to assist the visually impaired person to safely negotiate the crossing.
- Ensuring that all new uncontrolled crossing facilities provided in the City be provided with suitably designed facilities including dishing, tactile paving or table tops as appropriate.

Policy TR.13 Signage

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide and improve signage at locations throughout the City where the provision of signage is warranted.

To improve the quality of signage it is the intention of the City Council to:

- Carry out a programme to replace all route directional signage in the City to bring it up to date as a result of the construction of the southern ring road and the re-classification of the existing City road network.
- Provide variable messaging signage at strategic locations throughout the City to assist with information provision for more efficient traffic management.

- Provide improved car park information signage in the City Centre including the provision of electronic car park signage systems on approach to the orbital route giving information in relation to space availability in car parks.
- Provide more visible speed limit signage including road surface marking and repeated speed limit signs.
- Provide a special school gate signage package including highly visible road markings and speed limit signs in the vicinity of all schools.
-

Policy TR.14 Car Parking Control

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to control the provision of on-street and off-street car parking in the City Centre. In this regard it is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide for short term shopping and business parking requirements and for the need of local residents, rather than long-term commuter parking requirements.

To promote this policy, the City Council will:

- Continue to provide controlled parking zones in the City and modify these as necessary to facilitate the business and commerce of the City Centre.
- Extend the controlled disc parking scheme into other areas of the City where such controls will contribute to traffic management and the quality of life of the local residents and workforce.
- Will review the current system of traffic regulation and by-law enforcement to make the process more efficient so that it continues to deliver efficiency whilst promoting a high level of compliance.
- To continue to offer parking customers in the City as many options as possible for paying for parking including paper and electronic methods.
- To promote the provision of off-street car parks at strategic locations throughout the City including along the proposed orbital route, and at Park and Ride sites.
- Ensure that appropriate parking provision for short and long term stays are provided so as to maintain economic competitiveness, vitality and amenity of the City Centre.
- Manage on and off street parking facilities for all categories of vehicular traffic in accordance with the traffic management objectives for the specific area of the City.
- Facilitate the provision of parking facilities for use by the disabled driver.

Policy TR.15 Taxi/Minibus/Tour Bus

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide facilities for on-street Taxis, mini buses and tour buses, at appropriate locations and to facilitate the provision for minibus/taxi/hackney transport to provide a feeder service to public transport corridors and to encourage the provision of taxi ranks at appropriate locations including the main rail and bus station.

To facilitate this policy, the City Council will:

- Provide taxi ranks in the City Centre at appropriate locations whilst ensuring that a good balance is achieved between all road space users. In this respect use will be made of night time taxi ranks and time plated taxi ranks to ensure that supply meets customer needs.
- Prepare a planning and traffic management development strategy for the regulation and administration of the taxi industry within the City in accordance with current legislation.
- Strictly regulate the approval of planning applications for Hackney Cab, and call office services.

Policy TR.16 Loading Bays

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide loading bays in the City Centre at appropriate locations to facilitate loading and unloading for businesses and for new development to require that appropriate loading and unloading facilities are provided for the day to day function of the development.

Policy TR.17 Road Safety & Low Cost Safety Measures

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote road safety and to avoid the creation of traffic hazards. The City Council will continue to implement its policy of providing low cost safety measures at locations to improve safety on the road network as resources permit.

To promote this policy, the City Council will seek in the design and/or improvement of roads and in the assessment of planning applications for new developments, the safety of road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists must be a primary consideration. Cyclists and pedestrians are especially vulnerable in road accidents and all new designs must pay particular attention to securing their safety.

Policy TR 18 Signal Controlled Junctions

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote the provision of signal controlled junctions in the urban environment to provide a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

- Improve the design of existing traffic junctions to provide a safer travel environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Eliminate the use of roundabouts in areas of the city that are populated with cyclists and pedestrians.

Policy TR.19 Improved Access to the Southern Ring Road

It is the policy of Limerick Council to liaise with the National Roads Authority (NRA) and Limerick County Council to promote the provision of an additional road link for N20/N21 traffic accessing the City from the Southern Ring Road. In this regard there is a need to provide this access as a result of the layout of the Rosbrien Interchange.

In this regard the City Council will:

- *Ensure that any future development shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Roads Act and the provisions of the Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines (Draft 2010) and in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as Limerick County Council and the National Roads Authority.*

Policy TR.20 Park & Ride Facilities

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate the provision of Park & Ride facilities as part of the sustainable traffic management system for the City.

In this regard the City Council will:

- Implement the Park & Ride Objectives of the Public Transport Feasibility Study
- Seek to secure lands for Park & Ride facilities at locations as recommended in the Public Transport Feasibility Study.

Policy TR.21 Park & Stride/Cycle Facilities

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate the provision of Park & Stride/Cycle facilities as part of the sustainable traffic management system for the City.

In this regard the City Council will:

- Implement the Park & Stride/Cycle Objectives of the Public Transport Feasibility Study.

- Seek to secure lands for Park & Stride/Cycle facilities at locations as recommended in the Public Transport Feasibility Study.
- Provide and encourage the provision of Park & Stride facilities in areas within a reasonable walking radius of schools so that children and parents can walk safely to schools avoiding the necessity to create traffic congestion in neighbourhoods directly adjacent to schools.
- Develop plans for Park & Stride sites and to upgrade footpaths and crossing points between these and the schools.

Policy TR.22 Landscaping Along Roads

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to landscape and plant along roads when new roads are under construction or as improvement schemes are undertaken as resources permit. Landscaping schemes based on native species as far as possible will be designed to soften the visual impact of the road and enhance its appearance, with due regard being given to the achievement of road safety.

In this regard a Landscaping Plan must be developed for all new road schemes, both public and private.

Policy TR.23 Management of Under-Street Space

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to develop a policy for the management and regulation of under-street space and services to ensure optimum use of available space for the economic life of the City.

Before commencing any works, Limerick City Council will require all organizations and individuals excavating or laying services in the public roads and spaces to obtain a road opening license.

Policy TR.24 Taking In Charge

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to take in charge completed residential developments in line with the adopted 'Taking in Charge Policy' of Limerick City Council and in accordance with the terms of Section 180 of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2008 and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 and what ever legislation may come into force during the life of this plan.

Policy TR.25 Promotion of Alternative Energy Sources for Vehicles

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote and to encourage the supply of facilities for the supply of energy to vehicles from proven alternatives to fossil fuels. In this respect this may involve the provision of on street charging points for electric vehicles or facilities for the discharge of Bio-Fuels.

Policy TR.26 Universal Access

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to ensure that its public realm is universally accessible.

Chapter 7 Regeneration

Introduction

The Moyross Housing Estate on the North side of Limerick City and similar estates on the Southside of the City have experienced serious social problems and high profile criminal activity over many years. The Government responded to a series of events in September 2006 by ordering an extensive examination of social exclusion, crime and disorder issues in disadvantaged areas of Limerick and engaged the former Dublin City Manager Mr. John Fitzgerald to carry this out. Six months later, after conducting a comprehensive review, Mr. Fitzgerald submitted his report to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, chaired by then Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern.

The Report included two key recommendations:

1. Assign at least 100 additional Gardaí to Limerick City;
2. Establish two Government agencies to plan and implement the regeneration of housing estates and adjoining lands in disadvantaged areas.

This gave rise to the creation of the Limerick Northside and Southside Regeneration Agencies, which were established by Ministerial Orders S.I. 275/276 of 2007. Both Agencies were charged with the task of designing and implementing a comprehensive and integrated programme for the areas of Moyross on the Northside and Southill/Ballincurra Weston on the Southside. Subsequently, in March 2008, St. Mary's Park, was added to the remit of the Regeneration Project.

The Regeneration Programme

The Regeneration Agencies engaged three teams of consultants to prepare master plans for each of the areas. These teams commenced their work in February 2008 and the master plans were presented to Limerick City Council in early 2009. These master plans provide the strategic basis for the implementation of work programmes over the coming 10 years. The master plans are built on three key pillars;

- o Social regeneration
- o Physical regeneration
- o Economic regeneration

Social Regeneration

The most fundamental challenge for the Programme is to succeed in transforming the social demographic of the regeneration communities. The delivery of this will require greater integrated development and service provision, both by local agencies and national government departments. This will ensure greater efficacy and sustainability of investment, both in infrastructure, service provision and service delivery. Social Regeneration is ultimately about building key characteristics among constituents, such as self-esteem, confidence, civic pride and motivation. These ingredients, if developed throughout communities, heighten social standards and lower disadvantage; they also break down external prejudices and build trust. They create a sense of pride, empowerment, ownership and mutual respect – all of which are typically lacking in areas of disadvantage and social exclusion.

The Social Regeneration Pillar is broken down into four parts:

- o Education
- o Children, Youth & Family Support
- o Health
- o People & Neighbourhood

In relation to neighbourhoods and people, this covers all the real issues that affect people as they carry on with their lives on a daily basis e.g. policing and safety, management of estates, community development/participation and empowerment, sport and leisure, arts and culture and public realm issues.

The delivery of a much stronger social mix is paramount to the success and sustainability of the new housing estates in the Regeneration Areas. Such a mix has to be greater than just mixed tenure, it is essential that over the period of the Plan that these Areas achieve a population that has a greater level of income than at present. This will be achieved by the development of private/affordable housing, the expansion of home-ownership within the existing community and more importantly, improving the life chances of the current child population through education and job opportunities which clearly highlight the sheer importance of Social Regeneration. The achievement of a stronger social mix in the newly regenerated communities is a crucial objective of the programme.

Currently in the regeneration housing estates, over 52% of householders own their homes, while 48% are renting from the Local Authority.

It is hoped to change that mix to ultimately achieve the following:

- 20% Social/rented.
- 80% Private ownership.

Economic Regeneration

The creation of long-term employment locally and for local people, is a central theme for the Economic Regeneration Pillar. Currently, high unemployment levels, running way above the national average, exist in the regeneration areas and merely serve to exacerbate social exclusion.

Successfully tackling the dearth of employment opportunities in these areas will make a very significant contribution towards the overall goal of regeneration but can, the Agencies believe, only be achieved through a joint public-private sector approach.

To that end, education plays a very significant role in the Economic Regeneration process. Job creation is greatly challenged by the educational deficits in these areas. Currently there is a very high percentage of people in these areas with only basic primary education and creating an environment whereby young people are not alone encouraged but want to remain in education is central to Economic Regeneration.

Physical Regeneration

Physical Regeneration is an absolutely essential element of the overall programme and the Agencies have ambitious and innovative concepts in mind but we are absolutely cognisant of the reality that on its own, physical regeneration will achieve very little indeed.

The physical regeneration element of the overall process has, in the public domain, arguably been the most discussed and anticipated aspect of all, simply because it is the most predictable and imaginable of the three pillars.

It will radically reform the appearance/physical environment of these areas, which is not alone long overdue and badly needed but essential to help grow that vital and vibrant sense of community pride and self-esteem needed to make any regeneration project successful.

The overall investment in the Physical Regeneration element of the Programme will be high but will be spread out over the entire 10 year programme (2009-2018).

A very important ingredient in the overall mix for regeneration to be successful is that there is a strong sense of locality and even with current social exclusion levels, this very much exists, with a very high percentage of people living in these areas intent on continuing to live there, particularly now that the process has given hope and confidence for the future.

Policy RG.1 Implementation of Regeneration

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to support the implementation of the Regeneration Programme in a coordinated and sustainable manner and to co-operate with the Regeneration Agencies and the other agencies in the Region to deliver the goals and objectives set out in the Regeneration Programme.

Policy RG.2 Zoning

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to zone the regeneration areas in a flexible manner to facilitate the delivery of the master plans.

This development plan has provided in its projections of population and economic growth the need for the Regeneration Programme. It is accepted by all parties that the Programme needs to be fluid and will evolve with circumstances locally, regionally and nationally. Therefore this plan will offer sufficient flexibility that will allow the master plans to be implemented in a coordinated and sustainable manner. However the published master plan have not been accompanied by an assessment of the potential impacts of the master plan on the environment including designated protected areas as required under both EU and national legislation. It is therefore essential that in addition to the published master plans that framework implementation plans are prepared for the four areas and screened for a Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment (HDAA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as appropriate.

These framework implementation plans shall set out the key priorities that will guide the development of the four areas in the immediate future. The priorities shall differ for each of the areas; however there are a number of key principles for each area that shall be incorporated into each plan and these are set out below.

Furthermore there are common actions that are required for each area and these include:

- Common to all areas is the need to scope and prepare an SEA and HDAA.
- The preparation of a design code in respect of materials and colour palettes for buildings and public spaces so as to create a sense of identity and place.
- The preparation of permeability plans for each area.
- The preparation of an economic strategy for each area.
- To establish the regeneration areas or a portion of the regeneration areas as a Sustainable Energy Zone.

The framework implementation plans shall be set in the context of the relevant strategic documents that establishes the context within which the regeneration programme is taking place and the scale of some of the outputs.

The following documents shall be consulted:

- The Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines.
- The Mid-West Regional Economic Strategy.
- The Mid-West Retail Strategy.
- The Mid-West Housing Strategy.
- Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan.
- The Mid-West Region Recreational Strategy (when prepared).

Furthermore given the changing economic situation it is essential that the issue of phasing in broad terms be addressed.

Moyross Framework Implementation Plan

The following are the key local principles that the Moyross Framework Plan shall address:

- To protect the integrity of all Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity. In this regard the development proposals developed shall be subject to HDAA and SEA.
- To protect the existing biodiversity of the area and to provide interpretation for the public.
- To develop a large public park that connects the river Shannon, Moyross and Caherdavin for a range of active and passive recreational uses.
- To create a civic area of suitable scale in Moyross that can act as a focal point for community, civic and educational facilities including a rail station.
- To promote Watchhouse Cross as the District Centre for the area of Moyross, Kileely, Ballynanty and Parteen in accordance with the Mid West Retail Strategy.
- To complete the northern distributor road and to provide access from it to Moyross.
- To provide for greater linkages between Moyross and the adjacent areas to the west including the educational institutions.
- To protect the existing alignment of the Limerick/Galway rail line.

Kings Island Framework Implementation Plan

The following are the local objectives that the Kings Island Framework Plan shall address:

- To protect the integrity of all Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity. In this regard the development proposals developed shall be subject to HDAA and SEA.
- To prepare a flood risk assessment for King Island and the general catchment to determine the long term flood remediation solution for Kings Island and to identify lands for future development subject to HDAA.
- To develop a strategy to integrate Kings Island into the city centre core through selective site redevelopment and improved connections.
- To examine the potential of improved/new multi modal connections to the adjacent area.

Ballinacurra Weston Framework Implementation Plan

The following are the local objectives that the Ballinacurra Weston Framework Plan shall address:

- That a new connection be made between the Childers Road and Hyde Avenue.
- That a neighbourhood centre be developed along the frontage of Childers Road and Ballinacurra Road.

Southill Framework Plan

The following are the local objectives that the Southill Framework Plan shall address:

- The re-establishment of the N7/N20 Rosbrien interchange into Southill to establish Southill as a gateway to the city centre.
- To develop the Roxboro Shopping Centre and adjacent lands as a mixed use district centre in accordance with the Retail Strategy
- To develop the existing commercial and industrial lands along the south boundary of the Childers Road for mixed use employment related development.
- To develop a mobility strategy for the area connecting the residential zones to the district centre and employment zones and amenity area.
- To develop a new educational campus to serve the needs of the entire area.
- To develop an amenity strategy for the area.
- To establish the need for additional local shopping facilities throughout the area.

- To identify strategic sites for the construction of landmark/gateway buildings.

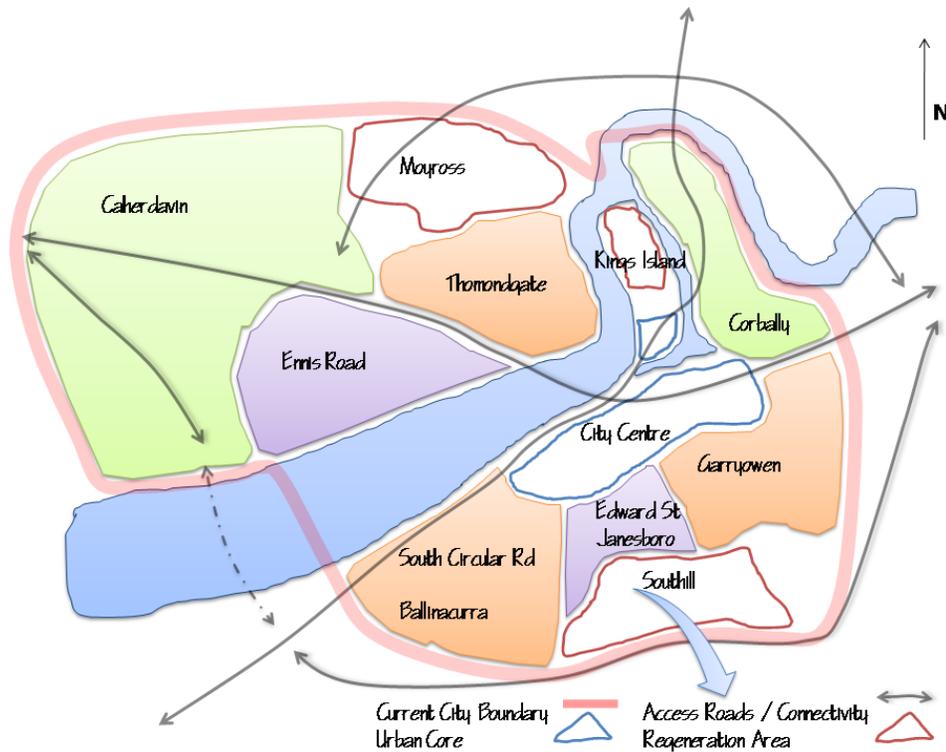
The framework plans shall be approved by the City Council and they shall form the basis of a variation to the zoning proposals contained in this plan.

Applications in the Regeneration Areas

In adopting a flexible zoning approach to the Regeneration Areas, the Planning Authority sets out the following framework within which all applications will be assessed:

- All applications made by the Regeneration Agency on publicly owned land can be processed in accordance with Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000-2008 subject to adherence to the requirements below.
- All applications shall be accompanied with a statement as to how they accord with the master plans and framework plan when approved.
- In the absence of the framework plans being approved the application shall be accompanied by a statement in respect of adherence to the standards contained in the City Development Plan and the principles set out above. In this regard any proposed development on lands currently zoned open space may be permissible where it can be demonstrated that there is no diminution in the residential amenities of the general area.
- The scale of all commercial and recreational proposals must be accommodated with a needs based assessment that addresses the needs of the City Centre as the primary location for commercial development in the Region.

Figure 7.1 Regeneration Areas



Chapter 12 Environment Management & Infrastructure

Part I Environment

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline Limerick City Council's policies and objectives for achieving high quality, sustainable environmental standards and to provide high quality public infrastructure in the City. The City Council seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of the City's environment and eliminate potential environmental risks, while also facilitating sustainable economic and physical development. The protection of the natural and built environment is of major importance to the future social and economic development of the City, as is the delivery of essential infrastructure and services.

Policy EM.1

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to avoid or reduce, where relevant, the negative environmental impacts of development in the City.

Surface Water Quality

Water quality in the River Shannon has improved significantly with the works undertaken as part of the Limerick Main Drainage Scheme. The completion of the Scheme has had a major influence on improving the water quality and appearance of the river in both the city and the upper and lower reaches of the river outside the city boundaries creating greater opportunities for developing the river from an amenity point of view for tourism, riverside walks and boardwalks and generally for water frontage development and living.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires that all member states implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all waters i.e. surface, ground, estuarine and coastal, and contains measures to protect, enhance and restore all waters with the aim of achieving good status by 2015. All public bodies, including Limerick City Council, are required to coordinate their policies and operations so as to maintain the good status of water bodies which are currently unpolluted; and improve polluted water bodies to good status by 2015.

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland has established a system of integrated river basin management. Limerick City is located in the Shannon International River Basin District which is the largest in Ireland at more than 18,000 km² in area.

The system will include provision & implementation of:

- A comprehensive water quality monitoring system for all waters within the river basin district;
- A computerized management system;
- A programme of appropriate abatement measures;
- A public awareness and consultation programme;
- An environmental management system.

Policy EM.2

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to assist in the preparation and joint implementation of the Shannon River Basin Management Strategy in order to promote and achieve an improvement of both surface and ground water quality.

Policy EM.3

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to continue to improve systems of monitoring and surveying water quality in the Shannon River and other City Streams in conjunction with Limerick County Council.

Waste Management & Recycling

Limerick City Council is part of a Waste Management Region along with Limerick, Clare and Kerry County Councils. The City's policies on managing waste are set down in the *Regional Replacement Waste Management Plan 2006-2011*.

The overall approach of the Limerick, Clare, Kerry Waste Management Plan follows the Irish & European Waste Hierarchy of:

- Prevention
- Materials Recovery (recycling/recovery)
- Energy Recovery
- Safe Disposal including landfill

Prevention

To prevent the generation of waste a fundamental behavioral change in waste management practices is required by the householder, business, industry etc. In the *Replacement Regional Waste Management Plan 2006-11*, one of the key aims is to prioritise waste prevention across all sectors.

Reuse

Limerick City Council actively supports reuse web sites and has links on the website to local and national reuse sites. The Regional Waste Management Office will be participating in the roll out of a national reuse website in 2009 on behalf of its partners.

Materials Recovery

The dry recyclable bin or opti-bag collection service provides householders with a readily accessible outlet to maximise the recovery of dry recyclable materials. This service is available to all householders in the City. The target in the current waste management plan for recyclables is 45%.

Energy Recovery

There is no existing thermal treatment and energy recovery in the Limerick, Clare, Kerry Waste Management Region. The current target in the regional waste management plan for the thermal treatment is 41% of waste to be treated by thermal treatment. This target assumes that the infrastructure is in place.

Landfill

Limerick City Council does not operate a working landfill. Municipal waste in the City is collected by private collectors with waste collection permits and brought to landfills in other parts of the region or country. The most recent 2007 annual report on the plan indicates that 77 % of the City's municipal waste was land filled in 2007. The current target under the regional waste management plan for the land filling of municipal waste is 14%. This target assumes that the infrastructure is in place for thermal treatment, materials recycling and biological treatment.

In line with National Policy the following targets are set down in the plan for 2013:

- Recycling 41%
- Thermal Treatment 45% (depending on the infrastructure being available)
- Landfill 14% by 2013

Policy EM.4

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to implement the provisions of the 'Regional Replacement Waste Management Plan for Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region 2006-2011', which includes:

- *Implement European Policy on Waste including the Waste Management Hierarchy*
- *Implement National Policy on Waste*
- *Achieve Targets set out in the EU landfill directive*
- *Implement Targets set out in the National Biodegradable Waste Strategy*
- *Polluter pays principal.*

Policy EM.5

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to continue working with the local community to raise awareness on best practice in-relation to waste management in Limerick City.

Longpavement Landfill Site

The Longpavement landfill site is located adjacent to Moyross. The facility opened in 1957 and closed in 1998. Limerick City Council is committed to restoring the Longpavement Landfill site under EPA Waste Licence W0076-1.

Policy EM.6

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to restore the Longpavement landfill site into a positive landscape feature that provides a recreational, amenity and biodiversity resource for the community within the city boundary.

Municipal Waste Management & Recycling

Limerick City Council continues to promote an increase in the amount of waste reused and recycled consistent with the Waste Management Plan for the City and Waste Hierarchy. The waste collection service in Limerick City is provided by private waste collection companies. These waste collection companies are regulated by the City Council via Waste Collection Permits which are issued on a regional basis. All households in Limerick City have a segregated waste collection service available to them. Householders separate domestic waste at source into a dry recyclable fraction and a residual waste fraction.

In accordance with the National Biodegradable Waste Strategy an additional opportunity to segregate the organic fraction from the waste stream is being introduced to both commercial and household waste collections.

Recycling figures in the regional plan annual report June 07-08 indicate:

- household recycling rate of 23%
- commercial recycling rate of 65%.

The City Council also operates approximately 20 Bring Sites around the City. The target number of Bring Sites for the city in the Replacement Regional Waste Management Plan is 26 by 2011

Policy EM.7

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to protect existing bring sites in the city and to provide for the development of additional sites in accordance with the Replacement Waste Management Plan.

Policy EM.8

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to identify and develop within the lifetime of the Plan a suitable site for a Civic Amenity Site within the City boundaries.

