

**Limerick County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Luimnigh**

# **Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016**



**ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2010  
(INCLUDING VARIATIONS 1-3 & 5)  
VOLUME 1: WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**FORWARD PLANNING DEPARTMENT,  
COUNTY HALL,  
DOORADOYLE,  
CO. LIMERICK**

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- **The Limerick County Development Plan was adopted on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 and came into effect on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010.**
- **Variation number 1 to the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016, which was adopted by the elected members on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011 comprised of the following:**
  - A. Amendments to ‘Chapter 2: Core Strategy’ which consists of replacing section 2.1 to section 2.8 and re-number remaining sections accordingly. The variation allows for the core strategy to be amended in light of the information contained in the DECLG guidance document entitled ‘Guidance Notes on Core Strategies’. The proposed variation provides further information in relation to the amount and location of land zoned to accommodate residential development in the County in comparison with the requirements for housing development based on the population targets put forward in the Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines.
  - B. Amendments to ‘Chapter 4: Housing’ of the Limerick County Development Plan, 2010-2016 to reflect the inclusion in the County Development Plan of the *Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities, 2010 – 2017*.
  - C. Amendments to ‘Appendix 1: Settlements’ to incorporate zoning maps and development objectives for Fedamore and Montpelier as these Local Area Plans were revoked in September 2011.
  - D. Inclusion of the *Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities, 2010 – 2017*. This is contained in a new volume to the plan, Volume 6.
- **Variation number 2 to the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016, in relation to Neighbourhood Centres.**  
**On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government issued a direction pursuant to Section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This Plan reflects this Ministerial Direction issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 and amends section 10.6.4.3**

The variation consisted of an amendment to the written statement in respect of the Development Management Guidelines (Chapter 10, Section 10.6.4.3 – Neighbourhood and Local Convenience Shops)

- **Variation number 3 to the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016, which was adopted by the elected members on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015 comprised of the incorporation of the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary.**

- **Variation number 4 to the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016, to incorporate the preferred route of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road. This was NOT adopted by the elected members.**
- **Variation number 5 (a) to the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (as Extended) which was adopted by the elected members on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017, incorporated the preferred route corridor for the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) .**

**Variation number 5 (b) to the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (as Extended) which was adopted by the elected members on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017, incorporated the vacant site levy, as provided for in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015.**

Notice of decision not to commence the review of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016

Date: Thursday 23rd October 2014

In accordance with the provisions of section 28 of the Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Act 2013, a decision has been made not to commence the review of the Limerick County and Limerick City Development Plans 2010-2016. The Plans will therefore continue to have effect until a new Development Plan for Limerick City and County is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 11B of the Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended.



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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

This chapter sets out the background to the development of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 with regard to legal requirements, the profile of County Limerick and National, Regional and Local planning policies and guidance documents.

The County Development Plan is a six year development plan for the County that sets out, as concisely as possible Limerick County Council's planning policy for the County for that period (subject to any interim variations).

## **1.1 Introduction**

This County Development Plan sets out Limerick County Council's overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County to 2016 and beyond and has been formulated following a period of consultation on issues to be included in the Plan.

It builds on the review of the County Development Plan 2005-2011, taking into account recent key development trends and national, regional and local policy developments and the EU requirement to include the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment to certain plans and programmes.

The plan seeks to develop and improve, in a sustainable manner, the social, economic, cultural and environmental assets of the County.

## **1.2 Legal Status of the Plan**

The County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. Section 11(1) of the Act requires that the Planning Authority, not later than 4 years after the making of a development plan, is to prepare a new development plan for its area. A development plan is valid for a period of six years, subject to any review or variations made in the future.

The Development Plan has also had regard to the proposed provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 in regard to the Core Strategy (chapter 2).

The Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 require a new plan to set out an overall Strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County. It must also be consistent with National Plans, Strategies and Policies, be in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development and have regard to the Development Plans of adjoining Local Authorities. The plan must also include a number of mandatory objectives including those for:

- The zoning of land for the use of particular areas for particular purposes (whether residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, as open space or otherwise or a mixture of such uses) where and to such an extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires these uses to be indicated.
- Provision of infrastructure – transport, energy and communication facilities, water supplies, waste recovery and disposal facilities, waste water services, and ancillary facilities.
- The conservation and protection of the environment, including archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European Sites.
- The integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population.

- The preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.
- The protection of structures and preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas.
- The development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration.
- The provision of accommodation for travellers.
- The preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities, including: Areas of special amenity, Landscape conservation areas, Tree preservation orders, Public rights of ways.
- The control, having regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive, of siting of new establishments, modification of existing establishments, development in the vicinity of such establishments, for the purposes of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident.
- The provision of services for the community including schools, creches and other education and childcare facilities.

### 1.3 The review process

An issues paper entitled “*A guide to having your say in the preparation of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016, Issues Paper, February 2009*” was prepared prior to the commencement of the review of the County Development Plan.

In line with the Planning and Development Acts, the review of the previous plan commenced four years after it was adopted with the placing of a public notice announcing the Council’s intention to review the 2005 County Development Plan and inviting submissions and observations from members of the public, as well as statutory and official bodies and organisations. The pre-draft consultation stage commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and ran for eight weeks until 14<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

During the public consultation period the issues paper was made available with a number of public and stakeholder workshops held throughout the County to encourage people to make submissions and observations.

A total of 83 submissions were received within the statutory time period. A report on these submissions and observations (called the County Manager’s Report to members on pre- draft submissions) was submitted to the Councillors on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009. At a Council meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 the Councillors considered this Manager’s Report. This Draft Development Plan was prepared and presented to the Elected Members of the Council in October 2009. After appropriate consideration the Draft Plan was placed on public display for a period of 10 weeks. This ten week period of public consultation commenced in December 2009. The plan was available in certain public offices, libraries and on the internet at [www.lcc.ie](http://www.lcc.ie). Written submissions were invited. At the end of the public consultation period in February 2010 a Manager’s Report on any issues arising was prepared and submitted to the Members of the Council. Following consideration of the report, the Council decided to materially

amend the Draft County Development Plan, and a further period of four weeks public consultation on these material amendments took place in August 2010. A further report on submissions was then prepared for the Council who considered the Report and made the new County Development Plan, with the amendments.

#### **1.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process introduced in 2004 that runs in tandem with the policy formulation of the plan and assesses the potential effects of the implementation of the plan on the environment.

The SEA process has been carried out in tandem with the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan process, which is documented by the SEA statement that accompanies this document (refer to Volume 4). It is an objective of the Council to ensure that there is full compliance with the SEA directive as transposed into Irish Law by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004.

#### **1.5 Appropriate Assessment**

The preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, are essential objectives of general interest pursued by the European Union.

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) formed a basis for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). These sites are afforded protection because of their habitat type or the presence of important flora or fauna species. The aim of the Directive is to ensure the long term protection and conservation of the biodiversity within each site. Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPA) are legislated for under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds). Primarily the Directive seeks to protect wild bird species, both Annex 1 and regularly occurring migratory species through the conservation of their natural habitats.

Collectively, SACs and SPAs are referred to as Natura 2000 sites. In general terms they are considered to be of exceptional importance in terms of rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community. Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken for any plan or program that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site. In summary, an Appropriate Assessment is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Limerick County Council has undertaken both an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report of the effect of the implementation of the Plan on Natura 2000 sites and has also undertaken

Appropriate Assessments of specific objectives and policies of the plan as it evolved. . This process is documented by the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report that accompanies this plan (refer to volume 4).

## **1.6 How to Use this Plan**

The purpose of the Plan is to set a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over the relevant period. The format, layout and content of the plan have been guided by the DEHLG publication ‘Development Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, 2007.

The plan is presented in 4 volumes as follows:

Volume 1: Written Statement

Volume 2: Maps

Volume 3: Record of Protected Structures

Volume 4: Strategic Environmental Assessment & Appropriate Assessment

## **1.7 County Profile**

### **1.7.1 Planning Area**

The entire Development Plan Area covers approximately 2,590 square kilometres and includes the Electoral Areas of Adare, Castleconnell, Kilmallock, Rathkeale and Newcastle West. Counties Clare, Tipperary North Riding and Limerick City border County Limerick to the north, Tipperary South Riding in the east, Cork in the south and Kerry borders the County in the west.

County Limerick is relatively flat apart from the Mullaghareirk, Ballyhoura and Slieve Felim mountain ranges located to the west, south-east and north east respectively. The Shannon and its tributaries, the Mulcair, the Maigue and the Deel drain the greater part of the County and the northern part of the County borders the Shannon Estuary.

### **1.7.2 Limerick City and County Boundary Alteration**

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government made an order effective from 1 March 2008 extending the boundary of Limerick City. The area transferred under Statutory Instrument No. 53 of 2008 (“Limerick City Boundary Alteration Order 2008”) is the Limerick North Rural Electoral Division, centred on Caherdavin, which has a population of 7,251 (Census 2006). This area is the wedge-shaped part of Limerick County Council which is west of the city and north of the Shannon, which includes the suburbs of Caherdavin, Moyross and outlying agricultural land and settlements. There are 9 townlands in this area: Ballygrennan, Caherdavin, Clonconane, Clondrinagh, Clonmacken, Coonagh East, Coonagh West, Knock and Shannabooly.



As these boundary changes only came into affect from March 2008 and most of the data collated for this plan stems from the Census 2006, the analysis presented in this plan refers to the previous demarcation of County Limerick and thereby includes the ED of Limerick North Rural wherever reference is made to Limerick County unless otherwise stated.

### 1.7.3 Population change

Ireland's population increased by 8.2% from 2002 to 2006, giving a total population of 4,239,848 in 2006. This intercensal growth is the highest on record and has resulted from both natural increase and significant net inward migration. Migration has been the dominant influence on the pattern of population change over the eighty-year period from 1926 to 2006 with inward migration being the main contributor for the recent significant population growth in Ireland.

