

1.1 What is Heritage?

Heritage refers to anything from the past that merits passing onto future generations: inherited traditions, monuments, objects and culture. According to the Heritage Act 1995, the national heritage of Ireland includes monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks, and inland waterways. Heritage can also be less tangible, for example local history, folklore, place names, culture, traditions, historic documents, language, rituals, symbolism, spiritually and genealogy. Heritage is an important facet of the community, contributing to a sense of identity and place; it is important that our rich heritage is available for future generations to appreciate. The Heritage Council is the statutory body established to manage heritage projects and to promote heritage nationally.

1.2 What is a Heritage Plan?

It is a document that facilitates a co-ordinated approach between the Council, the community and other agencies to determine the general principles and objectives for the protection and development of our heritage for future generations.

The Plan celebrates what Limerick has in terms of heritage but also highlights how Limerick's heritage should develop for the future. It is not exhaustive or authoritative, but is a necessary step to collectively focus on what is best for Limerick's heritage given limited resources, and the demands placed on heritage by modern life.

1.3 What is the purpose of the plan?

The goal or purpose of the plan is to ensure that the Council and the wider community focus on the need to ensure that Limerick's heritage continues to be unique and diverse. Heritage is a strong contributory factor to Limerick being a special place to live, work, locate to, and is a worthwhile location to invest in.

1.4 Some of the benefits of a heritage plan

Heritage is an exceptional resource offering opportunities for employment, recreation, health, learning and enjoyment. There are many benefits of having a plan to guide future development. Some of these are as follows:

- It can be a catalyst for local development, tourism, job creation, and potentially attracts investment.
- It contributes to a sense of place, community pride, and local identity.
- Heritage plans promote traditional crafts, skills, and culture, for example, thatching, weaving, blacksmithing, lime and stone wall building, lace making, traditional dance and

music, poetry, literature and traditions etc.

- It focuses on maximising the scarce resources and expertise of many agencies working in the heritage area
- It supports existing community development initiatives, for example assisting local community to secure funding for projects.

1.5 The broad objectives of the proposed plan

The following objectives have been identified to achieve the goal.

- To raise the awareness of, appreciation for, and enjoyment of Limerick City and County's heritage
- To acquire knowledge through survey and research in heritage in Limerick, and to make available heritage information to the wider public in a user-friendly manner.
- To promote best practice in heritage conservation and management.
- To support the local economy and strengthen tourism.

These are not definitive and we are open to suggestions through written submissions.

Broad Heritage Areas

The following are the broad heritage areas that the heritage plan will look at:

Archaeology

There are over 7000 known archaeological sites and monuments in Limerick. These represent the culture, society and economy of the area from the earliest times. These sites vary from the glorious architectural masonry in our many medieval monasteries to a simple standing stone. Some are owned and cared for by the State and attract thousands of visitors a year. Others are seen only by the farmer bringing in the cows. But they are all part of a shared heritage. New sites are added to the list each year. Despite this, the archaeology of an area is a fragile and finite resource. The National Monuments Act 1930-2004 (Amendments) and the Planning Acts serve to protect our archaeological heritage. Limerick City & County Council through the Development Plans is committed to protecting archaeological sites and their setting. The best protection, however, is an increased public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the archaeological heritage which increases their value and places them at the core of the community. Refer to www.limerick.ie/council/archaeology

Built Heritage

The built environment is a unique connection with times past and records human activity throughout the ages. It has been shaped by people responding to the surroundings they inherit, and

embodies the aspirations, skills and investment of successive generations. People value this historic environment as part of their cultural and built heritage. Limerick's built historical heritage is an asset that is under threat from demands: modern living standards, expectations and climate change. The Council uses a number of protective measures to conserve historical buildings and structures.

These include;

- The designation of Protected Structures under Section 51 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the maintenance of the Record of the Protected Structures.
- The designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)
- Including mandatory objectives in Development Plans and Local Area Plans for protection of Protected Structures and preservation of the character of ACAs.

Refer to www.limerick.ie/council/built-heritage-conservation

Modern Architecture and Public Realm

People value and are curious about Limerick's architecture as evidenced by the growing interest annual in the Open House festival. For future generations it is important to openly acknowledge the contribution of modern design to Limerick's heritage, to ensure that new design of buildings and spaces, and refurbishments respects its context, with suitable and appropriate materials and construction. This ethos requires investment and creativity. It is imperative that that this generation raise awareness of the value of good design, its impact on public realm, and its value for all citizens.