Construction & Demolition Waste

National Policy (*Changing Our Ways*) on Construction and Demolition Waste (C&D) has set an overall target of 85% recycling by 2013. Over the life time of the Replacement Regional Waste Management Plan, Limerick City (in conjunction with other local authorities in the region) must progress towards this overall objective through the implementation of the waste hierarchy and producer responsibility.

Policy EM.9

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to reduce the generation of Construction & Demolition Waste and ensure that reuse and recycling of this waste is maximized in support of the implementation Plan for the Management of C&D in the Region.

New building design and layout is crucial to effective waste management particularly at the operational phase of a development. Specific provisions must be made for segregated space appropriate to the size of the building that will allow for the segregation of waste consistent with the type of development in question and in line with national and regional policy, law and regulations.

These issues should be addressed at the planning stage of any development. Generally these would include:

- To ensure the provision of adequate space for wheelie bins in all new residential schemes;
- To ensure that communal refuse storage areas/bin enclosures are easily accessible to residents and are sited sensitively;
- To ensure developers provide home composters to all new houses with gardens;
- To ensure that appropriate design requirements for the facilitation of waste sorting and collection services for all significant development proposals are provided;
- To ensure that separate storage facilities for recyclable waste for all applications to extend and/or improve existing retail centres.

Policy EM.10

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to require Applicant/Developer at the planning stage to address the issue of waste management for both the construction phase of the development and the operational phases.

Litter Management

The impact of litter is recognised by the City Council as being detrimental to tourism and other economic sectors and damaging to the aesthetic quality of the City's environment. Limerick City Council is taking a proactive approach to combat the problem of litter using the management and enforcement powers under the Litter Pollution Act 1997. Cleansing programmes for the City's streets have been expanded and streamlined. Increased numbers of litter wardens have been employed and the number of on the spot fines and prosecutions for litter violations has increased dramatically over the past couple of years. Public education and awareness initiatives have also been introduced. The City Council has adopted a Litter Management Plan which will continue to be implemented over the period of the Development Plan.

Policy EM.11

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to implement the Litter Management Plan.

Contaminated Lands / SEVESO Sites

Contaminated land is generally considered to be lands where there are substances which could cause significant harm and endanger human health. Examples of land uses that may have caused such contamination include gas works, landfill sites etc.

The Docklands area of Limerick City, given its industrial use since the turn of the century and to the present day, has a legacy of contaminants in the soil and groundwater. Any redevelopment of former industrial sites within this area must consider potential environmental impacts arising from past activities.

Applications for development on contaminated lands will generally be encouraged, the City Council will require that a detailed investigation is carried out and appropriate mitigation strategies can be implemented to ensure that the land is treated/remedied appropriately before any development may take place.

The E.U Directive (96/82 EC) on the control of major accident hazards, commonly referred to as the Seveso II Directive was adopted on the 3rd February 1999. It was introduced into Irish Law through statutory instrument i.e. the EC (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2000 (S.I. No. 476 of 2000), on the 21st December, 2000. The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and chemicals and the limitation of their consequences for people and the environment.

These objectives must be pursued through controls on the following:

- The siting of new establishments.
- Modifications to existing establishments.
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which, by virtue of its type or siting, is likely to increase the risk or consequences of a major accident.

Within Limerick City there are two identified Seveso Sites, known as 'lower tier' sites under the European Communities (Control of Major Accidents Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 (S.I 74 of 2006).

These are:

- Joint Fuel Terminal (Topaz), Courtbrack Avenue, Dock Road.
- Grassland Fertilizers, Dock Road.

The Health & Safety Authority provides such advice where appropriate in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. Seveso Site Consultation Distances are specified in the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 (SI No 600 of 2001) and varies depending on the nature of activity at the site. Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for planning permission.

Policy EM.12

It is the policy of Limerick City Council in relation to proposals for developments on land identified as a known Seveso Site to consult with the Health & Safety Authority (HAS) when assessing proposals for development.

Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

Telecommunication infrastructure is a fundamental requirement for the successful development of Limerick as a Gateway City. The availability of various telecommunications services such as broadband is an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and the national economy. They contribute to quality of life in two ways: firstly, access to fast, reliable and cost effective communications can increase social inclusion, economic competitiveness and employment opportunities; and secondly, modern technologies can also contribute to sustainable goals by reducing the need to travel, by home working, teleconferencing, distance learning and e-commerce for example.

The advantages of a high quality telecommunications network must however be balanced against the need to safeguard the urban environment of Limerick City, particularly in sensitive areas where the impacts on residential amenity and visual amenity of areas needs to be adequately assessed. Visual impact must be kept to a minimum with detailed consideration given to the siting and external appearance of masts and antennas particularly in areas of landscape sensitivity (see protected areas *Chapter 11 Landscape, Biodiversity & Recreation*). Detailed policies on the siting and location of telecommunications masts are outlined *Chapter 15 Land Use Zoning Objectives & Chapter 16 Development Management*.

Policy EM.13

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to promote and facilitate the provision of appropriate information and telecommunications infrastructure (including broadband services) within the City and to encourage the provision of telecommunications based services at appropriate locations subject to environmental considerations in accordance with the Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996.

Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Measures

Climate change is now recognised as the most significant and threatening global environmental problem. In response to this, the Kyoto Protocol has imposed targets on Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Ireland's international commitment is to limit greenhouse gas emissions to a 13% increase above the 1990 level by 2012. As of 2005, Ireland's GHG emissions increased by 25.4% above 1990 levels indicating the extent of the challenge ahead.

Ireland's rapid economic growth over the same period has resulted in a corresponding increase in energy consumption and therefore greenhouse gas emissions through the upsurge in building throughout the country. Energy use in buildings accounts for approximately 45% of Ireland's delivered energy consumption and over one third of the country's carbon dioxide emissions.

The most significant and sustained increase in GHG emissions of 160% has been in the transport sector, mainly due to road transport through the unprecedented growth in car ownership over the last 10-15 years. The City Council is committed to facilitating and encouraging more sustainable transport options in the city and will actively engage with key transport stakeholders to help deliver an enhanced and efficient public transport system for the city. Added to this, the City Council will work with adjacent Local Authorities to provide a network of Green Transportation Routes for the urban area and will seek to identify potential *Park & Ride* facilities on all of the main approach roads into the City. Transport objectives and policies are detailed in *Chapter 5 Transportation* of the Plan.

Government Energy Policy now recognises the role that energy saving and renewable energy technologies will need to play in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and Ireland's dependence upon fossil fuels. If such emissions are to be reduced progressively to meet rising

target levels, it is crucial that new buildings meet more stringent energy standards as soon as possible.

The recently published Government White Paper entitled '*Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland 2007-2020*' sets a target for a 20% reduction in energy usage across the whole economy by 2020. The Public Sector will require a 33% reduction in energy usage. In addition, the Government is committed to providing 15% of electricity consumed from renewable sources by 2010 and 33% by 2020. The scale of the task ahead is highlighted by the fact that between 1990 and 2005 final energy demand increased by 64%. This target was increased to 40% by the Government in its 2008 '*Strategy Building Ireland's Smart Economy*'.

The '*National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012*' provides a framework for the achievement of the reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emission (GHGs) in achieving Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto protocol. Some of the important strategies include a modal shift to public transport as a result of improved spatial and energy planning. There is now a requirement for all new buildings to become more energy efficient in line with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2002/91/EC and through the development of energy related programmes and awareness campaigns targeted at all building users, both new and existing.

The Government is reviewing the current Building Regulations (Technical Guidance Document L - Conservation of fuel and energy) which is due to be completed in 2008. The Building Regulations (Part L) are the main influence on standards of energy performance and carbon dioxide emissions. The Council intends using this statutory device to improve the overall energy efficiency and renewable energy take up of new buildings in the City.

Dwelling Energy Assessment Procedure (DEAP) is the official Irish procedure for calculating and assessing the energy performance of dwellings. Published by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), the procedure takes account of the energy required for space heating, ventilation, water heating and lighting, less savings from energy generation technologies. It calculates both the CO₂ emission rate and energy consumption per annum. This is a useful tool for designers when considering and comparing options to conserve energy and reduce CO₂ emission.

DEAP is used to calculate the Building Energy Rating (BER) of a dwelling. The BER is a label containing the energy performance of the dwelling. Expressed as primary energy use per unit floor area per year (kWh/m²/per annum) and illustrated as an Energy Rating (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, etc) for the dwelling, it also includes a Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Emissions Indicator (kgCO₂/m²/yr) associated with this energy use and an advisory report. As per the Building Regulations all buildings will in time be required to be energy efficient.

As of now the roll out of this requirement applies as follows:

- To all new dwellings commencing on or after 1st January 2007
- To all new buildings other than dwellings commencing on or after 1st July 2008
- To all existing buildings when let or sold on or after 1st January 2009

Limerick City Council Climate Change Strategy

The Limerick City Council is presently preparing a *Draft Climate Change Strategy* which outlines the City Council's commitment, as a priority, to encourage more sustainable development, the efficient use of energy and the use of renewable energy in new and refurbishment buildings throughout the city. Included in this Strategy are the objectives to improve the thermal comfort of all Council owned buildings and reduce operating costs in the future as retrofitting of buildings to improve their energy performance at a later date will be much more expensive. As part of this commitment the City Council will encourage developers to

liaise with the Environment Department of Limerick City Council to discuss development proposals at pre planning stage so that the best design and layout for particular energy efficient systems can be considered from the outset.

Policy EM.14

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to support the development and use of renewable energy within the City.

Policy EM.15

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to adopt and implement the policy framework as set out in the Climate Change Strategy within the lifetime of this Development Plan.

Policy EM.16

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to encourage the use of energy saving measures and sustainable/renewable energy technologies in new developments where appropriate. Limerick City Council will promote and encourage the development of 'low energy buildings' as standard throughout the City.

In addition to full compliance with the *Building Regulations 1997-2007 TGD Part L*. Limerick City Council will require a minimum energy rating of B1 (Less than 100kWh/m²/yr) for all new dwellings (whether single use or part of a mixed use scheme) and encourage the attainment of higher standards where possible (A3, A2, A1 etc.). The current nationally approved energy rating methodology and software should be used to certify new developments. In the case of planning applications for residential schemes above 10 units an Energy Statement shall be submitted by a qualified and accredited person certifying that the proposed development conforms with, or improves upon, the above targets. Non residential development is obliged to conform at a minimum to the current and future building regulations and future Building Energy Rating requirements as required.

Policy EM.17

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to encourage energy efficiency through the design of buildings, layout and orientation on site.

Promoting Public Awareness of Energy Efficiency

Information and public awareness campaigns are vital if sustainability targets are to be achieved. The City Council, in partnership with the Limerick City Energy Agency, will continue its efforts at increasing public awareness of energy best practice through Car Free Day, Energy Awareness Week, the Green Flag initiative for schools, and the continuation of environmental initiatives through the RAPID programmes etc.

Policy EM.18

It is the policy of Limerick City Council in partnership with other relevant agencies to increase public awareness of energy best practice.

Improving Energy Efficiency of Existing Local Authority Building Stock

The improvement of energy efficiency in the existing building stock through rehabilitation should be a key focus for sustainable building and housing strategies. The modernisation of existing housing stock is being progressed by a number of Government assisted schemes. These schemes target those most at risk from fuel poverty among those local authority tenants and the elderly most notably in the form of Sustainable Energy Ireland's Warmer Homes Scheme and the Government aided Central Heating Scheme. The Regeneration programme will provide a mechanism of achieving this.

Policy EM.19

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to seek to improve the energy efficiency of its existing building stock.

Sustainability Checklist for New Developments

In considering proposals for development, the City Council will assess energy efficiency and waste management and take into account proposed site location, orientation, design, choice of materials, equipment and landscaping. The City Council is committed to the preparation of a sustainability checklist outlining best practice in achieving energy efficiency and sustainability in design and construction. The City Council will require developers to apply the principles identified in this checklist.

Conditions may be attached to planning permissions to ensure that sustainable building principles are applied. Developers of new buildings or buildings undergoing major refurbishment or change of use may be required to submit an energy statement demonstrating how their energy efficiency measures will work.

Policy EM.20

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to prepare a sustainability checklist outlining best practice in achieving energy efficiency and sustainability in design and construction during the lifetime of the Development Plan and to incorporate these into the development management system.

Promoting New & Innovative Schemes for Renewable Energy

The Government White Paper on '*Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland*' sets very ambitious targets for expanding the role of renewable energy notably the target of 33% of electricity consumption to come from renewable resources by 2020. With regard to this, the City Council continues to pursue measures for renewable energy take-up and promotion.

The City Council will continue to promote research into, and use of, both geothermal heating systems and CHP systems along with alternative energy efficient and renewable energy technologies.

Policy EM.21

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to pursue initiatives which promote innovation in the fields of energy conservation and renewable energy resources and research.

Air Quality

The adoption of the EU Framework Directive on Air Quality Assessment & Management has fundamentally changed the entire approach to air quality monitoring and assessment in member states. The implementation of this Directive, which prescribes new and revised limit values for a wide range of air pollutants, has required a radical restructuring and expansion of monitoring networks in Ireland and other member states. Greater emphasis is placed on data dissemination and the need to keep the public informed on the state of air quality. New or extended monitoring networks have been established for the main traffic related pollutants. The information on these pollutants indicates that nitrogen oxides and particulate matter will present the greatest challenge in meeting the new EU standards in urban areas in the future with associated implications for traffic management and transport policy.

Air quality is monitored in Limerick City by a number of stations around the city measuring suspended particulates, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulphur

dioxide, lead PM10 and benzene/toluene/xylene, etc. These stations ensure that Limerick City is compliant with the EPA recommendations outlined in 'The National Air Quality Monitoring Plan'. The information gathered through sampling is compiled in an annual report on air quality and trends produced by the City Council.

Policy EM.22

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to continue monitoring air quality and air quality trends and to expand the effectiveness and extent of monitoring arrangements in accordance with EU policy directives on air quality and to promote and develop the use of environmentally friendly fuels (such as bio fuels) in City Council vehicles and machinery.

Noise Pollution

Noise can have a significant impact on the environment and the quality of life enjoyed by individuals and communities. Traffic is the dominant noise source in most parts of the city. Other forms of noise, however, such as impulsive or tonal noise can potentially be more of a nuisance.

Local authorities, through the planning system, can help minimise the adverse effects of noise pollution by guiding development so that activities that generate noise are located away from noise sensitive areas such as housing estates and schools. Where this is not practicable, the City Council can place planning conditions on permissions for new development which seek to control and reduce noise levels. For example, conditions can be imposed restricting noise levels during construction, on entertainment activities and on industrial activity. Added to this the Council can further control noise pollution through the EPA Act 1992. Part VI Section 107 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority to require measures to be taken to prevent or limit noise pollution. A new EU Directive on noise, 2002/49/EC, requires member states to draw up noise maps, local plans and long term strategies to control and reduce noise in future.

Limerick City Council has prepared a '*Draft Noise Action Plan*' under Article 11 of the Environmental Noise Regulations, 2006. The draft Noise Action Plan has been made for places near major roads.

Policy EM.23

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to require all major developments to be designed and operated in a manner that will avoid significant noise impacts to sensitive receptors.

Policy EM.24

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to adopt a Noise Action Plan.

Light Pollution

While adequate lighting is essential to a safe and secure environment, light spillage from excessive or poorly designed lighting is increasingly recognised as a potential nuisance to surrounding properties, a threat to wildlife, and can reduce the visibility of the night sky. Urban and rural locations can suffer equally from this problem. Limerick City Council shall investigate and implement design of external light pollution reduction measures across all sectors especially with regards to public lighting. This will reduce the visual impact of our Cities on the night skies that is shown to have potential positive health and biodiversity impacts, while also potentially reducing long-term energy costs.

Policy EM.25

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to require that the design of external lighting/flood lighting (commercial and sports related) minimises the incidence of light spillage or pollution in to the surrounding environment and has due regard to the residential amenity of surrounding areas and road traffic safety.

Community Cemeteries**Policy EM.26**

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to facilitate the acquisition of lands necessary for the expansion of community cemeteries.

Part II Water Services**Introduction**

The purpose of this Chapter is to outline Limerick City Council's policies and objectives for achieving high quality, sustainable environmental standards and to provide high quality water & waste water infrastructure throughout the City. The protection of the natural and built environment is of major importance to the future social and economic development of the City as is the delivery of essential infrastructure and services. This Chapter is divided into key policy areas dealing with management measures and infrastructure developments relevant to the proper planning and sustainable development of the City as the Gateway of the Mid-Western Region.

Water Services Department Objective

To provide a safe and secure potable water source and a compliant waste water treatment plant to meet the needs of Limerick City, provide appropriate infrastructure to support this aim and in turn support the economic and social development of the City as a whole.

Policy WS.1 Potable Water

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to make continuously available a high quality drinking water source to meet local demands and to achieve an economically sustainable level of water production and supply through;

- *Water Production*
- *Water Quality*
- *Expansion & Improvements of the Water Distribution System*
- *Reducing Water Supply Demand through Water Conservation*

Water Production

The availability of a quality drinking water supply is essential for public health and the continued economic growth of the City and the Mid-Western Region as a whole. The need to balance the growing demand for water with the needs of the environment and those of existing users is critical. Future predicted population growth, increasing pressure for new development across the City and the changing trends in water use will lead to an increased demand for water. Thus, Limerick City Council shall seek to ensure prudent use of water resources while making adequate provision for future sustainable development. Over 60,000m³ per day of drinking water is currently produced by Limerick City Council at the Water Treatment Plant in Clareville. Of this production, 40,000m³ is delivered daily to the City whilst some 20,000m³ is exported daily to consumers in County Limerick and County Clare respectively. The source for raw water is the

River Shannon. The Water Treatment Plant at Clareville is currently undergoing an upgrade in order to meet present and future water demands in the City and the wider Mid-Western Region.

In addition to increasing capacity the plant is undergoing an upgrade in terms of:

- Rationalisation of works on the site to achieve a more efficient water production facility.
- Renewal of existing plant assets including storage, buildings and equipment in order to secure their future satisfactory operation, thereby ensuring good quality water at all times.
- Upgrading the control systems at the plant to facilitate a greater degree of automation, monitoring and control in order to improve efficiency and cost.
- Development of sustainable sludge treatment and disposal arrangements in order to secure satisfactory outlets for sludge residues at minimum cost.
- At the end of this upgrade, in April 2010, the plant will have a production capacity of 87MLD.

Objectives

- The Water Services Authority shall, not later than such date as may be prescribed by the Minister, make a '*Water Services Strategic Plan*' with regard to the provision of water services in its functional area.
- Complete a study assessing the necessity of completing Phase 2 of the proposed upgrade of the facility to 140 MLD.
- Complete a feasibility study on the potential to install a secondary source.
- Strictly monitor the O&M Phase (Operation & Maintenance) of the current contract to ensure the protection of the City Councils Assets.

Water Quality

Water abstracted from the River Shannon, is used as the primary drinking water source for the City's population. To comply with the EU Directive on the Quality of Drinking Water (98/83/EC), the City Council Laboratory monitors the water it extracts at three different stages:

- At abstraction
- During the treatment process
- And in the distribution system

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assessed the results for 2008 and concluded that the quality of the water supply is above the National average. It also stated that compliance with microbiological parameters was excellent in Limerick City with none of the samples analysed detecting any E. coli or Enterococci.

Policy WS.2 Water Quality

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to comply with the requirements of the EU Directive on the Quality of Drinking Water (98/83/EC) through the monitoring of water at three different stages:

- *At abstraction*
- *During the treatment process*
- *And in the distribution system.*

Objectives

- The City Council will continue to monitor drinking water quality in the city and endeavour to ensure good quality drinking water for City residents and businesses in accordance with current legislation.
- Promote good catchment management through continued lobbying of adjoining Authorities to protect the City's abstraction point.

- To endeavour to comply with National Policy in respect of lead pipes and other parametric values.

Expansion & Improvements of the Water Distribution System

It is the policy of the City Council to maintain the existing distribution system and in addition to remedy any deficiencies in water pressure by the laying of additional mains, by the reinforcement of the distribution system and by the extension of the ring main system, subject to the availability of funds.

Policy WS.3 Water Distribution System

It is the policy of the Limerick City Council to maintain the existing distribution system and in addition to remedy any deficiencies in water pressure by the laying of additional mains, by the reinforcement of the distribution system and by the extension of the ring main system.

Objectives

- Complete and commission the installation of the Southern Ring Trunk Main infrastructure around the City to service the north of the City ensuring all strategic spurs are completed.
- Complete a study assessing the requirement for connecting the Southern Ring Trunk Main to the 700mm west of the Shannon main and seek necessary funding.
- Review and reconfigure the existing District Metre Areas (DMA) to accommodate the new Southern Ring Trunk Main.
- Introduce pressure controlling measures in all District Metre Areas (DMA) to ensure a more consistent pressure level on water distribution systems.
- Renew and rehabilitate all remaining unsuitable water supply mains in an ongoing programme of annual replacement, and in accordance with the mains rehabilitation strategy.
- To cater for the future developments through public and private driven initiatives where production capacity permits.

All new development proposals will be required to implement and install water mains in accordance with the following:

- Water mains as detailed in the Water Services Department specification for laying water mains on Limerick City Council's website.
- Water mains required to be taken in charge by Limerick City Council in the future must be laid in public open space.
- WSCR Boxes must be located on the public footpath on each separate supply to individual residences or business units.
- Have regard for the specifications and details as defined in the DEHLG '*Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas*'.
- Comply with all National Policy in respect of water metering.
- Old lead service connections must be replaced from the Water Main on the public road to the building including the installation of a WSCR Box.

Water Conservation

The Limerick City *Water Supply Conservation Project* was initiated in 1997. Under this project the City was divided into 17 Zones called District Meter Areas for Water Distribution Management. Each zone has one or two feeds, which are connected to a telemetry system in City Hall. This system is downloaded every morning and the profiles checked to alert of any changes i.e. bursts or shut valves which may have occurred in the previous 24 hours.

A number of different methodologies are used when pursuing leaks in the different zones from the simple listening stick to the leak noise correlator which is a specially developed electronic device for detecting leaks. The minimum night flows which draw off the system, allows for the identification of areas of leakage and allows assessment to take place identifying leaks. The Limerick City Leakage Reduction and Target Level Review assessed water conservation, district metering and leakage control across the City subdividing it into a number of District Meter Areas (DMA's) with active leakage control being conducted citywide. Work has been ongoing on rehabilitation of water mains in the City in conjunction with the streetscape contracts and following burst history. The City Council, as part of the Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2014, has identified the resources needed to upgrade the City's existing water main infrastructure to ensure issues such as leakage and reduced pressure are addressed as a priority. Added to this, the Council will encourage proposals which serve to reduce the overall demand for water in the City thereby removing an unnecessary strain on the City's infrastructure and environment.

Policy WS.4 Water Conservation

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to encourage development proposals which serve to reduce the overall demand for water in the City thereby removing an unnecessary strain on the City's infrastructure and environment as a whole.

Objectives

- Continue to implement the water conservation management plan as outlined above.
- Provide for an unaccounted for water detection system and continue the fix/find programmes in the supply network.
- Eliminate Common Looped Supplies through the provision of new connections to the boundary of householder's properties if the common looped supply is terminated.
- Reduce water demand through management techniques.
- Reduce demand through water saving technologies i.e. Flow limiters, pressure regulators, leak detection systems, proximity shut off valves and water meters
- Encourage the use of non-potable water such as rainwater and grey water systems to offset water consumption where appropriate, e.g. toilet flushing etc.
- Cater for the future developments through public and private driven initiatives where production capacity permits.

All new development proposals will be required to implement and install water mains in accordance with the following:

- Safeguard against high water consumption and leakage.
- Certification from a suitably qualified engineer with a minimum of €2M Professional Indemnity Insurance, confirming that the development has been pressure tested and is in accordance with good industry standards prior to a water connection application.
- Submit Water Conservation Proposals when applying for planning permission.
- Comply with all National Policy in respect of water metering.
- Old lead service connections must be replaced from the Water Main on the public road to the dwelling including the installation of a WSCR Box.

Foul Water Drainage

The EU Directive on Urban Waste Water Treatment requires that urban areas exceeding 15,000 in population, and located on estuaries, be provided with a treatment plant to at least secondary treatment standard. It further requires a collection system, designed to prevent untreated discharges into receiving waters, and that the discharge of the treated effluent meets all relevant directives and national standards. The new infrastructure will ensure that the EU requirements

for the provision of wastewater treatment facilities are met. There are over 20,000 households within the City limits and up to a further 6,000 households in Counties Clare and Limerick which use the City sewer system. Each household generates on average 380 litres of wastewater per day.