### 1.7.4 County Limerick Population Change

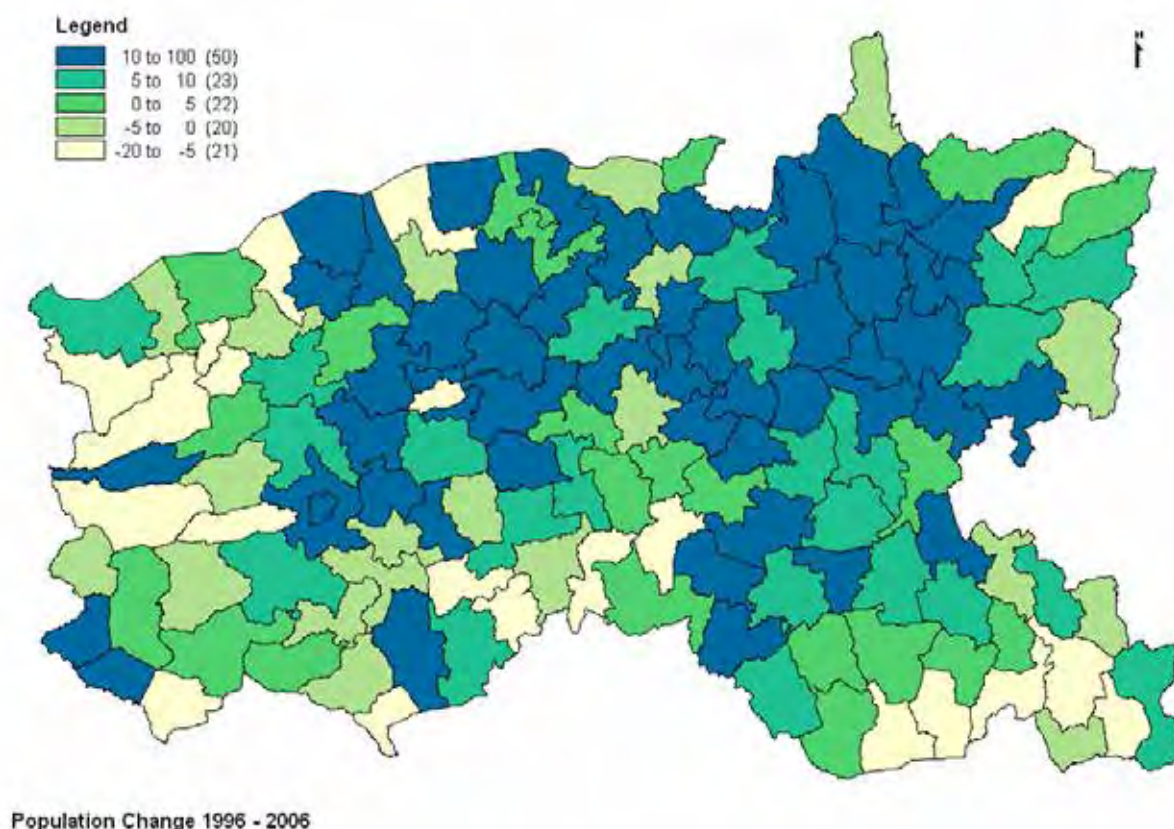
Table 1.1 below outlines population change for Limerick County (including the area subject to the boundary extension) between 1996 and 2006 and compares this to the performance of the Mid West Region and Ireland.

<b>Table 1.1: Analysis of Population Change for Limerick County, Mid West Region and the State from 1996 to 2006</b>							
Area	1996	2002	2006	Change 1996-2006	% Change 1996-2002	% Change 2002-2006	% Change 1996-2006
Clare	94,006	103,277	110,950	16,944	9.86	7.43	18.02
Limerick City	52,039	54,023	52,539	500	3.81	-2.75	0.96
<b>Limerick County</b>	<b>113,003</b>	<b>121,281</b>	<b>131,516</b>	<b>18,513</b>	<b>7.33</b>	<b>8.44</b>	<b>16.38</b>
North Tipperary	58,021	61,010	66,023	8,002	5.15	8.22	13.79
Mid-West Region	317,069	339,591	361,028	43,959	7.10	6.31	13.86
State	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848	613,761	8.03	8.24	16.93

(Source: Census of Ireland 1996, 2002 and 2006)

Based on the CSO Census of Ireland the population of County Limerick in 2006 was 131,516. This represents an actual increase of 18,513 since the 1996 Census, which equates to approximately a 16% increase over this 10-year timeframe. This percentage increase parallels that of the State which was almost 17% from 1996 to 2006. The rate of growth for the Mid West Region over the time period was just under 14% which is slightly less than that of Limerick County.

The County of Limerick is divided into 135 Electoral Districts (EDs) (excluding Limerick North Rural). The majority of these EDs have experienced a growth in population between 1996 and 2006. Map 1.1 illustrates the population percentage change for all of the EDs over the 10-year timeframe.



**Map 1.1: Percentage Population Change by Electoral Division, 1996 – 2006**

Table 1.2 sets out the change in population from 1996 to 2006 of the County's major urban settlement centres, the majority of which have a Local Area Plan (LAP) prepared. Over half of the settlement centres experienced population growth, with most of this growth being of double-digit figures.

An examination of the spatial distribution of population growth in County Limerick shows population growth in the City Environs, Key Towns and also in some of the centres on transport corridors distributed across the County. Population growth in the settlements is welcomed as such growth is an essential requirement in addressing balanced regional development, particularly for the more remote areas of the County. It is also notable that a number of towns across the County, including towns on transport corridors in close proximity to the City have experienced population decline during a period of exceptional population growth nationally, regionally and in County

Limerick. This shows a lost opportunity for these towns in terms of achieving critical mass of population and the associated benefits in this regard.

40 ED's out of a total of 135 ED's in County Limerick experienced a population decline in the ten year period 1996 – 2006. Of the ED's experiencing a population increase, 50 of these ED's experienced population growth of 10% or more over the 1996-2006 period and 29 ED's experienced population growth of 10% or more over the 4 year period between 2002 – 2006.

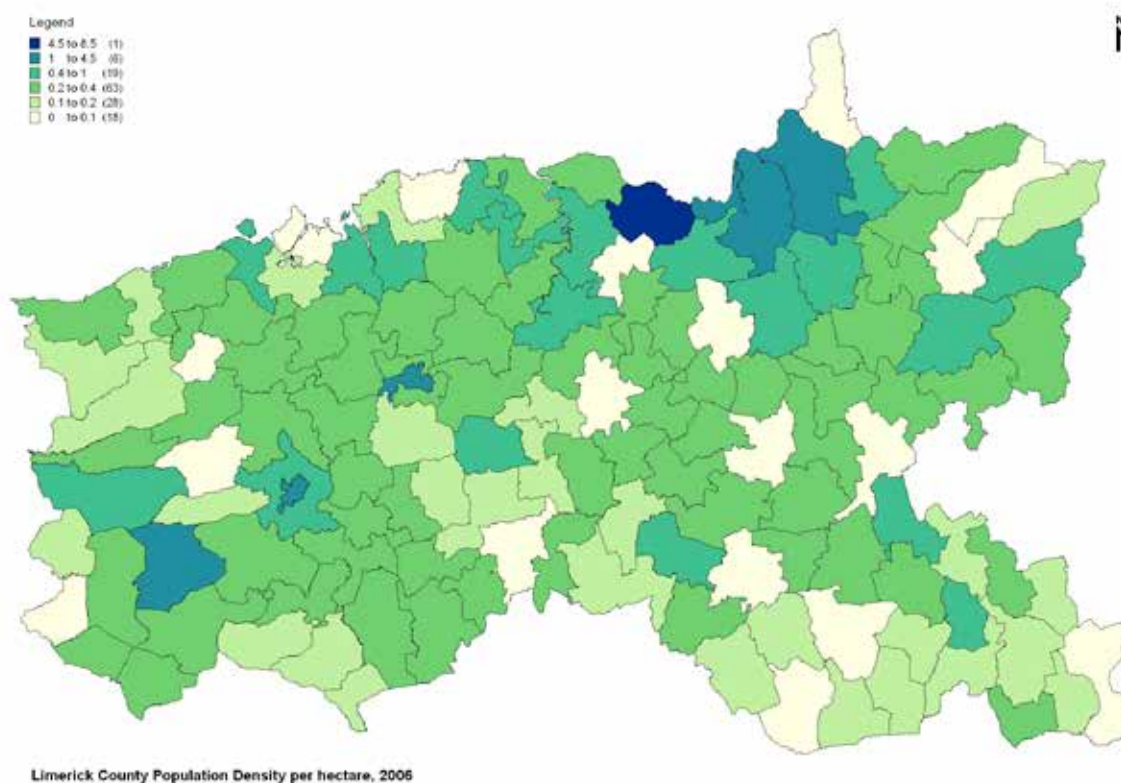
**Table 1.2: Population change in main towns, 1996 – 2006**

<b>Population Change in main towns</b>					
	Pop 1996	Pop 2002	Pop 2006	% change 1996 – 2006	Population '06 as a % of County total
<b>County Limerick</b>	113,003	121,281	131,516	16.38	
<b>Settlement</b>					
Southern Environs	10283	13925	16000	55.60	12.17
Castletroy	7000	8979	10601	51.44	8.06
Newcastle West	3618	4017	5098	40.91	3.88
Abbeyfeale	1486	1683	1940	30.55	1.48
Rathkeale	1546	1362	1494	-3.36	1.14
Kilmallock	1231	1362	1443	17.22	1.10
Castleconnell	1414	1343	1330	-5.94	1.01
Croom	1009	1056	1045	3.57	0.79
Adare	1042	1102	982	-5.76	0.75
Askeaton	851	921	979	15.04	0.74
Patrickswell	1022	998	924	-9.59	0.70
Kilfinnane	766	779	727	-5.09	0.55
Bruff	700	695	724	3.43	0.55
Caherconlish	636	616	700	10.06	0.53
Cappamore	665	684	669	0.60	0.51
Hospital	723	621	628	-13.14	0.48
Foynes	558	491	606	8.6	0.46
Montpelier (including O'Briens Bridge)	409	375	378	-7.58	0.29
Fedamore	200	203	215	7.50	0.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>35159</b>	<b>41212</b>	<b>46483</b>		<b>35.34</b>

### 1.7.5 Population Density

In 2006 the population density in County Limerick was exactly 48.0 persons per square kilometre (sq.km), which was an increase on both the 2002 and 1996 density figures of 44.3 and 41.2, respectively. The most densely populated EDs in 2006 were

Ballycummin, with a density of 804.3 persons per sq.km, Limerick North Rural, with 507.4 persons per sq.km, Ballysimon, with 370.1 persons per sq.km, Templeglantine, with 266.0 persons per sq.km and Newcastle Urban, with 240.2 persons per sq.km. The lowest ED densities in 2006 were Kilbeheny, with 9.9 persons per sq.km, Dunmoylan West, with 9.8 persons per sq.km, Aughinish, with 9.7 persons per sq.km, Doon West, with 9.3 persons per sq.km and Particles, with 7.8 persons per sq.km. Map 1.2 illustrates the population density per hectare for all of the County's EDs in 2006.



**Map 1.2: Population Density per hectare, 2006**

The general points to note from tables 1.1 and 1.2 are that much of the County has performed well in terms of population growth over the period 1996 to 2006, and that the increases in most urban areas are, in general, considerably greater than the decrease experienced in the minority of urban areas. An analysis of the current populations and rates of growth in the settlements indicates that the City Environs have experienced the greatest level of growth. Newcastle West has shown a considerable increase while Abbeyfeale and Kilmallock have shown a modest growth and Rathkeale has performed poorly in comparison to national growth levels in the 1996 – 2006 inter-census periods.