Biodiversity and Environmental Awareness

Limerick's natural environment is a wonderful resource for those living, visiting and working here. From the Ballyhouras to the Shannon Estuary, Lough Gur to the Galtees, its scenic nature and wealth of wildlife habitats including woodlands, bogs, turloughs, are valuable resources. The natural environment is often threatened by human activity. These threats are varied and many and some of the key threats are, pollution caused by agricultural, forestry, industrial and domestic effluents, the introduction of alien species and climate change. Ireland as an EU Member State has committed to halting biodiversity loss by 2020. The Local Authority is committed to safe-guarding natural heritage as a non-renewable asset. However, as with other agencies funding and resources remain limited. Refer to www.limerick.ie/council/biodiversity

Cultural Heritage

Limerick, with its rich heritage and love of the arts, is proud to have been Ireland's first National City of Culture in 2014. Our City

and County, with its music, art, theatre, and sport was recognised as having accomplished a renewed sense of respect, sense of ownership, sense of creativity, and its power to stimulate and grow new ideas. Limerick now has the confidence to bid for the 2020 European Capital of Culture initiative. This award is one of the most prestigious and visible European cultural awards in the EU, and is awarded on the strength of an exceptional programme of events to a city, that is both local and European. Similarly, County Limerick has a very strong cultural heritage in music, dance, theatre and the arts which also merits supports and funding for future generations. Refer to www.limerick.ie/council-service-group/arts

Local History

Limerick has many valuable resources for history. These include comprehensive library resources at the Local Studies Department of Limerick City & County Library, Limerick Archives and Museum, and the Hunt Museum. There are many historical societies throughout the City and County, and community groups researching local history, place names, field names, folklore and genealogy. Limerick's Library, Archives and Museum services are committed to preserving and documenting the past, ensuring that the history of Limerick is accessible to all citizens. Limerick City and County Library has been working for the past ten years to make its local studies resources available to the world via its website. To date hundreds of thousands of pages of local history data have been uploaded at www.limerickcity.ie/library. The Council has also worked with other agencies to modernise the distribution of historical information. For example, the digitisation of 70,000 burials that took place during 1855 - 2008 in Mount St. Lawrence. Similarly, the online catalogue of the museum's complete collection of artefacts is available to the community through www.limerick.ie/archives. The Local History Department at Limerick City and County Library Service holds a number of collections available for public consultation.

1.6 Some questions to consider

Are there other issues threatening Limerick's heritage?

- How can heritage 'move with the times' in terms of modern expectations such as social media, digitalisation and modern technology to a broader audience given scarce resources including funding?
- How can information on heritage matters be disseminated to local communities to encourage community ownership and appreciation?
- How can heritage be all inclusive in modern Limerick which has a culturally diversity community?
- How can the community, the Council and state agencies be



proactive in enhancing, protecting and raising awareness of Limerick's heritage?

What process is involved in making a heritage plan?

This 'Issues document' is the first step in the preparation of a heritage plan for Limerick City and County. This is an opportunity to highlight any issues/views that you wish to be considered in the preparation of the proposed plan. Written submissions/observations are invited and should be submitted by the **28th July 2016** to **Forward/Strategic Planning, Economic Development Directorate, Limerick City and County Council, 7/8 Patrick Street, Limerick** or emailed to forwardplanning@limerick.ie

Following consideration of submissions received at this first issues stage, the proposed heritage plan will be put on public display for a period of eight weeks during October/November 2016. The Proposed Plan will be available in our offices in Patrick Street, Customer Services Section in Merchants Quay and Dooradoyle, in the Rathkeale and Newcastle West Area Offices and local Libraries. It will also be displayed on the Council's website www.limerick.ie. The final Heritage Plan is expected to be published in February/March 2017.

If you have any queries, please contact Bernadette Collins, Executive Planner on (061) 407236, or Tom O'Neill, Heritage Officer on (061) 407229. Alternatively email forwardplanning@limerick.ie.



ISSUES PAPER

PROPOSED LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY HERITAGE PLAN 2017-2030



May 2016

HAVE YOUR SAY!



Forward/Strategic Planning