This wastewater treatment facility treats 11 million litres of wastewater per day to eliminate the discharge of raw sewerage into the Shannon River. This project has significantly upgraded the existing sewer network and pumping facilities. The system has been linked to a modern wastewater treatment plant, thereby eliminating untreated discharges to the Shannon and Abbey Rivers from Limerick. The investment is improving river water quality in the whole area, from Parteen in Co. Clare to the Shannon Estuary.

Following the completion of the Limerick Main Drainage Scheme, Phase 1, the City and its Environs is now served by a modern sewer infrastructure. The Limerick Main Drainage infrastructure was designed in 1999 to meet the current and foreseeable need of the City and contiguous areas but the City Council is mindful that continued upgrades to both the foul and surface water drainage systems in the City will be required to ensure that predicted population and economic growth for the City can be adequately and catered for in a sustainable manner.

Policy WS.5 Waste Water

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide a high quality sanitary wastewater collection and treatment system to meet the demands of the City's residents.

Objectives

- The development of Limerick Main Drainage Phase 2 will assess the capacities of the current plant, deliver a strategy for reducing the quantity of surface water infiltration into the foul network and extend the network, subject to the availability of finance.
- The Council will continue to upgrade and sustainably develop the drainage system for the City in order to facilitate residential, commercial and industrial development subject to the availability of finance.
- To cater for future development through public and private driven initiatives where treatment capacity permits are necessary.
- The extension of Limerick Main Drainage into the north side of the City to cater for any potential development when finance is made available.
- Continue to have a proactive approach to sewer maintenance in the City and to repair, renew and upgrade existing wastewater collection systems including the separation of foul and storm waters subject to the availability of finance.
- Strictly monitor the O&M Phase (Operation & Maintenance) of the current Waste Water Treatment facility to ensure the protection of the City Councils Assets.
- The City Council will continue to monitor the water quality discharged from the treatment facility and ensure quality discharge water to the River Shannon.
- Where possible and subject to the availability of finance it is the policy of the City Council to encourage and promote the reduction and elimination of the use of septic tanks within its functional area.
- It is an objective to eliminate the use of septic tanks where possible.
- All developments must have regard to the Shannon River Basin Management Plan.
- It is the policy of the council to ensure that the provision of waste water infrastructure keeps pace with that of development in order to ensure that the chances of water pollution are minimised.

All new development proposals shall adhere to the following:

- Have regard to the policy, national standards and guidelines, of not allowing the discharge of contaminants and greases to the City Council sewers.

- Sewers required to be taken in charge by Limerick City Council in the future shall be laid in public open space.
- Access Junction boxes shall be located on the public footpath on each separate supply to individual residences or business units.
- Have regard for the specifications and details as defined in the DEHLG *'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas'*, National and Limerick City Council requirements in respect of discharges.

Surface Water Drainage

Urban development generally results in a high proportion of impervious surfaces, pavements, roadways, roofs etc. This causes a large quantity of surface water run-off into the drainage network.

The City Centre drainage culverts were designed and installed during the 19th Century. At that time a combined piped system was installed catering for both foul and surface water flows with overflows to relieve capacity during heavy rainfall. Since the development of Limerick Main drainage, these combined sewers have been intercepted and the contents treated to EU standards. However the high level of surface water infiltration has had an adverse effect on the economic & hydraulic operation of the treatment plant.

The majority of the newer housing estates have had a separate system of drainage designed and installed. This allows the surface water to be discharged to the surrounding water courses and rivers in a controlled manner.

Drainage practices focus on volume control. Surface water networks designed to convey surface water run-off to underground pipes and on to receiving waters as quickly as possible.

In the design of surface water systems, regard shall be had to the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Guidelines for Flood Risk Management, current best practice and all relevant technical documents.

Policy WS.6 Surface Water Drainage

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to provide a high quality Surface Water Collection and Disposal System.

Objectives

- To cater for the future developments through public and private driven initiatives where discharge capacity permits.
- Control all discharges from future developments to a maximum of 4 l/sec/ha in general areas around the City and in the areas which contribute to areas of restricted capacity, control all surface water discharges to 2 l/sec/ha through planning & development conditions.
- Control discharges of surface water into drainage systems where the receiving drainage system is at or nearing full capacity. The level of control may be as low as 2 l/sec/ha or no discharge.
- Monitor and control development areas of potential flooding, having regard to *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009'*, Limerick City Council requirements, current best practice and relevant technical documents.
- Provide an adequate surface water system in order to minimise the risk of flooding.
- To work in conjunction with other public bodies towards a sustainable programme of improvement for riverbanks, back drains, etc.

- To endeavor to maintain and improve all watercourses where necessary to control flooding.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

SUDS techniques aim to improve water quality, water quantity and amenity. It is a holistic approach to minimising the adverse environmental effects of development on natural water resources. It encompasses measures such as rainwater harvesting for non-potable applications such as toilet flushing so as to reduce the burden on the public water supply.

Roofs and paved areas are major contributors to surface water runoff. Green Roof technologies are encouraged, where appropriate, to reduce surface water runoff. Limerick City Council favours the adoption of SUDS techniques in the development of the City as part of the policy to encourage sustainable aspects of urban development.

All New Development Proposals will be required to adhere to the following:

The parameters for a Hydraulic Analysis of the proposed storm water sewer network for any development as indicated:

- Rain Fall intensity : 60mm/hr
- Contributing areas: hard surfaces inclusive of roofs, roads, footpaths and any other hard standing area - 100% impermeable.
- Green areas or park land - 20% impermeable.

Storm water drainage sewers shall be designed to cater for a storm return period of a 1:30 year storm without surcharge and to cater for a 1:100 year storm without flooding

Designers shall have regard to '*The Planning System & Flood Risk Management -Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009*, at the design stage of any possible development site.

Policy WS.7 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to ensure that all new developments incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems at the application stage.

Objectives

All new Development Proposals will be required to adhere to the following:

- Complete a percolation and infiltration tests prepared by an Engineer, with a minimum of €2m Professional Indemnity Insurance, for the proposed route of the SUDS and designed to suit site specific requirements.
- Allow sufficient land take for SUDS when planning the site and also consider the region as a whole in association with adjoining lands and their requirements in designing SUDS. Developers may be required to set aside lands to cater for not only their own SUDS but also regional SUDS.
- Designed in accordance with a surface water management train.
- SUDS shall not be used where ground water or a high water table is at risk.
- Avoid pipes where possible and utilize the SWALES concept allowing for maintenance of such SWALES.
- SUDS shall be designed with wildlife in mind.
- Upstream silt traps should be incorporated in SUDS.
- Attenuate run off to pre development values or better.
- A method statement must be produced to identify and mitigate the maintenance hazards and all potential pollution hazards both during construction and operation in the future.
- All SUDS must be designed with all stages of construction approved and certified by a bonded chartered engineer.

Flood Protection

Flooding results from a combination of human activity and natural physical conditions. There is mounting evidence and consensus among scientists that the global climate is changing as a result of human activity which will lead to an increase in sea levels and consequently the threat of flooding. Flood risk will therefore need to be considered at all stages of the land use planning process and managed in an environmentally sensitive way.

Like other natural processes, flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and environmentally sustainable management. The accepted national policy response to flood protection is now to manage the risk to life and property as sustainably as possible, and to consider flood risk and its related impacts on development on a catchment basis rather than on an individual location basis. This will facilitate sustainable development through the reduction of future flood damage and hence reduce the associated potential economic and social costs.

The Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government in partnership with the Office of Public Works (OPW) released draft guidelines in September 2008, these guidelines have since been adopted and are titled *'The Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities', 2009.*

These guidelines require the planning system at National, Regional and local levels to:

- Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding by not permitting development in flood risk areas, particularly floodplains, unless where it is fully justified that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development and unless the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall;
- Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation of flood risk as the overall framework for assessing the location of new development in the development planning processes; and
- Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

Policy WS.8 Flood Protection

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to continue to work towards reducing flooding within the City and ensure that all new development proposals comply fully with the requirements of 'The Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities', 2009, and any additional guidance introduced during the lifetime of the Development Plan.

Objectives

- Avoid the risk of flooding by not permitting development in flood risk areas, particularly floodplains, unless where it is fully justified that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development and unless the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.
- Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management based on (1) avoidance, (2) reduction and only then (3) mitigation of flood risk as the overall framework for assessing the location of new development.
- Incorporate flood risk assessment into the Development Management process and planning appeals.

- Cater for future developments through public and private driven initiatives where capacity permits.
- In association with the Office of Public Works, develop a Flood Risk Map of the City in accordance with Section 14.6 of the requirements of the EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC).

Limerick City Council shall have full regard to these guidelines within the Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016, with particular reference to lands zoned for development. In this regard Limerick City Council has provided Map 2 - Flood Risk Areas in Appendix I. This map indicates the zones of High Probability and Moderate Probability of flooding as set out in Chapter 3 of the guidelines. Proposed developments in these zones must have regard to the guidance provided.

Other available information should also be considered such as the Office of Public Works (OPW) Flood Mapping www.opw.ie in order to identify areas that are known to have flooded in the past within and around the boundary of Limerick City. Provisions and recommended policies from studies produced will be examined and integrated into the current City Development Plan when available and where feasible. Until such time as comprehensive information and guidance is available on flooding in the City, a flexible approach is needed to take account of flood risk to ensure that appropriate measures are taken wherever the need arises. When considering development in flood risk areas regard shall be given to both the *Precautionary Principle* and *Sequential Testing* as detailed in the '*Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', 2009.

Developers/Applicants proposing developments in an area where there is a flood risk shall:

- Provide a detailed study and modelling exercise of the catchments, Risk Assessment of whether the proposed development is likely to be affected by flooding (including for climate change), whether it will increase flood risk elsewhere and of the measures proposed to deal with these effects and risks in accordance with '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', 2009.
- Satisfy the planning authority that any flood risk arising from the proposal will be successfully managed with the minimum environmental effect to ensure that the site can be developed and occupied safely.
- Comply with Limerick City Council planning authority requirements on finished floor levels.

Policy WS.9 Flood Risk

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to ensure that development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations.

OPW Guidelines - www.flooding.ie

- Development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted in flood prone or marginal areas. (Preventing such development, where flooding would result in significant hardship, financial losses or costs, will avoid increasing the existing level of risk and will protect the proposed new development from the human (stress and ill-health, for example) and financial costs of flood events. It will also eliminate or reduce expenditure on flood protection measures and compensation.
- Appropriately designed development, which is sensitive to the effects of flooding, may be permissible in flood plains provided it does not reduce the flood plain area or otherwise restrict flow across floodplains. (Examples of such development might include

- park areas, sports pitches, certain types of industry, warehousing, etc. designed to be flood resistant and/or insensitive. Such development should only be permitted provided it incorporates adequate measures to cope with the ever-existent flood risk, e.g. adequate drainage systems, safety measures, emergency response facilities and/or warning and response systems and where it is considered that flooding would not result in significant hardship/financial loss or cost.)
- Development must so far as is reasonably practicable incorporate the maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff. e.g.:
 1. *Hard surface areas (car parks, etc.), should be constructed in permeable or semi-permeable materials.*
 2. *On-site storm water ponds to store and/or attenuate additional runoff from the development should be provided.*
 3. *Soak-aways or french drains should be provided to increase infiltration and minimise additional runoff.*
 - Such sustainable design/construction measures are desirable in most areas and essential in floodplains, areas liable to flooding, and areas where the conveyance capacity of watercourses is marginal. In all of these cases development that reduces the rate of absorption or increases the rate of runoff increases the risk of flooding of lands and properties downstream.
 - For developments adjacent to watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance. (A setback of 5m-10m is required depending on the width of the watercourse).
 - Development consisting of construction of embankments, wide bridge piers, or similar structures will not normally be permitted in or across flood plains or river channels. (Such structures restrict/obstruct flow and increase the risk of flooding to property and land upstream. If it is considered necessary, in exceptional cases, to permit such structures, they should be designed to minimise and/or compensate for any potential negative effects).

All new development must be designed and constructed to meet the following minimum flood design standards:

- For Urban areas or where developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are involved - the 100 year flood;
- For Rural areas or where further developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are not involved - the 25 year flood;
- Along the Coast and Estuaries - the 200 year tide level;
- Where streams open drains or other watercourses are being culverted - the minimum permissible culvert diameter is 900mm. (Access should be provided for maintenance as appropriate.)

The application of higher design standards may be appropriate in certain cases where the level of risk and/or uncertainty warrant it e.g. hospitals or other emergency services, main roads, chemical plants, cultural repositories, areas of karst etc.

A Flood Impact Assessment and proposals for the storage or attenuation of run-off discharges (including foul drains) to ensure the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment must accompany planning applications for development of areas exceeding 1 hectare.

A certificate from a competent person as agreed with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council with a minimum of €2m Professional Indemnity Insurance that the development will not contribute to flooding within the relevant catchment, must accompany planning applications for development of areas of 1 hectare or less.

Chapter 13 City Centre

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the basis and context from which a collective approach to development in the City Centre is formed. This approach is needed in order to maintain and promote a strong, sustainable and cohesive core in the Mid-Western Region.

Numerous strategic documents at both national and regional level identify Limerick City as the capital of the region and a driver of economic growth at both national and regional level. The challenge for Limerick City and County Council is to put in place the infrastructure and policy conditions that will facilitate economic and employment growth.

Limerick 2030

The Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick sets out the medium and long term strategy for the development of Limerick City and County for the next 15 years.

The plan sets out a new vision for Limerick:

“Limerick will become a major economic force in the Irish and European economy, a leading centre for commercial investment – both foreign direct investment and endogenous business growth, capitalising on the strength of its Higher Education Institutions (HEI’S), the skills of its workforce and its environmental and heritage attributes. The City centre will be at the heart of this economic force – an attractive magnet for retail, leisure, residential, commercial, educational and cultural growth. Growth will benefit all citizens across the City, County and Mid-West Region.”

The 2030 economic strategy 2030 identifies a multi - sectoral approach to be pursued that is to be delivered and implemented through the pursuit of five inter-related objectives:

1. Position Limerick as a competitive knowledge economy, known for its skill base excellence in high tech sectors;
2. Develop an outstanding environment for starting and growing new businesses;
3. Create the conditions for long-term economic growth;
4. Create a vibrant City Centre economy with a new mix of economic uses and a strong educational presence; and
5. Maximise the local employment impacts from development / regeneration.

The spatial element of the strategy seeks to place the City centre at the heart of the wider economic strategy, developing its role as a place of creativity, culture and consumption. It is not just about providing the accommodation and infrastructure, but also providing the quality of life factors so important to investors, employers and skilled workers. There are 5 elements to this part of the plan:

- Seven City Centre Transformational Projects;
- Enhancing the City Centre retail offer;
- A new business offer;
- Expanding the residential opportunity; and
- Infrastructure / public realm investments.

City Centre Transformational Projects

Seven Transformational large scale projects have been identified as follows:

1. A ‘World Class’ Waterfront – a renaissance of Limerick’s entire Waterfront;
2. The ‘Limerick Cultural Centre’ – an iconic destination building on the Waterfront;

3. 'Great streets' - a transformation of the City's three main streets - O'Connell Street, Catherine Street and Henry Street;
4. A new City Square/Plaza - to define the focal point or 'heart' of the City Centre;
5. A City Centre higher education campus - the creation of a multi-versity combining facilities from Limerick Institute of Technology, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College in the heart of the City Centre;
6. Renewal of the Georgian Quarter - a concentrated programme to restore the Georgian part of the City to its former glory; and
7. Colbert Station renewal - a new public transport interchange and enhanced station environment.

Policy CC.1 Limerick 2030

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to secure the goals and objectives set out in Limerick 2030 - An Economic and Spatial Plan.

City Centre Retail Area (CCRA)

Limerick City and County Council is committed to the reinforcement of the City Centre's role in the retail hierarchy by facilitating the development of a significant amount of floor-space to meet projected demand and projected retail unit size. Retailing is prioritised in this area but not to the exclusion of other land use types. Other uses such as residential, hotel, office, cultural and leisure facilities etc., which compliment the retail function of the CCRA and promote vibrancy in the City Centre are also permitted, subject to the policies to promote City Centre retailing. It is essential that an appropriate mix of comparison and convenience shopping is provided in the CCRA so as to retain a vibrant and unique experience for shoppers. In this regard all applications in the CCRA will be assessed in respect of the type and format of retailing proposed and its impact on the overall vibrancy and vitality of the City centre. Please see Map 1A in Appendix I.

Policy CC.2 City Centre Retail Area

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to provide for the protection, upgrading and expansion of higher order retailing, in particular comparison retailing, and a range of other supporting uses in the City Centre retail area.

Enhancing the City Centre Retail Offer

Limerick 2030 reinforces the core conclusions of the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region that it is necessary to re-establish the City Centre at the top of the shopping hierarchy by improving the range and quality of shopping. In this regard a comprehensive redevelopment project is advocated for the Arthurs Quay area including the provision of a City Square and park. Furthermore the strategy supports the refurbishment and expansion of Cruises Street and other premises in the prime shopping area.

Policy CC.3 New Retail Development

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to secure the redevelopment of the Arthurs Quay area to provide an enhanced retail offer in the City Centre together with a new public square and public park.

City Centre Commercial Area (CCCA)

The CCCA reflects the commercial and employment zone of the City Centre, extending from the City Centre Retail Area. All uses are permitted throughout the CCCA, except comparison retail

uses, which are restricted to the City Centre Retail Area unless they serve a local need only. Please see Map 1A in Appendix I.

Policy CC.4 City Centre Commercial Area

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to support the retention and expansion of a wide range of commercial, cultural, leisure and residential uses in the commercial core area (apart from comparison retail uses).

A New Business Offer

Limerick 2030 sets out a number of projects to encourage businesses to locate in certain locations in the City centre. These Strategic Development sites are identified as follows:

- The Opera Site offers the potential to locate significant development adjacent to the core retail area. In particular, the development of a modern office based employment development, a third level campus with associated retail/residential/community uses. Furthermore, the site has the potential to accommodate a relocated Sarsfield House thus enhancing the riverfront by the provision of a new linear Arthurs Quay City centre park.
- The Hanging Gardens/Limerick GPO site on Henry Street is a partially completed development whose completion would reinforce Henry Street and the Waterfront along Bishops Quay as a business location.
- The former Cleeves Site on the northern bank of the river with its chimney stack which represents an iconic structure on the river front. The site offers significant potential for a range of uses including education, employment, tourism/culture and residential uses.

Other locations identified include the general City Centre Georgian Area which acts as a location for a cluster of professional services and the Georges Quay area which has potential to deliver a medical park centred around Barrington's Hospital.

Policy CC.5 New Business Offer

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to secure the development of the Opera Centre, the Hanging Gardens and the former Cleeves factory in support of the objectives set out in Limerick 2030.

Inner City Residential Neighbourhoods (ICRN)

The areas outside of the commercial area but within the City Centre boundary fall within this zoning type. These areas include a large quantity of older housing stock, some low-end commercial uses and a range of other non-residential types such as large health and education institutions and community facilities, which strongly contribute to the character of these areas. Limerick City and County Council is committed to protecting the established residential housing stock in these areas by restricting the development of incongruous development types and providing the range of local service provision required to ensure their attractiveness and vibrancy. Civic and institutional functions will also be facilitated where appropriate and new residential development to compliment the established areas will be supported. Please see Map 1A in Appendix I.

Policy CC.6 Inner City Residential Neighbourhoods

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to reinforce the residential character of inner City residential neighbourhoods, while supporting the provision and retention of local services, and civic and institutional functions.

Expanding the Residential Offer

The 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan highlights the decline in the City centre population in particular in owner occupation. A pilot scheme is recommended to demonstrate the potential to refurbish the existing historic building stock to provide high quality family accommodation. Furthermore, the Government's "Living Cities Initiative" should be fully supported.

The plan also highlights the potential contribution that residential accommodation provided by third level institutions can make to the vitality and vibrancy of the City centre.

Policy CC.7 Expanding the Residential Offer

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to develop a pilot project to demonstrate the potential of the City centre Georgian area to support modern family living in particular owner occupation.

Policy CC.8 Expanding the Residential Offer

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to actively support and implement the Living Cities Initiative.

Infrastructure / Public Realm Investment

The 2030 Economic and Spatial plan proposed a series of co-ordinated investment programmes to enhance the City centre. Central to this is the preparation of a City Centre Transport Strategy that would:

- Put pedestrians first throughout the City Centre.
- Improve the management of on-street parking.
- Enable the creation of a new City Square in the vicinity of Arthurs Quay and other public plazas.
- Adopt "smarter travel" principles in the City centre.
- Accommodate improved access to / from the third level institutions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- A unified road signage policy.
- A coherent pedestrian way finding system in the City centre.

This Strategy needs to be complemented by a new Public Realm Strategy which should have the following components:

- The creation of a network of public squares / plazas to include
 - O'Connell Street/ Arthurs Quay.
 - Potato Market / Merchants Quay.
 - Colbert Station.
 - Opera Centre
- To improve the connections between the City centre and King John's Castle, John's Square, Colbert Station, the national technological park and the Crescent.
- The continuation of the riverside walkways to enhance the appreciation of the Shannon.
- Enhancement of Nicholas Street and King John's Castle.
- Enhancement of the Park canal corridor as an amenity link between the City centre and the university.

Policy CC.9 Infrastructure / Public Realm Investments

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to prepare a City Centre Transport Strategy and Public Realm Strategy. In the interim Limerick City and County Council will actively pursue the objectives outlined above.

Strategic Sites

Within Limerick 2030, considerable attention has been paid to the identification of a number of strategic sites within the City Centre. These sites have been identified as strategic as the development of the sites individually and collectively hold significant potential to transform the wider City/County area and the region. These sites are of importance to the community therefore Limerick City and County Council has aimed, through Limerick 2030, to create a clear guide for the development of these sites within a holistic strategy document. Over the lifetime of the plan other sites may be identified as being of strategic importance and it will be necessary for Limerick City and County Council to take a proactive role in securing their sustainable development in the achievement of the goals and objectives set out in Limerick 2030 plan. It may be necessary for the City and County Council to take a leading role as a facilitator in the packaging of sites of suitable size and shape for developments in the City Centre. These measures can include compulsory purchase, registration of title, use of Derelict Sites legislation etc.

Policy CC.10 Strategic Sites

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to support the identification of strategic sites and to continue to develop strategies to secure their development in support of the objectives set out in Limerick 2030.

Chapter 15 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Part I Zoning Objectives (ZO)

Introduction

The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate the land use planning objectives of the City Council for all lands in its administrative area. Seven general zoning objectives and 16 specific zoning objectives are indicated in this plan. These zoning objectives should be read in association with the policies set out in earlier chapters and with the area based objectives in *Chapters 13 City Centre* and *Chapter 14 Area Profiles*. The zonings as described in this Chapter are indicated on the Zoning Maps in Volume II of this Plan. Subsidiary objectives are also indicated and these are elaborated in each of the area profiles.

The overall approach regarding zoning is based on the following principles:

- To use zoning as a tool to shape the future orderly development of the City and not just to reflect existing land uses;
- To reflect the development needs of the City over the plan period and for a reasonable period beyond;
- To promote particular uses in appropriate locations, to reduce conflict of uses and to protect natural and man-made resources;
- To promote the renewal of under-utilised and brownfield land, thus ensuring the efficient use of urban lands and infrastructure while meeting demands for space for housing and other development;
- To safeguard and improve amenities and the general quality of life;
- To promote the achievement of sustainable development by facilitating mixed use zones in certain cases by ensuring a balance of housing, employment and local facilities within an area and reducing the need to travel.

Land-Use Zoning Objectives

Each Land-Use Zoning Objective (hereafter referred to as 'ZO' with a reference number assigned) is defined below. Detailed objectives are provided within each area profile.

Zoning Objective 1

Objective ZO.1 City Centre Area (CCA)

To support the retention and expansion of a wide range of commercial, cultural, leisure and residential uses in the City Centre as defined in the 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan.

Objective ZO.1 (A) City Centre Retail Area (CCRA)

To provide for the protection, upgrading and expansion of higher order retailing, in particular comparison retailing, and a range of other supporting uses in the City Centre retail area.

The City Council is committed to the reinforcement of the City Centre role in the retail hierarchy by facilitating the development of a significant quantum of floor-space to meet projected demand. Retailing is prioritized in this area but not to the exclusion of other land use types. Other uses such as residential, hotel, office and cultural and leisure facilities etc which compliment the retail function of the CCRA and promote vibrancy in the City Centre are also permitted, subject to the policies to promote City Centre retailing.