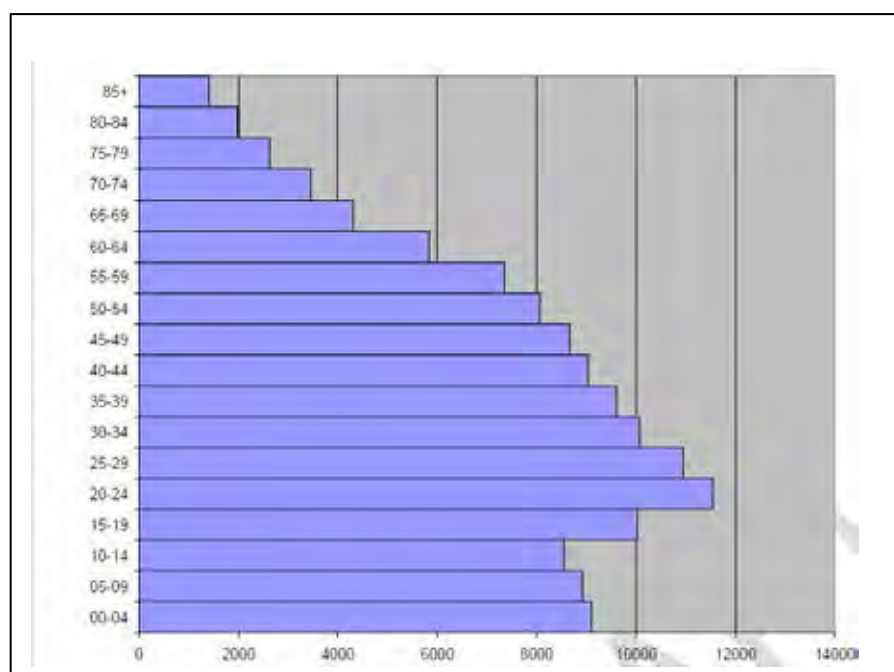
### 1.7.6 Settlement Growth

The 2005 Limerick County Development Plan identified a total of 58 settlements. These settlements are smaller rural towns and villages for which no local area plans have been prepared and for which settlement boundaries were identified in the 2005 County Development Plan. An analysis of Geodirectory statistics shows the addition of new residential properties in many of the identified settlements. The growth of the identified settlements acts as a positive alternative to ‘one off’ housing in the countryside whilst also assisting in achieving more balanced regional development. Such growth is integral to sustaining established rural communities. Policies to promote development and economic activity in smaller towns and villages have been put forward in Chapter 3 of this plan to promote the continued sustainable growth of rural areas. However, it is important to ensure that the growth of these villages is not so rapid as to be to their detriment and that any such growth should occur at a scale appropriate to each settlement.

### 1.7.7 Age Structures

As can be seen from Graph 1.1 and table 1.3 County Limerick has a relatively youthful population with a distinct ‘bulge’ in the 15-35 year cohorts.

**Graph 1.1: Population of County Limerick by Age Cohort in 2006 (Source: CSO, Census of Population, 2006)**





### 1.7.8 Age Dependency ratio

Age dependency ratio can be defined as the ratio of the combined child population (0-14 years) and the aged population (65 years and over) - persons in the "dependent" ages – to every 100 people of the intermediate age population (15-65 years) - "economically active" ages. The age-dependency ratio can be used as an indicator of the economic burden the productive portion of a population must carry – even though some persons defined as "dependent" are producers and some persons in the "productive" ages are economically dependent.

<b>Table 1.3: Limerick County Age Dependency Ratio</b>	
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Persons</b>
0-14	26,572
15-64	91,173
65+	13,771
“Dependent Age”	40,343
Intermediate Age	91,173
<b>Age Dependency Ratio</b>	<b>44.25%</b>

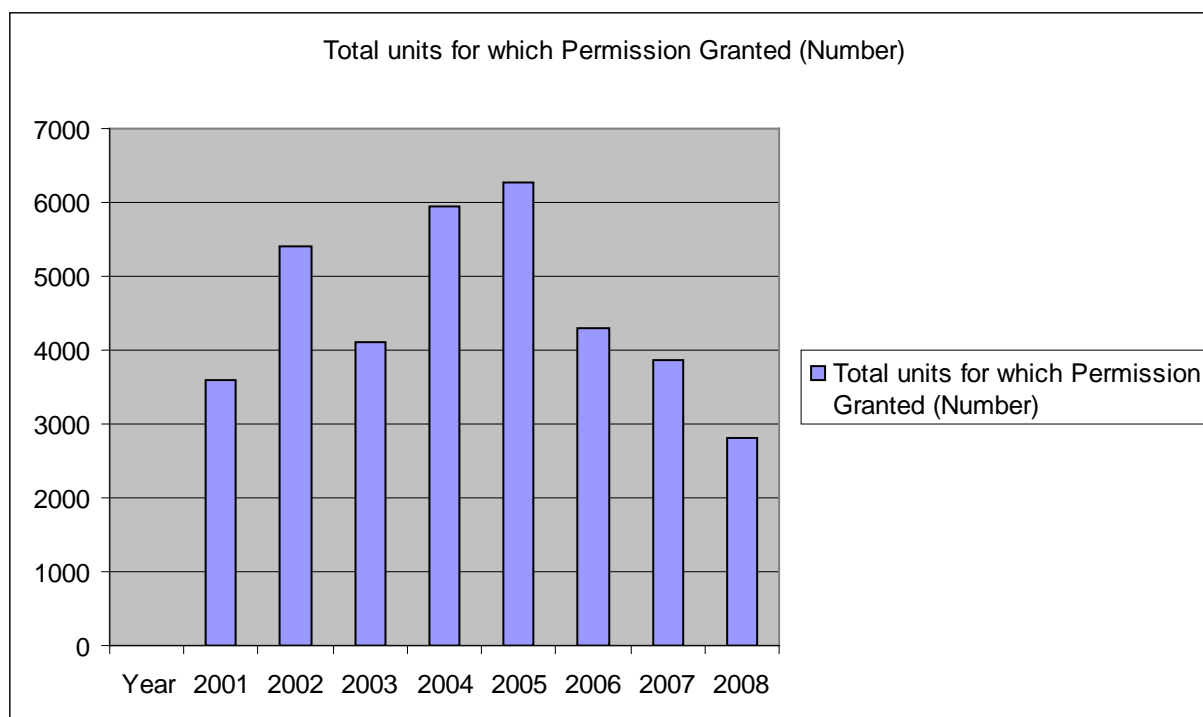
### 1.7.9 Household size

Average household size in the Mid West Region in 2006 was 2.87 persons. Household size in Ireland has been decreasing and this trend is expected to continue. The National Spatial Strategy indicates that average household size nationally will have fallen to 2.63 by the year 2011. The projected household size of County Limerick in 2022 is estimated to be approximately 2.6 persons.

This trend towards smaller households is an important factor when estimating the number of new houses that will be necessary to accommodate the projected future population of the County.

### 1.7.10 Trends in planning permissions

Graph 2.2 below indicates the total number of residential units of all types granted in County Limerick per year from 2001 – 2008. The graph demonstrates that from a peak in 2005 when over 6,000 residential units were granted in that year, there has been a steady decline in the number of units granted from 2006 to 2008.



**Graph 1.2: Total number of residential units granted in County Limerick per year 2001 – 2008. Source: Central Statistics Office**

### 1.7.11 Economic Growth

Following a sustained period of unprecedented economic growth nationally and in County Limerick, there has been a sharp downturn in the performance of the national economy within the last year, as part of a global ‘credit crunch’. An important consequence of the economic downturn is rising unemployment. In the Mid-West Region, in July 2009 the number of people on the live register in Limerick (City and County) according to the CSO Live Register Analysis was 21,791, which was nearly double the equivalent in July 2008, (11,448).

<b>Table 1.4 Number of persons on Live Register - yearly average 2006 – 2008</b>							
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>% increase 06-07</b>	<b>% increase 07-08</b>	<b>% increase 08-09</b>
Limerick (Total City & County)	7312	7585	10,906	18,394*	3.74	43.78	68.7
* Average figures for Jan – June							

The Mid-West Region and County Limerick are particularly vulnerable to the economic downturn in a number of ways. County Limerick relies on manufacturing to a significantly greater extent than the national average: 19% of the workforce was employed in manufacturing compared to 12.6% nationally (CSO 2006). Secondly, the County shared in the national property boom. In 2006, 11.3% of the active workforce

was employed in construction. Thirdly in the rural areas there has been extensive transformation of agriculture and the food industry. The number of farms in County Limerick fell between 1991 and 2002 by 16% (Source: West Limerick Resources).

### **1.7.12 Commentary on Growth and Development of County Limerick**

The exceptional growth which occurred in County Limerick over the 1996 to 2006 period has resulted in significant demand for development over that period and has seen the County population increase considerably. However, this general increase has not occurred in all parts of the County. The strong growth has tended to concentrate on the Limerick City Environs area and within and around the Key Town of Newcastle West as well as the villages and rural areas within easy commuting distance of Limerick City and environs. In parts of the County many rural areas surrounding towns have also experienced growth whilst the towns themselves have experienced population stagnation or decline. Furthermore, some of the more remote Electoral Divisions have experienced population stagnation or decline between the 1996 – 2006 and the 2002 – 2006 census periods.

In relation to economic growth, there is a need to encourage and facilitate appropriately scaled and located development which can contribute to the economic development of the County so that County Limerick can act as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism encouraging employment growth and economic activity.

## **1.8 Context for the preparation of the plan**

### **1.8.1 National and Regional Context**

Local Authorities, in preparing development plans have a statutory requirement to take account of Government policies and planning guidelines prepared by the Regional Authorities. A summary of the provisions of the relevant guidelines and policy documents are outlined below.

#### **1.8.1.1 National Development Plan**

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 sets out a programme of integrated investments aimed at underpinning Ireland's ability to grow in a manner that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

To complement the emergent Dublin-Belfast corridor, the Government's investment strategy identifies the Atlantic Road Corridor and the Western Rail Corridor between the Gateways of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford and onwards to other gateways such as Sligo and Letterkenny-Derry. The Atlantic Gateways of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford have much initial potential through strengthened individual cities, enhanced connectivity and a collaborative approach to planning and promotion, to develop a second major metropolitan corridor on the island of Ireland.

The NDP recognises the Limerick Gateway's potential as the economic core of the Mid West Region and puts forward priority investments to facilitate future growth.

### 1.8.1.2 National Spatial Strategy

In developing a settlement strategy for County Limerick the guiding framework has been Government policy at national level in the form of the *National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020* (NSS). The NSS provides a planning framework on delivering a more balanced social, economic and physical development between the regions of Ireland. The strategy emphasizes the critical role of 'Gateways' and 'Hubs' in achieving balanced regional development and designates Limerick and Shannon as a linked Gateway.

Some of the key aspects of the National Spatial Strategy which have influenced the settlement structure are:

- the spatial structure set out in the strategy in relation to the Mid-West region including the designation of the Limerick/Shannon ***Gateway***;
- complementary role of other towns and villages;
- the role of linkages in terms of good transport, communications and energy networks;
- distinction between rural generated housing and urban generated housing;
- suggested range of policy responses for different rural areas; and
- the spatial planning framework to support sustainable rural settlement.

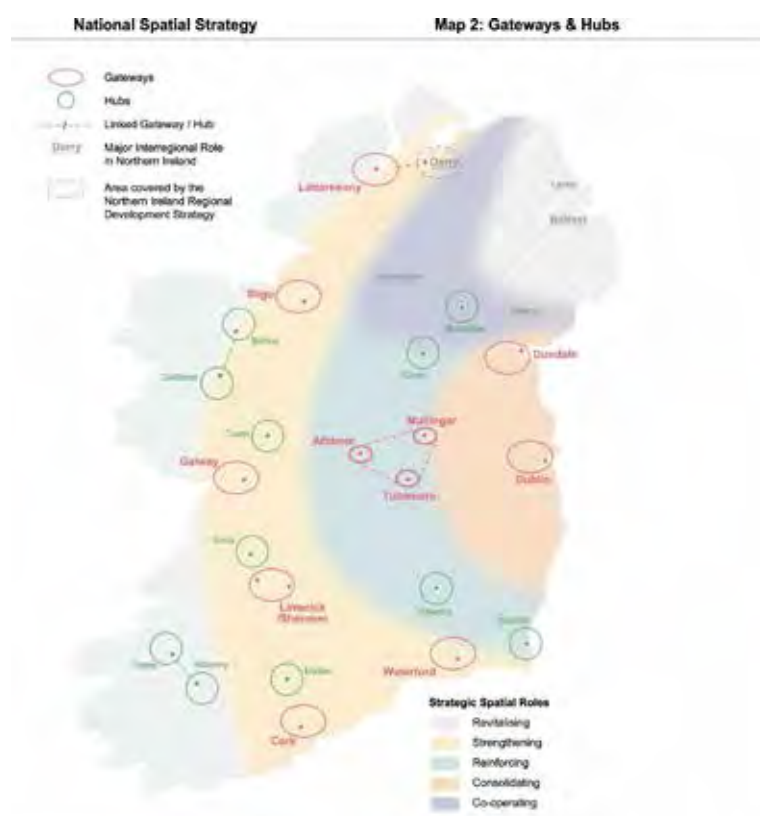
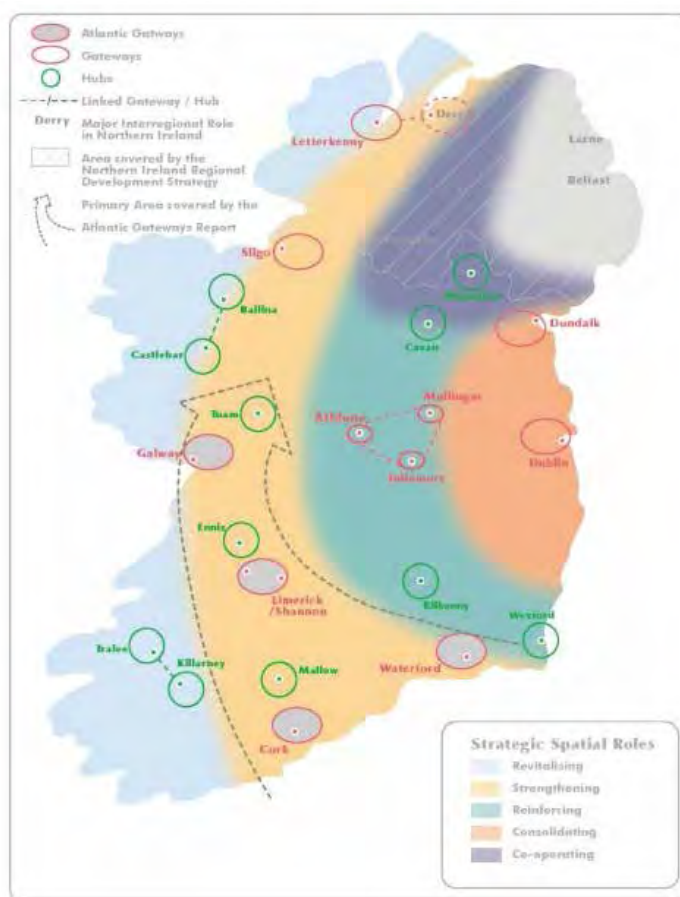


Figure 1.1: Limerick: National & Regional Context

### 1.8.1.3 The Atlantic Gateways Initiative – Achieving Critical Mass, September 2006 Framework Plan

The NSS emphasises that the rapid growth of the main cities and surrounding regions of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford points to their potential role in driving the development of their hinterlands and their combined potential to provide a strong counterbalance to Dublin capable of acting at the national and international levels, both individually and collectively. The Atlantic Gateways Initiative aims to coordinate and focus development and infrastructure in the corridor linking the Gateway Cities of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway together with the ‘hub’ towns in the region to develop the critical mass of population to compete with the Greater Dublin Region for future investment and to deliver an appropriate balance on the delivery of jobs, services and infrastructure.

Figure 1.2: The NSS & the Atlantic Gateways



#### 1.8.1.4 Mid West Region Regional Strategy & Regional Planning Guidelines May 2004

The national planning framework put forward in the NSS has been provided for at Regional level through the Midwest Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 (MWRPGs) which refer to Limerick City and County and Counties North Tipperary and Clare. The MWRPG's provide a regional framework for the formulation of the policies and strategy in the County Development Plan and seek to ensure the proper balance between the different settlements in the region with regard to development, population and services. This regional guidance influences the development of the settlement strategy in County Limerick. The MWRPG's identifies a 'Zone' based strategy for the Mid West Region which identifies distinct characteristics of different areas within the region and identifies nine different zones (Zone 1 – Zone 9). The MWRPG's propose that the identified zones be developed in ways that reflect their particular characteristics and outlines the development potential and development needs of the various zones in the region.



Fig. 1.3: Limerick - Regional Context

The MWRPG's also put forward population projections for the region and for each of the Counties within the region. The 2004 MWRPG's are currently under review and 'Population Targets' for the region and each County are determined having regard to 2009 'population targets' issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG).

The MWRPG ‘Zones’ which relate to County Limerick are outlined below along with a brief detail as outlined in the 2004 MWRPGs. It should be noted that some of the zones also include areas within the region which are outside of Limerick County and zones 3 and 4 are also outside County Limerick:

‘Zone 1: Limerick / Ennis / Shannon’: This is the core area of the Mid West Region, which has a high level of population growth, good internal and external accessibility, a large range of social and community facilities, and a strong settlement structure. The total population of this Zone in 2006 was 185,895.

‘Zone 2: Outer core area’: This is the Zone 1 hinterland area which exhibits many of the characteristics of Zone 1, but which will rely on transport access to avail of the facilities within Zone 1.

‘Zone 5: West Limerick’: This Zone contains the Key Town of Newcastle West. The guidelines note that this area must be considered in the context of Listowel and Charleville as well as the towns that lie within the Mid West Region demonstrating population decline, a poor settlement structure, limited accessibility and a modest level of social and community services. It is also in a mixed situation with regard to resources with medium quality agricultural land but with the potential of the Shannon Estuary available to it. The population of this zone in 2006 was 34,572.

‘Zone 9: South Limerick’: This Zone contains the Key Town of Kilmallock. This area is influenced by the neighbouring towns of Charleville and Mitchelstown as well as the towns that lie within the Mid West Region. With land of moderate agricultural quality, it has considerable tourism potential. In 2006 this zone had a total population of 16,810.

The Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA), which includes all Local Authorities in the region, are preparing a review of the Regional Economic Strategy and Planning Guidelines in tandem with this review of the Limerick County Development Plan and of the review of the Development Plans of the other Local Authorities in the Region, namely Limerick City and Counties Clare and Tipperary. The Government’s strategy ‘Building a Smart Economy’, 2008; regional population targets by the DEHLG in August 2009; and a pilot Forfás draft Regional Competitiveness Agenda (RCA) presented to the MWRA in February 2009 are three important inputs into the regional strategy review. In addition, the Mid West Regional Authority and the four Local Authorities within the region are committed to the preparation of a long- term strategic land use and transportation plan for the region, the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP), and this will feed into the regional planning guidelines and the County Development plan review. Other initiatives in the County are the establishment of a Jobs Task Force, a joint City/County Economic Development Committee, and a new Enterprise company to help small businesses find affordable sites.



### **1.8.1.5 Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP)**

A strategic Planning, Land Use and Transportation Strategy for the Mid-West region is currently being developed which shall include the County Council's of Limerick, North Tipperary and Clare and Limerick City Council. MWASP will provide for a comprehensive integrated plan for Land Use Planning and Transportation in the Mid-West Region over the next 30 years.

### **1.8.1.6 Retail Strategy**

A Retail Strategy for Limerick City and Counties Limerick and Clare has been prepared to cover the period 2010-2016. This strategy replaces the two previous strategies applying to the County: namely the Mid-West Retail strategy 2002-2011 and the County Limerick Retail Strategy 2003.

### **1.8.1.7 Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities 2010 - 2017**

Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 places an onus on all Local Authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy for their areas. The Housing Strategy provides for housing for the existing and projected future populations of the development plan area in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and aims to provide an equitable level of social and affordable housing. Limerick County Council, Limerick City Council and Clare County Council have prepared a Joint Housing Strategy for the period 2010-2017. This strategy replaces the existing housing strategies for the relevant local authorities. The Planning Authority must ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned to meet the requirements of the Housing Strategy and that a scarcity of such land does not occur at any time during the period of the Plan.

### **1.8.1.8 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary.**

The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary is an inter jurisdictional land and marine based framework plan to guide future development and management of the estuary. It was commissioned by Clare County Council, Kerry County Council and Limerick City and County Councils, Shannon Development and the Shannon Foynes Port Company - see Volume 7.