Objective ZO.1 (B) City Centre Commercial Area (CCCA)

To support the retention and expansion of a wide range of commercial, cultural, leisure and residential uses in the commercial core area, (apart from comparison retail uses).

The Commercial Area reflects the commercial and employment zone of the City Centre extending from the City Centre Retail Area. All uses are permitted throughout the CCCA, except comparison retail uses, which are restricted to the City Centre Retail Area unless they serve a local need only.

Objective ZO.1(C) Inner City Residential Neighbourhoods

To reinforce the residential character of inner City residential neighbourhoods, while supporting the provision and retention of local services, and civic and institutional functions.

The areas outside of the commercial core but within the City Centre boundary fall within this zoning type. These areas include a large quantity of older housing stock, some low end commercial uses and a range of other non-residential types such as large health and education institutions and community facilities, which strongly contribute to the character of these areas. The City Council is committed to protecting the established residential housing stock in these areas by restricting the development of incongruous development types and providing the range of local service provision required to ensure their attractiveness and vibrancy. Civic and institutional functions will also be facilitated where appropriate and new residential development to compliment the established areas will be supported.

Zoning Objective 2

Objective ZO.2 Residential, Local Services & Institutional

To protect and provide for residential uses and associated uses to support sustainable communities.

The provision and protection of residential uses and residential amenity is a central objective of this zoning, which covers much of the land in the suburban area. However other uses, including small scale local services, institutional uses and civic uses and provision of public infrastructure and utilities are permitted provided they do not detract from residential amenity and do not conflict with the employment use policies in Chapter 3 and related zoning objectives. Small scale 'corner shops' and other local services such as local medical services, will be open for consideration. Schools, third level institutes, and major established health facilities are located within this zone and appropriate expansion of these facilities will be acceptable in principle. The employment policies in Chapter 3 designate particular locations for offices, office based industry, major retailing development and these uses are not generally open for consideration in this zone (see *Chapter 3 Economic Development Strategy*). New local and neighbourhood centres are open for consideration in this zone provided they meet the criteria for such centres set out in the Retail Strategy.

Objective ZO.2 (A) Residential

To provide for residential development and associated uses.

Objective ZO.2 (B) Educational, Cultural & Community

To facilitate the provision of educational, cultural and community facilities to support local communities.

Zoning Objective 3

Objective ZO.3 Regeneration

To support the social, economic and physical regeneration of Moyross, Kings Island and Southill in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the City as a whole.

The regeneration agency has prepared a Masterplan for each of the three areas mentioned. These master plans have no statutory basis and are considered to be a guidance document. All developments in the areas will be assessed in accordance with the principles set out in *Chapter 7 Regeneration*. All proposed development in these areas will be assessed in the context of the impact on the local area and on the City as whole.

Zoning Objective 4

Objective ZO.4 Industry
To provide for industrial and related uses.

There is a need to protect existing industrially zoned lands in the interest of employment generation. *There are two categories of industrial zonings:*

Objective ZO.4 (A) Light Industry
To provide for light industry.

Light industry is where the primary activity is the manufacturing of a physical product in a manner that does not impact on the amenities of the adjacent area. The following uses will be acceptable in principle in this zone: light industry; trade warehousing and distribution; wholesaling; trade showrooms; retail showrooms (where ancillary to manufacturing, fitting and trade); and incubator units. Pure retailing and retail warehousing will not generally be acceptable in these zones as indicated in *Chapter 3 Economic Development Strategy*.

Objective ZO.4 (B) General Industry
To provide for general industry.

The zoning objective for these areas is to allow for general industry. The majority of these activities would not be compatible with residential environments. Light industrial activities are also permitted under this zoning.

Zoning Objective 5

Objective ZO.5 Mixed Use Development
To promote the development of mixed uses to ensure the creation of a vibrant urban area, working in tandem with the principles of sustainable development, transportation and self-sufficiency.

This zoning objective facilitates the development of a dynamic mix of uses which will interact with each other creating a vibrant residential and employment area. A vertical and horizontal mix of uses should occur where feasible, including active ground floor uses and a vibrant street frontage on principle streets.

The range of permissible uses within this zone includes residential, general offices, conference centre, third level education, hospital, hotel, commercial leisure, cultural, residential, public institutions, childcare services, business and technology/research uses (including software development, commercial research and development, publishing, information technology, telemarketing, data processing and media activities) and in addition, local convenience stores/corner shops and community/civic uses.

Objective ZO.5 (A) General Mixed Use

To promote the development of mixed uses that serves an area greater than its immediate catchment and to ensure the creation of a vibrant and sustainable urban area.

The primary purpose of this zoning is to provide for a range of employment and related uses. Permissible uses within this zone includes general offices, conference centre, third level education, hospital, hotel, commercial leisure, cultural, residential, public institutions, childcare services, business and technology/research uses (including software development, commercial research and development, publishing, information technology, telemarketing, data processing and media activities), light industrial uses and in addition, local convenience stores/corner shops and community/civic uses. Residential uses are also permitted

Objective ZO.5 (B) District Centres

To provide for and/or improve district centres as mixed use centres, with a primary retail function which will also act as a focus for a range of services.

These centres are characterised by a mix of convenience and comparison shopping. The quality of comparison goods shopping is generally a combination of high order and middle order, the Parkway, Caherdavin, and Roxboro function as the District Centres for the City. In addition to retail uses, District Centres will also provide a focus for other uses, including retail warehousing; retail office; commercial leisure, and services (e.g. libraries, hotels, personal and medical services) and residential uses.

Future development of these centres will be considered in the context of the Retail Strategy outlined in *Chapter 4 Retail Strategy*. General Offices will be open for consideration in District Centres provided the total area of offices is appropriate to the scale of the individual centre, subject to a maximum of 1,000 sq. metres of offices in any one centre. High quality urban design and availability of access by sustainable modes of transport will be a key factor in the development and extension of District Centres.

Objective ZO.5 (C) Neighbourhood Centres

To protect, provide for and/or improve the retail function of neighbourhood centres and provide a focus for local services.

The primary purpose of these centres is to fulfill a local shopping function, providing a mix of convenience shopping, lower order comparison shopping, and local services to residential and employment areas. Some of these centres need to be enhanced significantly in terms of their retail offering, mix of uses, public realm, and overall viability and vitality. Limited retail offices will be acceptable in these centres to serve local needs and are subject to restrictions on size and extent including a cap of 100m² per unit. Residential uses are also acceptable within this zone.

Objective ZO.5 (D) Local Centres

To protect, provide for and/or improve the retail function of local centres and provide a focus for local centres.

Local centres provide for convenience shopping, with anchor units of 400m² or less and a similar amount of associated small units containing convenience, lower order comparison shopping and local services outlets. Limited retail offices will be acceptable in these local centres to serve local needs, subject to restrictions on scale and extent including a cap of 75m² per unit. Residential uses are also acceptable within this zone.

Zoning Objective 6

Objective ZO.6 Open Space & Recreation

To protect, retain and provide for open space both natural and semi natural and recreation uses throughout the City. With a presumption against developing land zoned public open space areas for alternative purposes, including public open space within housing estates.

Objective ZO.6 (A) Public Open Space

To retain all land dedicated for public open space.

Chapter 11 Landscape, Biodiversity & Recreation, outlines the City Council’s approach to the development and protection of public open space. While primarily used for passive and informal recreation, lands zoned ‘public open space’ may also incorporate sports facilities and grounds.

Objective ZO.6 (B) Environmental Preservation Zones

To preserve and enhance the special natural and/or visual character of the preservation zones. There will be a presumption against development within these zones, with development only open for consideration where it achieves the specific policy objectives set out in Chapter 11 Landscape, Biodiversity & Recreation.

These areas have been identified by National, European and other designations or due to their sensitive landscape character and are deemed to be in need of special protection due to their special amenity value, which derives from their distinct topography, tree cover, setting to historic structure or other landscape character. Many of these sites have limited or no development potential due to their landscape character. Please see Map 5 in Appendix I.

Objective ZO.6 (C) Sports Grounds

To protect, retain and enhance the range and quality of sports facilities and grounds.

The sports grounds objective protects the City’s sports grounds and there will be a presumption against the loss of land zoned sports ground to other forms of development. Only development that is ancillary to/supports the principle use of the site for sports and which will only affect lands incapable of forming part of the playing pitches, will be considered in these areas. Ancillary uses include other sport and leisure facilities such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, meeting rooms, a gym, sports training halls, catering facilities, caretaker accommodation and appropriate car parking facilities. Ancillary offices, crèches and community uses are open for consideration, provided they are linked to the sports use.

Zoning Objective 7

Objective ZO.7 Agriculture

To protect, retain and enhance lands for agriculture and agricultural uses.

The City contains one area of agricultural land at Coonagh. Only development of an agricultural nature will be permitted. Residential development is not permitted except where it relates directly to agriculture.

Part II Land-Use Zoning Matrix

The Matrix below illustrates the land use activities that can be considered against the following Zoning Objectives (ZO)

Land Use Zoning Objectives (ZO):

ZO1(A)	City Centre Core Retail Area	ZO4(A)	Light Industry	ZO6(A)	Public Open Space
ZO1(B)	City Centre Commercial Area	ZO4(B)	General Industry	ZO6(B)	Environmental Preservation Zones
ZO1(C)	Inner City Residential Neighbourhoods	ZO5(A)	General Mixed Use	ZO6(C)	Sports Grounds
ZO2(A)	Residential	ZO5(B)	District Centres	ZO7	Agriculture
ZO2(B)	Educational, Cultural & Community	ZO5(C)	Neighbourhood Centres		
ZO3	Regeneration	ZO5(D)	Local Centres		

Legend: Landuse activities available in land use zonings:

- (X) Land use specifically not permitted
- (O) Open for consideration Land use
- (/) Permitted in principle Land use

Figure 15.1 Land-Use Zoning Matrix

LAND USE ZONING CATEGORIES (ZO)

Land Use Activity	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	3(vii)	4A	4B	5A	5B	5C	5D	6A	6B(x)	6C	7
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Advertisements and Advertising Structures	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X
Bed and Breakfast/ Guest House	O	O	O	O	/	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O
Betting Office	/	/	/	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X

Land Use Activity	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	3(vii)	4A	4B	5A	5B	5C	5D	6A	6B(x)	6C	7
Industry - General	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Industry - Light	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O
Motor Sales Outlet	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Night Club/ Discotheque	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	XX	X
*Offices less than 100m2	/	/	/	O	O	O	/	/	/(vi)	/(vi)	/(vi)	O(vi)	X	O(i)	X	X
*Offices 100m2 to 1,000m	/	/	O	X(viii)	O(vii)	O	O	O	/	/	O	X	X	X	X	X
*Offices over 1,000m2	/	/	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Open Space	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Petrol Station	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	/	/	/	X	X	X	X	X
Public House	/	/	/	X	X	O	O	O	/	O	O	O	X	X	X	X
Public Services	/	/	/	/	/	O	O	X	/	/	/	/	X	X	X	X
Recreational Buildings (Commercial)	/	/	/	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O
Recreational Facility/ Sports Club	/	/	/	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	/	X	O
Refuse Landfill/Tip	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Refuse Transfer Station	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Residential	O	/	/	/	O(iii)	O	X	X	/	/	/	/	X	X	X	O(i)
Residential Institution	O	O	/	/	O(iii)	O	X	X	/	O	O	O	X	X	X	O(i)
Restaurant / Cafe	/	/	/	O	O	O	O	O	/	/	/	/	X	O(v)	X	X
Retail Warehouse	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X

*Special Exclusions/Comments

Footnote:	Comment:
(i)	Any new Residential within the Agricultural Zone shall be restricted having regard to the provisions of Chapters 15 & 16.
(ii)	As part of a home based economic use.
(iii)	New Residential Development within Education/Community/Cultural Zones shall be restricted having regard to the provisions of Chapter 16 p.16.23
(iv)	Offices shall strictly relate to the administrative functions associated with the Recreational/Sporting Facility onsite.
(v)	Food Service shall strictly relate to the catering functions associated with the Recreational Sporting Facility onsite (no independent food retailers).
(vi) *	Office development in a district centre shall not exceed 1,000m ² . In neighbourhood centres individual units shall not exceed 100m ² and in local centres units shall not exceed 75m ² .
(vii)	Development in the regeneration areas shall accord with the principles set out in Chapter 7.
(viii)	Offices in excess of 100m ² may be permitted in protected structures.
(ix)	Offices in excess of 100m ² are open for consideration where they are ancillary to the primary educational, cultural or community use of the site.
(x)	Development in <i>Environmental Preservation Zones</i> (where another underlying zoning exists) shall accord with the principles set out in Chapters 11 & 16 of this plan and the requirements as set out under the <i>Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009</i> . Also see Map 5 Appendix I.

Chapter 16 Development Management

Part I Introduction

Limerick City Council is required to control development by ensuring that permissions granted under the Planning Acts are consistent with the policies and objectives of the City Development Plan. The creation of attractive environments with a genuine sense of place is a prerequisite to achieving sustainability. The quality of where we live, work and visit depends not just on the design of buildings, but on their layout and landscaping, the arrangements made for access, and in particular, how they relate to their surroundings.

The overall objective is to create a dynamic, mixed use, visually attractive, world class City, able to compete with other cities on a global basis, with the greatest possible opportunities for all, providing high quality living, working and relaxing environments, making the optimum use of scarce urban land on a sustainable basis and enhancing the particular character of Limerick while recognising that change is essential and desirable.

Development proposals will be assessed in terms of how they contribute to the achievement of the objectives above, and having regard to various qualitative and quantitative standards. Of foremost importance will be the encouragement of development of the highest possible architectural and urban quality.

The standards within this chapter are designed as a guide to the public in making an acceptable planning application. It takes account of the policy statement and new circumstances relating to control of use and the protection and improvement of the environment generally. In certain circumstances the Planning Authority may tighten or relax the standards. Limerick City Council will permit a departure from these standards only where it is clearly justified by the circumstances of a particular case. No such departure can be regarded as forming a precedent affecting the consideration of other proposed developments.

The Planning & Development Acts, 2000-2008, require that the Planning Authority, in considering applications for permission to carry out development, shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the Planning Authority, including the preservation and improvement of the amenities thereof, regard being had to the provisions of the Development Plan and the provisions of any special amenity area order or any European Site or other area so prescribed. There is also provision for the imposition of conditions on permissions granted.

The granting of planning permission does not in itself enable development to commence. There are other legal and procedural requirements which may have to be complied with. In this context, attention is drawn, in particular, to the need to comply with the Building Control Act, the Public Health Acts, Fire Regulations, Air and Water Pollution legislation.

The Planning Authority will prepare supplementary planning guidance documents to aid the development management process.

Compliance with Permissions Granted & Enforcement

Development must be carried out and completed in accordance with the planning permissions granted. In cases where development, including a material change of use, has commenced or is being carried out without planning permission or in breach of a permission, enforcement proceedings will be taken. The Planning Authority may require removal, modification or completion of the development or termination of the use, as necessary, to conform with the

proper planning and sustainable development of the area. It will continue to be the policy of Limerick City Council to use all powers at its disposal to ensure that development only takes place with the benefit of valid planning permissions and that all conditions attached to permissions are complied with in the developments. Limerick City Council will also continue to encourage developers/constructors to meet with resident groups in the areas affected by development in order to help allay issues that cause concern.

Exceptions to the Development Plan

Material Contravention

Limerick City Council has a statutory obligation to take such steps as may be necessary to secure the objectives of the Development Plan. In appropriate circumstances, Limerick City Council may permit a material contravention of the Development Plan. The granting of a planning permission which materially contravenes the Development Plan, is a reserved function of the Elected Members of Limerick City Council, exercisable following a public consultation process.

Development Levies

Limerick City Council may, when granting planning permission, attach conditions requiring the payment of contribution(s) in respect of public infrastructure and facilities, benefiting development in its area. Details of such contributions must be set out in the Development Contribution Scheme.

Bonds

To ensure the satisfactory completion of development, including the protection of trees, on a site which has been the subject of a grant of planning permission, a bond or cash lodgement may be required until the development has been satisfactorily completed. The bond or cash lodgement may be sequestered in part or in its entirety where the development has not been satisfactorily completed. Limerick City Council will determine the amount of such bond or cash lodgement.

Procedure for the Taking in Charge of Residential Areas

The City Council adopted a policy for the taking in charge of residential estates in September 2008. This procedure sets out the requirements of Limerick City Council to take an estate in charge.

Policy DM.1 Taking in Charge of Residential Estates

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to take in charge residential estates in accordance with the adopted 'Taking in Charge Policy' September 2008.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS)

To facilitate the proper assessment of development proposals in circumstances where it is considered that a proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect on the environment, due to the nature, scale or location of the proposal, Limerick City Council will require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with the provisions of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 (or as may be amended during the lifetime of the plan).

Landscape

Limerick's landscape and in particular the River Shannon is one of its key assets. It is vital that all new developments of any scale incorporate high quality landscape design and it is therefore essential that:

- Landscaping proposals are of a high standard and are in the form of a landscape masterplan for small and medium-sized developments;

- Planning applications shall clearly detail how such schemes will be implemented.

Major developments will also be required to prepare a Landscape Strategy as part of their development strategy submitted in their Design Statement. This must be prepared as part of the design process and to inform the site analysis and development proposal configuration, as well as detailed design of public, private and communal space.

Natural Heritage

There are a number of habitat, plant, animal and bird species within Limerick City's jurisdiction, which are protected under National and EU legislation. These are detailed in *Chapter 11 Landscape & Biodiversity*.

The planning process seeks to protect and enhance protected species and habitats. The precautionary principle will be applied to all proposals in environmentally sensitive areas and those which may be in use by protected species. This means that a *Scientific/Ecological Risk Assessment* is required in order to ensure that development does not undermine the conservation objectives of these sites.

All development proposals for sites designated as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) or Special Protection Area (SPA) will be accompanied by an Appropriate Assessment, and shall be referred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). A detailed ecological report carried out by a suitably qualified expert shall accompany all development for proposals involving:

- The culverting, diverting, under-grounding or alteration to the banks of streams/ rivers. These proposals shall be referred to the Regional Fisheries Board for comment
- The use by protected species of the site as a breeding, resting, roosting, feeding ground etc. These proposals shall be referred to the National Parks & Wildlife Service for comment.

The mitigation measures and monitoring recommendations from all EIS and ecological reports should be carried out with the approval and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority.

Architectural Heritage

When making a planning application for permission to restore, refurbish, demolish, develop or for a change of use of protected structures and other buildings of significant heritage interest, the following information should be submitted with each application:

- An Architectural Assessment Report as per the '*Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines*', 2004.
- A comprehensive schedule of proposed work as per the above guidelines.

Architectural Conservation Areas

The requirements for planning application documentation for development within the six Architectural Conservation Areas in Limerick City (1A, B & C, 2, 3 & 4 as detailed in Chapter 10 Built Heritage & Archaeology) are set out in Chapter 3 of the DEHLG *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, 2004*. The overall guiding principle is positive enhancement of the unique qualities that make a place special because of its particular character. Detailed policies are set out in *Chapter 10 Built Heritage & Archaeology*.

Archaeology

Archaeological remains are a non-renewable resource and so it is essential that they are properly safe-guarded and managed. A variety of different types of development may affect

archaeological remains – these include new buildings, modifications and extensions to existing buildings, the construction of car-parks, road surfaces and the installation of services.

Developers are required to contact the Planning Authority to find out if there may be any archaeological implications/requirements within their proposed development site. This is especially necessary for sites which are located within the historic areas of the City.

The cost of all archaeological work (including post-excavation analysis) necessitated by a proposed development are to be met by the developer. It is therefore in the developer's best interest to assess and quantify the archaeological implications of a proposed development at the earliest stages in the planning process.

Developers are required to supply an Archaeological Impact Assessment and Method Statement outlining construction procedures.

An *Archaeological Impact Assessment* should be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist and should include the following:

- A detailed account of the historical and archaeological background of the site, including examination of all relevant maps.
- The nature, extent and locations of any archaeological fabric including industrial archaeological features or buildings within the areas proposed for demolition and redevelopment. This shall be based on detailed inspections of standing structures.
- Identification of all constraints within the proposed development such as occupied buildings.
- The likely impact of the proposed development on any archaeological fabric.
- Propose a strategy to mitigate against any adverse effects on archaeological heritage.

Preservation in-situ and preservation by record are the two approaches applied in the protection of the archaeological heritage.

In relation to archaeological considerations the following shall apply:

- The archaeological remains of potentially significant sites within the Zone of Archaeological Potential of a Recorded Monument will be preserved in-situ or by record (Appendix II).
- Outside the Zone of Archaeological Potential where in the opinion of the Planning Authority developments involve major ground disturbance; archaeological conditions may also be applied particularly in the vicinity of known monuments.
- The City Council will require that archaeological investigation be undertaken prior to the commencement of development. All such investigations must be undertaken by a qualified archaeologist in consultation with Limerick City Council and the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.
- Conditions which modify the development may be imposed, in order to facilitate the archaeological investigation or preserve the archaeological record.
- Detailed assessment and survey of sites of industrial archaeological importance is essential in order to assess the impact of a proposed development. The impact on the aesthetic and architectural merits of the buildings is an additional consideration.

Applications for Planning Permission

Prior to making a planning application, consultation with Limerick City Council is of benefit in clarifying objectives, reducing the need for additional information, and minimising delays. Limerick City Council is anxious to facilitate such discussions and will endeavour to facilitate consultation. Applicants are advised to refer to the Development Plan and seek a pre-planning consultation with the Planning Department prior to the preparation of detailed plans.

Urban Design

The creation of sustainable communities is one of the main challenges facing the Irish town planning system and this has provided the focus for recently published guidance in relation to urban design. This chapter incorporates the recently published *Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide, 2008*, which is a companion document to the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines, 2009*. It is the philosophy of Limerick City Council to develop a planning approach that values urbanism and the creation of vibrant and attractive urban places. Urban Design addresses the relationship between the public domain, the buildings and their use. In this context the objectives of Limerick City Council in respect of development management are:

- The delivery of sustainable city neighbourhoods;
- The delivery of a high quality built environment through good place-making;
- The reinforcement of the strong and distinctive character of Limerick;
- The promotion of development that respects the past while balancing the requirements of a modern twenty first century city.

Design

Limerick City Council will ensure that all new developments contribute positively to the enhancement of the urban qualities of the City. A high standard of design is considered essential to this process, as well as the fostering of long term socially and economically viable communities. Creating a distinctive sense of place taking into account the site history and its setting is important. The analysis of any proposal will assess the visual characteristics of the building form and related elements, such as aspect and orientation, proportion, the balance of solid to void, the shapes and details of roofs, chimneys, windows and doors and the materials used. Details of walls, gates, street furniture, planting and paving will also be noted. Buildings in Limerick have a certain simplicity and consistency in both their design and materials. High quality building materials, which are in harmony with the essential character of the city, will be pursued. To achieve the quality of design expected, developers will be expected to employ experienced design teams, which may include planners, architects, landscape architects, urban designers, transport planners and road engineers. Conservation specialists will be needed where protected flora and fauna, archaeological sites and monuments, listed buildings or conservation areas are involved, and Arboriculturists where existing trees and major shrubs need to be retained and maintenance plans for planted areas have to be prepared. In certain circumstances models of a scheme will be required to an appropriate scale.

Policy DM.2 Planning Statements

It is the policy of Limerick City Council that all significant planning applications be supplemented by Planning Statements to explain the nature of the proposal and how it is compliant with the Development Plan. The City Council will seek all larger and complex proposals to be accompanied by Design Statements.

A *Design Statement* shall be prepared for all large and complex developments at the beginning of the design process and for all applications in major development areas. The Design Statement should address urban design, landscape and building design issues and clearly explain the

development process, design options considered and the adopted development strategy. The Design Statement should take the form of a concise illustration or series of illustrations accompanied by an explanatory written statement. This material will form the basis of meaningful pre-application discussions with the Planning Authority. Design Statements will normally be accompanied by a Visual Impact Statement.

A Design Statement should outline the following:

- The policy background, identifying all relevant policies, development briefs, design guides, standards and regulations and in the case of developments in areas with local area plans or adopted development guidelines shall show compliance with the relevant urban design and architectural principles and guidance;
- The urban design and architectural context including a site and area appraisal (illustrated with diagrams), summaries of relevant studies and reports of any relevant consultations;
- The development strategy for the site including design principles which have been formulated in response to the policy background, the site and its settings and the purpose of the development, and how these will be reflected in the development;
- An explanation of the urban structure, including approach to movement and accessibility, landscape development blocks, land uses, density, urban grain, visual context and built form;
- Viability factors including summaries of economic and market conditions (subject to the need for commercial confidentiality);
- The design and project management approach;
- A programme of meetings with the local authority and other bodies;
- A proposed programme of participation and consultation.