### **1.8.1.9 National Planning Guidelines**

Planning Authorities are required to have regard to any guidelines issued by the Minister. Accordingly, in setting out policies and objectives this plan has considered, inter alia, the following guidelines

- *Appropriate Assessment- Circular letter*
- *Architectural Heritage Protection*
- *Architectural Heritage Protection for places of worship*
- *Best Practice Urban Design Manual*

- *Childcare Facilities guidelines*
- *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities and associated Guidelines Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities DEHLG 2007*
- *Design Standards for new apartments*
- *Development Management guidelines*
- *Development Plan Guidelines*
- *Funfair Guidance*
- *Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines- Best Practice Guidance*
- *Landscape and Landscape assessment*
- *Provision of Schools & the Planning system*
- *Quarries & Ancillary Activities*
- *Retail Planning Guidelines*
- *Rural Housing policies and local need criteria in Development Plans- Circular letter*
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines*
- *Sustainable Rural Housing*
- *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas May 2009*
- *Taking in charge of Residential developments Circular letter*
- *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures*
- *The Planning system and Flood Risk Management- Guidelines*
- *Regional Planning Guidelines- Population targets 2010-2022 – Circular letter*
- *Wind Energy Development.*

#### **1.8.1.10 Other policy documents:**

In addition to the documents referred to above, where relevant, the Council will have regard to the policies, projects and guidelines of other plans and guidelines. These include:

- *Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland 1997(DEHLG)*
- *Mid-West Regional Recreational Strategy*
- *Shannon Region Tourism Strategy 2008-2010: Shannon Development Company and Shannon Regional Tourism board.*
- *Traffic Management Guidelines, 2003 Dept of Environment (DEHLG), Dept of Transport (DoT), Dublin Transportation Office (DTO)*
- *Transport 21: Department of Transport (DoT) 2006-2015 ( this applies only to major infrastructure projects)*
- *The Rural Transport Programme (Pobal, 2007)*
- *Development Management and Access to National Roads (NRA, 1985)*
- *Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020, (DoT).*
- *Economic, Social and Cultural Analysis of Limerick (2009): KSA on behalf of Limerick County Development Board.*
- *Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012: Road Safety Authority*

Strategies and Guidelines that are currently pending and likely to be completed during the lifetime of this Development Plan are as follows. The Planning Authority will also seek to comply with these guidelines:

- *Spatial Planning and National Roads- Guidelines for Planning Authorities (currently at Draft stage): DEHLG, DOT, and NRA 2009.*
- *'A Design Manual for Streets' soon to be prepared by the DoT.*
- *A revised edition of 'Site Development Works for Housing Areas' DEHLG, to be prepared later this year.*
- *Mid-West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022*
- *Draft Atlantic Gateway Corridor Framework.*

### **1.8.2 Local context**

The documents below which relate to County Limerick have also been taken into consideration in the preparation of this Plan.

#### **1.8.2.1 County Development Board Strategy**

The County Development Board sets out a strategy for the co-ordinated development of the County and reviews its implementation every two years. The current strategy is the strategy for economic, social and cultural development, 2002-2011 and is entitled 'Working Together for a Better Future'. The two priority themes under which it will work are 'Balanced Geographical Development' and 'Quality of Life' the latter of which includes as two of its sub-themes, a thriving economy and the creation of a more equal society.

#### **1.8.2.2 Adjoining Local Authorities' Development Plans**

In preparing the Draft Limerick County Development Plan, regard has been had, as required in the Planning and Development Acts, to the development plans of adjoining planning authorities.

#### **1.8.2.3 Local Area Plans**

The Planning and Development Act 2000 introduced a tiered and plan led system, cascading from national strategies to Local Area Plans (LAP's). The development plan transposes national and regional policies and sets the strategic context for LAP's.

Although the County Development Plan will guide development of the whole County, more detailed *Local Area Plans* have been prepared for the districts in the Limerick City Environs and a number of towns and villages within the County. These plans are supplementary to the County Development Plan and contain more specific land use and zoning information for the City districts, towns and villages. The following Local Area Plans have been adopted to date by the Planning Authority:

- Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2008
- Adare Local Area Plan 2009
- Askeaton Local Area Plan 2009
- Bruff Local Area Plan 2006

- Caherconlish Local Area Plan 2008
- Cappamore Local Area Plan 2005
- Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2007
- Castletroy Local Area Plan 2009
- Croom Local Area Plan 2009
- Hospital Local Area Plan 2006
- Kilfinane Local Area Plan 2007
- Kilmallock Local Area Plan 2009
- Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2008
- Patrickswell Local Area Plan 2009
- Rathkeale Local Area Plan 2007
- Southern Environs Development Plan 2005.

#### **1.8.2.4 Village Design Statements**

Village Design Statements (VDS) act as a local development framework for towns and villages by identifying how new development should be carried out so that it is in harmony with its setting and makes a positive contribution to the local environment. The contents of these plans will serve to inform planning policy and decisions in relation to development proposals in these villages.

To date VDS's have been prepared for the villages of Murroe and Athea. It is proposed to prepare VDS's for the remaining towns and villages within Tier 4 of the Settlement Strategy which have no LAP (refer to Chapter 3 of this plan). It is envisaged that these VDS's will be prepared either by the County Council or local communities in partnership with the County Council.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Core Strategy**

This Chapter sets out the Core Strategy behind the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016. The content of the Core Strategy is influenced by the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010. The Core Strategy provides the following information:

- Outlines compliance with guidelines regarding population targets issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Mid West Regional Authority;
- Details of residential land availability;
- Details of the proposed Urban Settlement Hierarchy;
- A vision and core policies that form the basis of this plan.

## 2.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets out the *Core Strategy*, the elements of which are set out in the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010. The *Core Strategy* outlines the overall framework within which objectives and policies throughout this plan have been conceived. The Core Strategy also identifies an overall vision for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County that will form the basis of this Development Plan.

## 2.2 Statutory Context and Background

In July 2010, the Government enacted the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2010, with Section 7 of the Act commenced in October 2010, which requires Planning Authorities to include within their Development Plans a ‘Core Strategy’. The Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 which was adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 and came into effect on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 included a core strategy in chapter 2. Since then the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government have published a ‘*Guidance Note on Core Strategies*’. In order to expand upon the Core Strategy contained within the Limerick County Development Plan to fully comply with the legislative requirements the plan was varied in December 2011.

The Act requires a Core Strategy to include details setting out the settlement hierarchy, population/housing targets for towns, rural settlement strategy, retail objectives and transport linkages. The Development Plan is required to set out existing zoning for residential and mixed uses, indicating the area in hectares and the proposed number of housing units and the new areas zoned as a result of the development plan process, including how these accord with national policy that development shall take place on a phased basis.

The Act also requires the core strategy to include a diagrammatic map showing roads, rail routes and rural areas designated in accordance with the *Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. This map is included at the end of this chapter. Details in relation to roads and rail routes within the County are outlined in *Chapter 8: Transport and Infrastructure*. Details in relation to rural areas designated in accordance with the *Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* are set out in *Chapter 3: Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy*.

## 2.3 National and Regional Strategic Context

Chapter one of this plan outlines the relevant plans at National and Regional level which influence the preparation of the Limerick County Development Plan. In summary, the key policies of National and Regional Planning Guidelines which influence the policies contained in the plan and with which the plan is consistent are as follows:

- Designation of a hierarchy of urban settlements for appropriately scaled development in order to achieve the critical mass to provide a range of facilities and services to the catchment population.

- Promotion of the Limerick / Shannon Gateway as the prime location for development to accommodate population growth to act as a key driver of the Mid West Region.
- Provide for population growth having regard to population targets for County Limerick allocated by the Mid West Regional Guidelines 2010-2022 and distributed having regard to the urban settlement hierarchy.
- Designation of Newcastle West and Kilmallock as ‘Key Towns’ for population growth.
- Provision of sufficient zoned land to accommodate population targets and associated development in a sustainable manner.
- Promotion of linkages as a means of moving people, goods, energy and information throughout the region.
- Designation of sustainable rural development objectives.
- Inclusion of policies proposing compliance with the recommendations of the *Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities, 2010 – 2017*.

## 2.4 Settlement Strategy

Strong settlements are the mainstay of a strong region. Vibrant and viable settlements that provide a range of jobs, services and housing choice not only provide the basis of strong economies and communities, but also support a greater range of sustainable modes of transport, both within and between settlements. The development of a range of settlements that work together to the benefit of the County and all its inhabitants, including those in rural areas can only occur in a planned way. The main tool of achieving this is a settlement strategy. A settlement strategy is the backbone of any development strategy that enables the sustainable development of towns, villages and rural areas.

In developing a settlement strategy for County Limerick the guiding framework is based on Government policy at national level in the form of the *National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020* (NSS). The NSS provides a planning framework on delivering a more balanced social, economic and physical development between the regions of Ireland. The strategy emphasizes the critical role of ‘Gateways’ and ‘Hubs’ in achieving balanced regional development, and the Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 which give effect to national policies at a regional level.

Some of the key aspects of the National Spatial Strategy and the Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines which have influenced the settlement structure are:

- The spatial structure set out in the strategy in relation to the Mid-West region including the designation of the Limerick/Shannon **Gateway**;
- The complementary role of other towns and villages;
- The role of linkages in terms of good transport, communications and energy networks;
- Distinction between rural generated housing and urban generated housing;
- Suggested range of policy responses for different rural areas; and
- The spatial planning framework to support sustainable rural settlement.

A settlement strategy for County Limerick is outlined in full in Chapter 3 of this plan which will act as a guide to the location and scale of new development.

## 2.5 Population Targets

The growth planned for in this Development Plan is based on population ‘targets’ provided by the DECLG for the Mid West Region which outline target populations which would be desirable for the Region to achieve up to 2016 and 2022 and which should be used as a guide for policy making. The Mid West Regional Authority (MWRA) has incorporated the population targets issued by the DECLG into the Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines (MWRPG) which were adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

The MWRA has allocated the Regional, Gateway and Hub population targets to each Planning Authority within the Region. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below set out the additional population up to 2016 and 2022 allocated by the MWRA to Limerick County, which comprises the Limerick Gateway, the service towns and the reminder of zones 4 and 8 in the County.

<b>Table 2.1 2016 Targets</b>					
<b>Zone &amp; Gateway / service town</b>	<b>Census 2006</b>	<b>Service Towns additional pop 2016</b>	<b>Gateway &amp; Rest Z1 additional pop 2016</b>	<b>Other additional pop 2016</b>	<b>Total pop 2016</b>
<b>Z1 (Limerick County)</b>	72,835		15,006		87,841
<b>W Limerick 4 (Newcastlewest)</b>	34,571	3,019		2,494	40,084
<b>East Limerick 8 (Kilmallock)</b>	16,859	1,050		1,247	19,156
<b>Total</b>	124,265	4,069		3,741	147,081

<b>Table 2.2 2022 Targets</b>						
<b>Zone &amp; Gateway / service town</b>	<b>Census 2006</b>	<b>Service Towns additional pop 2022</b>	<b>Gateway additional pop 2022</b>	<b>Rest Z1 additional pop 2022</b>	<b>Other additional pop 2022</b>	<b>Total pop 2022</b>
<b>Z1 (Limerick County)</b>	72,835		9,000	10,500		92,335
<b>W Limerick 4 (Newcastlewest)</b>	34,571	4,600			4,741	43,912
<b>East Limerick 8 (Kilmallock)</b>	16,859	1,600			2,359	20,818
<b>Total</b>	124,265	6,200			7,108	157,065



## 2.6 Core Strategy

As outlined above the settlement hierarchy outlined in Chapter 3 reflects the importance of each settlement within County Limerick in terms of existing scale and envisaged growth having regard to the population targets. The population targets provided for in the MWRPG have been distributed throughout the County based on the settlement hierarchy and the need to direct growth into the Gateway, key towns and other urban settlements. The MWRPG indicate that precisely how overall population figures are allocated within each local authority area will generally be a matter for the local authority, though it should have regard to the general approach of the MWRPG's.

The core strategy tables below show each tier in the settlement hierarchy and outline the population in 2006 (CSO 2006) of each of the larger urban settlements for which local area plans or zoning maps have been prepared. In smaller towns and villages where there are no zoning objectives the aggregate population for each tier in the hierarchy is given. Aggregated figures are also given for Tier 6 – small settlements and the open countryside. The tables also outline the population targets having regard to the population targets outlined in tables 2.1 and 2.2 above, the amount of zoned land required and available to meet demand for housing units as a result of the population targets and where relevant, any surplus or shortfall of zoned land. These tables have been prepared having regard to the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, section 10(2A) and the content of the DECLG '*Guidance Note on Core Strategies*', November 2010.

The Gateway and key towns have been allocated their population growth in the MWRPG and these have been incorporated into the core strategy. The remaining areas have been allocated their 2022 population target having regard to their position in the settlement hierarchy, population in the 2006 census, spatial distribution within the County, size, role and function of the settlement and the potential for future growth.

The MWRPG have allocated 17,602 housing units to accommodate population growth in County Limerick up to 2022. These housing units have been allocated to the settlements in the hierarchy using the same percentage of total as the 2022 additional population allocation for the county (32,800). For example, the additional population allocated to the Southern Environs of 5400 people represents 16.46% of the total 32800 population target for County Limerick. Therefore 16.46% of the 17602 total housing units will be provided for in the Southern Environs. This figure has been used to calculate the housing land requirement. The housing land requirement has included allocating 20% of housing units as serviced sites in settlements outside of the City Environs at a density of 10 units per hectare in accordance with the guidance in this regard contained in '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*'. A density of 22 units per hectare has been applied for the remaining 80% of units outside of the City Environs and Newcastle West. Within the City Environs and Newcastle West a density of 35 units per hectare was used. The amount of zoned land required includes an additional 50% headroom as required by MWRPG.

In relation to the capacity of existing zoned land, it is assumed that where there is a mixed use zoning that, due to the extensive range of uses that can be accommodated on this land use, 10% of the total undeveloped area is likely to be used for residential development at a density of 22 units per hectare outside the City Environs and 35 units per hectare in the City Environs. (Note that slight discrepancies exist due to rounding of figures).

In allocating 17,602 housing units to County Limerick, the MWRPG have indicated that a total of 829 hectares of zoned land is required to accommodate this growth. The following table is an extract from the MWRPG showing growth in housing units, recommended densities and total hectares required to accommodate growth.

<b>Table 2.3: MWRPG Housing Unit Allocation</b>								
	Nett Growth - Units	% at 35 units per ha	% at 22 units per ha	% at 10 units per ha	Ha @ 35 units per ha	Ha @ 22 units per ha	Ha @ 10 units per ha	Total ha
Limerick County	17,602	0.55	0.25	0.20	277	200	352	829

The MWRPG state that more land should be zoned for residential development than is required to meet the population targets (MWRPG page 72). In this regard, the MWRPG advise that the excess should normally lie between 50% and 150% of the land required though the excess in Phase 1 should not normally be more than 50% of targeted demand. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 below includes an additional 50% headroom for the amount of zoned land required.

The tables on the following pages outline the core strategy figures in relation to each tier of the settlement strategy for 2016 and 2022.

### **2.6.1 2016 Core Strategy**

Table 2.4 outlines the core strategy for 2016 showing existing and required zoned land for each town with a population in excess of 1500 and combined figures for other towns. The table also shows the excess or shortfall of zoned land up to 2016.

The additional housing units required is based on the 2022 housing unit allocation of 17602 in table 5.7 of MWRPG & applied to 2016 on a pro rata basis for each settlement / tier - i.e.  $17602 / 16 * 10$ . For example Southern Environs 2022 unit allocation is  $2898 / 16 * 10 = 1811$  units required in 2016.

In relation to table 2.4: 2016 core strategy, it should be noted that the figure for the total amount of land zoned in this table does not account for constraints to development for example as a result of sewerage treatment capacity limitations, flooding, archaeological constraints and the presence of Natura 2000 sites. The existence of these constraints will further reduce the amount of zoned land actually available for development.

To address over zoning it is proposed to review 5 local area plans (Rathkeale, Bruff, Caherconlish, Hospital and Kilfinnane) within one year of the adoption of the variation.

The reservation of zoned lands within Local Area Plans shall take place on a phased basis and in a sequential manner from the core centre of settlement outwards in accordance with the population and housing targets contained in the core strategy. Cognisance shall also be taken of the availability of services, sustainable transport, environmental and flood risk considerations.

Table 2.4: 2016 Core Strategy table: Population, unit and zoned land requirements							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Settlement Hierarchy	2006 Pop	2016 Additional Pop allocation	2016 Additional Housing Units Required	Zoned land required to accommodate 2016 additional pop - Hectares	Undeveloped Existing and Proposed zoned land – all phases	Undeveloped Existing & Proposed Zoned Land - Excluding Phases 2 & 3	2016 Excess (+)/ Shortfall(-) ha & % Excludes phases 2&3 (G-E)
<b>Tier 1</b>							
Southern Environs	16000	4032	1811	77.61	115	115	+37.39 (48%)
Castletroy	10601	2695	1208	51.77	81.1	81.1	+29.33 (56%)
<b>Tier 2</b>							
Newcastlewest	5098	3019	1541	99.06	86.09	53.52	-45.54 (-46%) <sup>1</sup>
Kilmallock	1443	1050	538	45.49	33.96	33.96	-11.53 (-25%) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Tier 3</b>							
Abbeyfeale	1940	1281	503	42.53	57.44	43.36	+0.83 (1.9%)
Rathkeale	1494	274	132	11.16	84.8	84.8	+73.64 (660%)
Other Tier 3	5866	3569	1413	119.46	226.54	166.64	+47.18 (39%)
<b>Tier 4</b>							
Tier 4 zoned settlements	4449	1350	585	49.46	156.04	151.84	+102.38 (207%)
Tier 4 un-zoned settlements	3503	630	305	No zoned land	No zoned land	No zoned land	No zoned land
<b>Tier 5</b>							
Tier 5 zoned settlements	380	92	42	3.55	8.5	4.51 (proposed zoning)	0
Tier 5 un-zoned settlements	3293	590	286	No zoned land	No zoned land	No zoned land	No zoned land
<b>Tier 6 &amp; Open Countryside</b>							
Tier 6 & Open Countryside total	70198	4232	2638	No zoned land	No zoned land	No zoned land	No zoned land
<b>Total</b>	<b>124265</b>	<b>22816</b>	<b>11002</b>	<b>500.09</b>	<b>849.47</b>	<b>734.73</b>	<b>+198 (39%)</b>

Notes in relation to table 2.4:

<sup>1</sup> 86 hectares of land is available for residential development in the current LAP which is due for review in 2013. Therefore there is sufficient land available for development over the life of the LAP.

<sup>2</sup> 33.96 hectares of land is available for residential development in the current LAP which is due for review in 2014. Therefore there is sufficient land available for development over the life of the LAP.

\*Due to rounding of numbers column totals may not sum correctly.

### **2.6.2 2022 Core Strategy**

Table 2.5 outlines the core strategy for 2022 showing existing and required zoned land for each town with a Local Area Plan and for each settlement for which a zoning map is provided in appendix 1 of the development plan. Housing unit requirements are shown for all other areas. The table also shows the excess or shortfall of zoned land up to 2022.



Table 2.5: 2022 Core Strategy table: Population, unit and zoned land requirements								
A	B	C	D	D	E	F	G	H
Settlement Hierarchy	2006 Pop	2022 Additional Pop Allocation	2022 additional housing units required - Units	Zoned land required to accommodate 2022 additional pop- Hectares	Undeveloped Existing & proposed zoned land all phases – Hectares	2022 Excess(+)/ Shortfall(-) zoned land all phases Hectares (E-D)	Undeveloped Existing & proposed zoned land excluding phase 2 & phase 3 – Hectares	2022 Excess(+) / Shortfall(-) phase 2 & phase 3 zoned land excluded- Hectares (G-D) (%)
Tier 1								
Southern Envs	16000	5400	2898	124.2	115	-9.2	115	-9.2 (-7.4%)
Castletroy	10601	3600	1932	82.8	81.1	-1.7	81.1	-1.7 (-2.05%)
Tier 2								
N'castleWest	5098	4600	2465	158.46	86.09	-72.37	53.52	-104.94 (-66%)
Kilmallock	1443	1600	861	72.79	33.96	-38.83	33.96	-38.83 (-53%)
Tier 3								
Abbeyfeale	1940	1500	805	68.06	57.44	-10.62	43.36	-24.7 (-36%)
Rathkeale	1494	394	211	17.84	84.8	+66.96	84.8	+66.96 (375%)
Castleconnell	1330	602	323	27.31	48	+20.69	7.5	-19.81 ((58%)
Croom	1045	730	392	33.14	25	+8.14	23.1	-10.04 (-30%)
Adare	982	1398	750	63.41	61.08	-2.33	61.08	-2.33 (-3.67%)
Askeaton	979	419	225	19.02	42	+22.98	42	+22.98 (120%)
Patrickswell	924	961	516	43.63	47.1	+3.47	29.6	-14.03 (-32%)
Foynes	606	101	54	4.57	3.36	-1.21	3.36	-1.21 (-26.47%)
Tier 4								
Athea	377	47	25	2.11	1.42	-0.69	1.42	-0.69 (-32.7%)
Bruff	724	317	170	14.37	35.93	+21.56	35.93	+21.56 (150%)
Caherconlish	700	305	164	13.87	30.1	+16.23	30.1	+16.23 (117%)
Cappamore	669	352	189	15.98	13.62	-2.36	9.92	-6.06 (-38%)
Hospital	628	314	169	14.29	35.9	+21.61	35.9	+21.61 (151%)
Kilfinnane	727	310	166	14.03	31.8	+17.77	31.3	+17.27 (123%)
Murroe	624	98	53	4.48	7.27	+2.79	7.27	+2.79 (62%)
Other Settlements	3503	910	488					
Tier 5								
Fedamore	215	83	45	3.8	6.6 (proposed zoning)	+2.8	2.61	-1.9 (-31%)
Montpelier	165	41	22	1.86	1.9 (proposed zoning)	+0.04	1.9	+0.04 (2.15%)
Other Settlements	3293	854	457	No zoned land				
Tier 6 & Open Countryside								
Tier 6 & Open Countryside	70198	7863	4220	No zoned land				
Total zoned land		23170	12435	800	849.47	+49.47 (6.1%)	734.73	-64.15 (-8%)
Total unzoned land		9630	5167	No zoned land				
Total	124265	32800	17602	800	849.47	+49.47 (6.1%)	734.73	-64.15 (-8%)





## **2.7 Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities 2010 -2017**

A Joint Housing Strategy has been prepared on behalf of Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council, and Clare County Council in accordance with Part V of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2010. The Joint Housing Strategy replaces the Limerick County Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011. The Joint Housing Strategy is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning guidelines. It takes into account the regional and city/county level population targets contained in the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022. The Guidelines give effect to National Spatial Strategy (NSS) at regional level and recognise that the Limerick/Ennis/Shannon area, as a Gateway/Hub zone, can make an important contribution to the balanced regional development of the Mid-West.