The appropriate level of consultation will depend on the degree to which consultation has already been carried out in the preparation of any relevant development briefs or design guides and on the relevant statutory requirements. The level of detail will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the development.

Layout

Layouts of buildings and spaces must be designed to ensure that areas are permeable, legible and safe. Legibility relates to the ease with which the observer can read the relationship between the structures, the landscape and the spaces between them, as well as the objects within these spaces. Main routes should be distinguished by exploiting vistas, key buildings and landmarks with the activities and functions of the place made visible, thus bringing a sense of liveliness to spaces. Landmark features can be used to give treatment to main entrances to a development, help treat open spaces and perimeter edges.

The design of buildings and the spaces around them can affect the sense of safety and security of people using them as well as the incidence of crime. Well-designed spaces can minimise crime, vandalism, graffiti and dumping of rubbish and prevent the deterioration of the environment.

New developments and refurbishments must be designed to promote safety and security both for its residents and for the general public using the street and minimise misuse of the environment.

Mix of Uses in New Developments

In commercial development in the City Centre and identified neighbourhood centres the appropriate mix of retail, residential, entertainment, cultural and employment generating uses will be required.

Landscaping

Good quality landscaping schemes are important for the City. Residential developments will be required to provide landscaped open space in accordance with the requirements set out below. To ensure that landscaped areas are attractive, safe and well maintained, their design and maintenance plans will be regarded as an integral part of all new development applications. Landscape schemes will be required to be of a high standard and must be in accordance with Limerick City Council standards for road and footpath layouts. If landscaping cannot be provided as part of a development, then financial contributions will be required to improve the landscape in the locality.

Energy Efficiency

The City Council will require all applications to meet the highest standards of sustainable design and construction, and conform in full with sustainable energy policies and of **Chapter 12 Environment Management & Infrastructure**. Applications for new major developments shall include an Energy Statement addressing how demolition, construction and long-term management of the development will be catered for and how the development:

- Makes most effective use of land and existing buildings;
- Reduces carbon dioxide and other emissions that contribute to climate change;
- Is designed for flexible use throughout its lifetime;
- Avoids internal overheating and excessive heat generation;
- Makes most effective and sustainable use of water, aggregates and other resources;
- Minimises energy use, including by passive solar design, natural ventilation, and vegetation (green roofs etc) on buildings;
- Supplies energy efficiently and incorporates de-centralised energy systems such as District Heating and uses renewable energy where feasible;
- Minimises light pollution, particularly from street lights, and utilises renewable energy sources to supply these on street elements;
- Procures materials sustainably using local suppliers wherever possible ensuring designs make the most of natural systems both within and around the building;
- Reduces air and water pollution;
- Manages flood risk, including through sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and flood resilient design for infrastructure and property;
- Ensures developments are comfortable and secure for users;
- Conserves and enhances the natural environment, particularly in relation to biodiversity, and enables easy access to open spaces;
- Avoids the creation of adverse local climatic conditions;
- Promotes sustainable waste behaviour in new and existing developments, including support for local integrated recycling schemes, CHP and CCHP schemes;
- Encourages major developments to incorporate living roofs and walls where feasible;
- Reduces adverse noise impacts.

Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

The City Council will require all applications to meet the requirements of Enet with specific regard to MAN connections:

- The developer shall submit details showing proposals for the provision of an appropriate level of broadband service infrastructure on an open access basis to each unit within the development for approval of the Planning Authority.
- Realizable options showing the feasibility for connection of the units within the development to an exterior *broadband service provider(s)* shall be included and demonstrated in the proposals.

- Rigid 110mm (od) green duct ducting and chambers for such service shall be installed concurrent with the initial construction and infrastructure installation within the development.
- Any land and way-leaves required for above and/or below ground infrastructure within the development shall be made available for such apparatus.
- All of the above proposals shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources.

Part II Quantitative Standards

Density

Density is a measure of the relationship between buildings and their surrounding space. Limerick is in general a low density city. The low densities within the city and greater metropolitan area can be largely attributed to the development of the suburbs in the 1950s at net densities of between 15 to 20 dwellings per hectare (6-8 per acre) in detached or semi-detached form. Such low densities are today unable to provide the critical mass of population needed to sustain key services and quality public transport required for a Gateway City, and thus encourage a reliance on private car travel. This is unacceptable in terms of sustainability and Ireland's commitments under the Rio Declaration, 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol, 2009, which requires Ireland to limit growth in greenhouse gas emissions. This low suburban density is being further compounded by falling household sizes, which, if left unchecked, will lead to a loss of critical mass of population and a reduction in the potential to sustain local services. The recently issued population targets from the DEHLG is clear in stating that the population of the city must increase substantially over the coming 12 years. This will require the cooperation of adjacent planning authorities to restrict residential development outside of the gateway.

The standards set out in this Plan will promote the development of higher densities and the consolidation of the urban form of the city. Achieving a high quality design and layout will be paramount in the acceptability of planning applications for high density schemes.

High densities will be promoted throughout the city area, and in particular will be sought within a walking catchment of public transport infrastructure (approximately 500m from a '*Green Route*'), major centres of employment; prime urban centres, neighbourhood centres and areas in need of regeneration. However there is a need to respect the character of the existing area. An assessment of the adequacy of public open space and other social supports in the area will be required.

Ideally, density should achieve the optimum use of urban land appropriate to its location and context. Appropriate density levels are determined both by the design of the development and the use of the building and by the character and scale of the receiving environment. This is a result of the different requirements for sunlight/daylight, access and privacy for commercial and residential space.

To provide some guidance to developers the following indicative densities are suggested:

- Outer City: densities in excess of 35-50 dwellings per hectare shall be encouraged subject to appropriate qualitative safeguards. In addition, schemes adjoining public transport routes, or close to major centres of employment may be encouraged to exceed this figure.
- In City Centre locations higher densities shall be encouraged where it can be demonstrated that the proposal complies with the guidance set out in Section 5.6 of the

DEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages), 2009.

In both City Centre and outer city areas, the final density will in all cases be dependent on the scheme's design and location. In cases such as schemes adjoining protected structures or in conservation areas, lower densities may be appropriate in order to preserve special characteristics of the area. Furthermore higher densities can best be achieved on sites in excess of 0.5 acres.

Where increases in density are desirable, these should be sought by introducing variety in built form into the layout. This could include the use of terraced houses, apartments and duplexes.

Site Coverage

Site coverage is a control for the purpose of preventing the adverse effects of over development, thereby safeguarding sunlight and daylight within or adjoining a proposed layout of buildings. Site coverage is the percentage of the site covered by building structures, excluding the public roads and footpaths.

Site coverage is a tool particularly relevant in urban locations where open space and car parking standards may be relaxed. The plan sets out recommended standards for the City Centre, District Centres and the outer core. These standards are intended to be indicative only. The special considerations, which apply to plot ratio, will also apply to site coverage.

Indicative Site Coverage Standards

<i>Zoning</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Indicative Site Coverage</i>
<i>Zone 1</i>	Core City Centre	80%-100%
<i>Zone 2</i>	Outer Core	80%
<i>Zone 3</i>	Suburban	50%

Building Heights

The issue of appropriate building height in context is relative and relates not only to the prevailing or dominant heights but also to the grain and its consistency or diversity within an existing character area.

Limerick has many different character areas reflecting histories, communities and various opportunities for change. Different character areas will require different approaches to the issue of building heights. There is a recognised need to protect conservation areas and the architectural character of existing buildings, streets and spaces of artistic, civic or historic importance. In particular, any new proposal must be sensitive to the historic City Centre.

Limerick City Council also recognises the needs of the City to grow and to reach its full potential as a significant Gateway for the Mid-Western Region and it is Limerick City Council's policy to allow for the development of high buildings in appropriate locations in order to promote investment, vitality and identity.

Special Standards Applying to Medium & High Rise Buildings

The following considerations will be taken into account in considering proposals for high buildings:

- The need to create a positive urban design;
- The need to suitably incorporate the building into the urban grain;
- The need to create positive urban spaces;

- In view of the inevitable prominence of a high building it should be of outstanding architectural quality, creating a building which is elegant, contemporary, stylish, and, in terms of form and profile, makes a positive contribution to the existing skyline;
- The need to respect important views, landmarks, prospects, roofscapes and vistas;
- The proposal should be very carefully related to, and not have any serious disadvantages to, its immediate surroundings, both existing and proposed, and especially to any other high buildings and prominent features in the vicinity and to existing open space;
- The site must be of appropriate size and context to allow for a well designed setting of lower buildings and/or landscaped open space;
- The design of high buildings should seek to minimise overshadowing and overlooking of surrounding property and should not create adverse micro-climatic effects (such as down-draft);
- The building should consider important telecommunication channels and not interfere with air navigation

When submitting plans for high rise buildings the developer will be required to submit a *Visual Impact Analysis Study* including a 3-D model of the scheme, and photomontages of the impact of the building(s) at a city-wide and local scale.

When developing landmark high rise buildings the Planning Authority will encourage architectural design competitions.

Access for All

All new buildings constructed in the City shall be accessible to people with varying accessibility needs and comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations - Part M. Access to a building should be a key consideration at the pre-planning and design stage.

In order for the City's public realm to work successfully, it must be safe and accessible for all user groups. The design of new streetscapes and individual development sites must be sensitive to the needs of users with disabilities, parents with young children and the elderly.

Accessibility

Disabled parking space provision, ramps, lifts etc should be located at the closest point of entry to the proposed building with no crossing of vehicular routes. The pedestrian route should be defined (e.g. textured surface), non slip and well lit. Footpaths at the junctions of roads in new housing developments should be designed to cater for disabled persons and incorporate tactile paving.

All new development must have regard to accessibility issues in the context of design solutions, treatments, materials and finishes etc. in line with the guidance set out in the following documents:

- *'Public Realm Guide', Draft 2009.*
- *'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice', 2009.*

In assessing applications, which relate to protected structures regard shall be had to the protected status of the structure and the need to protect the special character.

Roads & Traffic

The design standards required for all elements of the City's transport infrastructure can vary according to the type of development (scale, design, layout, intensity etc) and location proposed (City Centre - high density or suburban - low density). Each development scenario will pose a new set of issues and the standards required with regard to carriageways, gradients, footpaths,

cycleways, vehicular access points, service roads, junctions, road drainage, cul-de-sacs, sight lines, boundary treatment, street furniture, rear lanes, public lighting, and underground services etc must be flexible in order to achieve the maximum benefit from each site in the context of the existing built environment and high quality sustainable development.

The City Council's Transport & Infrastructure Department design standard requirements for local roads shall be based on the following documents:

- o *'Traffic Management Guidelines Manual'* - Dublin Transport Office.
- o *'Geometric Design Guidelines'* RT180 & 181 - An Forfas Forbartha (1977 - 1986).
- o *'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas'* - Department of Environment & Local Government, 1998.

Other roads and all road construction shall be based on the following documents:

- o *'Design Manual for Roads & Bridges'* - National Road Authority - December 2007.

Any new development proposal shall include a car and cycle provision based on the requirements of the following guidance documents;

- o *'Public Realm Guide'*, Draft, Limerick City Council, 2009.
- o *'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages)'*, 2009.
- o *'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice'*, DEHLG, 2009.
- o *Any future LCC guidance e.g. 'Cycle & Walking Strategy'*.

Residential Parking Standards

The purpose of residential parking standards are to ensure that a sufficient number of parking spaces (resident, disabled, visitor etc) are provided to facilitate the fluid running of a new development. In order to achieve a modal split away from car based dependency, and in turn help achieve the aims of the *Smarter Travel* initiative, the City Council shall charge a levy in lieu of the provision of on-site parking, towards the cost of providing facilities for public transport routes, cycle routes or other traffic management options.

Parking Zones

Zone 1 - Central Core

The 2004 CDP City Centre Designation shall be retained in this regard.

Georgian Quarter - Residential/Commercial - The City Council will consider a financial contribution in lieu of residential parking spaces and possibly waive a contribution for commercial purposes where an individual proposes to bring a Georgian building back into everyday use. Such an agreement shall be reached at the pre-planning stage.

Zone 2 - Outer Core

- o Between Mallow Street & Cecil Street.
- o Between Denmark Street & John's Street.
- o Between Sexton Street & William Street.
- o Gerald Griffin Street & Mulgrave Street.

Zone 3 - Suburban

Covers the area from the edge of Zone 2 up to the City Boundary.

Employment Based Parking Standards

Commercial/Industrial/Office/Education/Recreation etc.

In all employment based developments, the Planning Authority shall require a sufficient number of parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site in line with the requirements set out in Table 16.1 Parking Standards Table, in order to meet the parking needs of employees. However in the case of strategic City Centre sites where it is not possible to provide for the level of parking required, the Planning Authority may consider a financial contribution in lieu of the necessary spaces as provided for under Section 48 of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2008.

- Where parking is associated with late night uses such as places of entertainment, car parking shall be sited so as to reduce noise disturbance to adjoining residents.
- In addition to the general car parking standards required, service/loading bays may also be required. The number of service bays will depend on the nature of the proposed business, and will be determined by the City Council in each case.

Mixed Use Development

Where a development includes two or more land uses to which different parking standards apply, the relative demands of each use for parking should be assessed in proportion to the extent of respective use. Developers are encouraged to make the best use of any shared parking areas e.g. by the time of day/day of the week, where this can be achieved without difficulty.

- The City Council shall use discretion with respect to Parking Standards in the case of small infill developments.
- No residential parking permits will be issued for new developments.

Mobility Management Plan

A Mobility Management Plan (MMP) is required to be carried out and submitted as part of any planning application for any large scale employment based development which may generate significant trip demand. Development for which mobility management could be applied includes the following – Office, industrial, Retail, Warehousing & distribution, places of education.

Threshold for which a Mobility Management Plan is automatically required:

- Traffic to and from the development exceeds 10% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road.
- Traffic to and from the development exceeds 5% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road where congestion exists or the location is sensitive.
- Retail development in excess of 1000 sq. metres
- Office & education development in excess of 2500 sq. metres
- Industrial development in excess of 5000 sq. metres
- Distribution and warehousing in excess of 10.000 sq. metres.
- Where the City Council may consider that a variation to this threshold exists subject to specific site characteristics e.g. city centre vs. suburban location, discretion shall be exercised.

Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines

A Traffic and Transport Assessment is required for any development which would be considered to have a significant effect on travel demand and capacity of the surrounding transport links. The guidelines for the determination, scoping and threshold of a Transport Assessment are set out National Roads Authority , *Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines* (September 2007) and in DEHLG '*Traffic Management Guidelines*' – Section 1.11 and Table 1.4.

Table 16.1 General Parking Standards

Land Use	<u>Zone 1</u> Central Core (Maximum)	<u>Zone 2</u> Outer Core (Recommended)	<u>Zone 3</u> Suburban (Minimum)
PS1 - Retail Food Superstore > 2500m ² Non-Food Retail < 500m ² Retail Warehouse	1: 22 m ² 1: 25 m ² 1: 25 m ²	1: 35 m ² 1: 40 m ² 1: 35 m ²	1: 18 m ² 1: 25 m ² 1: 30 m ²
PS2 - Employment Offices Banks Light Industrial (productive) Industrial Warehousing (non-productive/storage) Showrooms	1: 50 m ² 1: 100 m ² 1: 100 m ² 1: 400 m ² 1: 150 m ²	1: 35 m ² 1: 100 m ² 1: 80 m ² 1: 400 m ² 1: 80 m ²	1: 25 m ² 1: 50 m ² 1: 35 m ² 1: 300 m ² 1: 40 m ²
PS3 - Hotel, Restaurant, Public House Hotels Youth Hostels Public Houses/Hotel Bars Public Area Restaurants & Hotel Restaurants Public Conference/Function Public Area	1: 2 Bedrooms 1: Staff Member 1: 30 m ² 1: 30 m ² 1: 60 m ²	1: 2 Bedrooms 1: Staff Member 1: 30 m ² 1: 30 m ² 1: 50 m ²	1: Bedroom 1: Staff Member 1: 20 m ² 1: 20 m ² 1: 30 m ²
PS4 - Leisure & Assembly Development Cinema/Theatre Fitness Centre/Gym Leisure Centre Amusement Centre/Entertainment Dance Hall/Public Area	1: 30 Seats 1: 50 m ² 1: 50 m ² 1: 80 m ² 1: 25 m ²	1: 15 Seats 1: 40 m ² 1: 50 m ² 1: 50 m ² 1: 25 m ²	1: 5 Seats 1: 30 m ² 1: 30 m ² 1: 30 m ² 1: 10m ²
PS5 - Non-Residential Institutions Places of Worship Schools (non-residential) Further & Higher Education Crèche Clinics/Surgeries/Primary Health Care Centre Hospital	1: 25 Seats 1: Classroom 1: Staff Member 1: Employee 2: Consulting Room Negotiable	1: 10 Seats 1: Classroom 1: Staff & 1 per 10 Students 1: 8 children 2: Consulting Room 1 Staff Member & Visitor Space negotiable	1: 5 Seats 1.25:Classroom 1: staff & 1: 6 students 1: staff & 1: 5 children 1: Staff & 2: Consulting Room 1: Staff Member 1 & 1: Bed

PS6 - Residential			
House	1: House Unit	1: 3 Bed House & 2: 4 Bed House	2: house & 25% Visitor
Apartment	1: Apartment	1: Apartment	1:25/Apartment & 25% Visitor
Student Accommodation Nursing Homes	1: 10 Students 1: Employee	1: 8 Students 1: Employee & 1: 4 Beds	1: 5 Students 1: Employee & 1: 2 Beds
Sheltered Accommodation (prior approval during pre-planning stage necessary)	1: Staff member	1: Staff Member	1: Staff Member & Visitor Parking
Georgian Quarter	0.5: Unit	n/a	n/a
PS7 - Sport Facilities			
Stadia/Regional Grounds	Negotiable	Negotiable	Negotiable
GAA/Rugby/Soccer/Tennis/Athletics/ Hockey Grounds - Local Grounds	n/a	Negotiable	15 per pitch
Golf Course/Swimming Pool/Equine related facility etc agreement shall be reached at the pre-planning stage.	Negotiable	Negotiable	Negotiable

** One car parking space per square metre of Gross Floor Area (GFA) except where noted*

The standards set out above may be relaxed if certain scenarios occur as follows:

- Where public car parking is available in the vicinity of the development which is adequate to serve both the development and to perform its original purpose, or where such parking provision is proposed.
- Where adequate on-street parking is available and is likely to be available in the foreseeable future and where the car parking activity associated with the development is not likely to give rise to a loss of amenity or to traffic congestion.
- Where on the particular planning merits of the case or in central urban areas, it would be unreasonable to require full provision. Where public car parking facilities have been provided or are to be provided which facilitate the development, in this case, the Planning Authority will require the payment of a contribution towards the provision of such car-parking spaces. The level of contribution will be calculated based on the scale and the nature of the proposed development.

Increased car parking provision may be required if the following scenario arises:

- Where schools are used for night time activities such as night classes, additional spaces for buses and cars may be required. The exact requirements will be determined in each case. In some cases the use of hard surfaced recreational areas may be acceptable.

Mobility Impaired Parking Standards

Designated car parking spaces shall be provided for people with disabilities as part of all new development proposals.

- 1 space per 25 car parking spaces shall be provided for new office, retail, industrial, commercial and recreational developments.
- Parking bays shall be clearly signposted.
- Spaces shall be a minimum of 3m-4.88m wide to accommodate hydraulic wheelchair/car seat or located beside a dropped footway.
- Each space shall be delineated with a double line marking between each space.

Parking Space Dimensions

- Standard Car Parking Bay - 2.44 m x 4.88m.
- Disabled Parking Bay - 3.0m x 4.88m.
- Circulation Aisles Between 4.3m-6.1m (depending on alignment)
- Loading Bay - 6.1 m x 3.0m.

Cycle Provision

All new development proposals shall include the provision of secure, weather protected, well lit, well signposted and well located cycle facilities to include parking stands and Work Place Facilities (showers etc), in order to help encourage more sustainable commuter patterns throughout the City in line with the objectives of the '*Smarter Travel*' initiative.

Stands shall be of an approved type and located in a secure location within the overall development. The following documents should be consulted at the design stage.

- '*Public Realm Guide*' - Draft, 2009.
- '*Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice*', 2009.

Where stands cannot be provided for on-site, a development contribution, calculated per stand shall be required in order to facilitate provision elsewhere in the vicinity of the development site.

Table 16.2 Cycle Parking Standards

Land Use	<u>Zone 1</u> Central Core	<u>Zone 2 & 3</u> Outer Core/Suburban
CPS1 - Retail Local Shops Food Superstores >2500m ² Retail Warehouse	1 Stand: 50m ² 1 Stand: 200m ² 1 Stand: 100m ²	1 Stand: 50m ² 1 Stand: 200m ² 1 Stand: 100m ²
CPS2 - Employment Offices Light Industrial (productive)/Industrial Warehousing (non-productive / storage)	1 Stand: 30m ² 1 Stand: 250m ²	1 Stand: 30m ² 1 Stand: 100m ²
CPS3 - Hotel, Restaurant, Public House Hotels/Youth Hostels Public Houses / Hotel bars public area Restaurants & Hotel restaurants public Conference / Function public area	1: 8 bedrooms/dorm bed 1 Stand: 30m ² 1 Stand: 30m ²	1: 8 bedrooms/dorm bed 1 Stand : 30m ² 1 Stand: 30m ²
CPS4 - Leisure & Assembly Development Cinema/Theatre	1: 100 Seats	1: 20 Seats

Fitness Centre/Gym Leisure Centre	1: 50m ²	1: 25m ²
CPS5 - Non-Residential Institutions		
Places of Worship	1:50 seats	1:50 seats
Schools (non residential)		
Primary	1:10 Students	1:10 Students
Secondary	1:5 Students	1:5 Students
Further & Higher Education	1:10 Students	1:10 Students
CPS6 - Residential		
House	1: House Unit	1: House Unit
Apartment	1: Apartment	1: Apartment
Student Accommodation	1: 10 Students	1: 10 Students
Nursing Homes	1: 10 Employees	1: 10 Employee
Sheltered Accommodation	1: 5 Employees	1: 5 Employees
CPS7 - Sport Facilities		
Stadia/Regional Grounds	1: 100 Seats	1: 20 Seats
GAA/Rugby/Soccer/Tennis/Athletics/ Hockey Grounds – Local Grounds	5: Pitch	10: Pitch

* Cycle Parking space per square metre of Gross Floor Area (GFA) except where noted.

Table 16.3 ‘Smarter Travel’ Work Place Facilities

Where cycle parking Standard CPS2 applies to a proposed development, shower and changing facilities shall be provided as part of the development in order to encourage sustainable commuter travel in line with the objectives of the ‘Smarter Travel’ initiative.

No. of Cycle Stands Required	Minimum Number of wash Facilities Required per Gender
	Showers
>5	1
25-50	2
50-100	3
100-150	4
>150	5

* >150 Cycle Stands required, the City Council shall use discretion with regard to the number of facilities required per development.

Mobility Management Plan (MMP)

The Mobility Management Plan can be used as a key mechanism in the Development Management process whereby new developments can support the objectives of sustainable development through the encouragement of a modal split away from car based commuting dependency, and in turn help achieve the aims of the *Smarter Travel* initiative. The City Council will require that a Mobility Management Plan is carried out and submitted as part of any planning application proposed for large employment based developments, where it is considered that local traffic volumes may be greatly increased as a result of such a development. Where the City Council may consider that a variation to this threshold exists subject to specific site characteristics e.g. city centre vs. suburban location, discretion shall be exercised.

The following development proposals shall include a Mobility Management Plan:

- Office development - office based industry.
- Retail development – retail parks, one-off developments, retail warehousing.
- Industrial development.
- Warehousing/storage/distribution.
- Neighbourhood/Town Centre development.
- Education development – school, colleges etc.
- Recreational development.
- Mixed use developments.

The MMP shall include measures to promote and improve the attractiveness of using public transport, cycling, walking, journey-sharing, flexible working or a combination of these as alternatives to one person per car based journeys to work.