## **2.8 Potential for Economic and Social Development**

In providing for economic development, regard will be had to the County Settlement Hierarchy which promotes the Gateway, followed by the Key Towns as the primary locations for development, including economic development. Local Area Plans and Zoning Maps within this Development Plan contain zoning designations such as ‘Mixed Use’, ‘Enterprise and Employment’, ‘Industry’ and ‘Education and Community’ and ‘Open Space / Recreation’ to accommodate economic and social development throughout the County.

In recognising the potential for economic and social development, particular attention must be paid to the impact of retail development. A joint Retail Strategy for Limerick City, Limerick County and Clare County has been prepared. Each of the Local authorities will be obliged to apply those policies and objectives that apply to their areas which have been prepared within the context of the DEHLGs document ‘Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ 2005. Local Area Plans identify appropriate locations for retail development having regard to the Retail Strategy and Retail Planning Guidelines in force at the time of preparation of a particular plan. Within this Development Plan, ‘Policy ED11: Retail development’ states:

It is the policy of the Council only to facilitate retail development where it is in accordance with

- a) Retail Planning Guidelines, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) 2005, and any subsequent amendments thereof.
- b) The Joint Retail Strategy for Limerick City, Limerick County and Clare insofar as it applies to the County, including any subsequent amendments thereof.

Based on the population targets put forward by the Mid West Regional Authority for County Limerick and estimates of employment demand and densities, a total of 620 hectares of employment zoned land is anticipated to be required by 2022. In this

Development Plan there is a total of 755 undeveloped hectares of land zoned for employment generating uses.

## **2.9 Transportation**

In preparing this Limerick County Development Plan, the importance of linkages throughout the County and beyond is recognised as an important feature in achieving the balanced regional development objectives of the National Spatial Strategy. For this reason Chapter 8 of this plan has identified transport linkages and identifies relevant road and rail corridors throughout the County and extending to the Region and beyond, and puts forward policies for the protection and enhancement of these linkages. Map 8.1 outlines relevant inter-urban and commuter rail routes and Map 8.2 outlines the road network throughout the County. Currently a Mid West Area Strategic Plan is being prepared as a land use and transportation plan for the region.

## **2.10 Environmental Statement**

The objectives in the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 are consistent in so far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment. This statement is based on the following:

- i. The preparation of the Environmental report as part of the strategic environmental assessment process and the adoption of its recommendations in the drafting of the plan.
- ii. Appropriate Assessments were also prepared for specific proposed variations to the plan and where practicable their recommendations were incorporated into the plan.

This statement should also be read in conjunction with the Environmental Report and the SEA statement as required under article 9(1)(b) of the SEA directive which outlines how environmental considerations were incorporated into the preparation of the plan.

## **2.11 Overall Vision Statement**

Having regard to the information outlined above and the need to provide a framework to facilitate the proper planning and sustainable development of County Limerick into the future it is considered appropriate to put forward an overall vision statement that will underpin this Development Plan.

### **Vision Statement:**

**Limerick County Council will adopt a positive and sustainable approach to balanced development thereby enhancing the lives of people who live in, work in and visit the County, whilst protecting the natural and built environment.**

## **2.12 Core Strategic Policies**

It is envisaged that the vision statement for County Limerick will be underpinned by a number of core strategic planning policies which provide a framework for specific policies and objectives throughout this Plan. These strategic planning policies are outlined below.

**Policy CP 01:**

**To implement relevant European, national and regional regulations, guidelines and strategies at County level.**

**Policy CP 02:**

**To provide a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over the plan period.**

**Policy CP 03:**

**To provide for an enhanced quality of life for all, based on high quality, sustainable residential, working and recreational environments and transportation networks.**

**Policy CP 04:**

**To provide a strong network of settlements within an appropriate hierarchy that allows for the sustainable and balanced growth of the County, whilst maintaining rural areas and their communities.**

**Policy CP 05:**

**To provide appropriately zoned lands to cater for the sustainable growth of the County.**

**Policy CP 06:**

**To ensure that everybody has the opportunity of obtaining affordable housing, can enjoy safe and accessible environments, have access to employment, education, community and recreational facilities and arts and culture and to promote social inclusion.**

**Policy CP 07:**

**To facilitate the provision of the County's infrastructure in a sustainable and efficient manner that promotes the social, economic and physical development of the County and the people living therein.**

**Policy CP 08:**

To ensure that the character and vitality of established town and village centres and the rural areas are maintained and enhanced, that quality underpins all new development by creating and maintaining a sense of place and local distinctiveness in established and new development areas, and that the rural resources, including agriculture and tourism are maintained and enhanced whilst encouraging diversification.

**Policy CP 09:**

To promote County Limerick as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism, while encouraging employment growth and economic activity.

**Policy CP 10:**

To identify, conserve, protect and enhance the unique and diverse natural and built heritage of Limerick County and to implement the provisions of the National Biodiversity Plan to secure the conservation, including where possible the enhancement, and sustainable use of biological diversity in Limerick.

**Policy CP11:**

*The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 introduced a vacant site levy in order to incentivise the development of vacant sites in urban areas for housing and regeneration purposes. The application of the levy is intended to bring underutilised and vacant sites and buildings in urban areas into beneficial use.*

*It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to promote the appropriate development and renewal of urban sites and areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration, in order to ensure there is no:*

- (i) adverse effects on existing amenities and facilities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,*
- (ii) urban blight and decay,*
- (iii) anti-social behaviour, or*
- (iv) shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.*

This shall apply to the zoned lands in the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plans





## Chapter 3

### Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy

The aim of the settlement strategy is to provide a strong network of settlements which can facilitate balanced development throughout the County. This Chapter presents policies for a settlement strategy based on the following main principles:

- The settlement structure will guide where new development should appropriately take place in County Limerick, having regard to National and Regional policy, current and projected population levels, development pressures and physical constraints.
- The development of settlements will be promoted in a planned and sustainable manner whilst promoting quality of life in achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental factors. Urban sprawl on the edge of the City Environs and on the edge of towns and villages must be avoided and a clear character distinction between the built up areas and the open countryside will be maintained through the provision of Local Area Plans in the main settlements and compact settlements, reinforced through policy, elsewhere in the County.
- A clear strategy for the development of settlements is integral to achieving full economic potential. The settlements identified will play an important role in delivering jobs and services to the surrounding areas.
- To develop and sustain existing rural communities and accommodate the local housing needs of the existing rural population.

### **3.1 Introduction**

A settlement strategy is a spatial expression of population distribution settlement size, settlement role and settlement hierarchy. The settlement strategy will provide a planning framework for the location of development and population over the 6 year life span of the County Development Plan and beyond.

This Chapter is presented in two parts: Part 1 deals with the settlement strategy for the County. The settlement strategy puts forward a hierarchy of settlements, which reflects the development role of each settlement type, with the top of the hierarchy acting as the prime location for development. This strategy aims to ensure that development will be linked to the capacity of the settlement to ensure that the relevant services, facilities and social capital will be provided in line with residential development.

Part 2 outlines the policies dealing with residential development in rural areas. It identifies the different types of rural areas as required by the “Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines” issued by the DEHLG and the policies for development in these areas.

#### **Part 1: County Settlement Strategy**

### **3.2 Settlement strategy**

The Council recognises that in making a decision on where to live many people choose to live in rural areas. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) acknowledges that persons from an urban area may seek a rural lifestyle, and the NSS states that small towns and villages have a key role in catering for much of this demand.

To this end the County Development Plan will provide for the planned expansion of the small towns and villages through the designation of settlements within a hierarchy of settlements.

The settlement strategy for the County has been prepared in order to accommodate the needs of local people as well as promoting the strategic economic and social development of the County in a sustainable manner. The overall objective of the settlement strategy is to achieve balanced development within the County, whilst supporting both urban and rural settlement in accordance with National and Regional policy.

Table 3.1 and map 3.1 set out the settlement hierarchy for County Limerick.



### 3.3 Methodology used in designating the settlement tiers

Building on the 2005 County Spatial Strategy, a survey was undertaken of all settlements in the County. The development of the settlement structure has been influenced by:

- Importance of the settlement on a Regional and National context,
- The size, overall built form and character of each settlement,
- The population,
- The existing facilities, including social and commercial, within each settlement,
- Existing and proposed infrastructural developments,
- Spatial distribution within the County,
- The historic role and function of the settlement,
- The function of each settlement and the functional relationships between them,
- The potential for future growth, especially if it will bring economic and social benefits to the surrounding area,
- Any constraints to development, including the ability to provide essential infrastructure,
- Its contribution to sustainable development such as transport,
- The “Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in urban Areas”, issued by the DEHLG May 2009.

The survey concluded that the number of services within the settlements is generally in proportion to the population of each settlement and it was therefore considered that the population of each settlement should influence its location within the settlement hierarchy.

NOTE: Tier 5 and Tier 6 settlements generally can be defined as a compact community usually though not exclusively titled a village with a traditional core, which has a number of the following features or facilities: a church, school, pub/shop, community hall and other community/recreational facilities and some elements of public infrastructure and which function as a service centre for a wider community.

**Table 3.1: Settlement Hierarchy**

<b>Settlement Structure for County Limerick</b>	
<b>Tier 1: The Gateway The City and City Environs</b>	These locations are defined as the City Environs Area comprising the areas covered by the Castletroy Local Area Plan and the Southern Environs Local Area Plan.
<b>Tier 2: Key Towns</b>	Kilmallock, Newcastle West
<b>Tier 3: Centres on Transport Corridors</b>	Abbeyfeale, Adare, Askeaton, Castleconnell, Croom, Foynes, Patrickswell and Rathkeale
<b>Tier 4: Towns and Villages</b>	Athea, Ballingarry, Bruree, Bruff, Caherconlish, Cappamore, Doon, Dromcolliher, Glin, Hospital, Kilfinnane Murroe, Oola, Pallaskenry and Shanagolden.
<b>Tier 5: Small villages with a range of infrastructural, social and community facilities.</b>	Ardagh, Ballyagran, Ballyhahill, Ballylanders, Ballyneety, Broadford, Carrigkerry, Clarina, Fedamore, Galbally, Herbertstown, New Kildimo, Kilteely, Knocklong, Montpelier, Mountcollins, and Pallas Grean (new).
<b>Tier 6: Small settlement</b>	Anglesboro, Ardpatrik, Ashford, Athlacca, Ballyorgan, Ballysteen, Banogue, Caherline, Cappagh, Castlemahon, Castletown, Crecora, Croagh, Dromkeen, Elton, Feenagh, Feohanagh, Glenbrohane, Glenosheen, Glenroe, Granagh, Kilbeheny, Kilcolman, Kilcornan, Kilfinny, Kilmeedy, Knockaderry, Knockainy, Knockdown, Loughill, Meanus, Monagea, Nicker, Old Pallas, Raheenagh, Strand, Templeglantine and Tournafulla.