The MMP shall include objectives specific to the development aimed at mitigating against potential traffic problems that may be caused by such a development through the following measures:

- Provision of appropriate parking spaces;
- Develop/improve links within the existing public transport system to help move away from car-based travel;
- Provide Work Place Facilities for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Ensure that buildings are accessible to people with varying accessibility needs;
- Respect existing public rights of way;
- On-going review of the MMP. As conditioned under each grant of planning permission.

In the specific case of retail developments, MMPs may include measures for employees, customers and suppliers. Mobility management for retail development may require a different approach to mobility management for employment generating uses. For education uses, measures may apply to staff and students/parents and for employment sites such as office or industrial, employees, visitors (clients, suppliers) must be considered.

Any planning permission issued by the City Council with regard to the criteria set out above shall adhere to a condition for a follow up review of the *Mobility Management Plan* in agreement with the Transport & Infrastructure Department of Limerick City Council.

When A Designer of a scheme is preparing a MMP guidance shall be taken from the '*Mobility Management Plans*' - DTO Advice Note, July 2002.

Public Realm Design Guide

The Public Realm Design Guide is concerned with all streets and public spaces within the City Centre as well as the main approach roads to Limerick City. Limerick's streets are routes which help service the City's economy, allowing the circulation of public and private transport, delivery of goods and services, communications, gas, water, electricity and the removal of waste. They are also places for people, where residents, workers and visitors interact. They provide the setting for Limerick's public face. The complex multi-functional role of streets can result in conflicting interests and differing design treatments. A greater sense of coherence across the City can be achieved through a more consistent approach to the design and management of Limerick's streets from both the City Council and the individual development of City Centre sites.

Smarter Travel & Green Routes

The Government is committed to developing cycling as one of the most desirable modes of travel, it being good for your health, the economy and the environment. The last three decades have seen a steady decline in people using cycling as a means of transport. The National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) sets out objectives to the year 2020 to achieve reversal of this situation. As part of the policy, the *Smarter Travel* funding initiative has been introduced to help support the delivery of sustainable transport projects nationwide.

Green Routes are regulated traffic management measures designed to provide priority for the efficient movement of commuters, shoppers and tourists by bus/bicycle. Green Routes will greatly improve the frequency and reliability of bus services, provide for improved bus service expansion, introduce new and improved pedestrian crossing facilities and provide better facilities for cyclists. Any new development proposal shall take account of the location of the proposed green routes and factor these routes into the overall development at the design stage.

Rail Lines

In line with the requirements of the Department of Transport's policies and the need to protect transport corridors in order to facilitate sustainable future development, the Designer of a development shall have regard to the requirements set out in the *'Railway Safety Commission's Guidance Document -010- A Third Party Guidance on Railway Risk Volume 1 Planning & Development'*, when a proposed development site is in the vicinity of a rail line.

Where a potential development site is within the vicinity of a rail line, the Applicant must submit a *Work Method Statement* to Iarnród Éireann for written agreement prior to lodging a planning application. A revised statement shall be submitted as part of any subsequent planning application indicating, with the agreement of Iarnród Éireann, the Applicant's proposals with regard to the existing rail line and any mitigation measures necessary in this regard is acceptable.

A Designers major considerations when proposing a development near a rail line are:

- Safety;
- Lighting;
- Noise;
- Screening.

Water Services Infrastructure Design Standards

It is the aim of Limerick City Council to provide a safe and secure potable water source and a compliant waste water treatment plant to meet the needs of Limerick City, provide appropriate infrastructure to support this aim and in turn support the economic and social development of the City as a whole.

Flood Risk Analysis

All development applications proposed in an area where there is a Flood Risk as identified in Appendix I, shall contain the following information:

- Submit a **Flood Risk Analysis & Hydrological Survey** for the proposed site to be accompanied by a detailed study and modeling exercise of the catchments in question.
- Submit a Flood Risk Assessment which addresses the following issues – is the proposed development likely to be affected by flooding? (This assessment shall allow for climate change), is the proposed development likely to increase flood risk elsewhere? The Assessment shall address the issues raised and incorporate mitigation measures to deal with any possible fallout effects and risks in accordance with *'The Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009*.
- Satisfy the Planning Authority that any flood risk arising from the proposal will be successfully managed with the minimum environmental effect to ensure that the site can be developed and occupied safely.
- Satisfy the Planning Authority that finished floor level requirements can be met throughout the proposed development. The **Finished Floor Levels (FFL's)** for all new developments proposed must comply with the recommendations of the *'The Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009* with regard to flood protection and the most up to date flood reports which indicate that a minimum floor level of 900mm above the maximum recorded High Tide Level for the area in question. These levels may be included in the *'The Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009*.
- Submit details of the mitigation measures proposed to protect the development site and the surrounding area from the impacts of a possible flood event when constructed.
- Satisfy the Planning Authority in writing that the Planning Requirements of the Office of Public Works (OPW) as indicated on the website www.flooding.ie can be met on the proposed site.

The level of information required will be determined in accordance with the level of vulnerability to flooding as outlined in Appendix 1 and the requirements set out in the *'Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009*.

Water Services Act, 2007

(Shall apply to ALL New Development Proposals)

The Water Services Act incorporates a comprehensive review, update and consolidation of all existing water services legislation and facilitates, through the establishment of a comprehensive supervisory regime, compliance with specified performance standards.

It is a policy of Limerick City Council that, building over public pipes is no longer acceptable. As part of any planning application the Applicant is required to submit a Site Layout Plan prepared by an Engineer with a minimum of €2m Professional Indemnity Insurance, certifying the location of the sewer, or common drainage serving more than one house, on site by physical survey.

If, in order to facilitate a proposed development, the re-routing of the existing sewer is necessary, the Applicant must submit as part of the planning application a Site Layout Plan and cross sections showing the re-routing of the said public sewer where no part of the proposed development shall come within 5m of same. Should re-routing of the sewer not be possible and no alternative solution exists, a refusal of Planning Permission may result. The Applicant is requested to consult with the Limerick City Council Water Services Department prior to the submission of any proposal which may affect public pipes.

New Development Proposals – Water, Waste Water & Surface Water

Water Infrastructure

All new development proposals shall be required to implement and install water infrastructure in accordance with the following:

- Water mains as detailed in the Water Services Department specification for laying water mains on Limerick City Council website.
- Water mains required to be taken in charge by Limerick City Council in the future must be laid in public open space.
- WSCR Boxes must be located on the public footpath on each separate supply to individual residences or business units.
- Regard for the specifications and details as defined in the DEHLG '*Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas*'.
- Comply with all National Policy in respect of water metering.
- Old lead service connections must be replaced from the Water Main on the public road to the dwelling including the installation of a WSCR Box.
- Developers must submit a certificate from a suitably qualified person as agreed with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council with a minimum of €2m Professional Indemnity Insurance confirming that the development has been pressure tested and is in accordance with good industry standards prior to a water connection application.

Waste Water Infrastructure

All new development proposals shall be required to implement and install waste water infrastructure in accordance with the following requirements:

- Have regard to the City Council policy of not allowing the discharge of contaminants and greases to the City Council sewers, and with the relevant National standards and guidelines.
- Sewers required to be taken in charge by Limerick City Council in the future shall be laid in public open space.
- Maintenance way leaves shall be put in place over all public infrastructure in private property where required in agreement with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council.
- Access Junction Boxes shall be located on the public footpath for each separate supply to individual residences or business units.
- Have regard for the specifications and details as defined in the DEHLG '*Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas*', and as required under National and Limerick City Council requirements in respect of discharges.

Surface Water Infrastructure

All new development proposals shall be required to implement and install surface water infrastructure in accordance with the following requirements:

- Surface Water Infrastructure Proposal must be provided for each proposed development. A plan that combines/ties a number of Landowners in respect of a large area zoned for a particular land use will be considered necessary for large scale development areas. Lands may be required to be set aside for to cater for flood plains.
- The parameters for an Hydraulic Analysis of the proposed storm water sewer network for any development is as indicated:
 - Rain Fall intensity : 60mm/hr
 - Contributing areas: hard surfaces inclusive of roofs, roads, footpaths and any other hard standing area - 100% impermeable.

- Green areas or park land - 20% impermeable.
- Storm water drainage sewers shall be designed to cater for a storm return period of a 1:30 year storm without surcharge and to cater for a 1:100 year storm without flooding.
- Project Designers shall have regard to '*The Planning System & Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009*, at the design stage of any proposed development site.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Limerick City Council favours the adoption of SUDS techniques in the development of the City where feasible as part of the policy to encourage sustainable aspects of urban development. SUDS proposals shall be submitted as part of the basic planning application for agreement with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council.

Rain Water Harvesting

Rainwater offers a sustainable, environmental alternative to purified drinking water for non-potable use in the home and in business. Rainwater is collected in a tank and is then pumped into the property to be used for non-potable applications such as toilet flushing, washing machines and for outside usage such as garden watering and car washing. Proposals shall be submitted as part of the basic planning application for agreement with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council.

Roof Garden/Green Roof/Living Wall

The environmental and aesthetic benefits to the City are the prime motivation behind this open space/landscaping concepts. Where a Designer is lacking in an open space provision in a high density development the roof garden/green roof/living wall approaches may help reach the necessary requirement to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. Proposals shall be submitted as part of the basic planning application for agreement with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council.

Single Dwelling Development

(a) Rural Development where NO Public Sewer connection exists.

The treatment plant and percolation system proposed shall be designed, installed and operated in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency publication '*EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals - Treatment Systems for Single Houses, 2010*' or otherwise in accordance with alternative proposals submitted by the Applicant and approved by Limerick City Council. Proposals shall be submitted as part of the basic planning application for agreement with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council. All applicants are required to submit a percolation test indicating the rates of percolation for the appropriate area to the City Council for assessment.

(b) Urban Development where a Public Sewer connection exists.

Proposals shall be submitted as part of the basic planning application for agreement with the Water Services Department of Limerick City Council. All development works and connections shall be carried out under the guidance of Limerick City Council Water Services Department.

Part III Development Management

Residential Development

A high quality of urban design, building design and dwelling design will be sought in any development incorporating residential uses. In considering applications for new developments the Planning Authority will refer to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines on '*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (DEHLG, September 2007) and '*Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities*' (DEHLG, 2007). Research completed for the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Dublin City Council clearly illustrates that if we are to create sustainable urban homes and neighbourhoods we need to ensure that dwellings and their neighbourhoods are attractive and functional to live in for all sections of the community. The two key requirements for successful higher density urban neighbourhoods are adequate dwelling size and adequate public and private open space.

All new housing and apartment developments should:

- Reflect the existing character of the street by paying attention to the proportion, pattern, massing, density and materials of surrounding buildings.
- Maintain existing building lines, roof pitches and heights and window proportions.
- Incorporate variations in design- roof type etc. around a common theme, in
- Housing developments of more than 15 dwellings.
- Specify the design BER rating for the proposed dwellings.

In assessing applications for residential development the following criteria will be taken into account:

- Zoning and specific objectives contained in this plan and any Local Area Plan/non statutory planning guidance adopted by Council.
- Density: Higher densities should be provided in appropriate locations. Site configuration and area will have an impact on the density levels achievable.
- Quality of the proposed layout and elevations: The quality of the residential environment will be of primary significance in determining the acceptability of planning applications. Layouts, elevations, and plan form must be designed to emphasise a sense of place and community, utilising existing site features, tree coverage and an appropriate landscape structure. The design of schemes incorporating social and affordable housing shall not be built to designs that articulate social difference.
- Levels of privacy and amenity: The relationship of buildings to one another, including consideration of overlooking, sunlight/daylight standards and the use of screening devices.
- Quality of linkage and permeability to adjacent neighbourhoods and facilities and the nature of public realm/streets and spaces.
- Accessibility and traffic safety (proximity to centres and to mass transit corridors, existing and proposed).
- Quantitative Standards set out in this chapter.
- Safety and positive edges to public realm: opportunities for crime should be minimised by ensuring that public open spaces are overlooked by housing and appropriate boundary treatments applied.
- Quality of proposed public, private and communal open spaces and recreational facilities.
- Compliance with Housing policy (e.g. lifecycle provision, size, tenure, mix, etc).
- Compliance with Social and community infrastructure (e.g. childcare, local shops, etc.).

- Objectives contained in other chapters in the plan (e.g. in relation to Energy Efficiency, landscape, transport, etc.).
- Management Arrangements.
- Compliance with relevant Building Regulations.

An applicant applying for permission for a residential development, other than for exempted residential development, must specify in the planning application how they propose to meet the requirements of the Housing Strategy. Planning applications for residential development will be assessed on the basis of the Housing Strategy, the land use zoning, the design and layout, accessibility to public transport, housing mix, the provision of special needs housing and the provision of social and affordable housing.

The provision of public open space in the form of high quality parks and spaces is one of the most important factors in determining the attractiveness of the City. All developments (residential and non-residential) should include public open space to ensure that they provide sufficient space for the amenities of residents, workers and visitors and to create an attractive landscape.

Standards for public open space are set out as follows:

Table 16.4 Public Open Space Provision

Greenfield sites 15%

General provision 10%

Institutional Sites / Sites forming the setting to a Building of Significance Minimum 20% (subject to site specific analysis)

Within the City Centre and Inner Urban areas opportunities for providing new public open space may be limited due to site constraints and the need to protect the established pattern of streets and spaces. Where this cannot be provided or where it is not appropriate to provide this, a contribution to local amenity facilities in lieu of the shortfall will be required. This will take the form of a contribution on a per capita basis towards capital investment in creating and / or upgrading parks and spaces and revenue costs for the maintenance of these spaces. On minor streets and spaces safe, well designed shared surface play streets and courtyards may also be considered as fulfilling or part-fulfilling the overall requirement for public open space in the case of residential developments.

Planning applications which include proposals for development on public open spaces, including access across public open space, will be categorised as material contraventions of the development plan and be referred to Council for decision.

The *Design Strategy* for open spaces should be explained in the Planning Statement or the Design Statement in relation to major developments, and design issues outlined in the '*Urban Design Guide*', 2008.

Apartment Development

In addition to the above criteria the following standards will apply to all proposals for apartment developments.

- The provision of a range of housing types and sizes in the City will increase in importance as trends show a decline in family households and an increase in elderly and single person households. The majority of housing output in the last 6 years has been in the form of apartments and this proportion is likely to increase with the limited supply of suburban Greenfield sites;

- Within the City Centre it is accepted that the majority of dwellings provided will be apartments. However there is a need for a greater proportion of three and four bed apartments and the retention of existing dwellings in residential use. In general one bed apartments should constitute a maximum of 20% of any development;
- All applications shall have regard to the '*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', 2007.

The following Minimum Floor Areas shall apply:

Table 16.5 Apartment Type	Minimum Apartment Sizes Size
1 x bed	55 m ²
2 x bed/3 Persons	80 m ²
2 x bed/4 Persons	90 m ²
3 x bed	100 m ²
4 x bed	115 m ²

In addition to minimum floor area the internal layout of apartments should have adequate space for normal living purposes. All rooms should be of a reasonable shape and proportion. The shape and layout of rooms should maximise the amenity of residents.

In this regard the following Minimum Standards shall apply;

Table 16.6 Room Type	Minimum Room Sizes Floor Area (Minimum)
Living area	11 m ²
Kitchen area	5 m ²
Dining Area	4 m ²
Bathroom	4 m ²
Bedroom (Double)	10.2 m ²
Bedroom (Single)	6.5 m ²

Entrance halls and corridors in apartment complexes should be well designed with natural ventilation and lighting. The provision of double height spaces at entrance lobbies and dual aspect apartments will be encouraged. Long corridors will not be permitted.

All living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms should be so located as to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls and space should be provided for the segregation of waste

All dwellings units shall have at least one bedroom which is a minimum of 10.2 m² in floor area.

In the case of residential accommodation over shops or other business premises, a separate access should be provided for the upper floor accommodation where the ground-floor commercial use consists of restaurants/takeaways, public houses, dry cleaners or printing shops, with apartments above, then proper sound-proofing, ventilation and storage must be built into the design of the building

Ground floor apartments onto city streets will not be permitted in order to protect residential amenity, animate the street and encourage a mixed-use culture. On particularly noisy streets, apartments on the upper floors facing directly onto the street may be discouraged. In some cases

apartments onto minor streets may be allowed at ground floor level, but a floor-to-ceiling height of 3.5m. to 4m. will be required to allow for subsequent conversion to non-residential use.

Private Space

The provision of adequate and well-designed private space may be in the form of balconies, terraces, roof gardens or communal (semi-private) landscaped areas exclusive of surface car parking.

The minimum private open space requirement for apartments shall be as follows:

Table 16.7	Private Open Space Provision for Apartments
Location	Private Open Space m² per bed space (min.)
City Centre / Inner City	5-10 m ²
Suburban Areas	12-15 m ²

The private balcony or terrace area shall be considered as an outdoor room and spacious enough to accommodate a table and chairs for the household and be safe enough to allow for children's play activities. Two balconies should be considered an option for private space provision in dual aspect apartments.

Table 16.8	Minimum Floor Areas for Main Apartment Balconies
Apartment Type	Balcony size
1 x bed	6 m ²
2 x bed	8 m ²
3 + x bed	10 m ²

Individual Storage Facilities

All apartments shall be provided with a designated internal storage space, separate to the area containing the water tank and the hot water cylinder, and designed to permit ready access and use.

The minimum space requirements for internal storage are as follows:

Table 16.9	Minimum Apartment Storage Space Required
Apartment Type	Storage Space
1 x bed	2.0 m ²
2 x bed	3.0 m ²
3+ x bed	4.0 m ²

Externally accessible space should also be considered for storing play equipment and bicycles.

Refuse Storage

Refuse storage, recycling and composting areas for apartment development must be addressed at the design stage for all schemes (Please see **Waste Storage & Collection Standards** below).

Daylight & Sunlight

The Planning Authority considers that all buildings should receive adequate daylight and sunlight. Careful design of residential buildings, where the amount of incoming light is important, can ensure that sufficient sunlight can enter habitable rooms to provide comfort and also reduce the need for artificial lighting. Development shall be guided by the principles of '*Site Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Good Practice*' (British Research Establishment Report, 1991).

In this regard the majority of apartments in a development must be dual aspect. Single aspect dwellings will only be acceptable where it is not possible to accommodate dual aspect dwellings. Where single aspect buildings are unavoidable, they should be designed to avoid exclusively northern orientation. If this is not possible some compensation is appropriate, such as a view of landscaped areas and greater floor-to-ceiling heights

Housing Development

Dwelling Size

Provision of dwellings with 3/3+ bedrooms are very important to achieving balanced communities as they are attractive to families, providing they are of a sufficient size and accompanied by high quality amenities and infrastructure. Larger units are also flexible in that they can accommodate a variety of household types. Dwellings should be designed in a manner that allows for the conversion of the roof space to habitable accommodation.

Housing Mix

All schemes on sites over 0.5 ha will be required to provide a mix of house type and size. There is also a need to provide dwellings to meet the specific needs of other household types i.e. elderly, mobility impaired, sheltered housing etc.

Separation between Dwellings

A distance of at least 1.5 metres shall be provided between dwellings for the full length of the flanks in all developments of detached, semi-detached and end-of-terrace houses. In general, this distance should be equally divided between dwellings so separated to allow for a usable side entrance. Where garages are provided at the side of semidetached dwellings and end-of-terrace houses, they may substitute for this requirement, provided they incorporate a direct through access from the front to the rear of the premises.

Private Open Space

In all new developments, including houses, duplexes and apartment blocks, residents must have access to private/semi-private open space, which is free from unnecessary observation.

Open space for houses is usually provided by way of private gardens to the rear or side of the house. A standard of 15m² of open space per bed space will normally be applied. There is currently no minimum length of rear garden but a 20m separation between opposing windows at first floor level and above will normally be required. This may be relaxed if it can be clearly demonstrated that the development is designed in such a way as to preserve the amenities and privacy of adjoining occupiers. In certain developments a combination of private and semi-private spaces may be provided, to include communal landscaped areas such as courtyards. Where on street parking is provided in lieu of front gardens a landscaped strip with a minimum depth of 2m will be required to the front of each house.

In duplex developments private open space may be in the form of balconies, terraces, roof gardens or communal landscaped areas exclusive of surface car parking. Balconies or terraces shall be usable and be a minimum of 4m² in area and should be integrated or recessed into the main structure of the building with a view to providing shelter, privacy and where possible to avoid overlooking. No balcony or terrace from 1st floor up should overhang on the public footpath.

The Minimum Private Open Space Requirement for Apartments shall be as follows:

- In the case of mews dwellings in the suburbs the standard of 12-15m² per bed space may be relaxed provided the dwelling has a rear garden with a minimum length of 7.5 metres for its entire width. Within the city centre a minimum of 20m² will be required.

Public Open Space for Residential Development & Other Development

It is important that public open space in new residential developments is genuinely accessible to residents in the vicinity, particularly where a development is located on former institutional lands. These developments shall be designed in such a way as to be permeable. The quantitative standards are set out above. Relaxation of these standards will only be considered where there is excess supply of high quality public space in the area. In these instances it may be more appropriate to seek a financial contribution towards its provision elsewhere in the vicinity. This would include cases where it is not feasible, due to site constraints or other factors, to locate the open space on site, or where it is considered that, having regard to existing provision in the vicinity, the needs of the population would be better served by the provision of a new park in the area (e.g. a neighbourhood park or pocket park) or the upgrading of an existing park. In these cases a financial contribution will be sought in lieu of part or all of the public open space requirement. Where sufficient public open space already exists in the vicinity, consideration will be given to the provision of indoor recreational facilities in lieu of the open space requirement.

In all cases open space shall be of a high quality of design and layout, be located in such a manner as to ensure informal supervision by residents and be visually and functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings. Existing features, such as mature trees, shall be retained and enhanced by the open space provided.

A landscaping plan will be required for all developments. All open space, whether public or private, shall be shown together with details of hard and soft landscaping and the provision or retention of trees.

Where a proposed development adjoins a river or canal bank a linear walkway along the bank, which is accessible to the general public, may be required.

Naming of Residential Estates

All new street and development names shall reflect local historical, heritage or cultural associations and the basic generic description (e.g. Court, Quay, Road etc.) must be appropriate. The Planning Authority will approve the naming of residential developments in order to avoid confusion in regard to similar names in other locations. Street signs must be bilingual, and all house numbers must be visible.

Management Companies

Residential estates are generally designed in accordance with development control standards, which are aimed at the longer term taking in charge and maintenance of the public roads, footpaths, services and open spaces, by Limerick City Council. Any estate to be taken in charge must comply with the '*Taken in Charge*' policy of Limerick City Council (Transport & Infrastructure Section).

In residential developments which are not proposed to be taken in charge by Limerick City Council, evidence will be required that management companies are to be set up at an early date and membership of such shall be compulsory for all purchasers in the development. Limerick City Council will work towards developing best practice standards for apartment management companies.

Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities in accordance with the '*Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', 2001, DEHLG, will be a requirement of any residential development. It is possible that there will be no requirement to provide a childcare facility where there is adequate supply already in the area. In these instances it may be possible to provide dwellings that are sufficiently sized to be converted/partially converted in the future

Back-to-Back Dwellings

In general back-to-back dwellings will not be permitted due to their single aspect and restricted access to private open space.

Backland Development

Limerick City Council will encourage the provision of comprehensive backland development where the opportunity exists. The development of individual backland sites can conflict with the established pattern and character of development in an area. By blocking access, it can constitute piecemeal development and inhibit the development of a larger backland area. In *Chapter 14 Area Profiles*, some backlands capable of comprehensive development have been identified.

Mews Dwellings

Limerick City Council will actively encourage comprehensive schemes which provide a unified approach to the development of residential mews lanes and where consensus between all property owners has been agreed in advance. This design framework is the preferred alternative to individual development proposals.

Where mews dwellings are proposed, the following standards will apply:

- Development will generally be confined to single family units of two storey height. In certain circumstances, three storey mews developments incorporating apartments will be acceptable. This provision shall only apply where the proposed mews building is subordinate in height and scale to the main building, where there is sufficient depth between the main building and the proposed mews building to ensure privacy, where an acceptable level of open space is provided, where the laneway is suitable for the resulting traffic conditions, where existing plot widths are maintained and where the apartment units are of sufficient qualitative size to provide for a high quality residential environment. In such cases, the provision of no more than one off street parking space within the curtilage of the mews building will be encouraged
- Mews buildings may be permitted in the form of terraces, but flat blocks are not generally considered suitable in mews laneway locations.
- New buildings should complement the character of both the mews lane and main building with regard to scale, massing, height, building depth, roof treatment and materials. The design of such proposals should represent an innovative architectural response to the site and should be informed by established building lines and plot width. Depending on the context of the location, mews buildings may be required to incorporate gable-ended pitched roofs.
- The amalgamation or subdivision of plots on mews lanes will generally not be encouraged. In exceptional circumstances, where the amalgamation of plots is acceptable, the established grain should be reflected in the development through creative design and detailing.
- Accommodation will only be allowed in the roof space of a two storey mews if the pitch and eaves height of the mews dwelling is in accordance with the established pattern on the laneway. This provision shall not apply where three storey mews developments are proposed. Dormer windows, front or rear, will not be permitted, and balconies will be considered on their merits.

- Existing stone/brick coach houses located on mews laneways are of national and international importance. Limerick City Council recognises the increasing rarity of these buildings and the need to retain and conserve all of the surviving examples, particularly in relation to their form, profile and building line as well as any original features remaining. Proposals to demolish such buildings on economic grounds will generally not be accepted.
- All mews lanes will be considered to be shared surfaces, and footpaths need not necessarily be provided.
- Mews lanes, which do not already have existing setbacks, may be redeveloped with mews dwellings directly on the existing road boundary, provided that an integrated garage space is provided in the mews dwelling. In these cases, a condition will be attached to any permission de-exempting the conversion of the garage for use as part of the dwelling house.
- All parking provision in mews lanes will be in off street garages, forecourts or courtyards. At least one off street car space must be provided for each mews building, subject to conservation criteria.
- New mews development should not inhibit vehicular access to car parking space at the rear for the benefit of the main frontage premises, where this space exists at present. This provision will not apply where the objective to eliminate existing unauthorised and excessive off street car parking is being sought.
- Private open space shall be provided to the rear of the mews building and shall be landscaped so as to provide for a qualitative residential environment. The depth of this open space for the full width of the site will not generally be less than 7.5 metres and shall not be obstructed by off street parking. Where the provision of private open space at the rear of the mews development to the above standard is impractical, the Planning Authority may allow some reduction of the above standard of private open space subject to the provision of high quality landscaped space.
- If the main house is in multiple occupancy, the amount of private open space remaining after the subdivision of the garden for a mews development shall meet both the private open space requirements for multiple dwellings and for mews development.

Corner/Side Garden Sites

The Planning Authority will take into consideration the following in assessing proposals for the development of corner/side garden sites:

- Does it reflect the character of the street integration and compatibility of design and scale with adjoining dwellings, paying attention to the established building line, proportion, heights, parapet levels and materials of adjoining buildings.
- The maintenance of the front and side building lines where appropriate.
- Impact on the residential amenities of adjoining sites.
- Impact on the character of the streetscape.
- The maintenance of open space standards and refuse storage for both existing and proposed dwellings.
- The provision of a safe means of access to and egress from the site which does not result in the creation of a traffic hazard.
- The provision of appropriate car parking facilities.
- In general apartment blocks will not be considered for corner/side garden sites.

Infill Housing

In order to comply with general policy on infill sites and to make the most sustainable use of land and existing urban infrastructure, the Planning Authority will permit the development of infill housing on appropriate sites. In general, infill housing should comply with all relevant Development Plan standards for residential development, however, in certain limited

circumstances; the Planning Authority may relax the normal planning standards to allow development to take place.

In all cases where permitted infill housing should:

- Have regard to the existing character of the street by paying attention to the established building line, proportion, heights, parapet levels and materials of surrounding buildings.
- Comply with the appropriate minimum habitable room sizes.
- Have a safe means of access to and egress from the site which does not result in the creation of a traffic hazard.

Conversion of Existing Houses to Flat Accommodation

Houses suitable for family accommodation may not be subdivided and converted to flats. However, the subdivision of large houses, housing above business premises and housing on primary traffic routes may be permitted.

Permission to convert to flats will not normally be granted unless:

- The minimum size of unit is above standards outlined in this plan (apart from in the case of historic buildings where flexibility will be applied).
- Flats are self-contained, apart from in exceptional circumstances in relation to historic buildings. When this is not possible, flats should have at least one bathroom and toilet for every two units, or one for every floor of a house.
- The parking space provided is not at the expense of a garden or courtyard.
- There are areas necessary for amenity purposes.
- Each flat has a refuse bin storage area and washing/drying facilities which are accessible to the occupants of that unit.

Dwelling Extensions

The design and layout of extensions to houses should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties particularly as regards sunlight, daylight and privacy. The character and form of the existing building should be respected and external finishes and window types should match the existing.

Proposed Extension design shall comply with the following:

- Follow the pattern of the existing building as much as possible.
- Be constructed with similar finishes and with similar windows to the existing building so that they will integrate with it.
- Roof form should be compatible with the existing roof form and character. Traditional pitched roofs will generally be appropriate when visible from the public road. High quality mono-pitch and flat-roof solutions will be considered appropriate providing they are of a high standard and employ appropriate detailing and materials.
- Dormer extensions should not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of the roof. Box dormers will not be permitted where visible from a public area.
- Care should be taken to ensure that the extension does not overshadow windows, yards or gardens or have windows in flank walls which would reduce the privacy of adjoining properties.
- Ensure that adequate space is provided to allow for maintenance of the gable and access to the rear garden.
- That the available amount of private open space should not generally be reduced to below 40m².

'Family Flat' Extensions

A family flat (more commonly known as a 'granny flat') is a part of a house converted into self-contained accommodation for an elderly person or couple who are related to the principal occupants of the house. The provision of this type of accommodation is very important because it helps families look after the aged in their own house and neighbourhood. It is also recognised that there may be circumstances other than age (i.e. disability or illness) in which a close relative may need to live close to their family for support but still enjoy some degree of independence.

- Assessment of family flats will be based on the following criteria.
- Demonstration of a bona-fide need for such a unit, including details of the relationship between the occupant(s) of the main dwelling house and the occupant(s) of the proposed family flat.
- The unit shall be located at ground floor level.
- The unit shall comprise a physical extension of the main house, including a clear connection to the main dwelling.
- Entrances to the family flat should be provided via the main dwelling unit. Where separate own-door access is unavoidable, own-door access should be located to the side or rear.
- Where a family flat is permitted, conditions may be imposed restricting the use and/or sale of the family flat and requiring the reintegration of the unit for use as part of the main dwelling in the event of the cessation of its use as a family flat.

Waste Storage & Collection Standards

The following general design considerations should be taken into account in the provision of refuse storage facilities:

- To allow for a possible change in the current waste collection service in Limerick City, each residential unit shall have adequate storage for a 3-bin system – organic, dry recyclables and residual waste;
- Residential units with no rear access shall provide adequate storage for the bins to the front of the development, in contained and screened units;
- For residential units without suitable private open space a set of three x 240 litre bins shall be provided for each pair of apartments or a set of three 1,100 litre bins shall be provided for a block of ten apartments;
- The Designer shall endeavor to ensure that bin storage is located on the ground floor or basement area of the apartment development, well screened from public view and adjacent to the block it serves;
- Provision of appropriate signage and instructions with respect to communal waste storage and collection services;
- Each Apartment development proposal must include a Management Plan which clearly addresses domestic waste management on site in agreement with the Environment Department of Limerick City Council;
- Adequate ventilation of waste storage areas so as to minimise odours and potential nuisance from vermin etc;
- The provision of purpose-built deep collection waste bin systems where appropriate (i.e. bin opening at ground level with about two-thirds of bin stored underground);
- Consideration should also be given to the provision of separate collection facilities for other recyclables such as glass and plastics.
- The Designer shall have regard to any additional requirements indicated in '*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', 2007.

Parking in Front Gardens

The cumulative effect of removal of front garden walls and railings damages the character and appearance of suburban streets and roads. Consequently proposals for off street parking need to be balanced against loss of amenity. The removal of front garden walls and railings will not generally be permitted where they have a negative impact on the character of streetscapes (e.g. in Architectural Conservation Areas, Street Improvement Areas and other areas of architectural and historic character).

Where the re-development of a drive-way is permitted the following shall apply:

- Not have outward opening gates.
- Have a vehicular entrance not wider than 3m.
- Have a vehicle entrance not wider than 50 per cent of the width of the front boundary;
- Have an area of hardstanding (parking space of 2.5m x 5m). Suitably landscape the balance of the space.
- Have gates, walls and railings made good.
- Dish and strengthen the footpath and relocate any services at the applicant's expense.
- Where adjoining householders intend to construct drive-ins, a more efficient use of garden space can be achieved by the use of a shared vehicular entrance to serve both houses.
- The hardstand/paving proposed shall be surfaced in a permeable (or porous) surfacing which allows water to drain through, such as gravel, permeable concrete block paving or porous asphalt, unless the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally.

Recreation Facilities

Recreation facilities shall be included in all new Residential Proposals:

- A mix of facilities can be provided on site with regard to the type of facilities which already exist in the vicinity of the proposed site and the number of units proposed by the Applicant.
- Agreement as to the type of recreational facility shall be provided shall be reached at the pre-planning stage.
- Alternative proposals for recreational facilities other than those outlined in the Recreation Matrix below are welcomed by the Planning Authority i.e. allotment development with management agreement etc.
- All recreation facility development shall be constructed in compliance with the relevant guidelines for same.

Table 16.10 Recreation Matrix

No. of Residential Units:	Recreational Facility to be Provided:	No. of Recreation Facilities Required:
<10	○ Street Furniture - Park Bench etc	1
<20	○ Children's Play Area	1
<35	○ Hard Surface Area for football, skateboards etc ○ Inclusion of permanent goal posts or Skateboard Jump	2
<75	○ Formal Park Area/Playing Pitch	2
<100	○ Skateboard Park/Playing Pitch	3

Teenage Spaces

Teenage spaces are public spaces aimed at the 12-20 age group where young people can congregate in a safe environment with passive surveillance and participate in recreational activities e.g. skateboard parks, playing pitches, open space in residential developments etc.

Any new teenage space facility shall adhere to the following requirements:

- National Recreation Policy for Young People: *'Teenspace' 2007.*
- Be located to provide maximum visibility in and through the space.
- Be located near public transportation (i.e. bus routes).
- A specific space e.g. skateboard park, shall include components that serve a variety of skill levels
- Have a code of conduct.
- Spectator accommodations (i.e. seating and/or viewing area/refuse facilities).
- Community generated art.
- A drinking fountain.
- A bike rack.
- Possible restroom facilities within a larger park area.
- Signage may include hours of use, recommendations for safety gear if necessary etc.
- Noise and lighting impacts must be considered.

Graffiti Safe Zones

Limerick City Council recognises the growing culture that surrounds skateboarding as a youth phenomena which includes music, fashion and art. A form of art specific to the urban environment is graffiti. It is an objective of Limerick City Council to help embrace this culture and identify *'Graffiti Safe Zones'*, where graffiti artists are encouraged to display their work in the urban environment. A number of appropriate zones shall be identified throughout the City where this type of expression will be considered visually acceptable.

The Zone shall adhere to the following requirements:

- Be visually acceptable;
- The use of inappropriate language or visual expression is strictly prohibited.
- Buildings, railings, bins, landscaping, street furniture or restroom facilities shall not be de-faced.

Home Based Economic Activity (including medical surgeries)

Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by residents of a house, being subordinate to the use of the house as a single dwelling unit and including working from home. The Planning Authority recognises that such working arrangements can benefit individuals, families and the local community in addition to contributing to more sustainable land use patterns by reducing the need for commuting. There is no objection to minor changes of use to allow for this provided the use remains ancillary to the main residential use, the applicant continues to reside in the house and the use has no adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings.

In determining applications for developments involving working from home, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following considerations:

- The nature and extent of the work.
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, particularly in relation to hours of work, noise and general disturbance.
- Anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposed development.
- Arrangements for the storage of refuse and collection of waste.

- There will be a presumption in favour of this type of use in residential areas. However, such use will not normally be permitted in apartments except in the case of own-door units accessed from street level.
- Permissions for change of use shall be limited in duration to the period of such use by the applicant in question. A temporary permission for three years will be granted to enable the Planning Authority to monitor the impact of the development on the area.

Non-Residential Development – Commercial

Office & Retail Developments

The general principles guiding the location of commercial development in the city have been set out in preceding chapters.

When assessing such planning applications a number of considerations will be taken into account:

- Conformity with the land use policies set out in respect of commercial development as outlined in Chapters 3, 4 & 15.
- The mix of uses being proposed particularly in mixed use areas (the City Centre, District Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Local Centres) where redevelopment and changes of use need to be orientated towards creating urban environments that are vibrant and lively.
- Where the proposed use and end user will contribute positively to retaining the character and vibrancy of the city centre. In particular there is a need to preserve those areas of the city which are unique by virtue of the mix of uses and users.
- Achievement of an appropriate density and scale of development (indicative plot ratios are highlighted below).
- Provision of public open space to a minimum of 10% of site area, and a minimum of 15% in relation to major development sites;
- The high quality design requirement that protects but also enhances the architectural character of the City, particularly in relation to landmark structures and viewpoints.
- The potential impact of traffic movement, parking provision and desirability thereof and whether or not consideration has been given to a Mobility Strategy.
- Whether or not the proposed development will have a significant detrimental effect on the amenities of the surrounding areas.
- Energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the development.
- The quality of waste management measures proposed.

In all significant retail and office developments in the City, a Design Statement will be required. Demolition of existing buildings within the City Centre will not be permitted unless fully justified by a structural assessment and positive redevelopment proposals within the context of preceding objectives outlined above.

All significant retail developments (generally greater than 90m²) will be required to prepare a Retail Needs Assessment in accordance with the retail strategy to justify a demand for the development proposed. Need assessments should consider both the quantitative and qualitative need for a proposal and examine the scope to increase the market share of a centre and/or for regeneration benefits to be achieved.

When a need is demonstrated a retail impact assessment should be prepared having regard to the sequential approach so as to determine the optimum location for the development in accordance with the retail hierarchy.

Such an assessment should address the following criteria and demonstrate whether or not the proposed development would:

- Support the long term strategy for District Centre as established in the Development Plan and not materially diminish the prospect of attracting private sector investment.
- Cause an adverse impact on District Centre, either on its own or cumulatively with recent developments/extant planning permissions, sufficient to undermine the quality of the centre or its role in the economic and social life of the community.
- Diminish the range of activities and services a District Centre can support.
- Cause an increase in the number of long term vacancies in the primary retail area.
- Ensure high standards of access by a range of means of transport including public transport, by bicycle, by foot and also by the private motor car, so that the development is accessible to all sections of society.
- Link effectively with existing town centres so there is likely to be commercial synergy.

The level of detail provided in a *Retail Impact Assessment* should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal and should focus on the key issues.

Warehouse & Industrial Uses

Limerick City Council will facilitate the development of manufacturing industry on lands zoned for such purposes subject to environmental controls and the assessment of the potential impact of such development on adjacent land uses.

Where this type of development may generate heavy traffic, locations that would encourage movement of heavy vehicles through residential areas will not be considered by the Planning Authority.

The criteria for assessment of such developments will include:

- The nature/activities/processes of the proposed development including size and location factors.
- The compatibility with adjoining uses.
- The traffic implications and alternative access servicing and mobility plans/commuting arrangements.
- Site configuration and the quality of urban design, landscape design and building design (including material quality and reflectivity).

Public Houses/Night-Clubs/Disco-Bars/Dance Floors

Night clubs, disco bars and public houses play an important role in the City providing a night-time use which adds to the attractiveness of the City. They will not however be permitted in residential areas. Noise at the boundaries of these establishments will be carefully monitored and noise insulation and reduction measures will be required at the time of the submission of the planning application. An over concentration of such developments in a particular area, either through redevelopment, refurbishment, or extension will also not be permitted. In applications for such developments the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed new entertainment use, an extension to an existing entertainment use or variation in opening hours would not cause harm to residential amenity, environmental quality or the established character and function of the area.

Smoking areas associated with such premises require planning permission and will be assessed having regard to the impacts on the general amenities of the area in question.

Takeaway/Off license/Amusement Centre/Gaming Zone

In order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and protect night time amenities in a particular area, it is the objective of Limerick City Council to prevent an excessive concentration of takeaways, off-licenses, amusement centres or gaming zones and to ensure that the intensity of any proposed use is in keeping with both the scale of the building and the pattern of development in the area.

The provision of such facilities will be strictly controlled, having regard to the following, where considered appropriate:

- The effect of noise, general disturbance, hours of operation, litter and fumes on the amenities of nearby residents.
- The need to safeguard the vitality and viability of shopping areas in the City and to maintain a suitable mix of retail uses.
- Traffic considerations.
- The number of such facilities in the area.
- Litter control measures.
- With regard to takeaways the need to integrate the design of ventilation systems into the design of the building.

Bookmakers

Bookmaker premises have by law a dead shop front. Great care must therefore be taken to avoid an over concentration of this type of use in any one area.

Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities is subject to the *Child Care Act* and the '*Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulation*', 1996.

The Childcare Facilities Guidelines state that appropriate locations for childcare facilities include:

- Major new residential developments.
- Places where there are significant numbers of workers.
- In the vicinity of schools.
- Neighbourhood and District Centres.
- Adjacent to Public Transport Corridors.
- The Planning Authority recognises the need for properly run and conveniently located childcare facilities throughout the city and will implement the '*Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (DEHLG, 2001). Applicants should consult Limerick City Childcare Committee for advice on demands and needs in childcare facilities when putting together a childcare proposal.
- Having regard to the '*Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations*', 1996 and the planning implications of these Regulations, the following will be considered.
- Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed.
- Availability of outdoor play area (to a minimum of 3m² outdoor space per child place in urban locations and 5m² per child in suburban areas) supported by details of management.
- Convenience to public transport nodes.
- Safe access and convenient off-street car parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and staff.
- Local traffic conditions.
- Number of such facilities in the area.
- Intended hours of operation (in certain residential areas, 24 hour operations could be problematic).

- Applications for childcare facilities in existing residential areas will be treated on their merits, having regard to the likely effect on the amenities of adjoining properties, and compliance with the above criteria. Detached houses or substantial semi-detached properties are most suitable for the provision of full day care facilities. Properties with childcare should ideally include a residential component within the dwelling, and preferably the operator in the case of smaller dwellings.

Nursing Homes

There is a continuing and growing need for nursing homes and in particular, because of the ageing population structure in the suburbs, for elder care homes. Such facilities should be integrated wherever possible into the established residential areas of the City, where residents can expect reasonable access to local services.

- In determining planning applications for change of use of a residential dwelling or other building to nursing/elder care home, the following factors should be considered:
- Compliance with standards as laid down in the *Statutory Instrument No. 226 of 1993, Nursing*.
- *Homes (Care and Welfare) Regulations, 1993*.
- The effect on the amenities of adjoining properties.
- Adequacy of off street parking.
- Suitable private open space.
- Proximity to local services and facilities.
- The size and scale of the facility proposed; the scale must be appropriate to the area.

Bed & Breakfast/Guest House/Hotel/Hostel/Apart-Hotel

Planning permission is required for the conversion of more than four bedrooms in a dwelling house into a bed and breakfast establishment, in accordance with Article 10(4) of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001-2008.

In determining planning applications for change of use to bed and breakfast, guest house, hotel or hostel in residential areas, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- Size and nature of facility.
- The effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- The standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises.
- The availability of adequate, safe and convenient arrangements for car parking and servicing.
- The type of advertising proposed.
- The effect on protected structures and/or conservation areas.
- The number of existing facilities of the same nature in the area.

Telecommunication Infrastructure & Apparatus

In evaluating planning applications for the provision of telecommunications apparatus installations, Limerick City Council will have regard to the DEHLG *'Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae & Support Structures', 1996* (or as may be amended during the lifetime of the plan). Limerick City Council favours co-location of such facilities by different operators on the same mast in order to discourage proliferation and clutter. The Designer shall take cognisance of existing aircraft flight paths etc.

Overhead Power Lines

Where overhead power lines exist all development shall be carried out in line with the requirements as set out in the *'Code of Practice for Avoiding Danger from Overhead Electricity Lines' 2008*.

Where KV power lines cross a proposed site, the Applicant must submit a '*Work Method Statement*' to ESB Networks for written agreement prior to lodging a planning application. A revised statement shall be submitted as part of any subsequent planning application indicating, under the agreement of ESB Networks, the Applicant's proposals with regard to the existing overhead lines and any mitigation measures necessary

The requirements set out above shall also apply to any underground infrastructure which may need to be excavated or relocated as a result of a planning application made i.e. broadband, water infrastructure etc. The Applicant shall contact the relevant body responsible for the infrastructure in question and reach a written agreement prior to lodging a planning application with Limerick City Council.

Non-Residential Development – Community Uses

As a general principle the location and provision of community facilities is a pre-requisite to the creation and enhancement of viable, enjoyable, sustainable and attractive local communities. In assessing planning applications for example leisure facilities, sports grounds, playing fields, play areas, community halls, organisational meeting facilities, medical facilities, childcare facilities, new school provision and other community orientated developments, regard will be taken of considerations such as:

- Overall need in terms of necessity, deficiency, and opportunities to share/enhance existing facilities. Where new facilities are provided they should be designed in such a way as to allow for multi-functional use.
- Community facilities must be located so that they are conveniently accessible by both residents and others who may have reason to use the facility. They should be well integrated with pedestrian and cycle routes and where they serve a wider community, located on or close to a quality public transport route.
- Community facilities must be accessible to all members of society, including those with disabilities.
- Facilities must conform with the requirements of appropriate legislative guidelines, for example, childcare and education facilities.

Conversion of Existing Houses

Conversion of houses and apartments to other uses will not normally be permitted apart from the areas zoned for mixed uses, district centres, neighbourhood centres, local centres and commercial core within the city centre. Exceptions to this may be made in the case of a Protected Structure and other buildings of architectural merit where restoration to an architecturally high standard is involved.

Signage & Advertising

Advertising Hoardings - Billboard Locations

Excessive outdoor advertising will be strictly controlled. Such advertising will not be permitted in the following locations:

- The City Centre.
- Along the frontages of the River Shannon, especially in order to preserve the river's amenity.
- In predominantly residential areas, especially on prominent gable walls.
- Where a proliferation of them already exist.
- On stone walls in suburban areas.
- Where they may cause a road hazard.

- Permanent cross street banners/advertisement symbols will not be permitted in any location within the City unless an agreed timetable for use has been approved by the City Council.
- Tri-vision signage will not be permitted on protected structures, O'Connell Street, Catherine Street, Henry Street or along the River Shannon. This type of signage will only be considered where it is shown that no other bill-board signage exists on the same street and motorists will not be affected.

Advertising on Buildings

In general advertising on buildings should conform with the following:

- Be sympathetic in design and colour both to the building on which the signage will be displayed and the surrounding buildings etc.
- Not obscure architectural features such as cornices or window openings.
- Illuminated signs or other advertising structures will not be allowed above the eaves or parapet level on buildings in any part of the City.
- Shop front advertising should be designed as an integral part of the shop front and not left as an afterthought.
- Applications for new, or a change of use of commercial units, will be required to indicate what type of signage is proposed.

Fingerpost Signs

The erection of fingerpost signs will require a license from the Planning Authority and should comply with the following:

- Directional signs for major tourist attractions and community purposes will be considered but business and product advertising will not be permitted in the City Centre as a rule.
- Signs must be of a standard size and colour and where permitted will be provided by the Licensee but will be erected by the City Council.
- Signs which interfere with the City Council's or the National Roads Authority's road signage will not be permitted.

Shop Front Facades

Policy DM.3 Retention of Traditional Shop Front Facades

It is the policy of Limerick City Council to preserve and retain traditional shop fronts in order to keep the commercial heritage and vibrancy of the City Centre intact.

Planning control over alterations to shop fronts and facades of commercial premises is necessary in order to maintain good architectural standards in the commercial core and historic centre of the City.

The Planning Authority's objective is to improve the quality of advertisement and shop front design. Statutory protection is given to buildings of special merit or historic interest which are on the Record of Protected Structures. The need to change aging shop fronts will be closely examined as it is the policy of Limerick City Council to preserve and retain traditional shop fronts of importance to the overall vibrancy of the City Centre. The condition of the existing frontage should be expertly examined as the automatic replacement of shop fronts in a poor condition may be a premature solution. Careful repairs can make good a neglected shop front without incurring the considerable cost of a new shop front. In addition, refurbishment of shop fronts can often offer an opportunity to strip away later additions and to re-establish the

proportions and details of the original framework. An existing shop front of distinctive character, which is repaired and decorated usually, looks far better than a standardized replacement.

The repair, restoration and replacement of shop fronts must be sympathetically carried out to protect the architectural character of the City. It may be necessary to accept that modern shop fronts are not appropriate in certain old buildings or traditional shopping parades.

Where new shop fronts are acceptable in these situations the quality of design and finish should be of the highest standard and accurate facsimiles of period fronts may be necessary.

Where existing shop fronts are of no special merit, total replacement with a contemporary design is acceptable and if sensitively handled can greatly enhance the appearance of the whole street.

Fascia Signage/ Illuminative/Projecting Signs

As a general principal fascia signs and projecting signs should be simple in design, not excessive in illumination or size.

The following basic guidelines will be applied in assessing planning applications:

- Plastic derived fascias with product advertising will not be permitted.
- Projecting signs should be of 2.4m clearance above street level.
- Internally illuminated fascias will not be permitted.
- Internally illuminated signs shall be restricted.
- Overall illumination of fascia signage or shop fronts or distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to spot-lighting, up-lighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting.
- The use of banners, flags, billboards and other forms of commercial and cultural advertising will be strictly controlled in the City Centre and essentially restricted to those outlets of a cultural/entertainment activity.
- Product advertising on canopies will not be permitted.
- An over-riding principle is the avoidance of visual clutter and an improvement in the quality of the commercial character of the city.

Security Screens

Security measures are an integral part of shop-front design. Consideration must be given to security measures at the design stage. It is important to strike a balance between the security needs of the shop unit and the visual impact (if any) the security method chosen will have on the appearance of the street in question.

- Planning permission is required for the erection of roller shutters.
- External roller shutters will not be permitted particularly in the City Centre.
- Box housing for shutters, mounted externally or concealed behind a large projecting fascia is a material alteration which is unlikely to be permitted in any shopping street.
- Security screens located inside the shop window or to the rear of the display area do not require planning permission as a general rule but must be visually permeable.
- Demountable metal-grills or wrought iron-work grills may also be acceptable.

Security Screen Check List:

- Allow for visibility between the shop and the street;
- Provide opportunity for window shopping;
- Discourage vandalism through durable design features;
- Allow for the spill of light from the shop front onto the street;
- Provide activity and interest at the street level.

Canopies/Awnings

Planning permission is required for the erection of canopies. Canopies of traditional design and retractable materials will be favoured. The development of innovative design for canopies and awning is encouraged by Limerick City Council. However, the obstruction and clutter of public footpaths by canopy use is strongly discouraged.

The use of tables, chairs and divisional awning on the public footpath requires a license application to the Planning Authority under Section 254 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000-2008.

Bus Shelters / Other Stand Alone Structures

Promotional or commercial advertising in bus shelters and other stand alone structures that are an essential element of public infrastructure or provide a public amenity, such as telephone kiosks will only be permitted in a format and location which is clearly integral and subsidiary to the structure as designed, and does not detract from the surrounding location

Locations where advertising panels will not be permitted are as follows:

- a) The Architectural Conservation Area in and around St Johns Square.
- b) The square facing King Johns Castle, the immediate curtilage of the Castle and the area of Church road facing Bishops Palace.
- c) The area adjoining St.Marys Cathedral and the Courthouse
- d) The immediate vicinity of the Treaty Stone

Outside of these areas, advertising panels on stand alone structures shall only be permitted where:

- a) Both the advertisement and structure comply in terms of siting, **scale** and design, with the principles and guidelines as set out in the 'Design Manual for Urban Streets' (DECLG, 2013)
- b) The advertisement is clearly subsidiary to the structure,
- c) Either the purpose of the proposed structure is:
 - i. to replace an existing structure, and in this case, it represents an improvement over a pre-existing structure, or
 - ii. there is a bona-fide requirement for the structure in the interests of public amenity, pedestrian or traffic safety.

Conservation

Works to Protected Structures & Proposed Protected Structures

Works, both to the exterior and interior, which materially affect the character of a protected structure (*and proposed Protected Structure where a Section 12(3) or Section 55 notice has been served*) or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest, require planning permission. What might be regarded normally as minor alterations to buildings may not necessarily be regarded as such in the case of protected structures.

Such works can include:

- o Window replacement and fenestration changes
- o Wholesale plastering/pointing/painting, painting or rendering of previously unpainted and/or un-rendered elements or painting which is inappropriate to the context of the protected structure and its surroundings;
- o Modifications to brick and stonework and inappropriate modifications to historic gutters and downpipes;

- The removal/alteration of external and internal architectural detailing including interior joinery and decorative plasterwork;
- Inappropriate interior works including the removal of walls, the creation of openings and partitioning of rooms;
- Works to roofs and railings involving the removal of original materials and replacement with inappropriate materials.

In considering applications for alterations and/or additions to a protected structure or Proposed Protected Structure, the Planning Authority shall have regard to the following;

- The protected status of the structure and the need to protect its special character and to ensure its continued structural stability;
- The various elements of the structure which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted on by the proposed development;
- The extent of intervention and alterations which is proposed and which has already taken place excluding any unauthorised development.

In the case of a proposal to materially change the use of a protected structure or Proposed Protected Structure, the suitability of such use having regard to its potential impact on the structure including works necessary to comply with Fire and Building Regulations which the proposed use change would give rise to:

- The reversibility of the proposed alterations;
- In the case of buildings within the curtilage of a protected structure whether such buildings are of heritage value or not.

The inappropriate subdivision and loss of the original proportions of well designed interiors or the creation of new openings where these would affect the special character of the building will not be permitted. Similarly, the interconnection of protected structures will be discouraged to protect the special character and fabric of such buildings. However it is accepted that to make the structures viable and to encourage sustainable uses some relaxation may be permitted.

Windows made from aluminum, uPVC or similar material will not be acceptable in protected structures. In twentieth century buildings, the original metal/windows shall be retained.

Security cameras on protected structures will generally not be encouraged. Where applications for such devices are proposed in exceptional circumstances, every effort should be made to conceal the device and to employ best available technology, including the smallest scale of device available, to ensure that the device would not be obtrusive and would not detract from the integrity of the protected structure.

No advertising material other than brass/wood/stone name-plate type signs will be permitted on protected structures, though other materials such as steel may be permitted in certain circumstances provided that the design of the sign would not detract from the integrity of the structure. The wall fixings should be secured through mortar joints and should be reversible. Planning permission is required for the erection of a satellite dish signal receiving antenna (satellite dish) on protected structures.

A detailed Architectural Conservation Impact Report and associated Method Statement shall accompany planning applications for works to protected structures or Proposed Protected Structure. This report shall be prepared in accordance with *Appendix B: the DEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, 2004* and as a minimum shall:

- Outline the historical and architectural significance of the building.
- Include a detailed survey of the building, including a photographic survey.
- Detail the proposed works it is intended to carry out on scaled floor plans and elevations;
- Contain a full assessment of the impact of the proposal or works on the original integrity, fabric and character of the structure and clearly outline proposals to mitigate any potential adverse impact on architectural heritage of the structure, including works, the reversibility of the proposed works.
- Detail level required: The detail required to be submitted will be dependent on the significance of the building and the nature and extent of works proposed.
- Agent/ Author Qualification or Competency: Where the works to the protected structure or proposed protected structure are unlikely to have more than a minor impact on the character of the structure, it may be acceptable that the assessment be undertaken by a person, or persons, without specialised expertise, although minimum RIAI Conservation Accreditation Grade III or equivalent is preferable. However, where the protected structure or proposed protected structure is of high quality, rarity and significance having regard for the NIAH categories of special interest, or where the impact on the architectural heritage may be substantial given the scale of the works proposed, the City Council will require that the assessment be carried out by a person with relevant competence or expertise being RIAI Conservation Accreditation Grade II or Grade I, or equivalent.

All works to protected structures shall be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice outlined in the DEHLG *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines (2004)* under the supervision of a suitably qualified conservation professional.

Uses & Protected Structures

Uses should be compatible with the overall objective to protect the special interest and character of protected structures and should cause minimum interference with the floor plan and minimum intervention to comply with Fire and Building Regulations. Where proposals relate to redundant buildings, including former financial buildings and places of worship, uses which are compatible with the original use and which facilitate public access to the primary spaces of these buildings will be encouraged.

Development within the Curtilage & Setting of a Protected Structure or Proposed Protected Structure

In considering applications for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, the Planning Authority shall have regard to the following:

- The protected status of the structure and the need to protect its special character;
- The various elements of the structure which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted on by the proposed development;
- Proximity of any new development to the main protected structure and any other buildings of heritage value;
- The design of the new development, which should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure.

The quality of the design will be a foremost consideration when assessing proposals for development within the curtilage of protected structures, with particular emphasis on siting, building lines, proportions, scale, massing, height, roof treatment and materials. This does not preclude innovative contemporary buildings which can contribute to the richness of the historical context.

Development proposals should include an appraisal of the wider context of the site or structure. This appraisal should examine the visual impact and design of the proposal and should address issues including the grain of historic settings, sensitivity to scale and context, views and the design of innovative quality architecture which would complement the setting of the protected structure.

Care of Significant Architectural Features - Iron work/windows/bricks etc

All works to buildings with features of architectural heritage significance shall be carried out in line with the requirements set out in the *Architectural Heritage Protection - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2004*, and the DEHLG 'Advice Series' for bricks, windows, ironworks and care of older buildings.

Retention, Re-Use or Works to Structures identified on the NIAH (Candidate Protected Structures) and other Structures of Architectural Heritage Merit which are not Protected

The re-use of older buildings of architectural heritage merit and significance (which may or may not include structures identified on the NIAH) is a central element in the conservation of the built heritage of the City and important to the achievement of sustainability.

Where Planning Applications involve works to or redevelopment of a building or structure identified on the NIAH, the Planning Authority shall have regard for the DEHLG *Architectural Heritage Protection - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2004*, and may require an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment to be prepared commensurate to the nature and scale of the proposal.

In assessing applications to demolish older buildings of architectural heritage merit which are not listed on the Record of Protected Structures or the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, the Planning Authority may actively seek the retention and re-use of buildings/structures of historic, architectural, cultural, artistic and/or local interest or buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and identity of streetscapes and the overall sustainable development of the City.

The heritage value of older buildings of significance, particularly buildings predating 1900 may not always be obvious and some buildings may contain concealed features of importance. In these and other unique circumstances where buildings or structures or parts of a structure are identified as part of a development assessment process to have significant architectural heritage merit, the Planning Department may require an architectural heritage impact assessment to be prepared commensurate to the nature and scale of the proposal, to enable a full appraisal of the building's architectural, cultural, artistic or historic merit.

Where the Planning Authority accepts the principle of demolition, a detailed inventory of the building shall be required for record purposes. Demolition of protected structures or other buildings of historic significance may be permitted where it is deemed that the proposed development is in the best interest of the economic sustainability of the City Centre. Consideration of any delisting of a Protected Structure shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 54 and Section 55 of the Act where protection of the structure is no longer warranted, in advance of any development application.

Development in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

The requirements for planning applications for development within the six Architectural Conservation Areas in Limerick City (1A, B & C, 2, 3 & 4) are set out in Chapter 10 Built Heritage & Archaeology) and shall be made in accordance with Chapter 3 the DEHLG *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, 2004*.

All new buildings should complement and enhance the character and setting of the ACA in question.

In considering proposals for development in ACAs, it is policy to have particular regard to:

- The effect of the proposed development on buildings and the surrounding environment, both natural and man-made.
- The impact of development on the immediate streetscape in terms of compatibility of design, scale, height, plot width, roof treatment, materials, landscaping, mix and intensity of use proposed.

Development within conservation areas should be so designed so as not to constitute a visually obtrusive or dominant form of development. New alterations and extensions should complement existing buildings/structures in terms of design, external finishes, colour, texture, windows/doors /roof/chimney/design and other details.

The Planning Authority discourages the use of uPVC or aluminum in windows, fascias and doors in historic buildings that are not protected. Proposals for the application of cement render to the external brick fabric of older buildings will not be encouraged in conservation areas. In assessing development proposals, the Planning Authority will seek the retention of mature trees (those in good condition) which contribute to the character of conservation areas where appropriate.

In conservation areas, advertising will be severely restricted, and shall only relate to the service provided on the premises. In dealing with all advertising in conservation areas, the overriding consideration will be the enhancement and protection of the essential visual qualities of the area. Where applications for security cameras are proposed, every effort shall be made to conceal the device and to employ the best available technology.

Parking in the Curtilage of Protected Structures & in Architectural Conservation Areas.

Poorly designed off street parking in the front gardens of protected structures and in ACAs can have an adverse affect on the special interest and character of these sensitive buildings and areas. For this reason, proposals for off street parking in the front gardens will not normally be permitted where inappropriate site conditions exist, particularly in the case of smaller gardens where the scale of intervention is more significant.

Proposals for off street parking in the front gardens of protected structures and within ACAs will not be permitted in the following circumstances:

- Where satisfactory vehicular access to the rear garden exists or can be easily provided and where sufficient rear garden area is available to meet both the parking and open space requirements of the building;
- Where there is insufficient area to accommodate a parked car in the front garden or where the proposal relates to vehicles other than a private car (e.g. caravan/boat);
- Where proposals would result in the removal of the entire front boundary of the property.

However, where site conditions exist which facilitate parking provision without significant loss of visual amenity and historic fabric, proposals for limited off street parking in the front gardens of protected structures and in ACAs may be considered where the following criteria can be met:

- Sufficient width of frontage exists to maintain the majority of original railings and walls with appropriate insertion of gated entrances without the removal of the entire front boundary of the property.

- No more than one private car parking space is provided within the curtilage of the building;
- There is sufficient depth available in the garden to accommodate a private parked car;
- Access to and egress from the proposed parking space will not give rise to a traffic hazard
- Every reasonable effort is made to protect the integrity of the protected structure and/or architectural conservation area;
- The building is an owner occupied residential building;

Development on Archaeological Sites & in Zones of Archaeological Potential

When considering planning applications in the *Zone of Archaeological Potential* and on sites of known archaeological interest, the Planning Authority will have regard to the view and recommendation of the National Monuments Service and other interested bodies, such as the Heritage Council, before arriving at a decision.

In order that the Planning Authority's policy on archaeology is implemented, the following will be necessary prior to lodgement of a planning application:

- The Applicant shall employ a Qualified Archaeologist to carry out site investigation works;
- The merits and demerits of foundation type (piled, raft, etc.) shall be assessed, having regard to the potential of such foundation to avoid undue damage to archaeological strata.

When planning permission for development involving sub-surface excavation is being granted, attention will be drawn to the legal obligation to report the discovery of archaeological finds to the National Museum of Ireland.

Outdoor Events

Where an Outdoor Event is expected to exceed 5,000 people in attendance, the Promoter must apply for an Event License under the terms of *Part XVI of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2008*. Limerick City Council's *Park & Ride Strategy* shall be adhered to for all events.

Petrol Stations

Where a Petrol Station is proposed the following guidelines shall be considered:

- The proliferation of existing petrol stations and distances to same.
- Access to a petrol station will not be permitted closer than 35m to a road junction.
- Frontage shall be agreed with the Transport Department of Limerick City Council prior to the lodgement of this type of development proposal.
- All pumps and installations shall be set back at least 5 metres from the public road.
- A wall, of a minimum height of 0.5 metres, must separate the forecourt from the public footpath.
- All external lighting shall be located so as not to cause distraction to road users.
- One large illuminated projecting sign will be permitted per petrol station.
- Any ancillary facilities shall be located so as not to interfere with residential amenities.
- Any convenience shop proposed on site shall be ancillary to the principal use of the premises as a petrol station and shall be a maximum size of 100m² excluding storage, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a deficiency of convenience retail space in the vicinity. Under such circumstances, the maximum floor space may be increased to 150m².
- Late night opening will only be permitted if it does not impact adversely on residential amenity.
- A landscaping plan shall be submitted as part of this type of development proposal.

- Fast food takeaway and off licence facilities shall not be permitted in petrol stations.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment of Proposed Variation No. 4 to the
Limerick City Development Plan 2010 – 2016**

- Incorporation of the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan

**SEA STATEMENT FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE 2030 PLAN
INTO THE LIMERICK CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2016**

February 2015

SEA STATEMENT FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE 2030 PLAN INTO THE LIMERICK CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with article 9 of the SEA directive and 14(l) of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) regulations the following is a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the incorporation of the 2030 Plan into the Limerick City Development Plan 2010 and how the Environmental Report and the outcome of the in house and public consultations were taken into account and indicates the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives considered. The wider consultation associated with the statutory process of plan variation complemented internal research and consultations.

1.2 Summary of how environmental considerations were factored into the incorporation of the 2030 Economic Plan into the City Development Plan 2010.

During the preparation of the variation no consideration was given to expansion of zoning outside the current plan boundaries. No further lands were zoned outside the plan boundaries-this option was rejected as analysis indicated that sufficient land was zoned for different purposes within the Plan area to cater for the population for the plan period. In addition the zoning of further land would not contribute to the aim of sequential zoning and would divert scarce resources from the main aim of revitalising the city which is the core aim of the 2030 Plan. It was considered that further expanding zoned land would result in under used or partially developed land which would take from efforts to assist with the development of the core of the City in line with the Local Area Plan Guidance Documents 2012 and the Development Plan Guidance 2007.

The issue of ex-situ effects on Natura 2000 sites and the issue of the need for appropriate assessment screening had been raised during the preparation of the variation. Progression to full Appropriate Assessment was not deemed necessary as buffer zones were incorporated into the existing development plan along the undeveloped sections of the river banks in the plan area, while the possibility of ex-situ effects were not regarded as significant due to the improvement works to the Bunlickey Waste Water Treatment Plant. An objective within the plan was introduced to ensure that infrastructure kept pace with development. Policy WS5 was updated in this regard. In addition as the content of the Environmental Report indicated works are planned to improve the ability of the WWTP to deal with waste from the city.

The need to ensure that the urban form of Limerick is both protected and enhanced is reflected in the zoning patterns of the plan. The zoning as presented in the 2010 plan seeks to consolidate the settlement pattern of Limerick ensuring that future development in terms of location and scale contribute to this end. In addition the sections of the plan relating to Protected Structures and the Architectural Conservation Areas also seeks to ensure that these aspects of the heritage of the city are adequately conserved. The preservation strategies of the 2010 Plan as outlined in Chapter 10, Parts III and IV will apply the to the City Development Plan as varied as these policies now apply to the contents of the 2030 Plan. Any measures which are contained in the 2030 plan will have to comply with these measures. As the 2010 City Development plan points out (p.82) the aim of designating these areas is to "preserve their special characteristics and distinctive features from inappropriate actions".

1.3 SUMMARY OF HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT AND SUBMISSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS MADE TO THE PLANNING AUTHORITY UNDER SECTION 13 OF THE ACT WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Submissions under section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, have been received during the plan variation process. These have been taken into account in the final plan, following the public display period. Issues raised by the Environmental Authorities and the responses as outlined in the Chief Executives report have already been on public display.

Some of the main issues that have been raised by submissions from the Department of the Environment and the Irish Georgian Society have centred on the sensitivity of the existing historic built environment in the city and have mentioned that building heights should have been included in the measures in the 2030 plan. This was considered unnecessary as in the existing city plan in the development management chapter (Chapter 16) the issue of building heights has already been dealt with. Reference has already been made to the existing protection conferred by the Architectural Conservation Areas and it should be remembered that the policy objectives of the 2010 City Plan now control the proposals put forward in the 2030 plan. It should be emphasised that the incorporation of the 2030 plan now means that it is subject to the same statutory controls that govern development activity in terms of planning control, fire regulations and environmental legislation as it now part of a statutory land use plan.

The historic building stock also poses nature conservation issues which have been mentioned in the environmental report. Reference is made to the contents of Chapter 11 which details nature conservation policies which apply to the city and now apply to the contents of the 2030 plan as incorporated. As mentioned in

the plan preparation stage it will be necessary to survey for wild life species such as birds and bats that that have adapted to urban living prior to development taking place.

1.4 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PLAN AS ADOPTED IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

It is required in the legislation that the Environmental Report must consider “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme” and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternative strategies that were considered are outlined below.

Alternative Strategy Option 1- Continue with existing 2010 Plan with its time extension and without the variation to incorporate the 2030 plan:

The preparation of the LEASP proposes measures that build on earlier proposals such as the 2008 City Centre Strategy and earlier public realm proposals. The identification of the seven key areas aims to promote tailored responses to the difficulties of each area and the specific opportunities each affords. The proposals are a response to the difficulties facing Limerick City and are those judged to be the most realistic at the current time. The 2030 plan as incorporated during the variation process has the advantage of being able to take into account the planning guidance which has become available in the interim and which reflects current best practice.

While earlier plans and development briefs (e.g. Patrick Street-Ellen Street Development Brief 2004) did make their acknowledged contribution to the contents of the current plan the content of such plans required updating because of the new economic background, the new legislative and policy structures caused by the amalgamation of the two local authorities and the addition of new infrastructure within the metropolitan area. In this regard the plan points out that the current traffic management initiatives had been put in place prior to the opening of the River Shannon Tunnel which has removed a large volume of traffic from the City centre (LEASP, p.53). Facilitating pedestrian usage of the City centre by managing traffic flows is an important element of the plan and this plan presents comprehensive proposals to address this issue (LEASP, pp. 91-96). The management of traffic is central to accessibility in urban areas and these proposals have indicated the need for revised management which played a part in the selection of this plan in its current format. As mentioned above the contents of the 2030 plan reflect current best practice, not only in relation to S28 guidance documents, but also in relation to international practice as the examples outlined in the 2030 document indicate. In terms of improving permeability of and providing transport links it should be remembered that many

of the measures of the 2030 Plan complement those of the Smarter Travel initiative.

In short, the selection of the current strategy has built on earlier efforts such as conventional land use plans (e.g. the series of City Development Plans), the successful outcome of the actions of the 2008 City Centre Strategy and marks a fusion of conventional land use planning with the area specific actions of the LEASP. One alternative would have been to continue with conventional land use plans, which lacking the area specific focus and actions of the LEASP, would not be able to direct resources in the targeted fashion required. The improvement works for the Colbert station area, recently granted planning approval, is a good example of such an approach.

As part of the preparation work for the variation consideration was given to delaying the variation until the preparation of a new development plan for the city area was required. However this would have meant substantial loss of time. It was decided to incorporate the 2030 plan into the existing City Development Plan. The time frame of the City Development Plan has been extended until the preparation of new Regional Planning Guidelines. This is necessary in that it will be the new RPGs, when prepared, that will indicate the population targets for the city. In the meantime, though the Mid-west Regional Authority is being reorganised it is necessary to extend the time frame of the City Development Plan to ensure that it continues to operate under the aegis of the current RPGs. As yet there is no date for the preparation of the new RPGs.

Alternative Strategy Option 2- Continue with existing 2008 City Centre Strategy without the incorporation of the 2030 plan

The outcome of earlier plans such as the Limerick City Centre Strategy 2008 plan had indicated the potential of actions in selected parts of the city and while this has achieved impressive results, not least the board walks along the Shannon in the city centre, it was considered that actions on a larger scale would be necessary to reverse the decline of the city centre and the key areas identified in the 2030 LEASP.

This is the advantage of the 2030 Plan in that with its range of targeted measures, it will be a better vehicle for guidance of resources to specific areas. It will also be a better means of working with other agencies to ensure that an integrated approach to investment will serve to revitalise the city. The link with the re-development of Colbert station is an example of this. It should also be remembered that the regeneration process active in the city areas now for a number of years also has area based response measures and the area based responses of the 2030 plan will serve to complement the regeneration plans which are active elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

Alternative Strategy Option 3- reliance on non- planning led initiatives to secure the revitalisation of the city centre, with non-modification of existing land use plans.

While the initiatives of other agencies, such as Iarnród Éireann are indeed welcome they would tend to concentrate on areas that would be of specific interest to particular organisations and would lack the area based response that is the hall mark of the 2030 plan. The 2030 Plan, by proposing a larger development framework in conjunction with the policy support of the City Development Plan, provides a template which would avoid piecemeal responses to the issues facing the City. This has already been alluded to above in that the regeneration process will be complemented by the overall plan led approach of the 2030 initiatives. Both regeneration and the 2030 plan will ensure that area based responses to development issues in the city will be distributed through out the metropolitan area.

It was not considered feasible to proceed with non –modified plans as these would not have adequate mention of the 2030 plan in their statutory content. The 2010 plan, for instance, had in Chapter 7 (City Development Plan 2010 p. 53 to 58) a detailed mention of the regeneration areas in the city and responses to the issues that faced them. The variation which incorporated the 2030 plan also added material which reflected both the contents and the importance of the 2030 plan and places it firmly within the ambit of the most important statutory guidance document for the city.