### 3.4 Overall Settlement Strategy Policies and Objectives

As a general rule, developments will be encouraged to locate within the development envelope of towns and villages in accordance with Local Area Plans and the settlement strategy set out below.

**Policy SS P1: Development of the gateway:**

**It is policy of the Council to recognise the role of the Limerick / Shannon Gateway as a key driver of social and economic growth in the County and in the wider Region and to promote the Gateway as the main growth centre.**

**Policy SS P2: Development of tier 2-6 settlements:**

**It is policy of the Council to support the sustainable development of settlements within tiers 2-6.**

To achieve policy SSP2 the following are Council objectives:

**Objective SS O1: Scale of development within tiers 2-6**

To ensure that the scale of new housing developments both individually and cumulatively shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development and to ensure that the expansion of towns and villages shall be in the form of a number of well integrated sites within and around the core area rather than focusing on rapid growth driven by one very large site. In this regard, and without prejudice to other development plan policies or development management best practices, there will be a positive presumption for housing developments of the following scale or smaller within each tier, as appropriate:

- Tiers 2– 4:** Generally no one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10-15% within the lifetime of the plan.
- Tier 5:** Generally no one proposal for residential development shall be larger than 10-12 units. A limited increase beyond this may be permitted where demonstrated to be appropriate.
- Tier 6:** Generally development shall be in the form of single units on infill or brownfield sites within the core centre, except where there is a public sewer and water supply with capacity where up to 4-5 houses per application shall be considered. A limited increase beyond this may be permitted where demonstrated to be appropriate.

**Objective SS O2: Design of development within tiers 2-6**

The design, layout and character of new development shall relate to the local character and heritage of existing towns and villages and shall enhance the existing village character and create or strengthen a sense of identity and distinctiveness of the settlement.

**Objective SS O3: Capacity of town/ village to absorb development**

Development of towns and villages shall be considered on the basis of its connectivity to the existing town / village core, capacity (infrastructural, social, cultural and economic), good design, community gain and proper planning and sustainable development.

**Objective SS O4: Sequential growth of settlements**

Where no specific zoning is identified for a settlement, new developments shall be within or contiguous to the core identified for each settlement, thus avoiding “leap frogging” of development and shall be designed so as to consolidate existing villages /towns and provide for the organic and sequential growth of the settlement. Infill and brownfield sites will be the preferred location for new development.

**Objective SS O5: Prevention of urban sprawl**

In order to retain the identity of towns / villages, to prevent sprawl, and to ensure a distinction in character between built up areas and the open countryside, it is an objective to prevent linear roadside frontage development on roads leading out of towns and villages.

**Objective SS O6: Compliance with other guidelines**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any new development complies with the standards set out in the development management guidelines in Chapter 10 of this Plan and the Sustainable Residential Guidelines for Urban Areas and the Urban Design Manual issued by the DEHLG, May 2009, or any amendment thereof.

**Objective SS O7: Monitoring growth**

It is an objective of the Council to monitor growth patterns and the pace of growth within individual settlements and apply appropriate management measures in ensuring compliance with the above.

**Objective SS O8: Infrastructure in all settlements**

a) It is the policy of the Council to adopt a flexible approach to proposals for development in all settlements lacking adequate water and sewerage facilities, where such proposals are consistent with the Settlement Hierarchy outlined in Table 3.1 of this plan and the obligations of the Council under environmental and water services legislation.

In particular the Council will consider contributing towards the cost of a sewage treatment plant which is provided by a private developer and which meets the needs of the existing population of the town or village, the needs of new development proposed by the developer and some additional reserve capacity for future development.

The aim of the Council’s contribution will be to ensure that the provision of this facility is viable from the developer’s viewpoint and economically viable for the Council in the long term.

b) As a general rule priority will be given to the development of lands that can be served by means of gravity sewer as opposed to proposals that rely on pumping.

**Policy SS P3: Acquiring land**

**Subject to finance being available, it is a policy of the Council to be proactive in acquiring land and providing services and sites within small towns and villages as a means of stimulating a shift towards development within these areas.**

**Policy SS P4: Supporting Local Groups**

**It is the policy of the Council to use the Development Contribution Scheme under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 to provide or to support local development groups involved in the provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities, amenities, landscaping works, roads, car parks, sewerage and water facilities and to facilitate the development of public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities.**

**Policy SS P5: Partnership Approach**

**It is the policy of the Council to commit to a partnership approach to community issues through active involvement with sectoral interests and community groups.**

The objectives such as SS O1 – SS O5 which emphasise the growth of compact settlements came about as the result of experience of the difficulties involved in servicing settlements with a dispersed structure reliant on smaller scale treatment systems which often require pumping to more central locations for treatment. In addition successive guidance such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, 2004, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, May 2009 and “Smart Travel- A Sustainable Transport Future”, Department of Transport, April 2009 stress the need to make maximum use of brownfield sites and to make maximum use of the existing built environment.

### **3.5 The Role of each tier within the settlement hierarchy**

#### **3.5.1 Tier 1 Limerick Gateway (City Environs)**

Limerick City Environs has a population of 26,601 (CSO, 2006). The City Environs include the areas of Annacotty, Castletroy, Dooradoyle, Mungret and Raheen and these areas accommodate a wide range of services, employment, leisure and retail facilities of Regional significance for the surrounding catchment area. This area forms part of the Limerick/Shannon Gateway in the NSS and in the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) is located within ‘Zone 1’ of the Region. Gateways and hubs are the priority growth areas within the NSS policy framework and should therefore be growing at faster rates than the Regions of which they are a part. As Gateways are the prime focus of growth, it is reasonable to assume that their growth should take place at a higher rate than that of other towns. The Limerick Gateway is centrally located within the ‘Atlantic Gateway’ corridor as identified in

the NSS and so is strategically placed to contribute to the critical mass necessary to sustain a strong level of economic growth and prosperity along with the other areas within the ‘Atlantic Gateway’, thereby providing a counter weight to the Eastern Regions of the Country.

Limerick City and Environs act as a core driver of the Region and a focal point for attracting investment into the area that would energise the entire Region. The city environs are the largest settlement in County Limerick. The population of the city environs (excluding Caherdavin which was transferred to Limerick City in 2008) in 2006 was 26,601. Having regard to development following on from the 2006 census it is estimated that the population of the city environs is now in the order of 28,500 people.

In accordance with National Guidance and the Mid West Regional Authority population targets, it is envisaged that the population of Limerick City Environs could grow by an additional 9,000 people by 2022.

**Policy SS P6:**

**It is policy of the Council to ensure that sufficient land is zoned within the city environs so that, as part of the Limerick Gateway, they will act as the primary focus for investment in infrastructure, housing, transport, employment, education, shopping, health facilities and community.**

**Objective SS O9: Provision of Local Area Plans for Southern Environs and Castletroy**

To support this policy it is an objective of the Council to monitor and review the Local Area Plans for Castletroy and the Southern Environs in accordance with relevant legislation.

### **3.5.2 Tier 2 Key Towns**

The role of the Key Towns is to act as key service centres in the west and south of County Limerick to strengthen the settlement pattern and act as the main drivers of development and significant providers of services within their respective sub-regions, as well as complementing the development of the Limerick/Ennis/Shannon Gateway and acting as a base for high quality transport links to the core area of the Region. The Mid-West RPG, 2004 identify Newcastle West as the principle town in West Limerick (Zone 5) and Kilmallock as the principle town in South Limerick (Zone 9). The objective as set out in the RPG for these towns is that they “will act as local development hubs around which other towns and villages can also expand and develop” in a collaborative manner.

**Policy SS P7:**

**It is policy of the Council to promote Newcastle West and Kilmallock as the key service centres in the West and South Limerick areas and to promote the sustainable growth of these towns to become self sufficient settlements and act as service centres for the inhabitants of their rural hinterlands. In this regard it is policy of the Council to ensure that sufficient land is zoned within these settlements so that they will act as the primary focus for investment in infrastructure, housing, transport, employment, education, shopping, health facilities and community.**

**Objective SS O10: Provision of Local Area Plans for tier 2 settlements**

To support this policy it is an objective of the Council to monitor and review the Local Area Plans for Kilmallock and Newcastle West in accordance with relevant legislation.

**3.5.3 Tier 3 Centres on Transport Corridor**

The main centres on the transport corridors will be promoted as secondary development centres for significant future development. They provide a wide range of services and their functions are complementary to the Limerick Gateway, the Key Service Centres and each other. They also have an important regional employment function within their surrounding catchment areas.

**Policy SS P8:**

**It is policy of the Council to encourage and facilitate where possible, the sustainable, balanced development of existing settlements along the strategic national roads and rail corridors. In this regard the Council will seek to ensure that sufficient land is zoned within these settlements so that they will act as the primary focus for investment in infrastructure, housing, transport, employment, education, shopping, health facilities and community.**

**Objective SS O11: Zoning of land for tier 3 settlements**

To support this policy it is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Monitor and review the local area plans for Abbeyfeale, Adare, Askeaton, Castleconnell, Croom, Patrickswell and Rathkeale in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- b) Zone land within the town of Foynes.
- c) To address the unique development patterns within the town of Rathkeale and stem the existing decline.
- d) Prepare a village design statement or local development framework plan for Foynes, subject to available resources.

### 3.5.4 Tier 4 Towns and Villages

These are settlements generally with a population of over 400 people that cater for the daily and weekly needs of their inhabitants and the needs of the surrounding wider catchment area and provide a range of employment opportunities and services appropriate to their size and function, such as secondary and primary schools, childcare facilities, sports grounds/complexes, library, Garda stations, medical centres and a good range of local services including shops, pubs, post office and banks/ credit unions.

**Policy SS P9:**

**It is the policy of the Council to support the sustainable development of tier 4 settlements.**

**Objective SS O12: Requirements for developments within tier 4 settlements**

Within these settlements the Council shall facilitate development subject to compliance with objectives SSO1- SSO6 and the following:

- a) The scale of new residential schemes for development shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development. In this regard any development shall enhance the existing village character and create or strengthen a sense of identity and distinctiveness for the settlement.
- b) The development of these centres shall provide for serviced sites and a variety of other house types and densities as appropriate.
- c) New commercial developments shall generally be located within the core area and shall contribute positively to the village urban fabric and streetscape.
- d) New community and social facilities shall be provided in conjunction with residential development as required.

**Objective SS O13: Zoning of tier 4 settlements**

- a) It is an objective of the Council to zone land within the villages of Murroe and Athea in line with the previously prepared Village Design Statements. Any development shall comply with these zoning requirements.
- b) It is an objective of the Council either to prepare or support communities in the preparation of village design statements or local development framework plans for the settlements within this tier, where no local area plan exists, over the life time of the development plan, where appropriate. Any plan prepared shall have regard to objective SSO12 listed above and objectives SSO1-SSO7. These plans will serve to inform planning policy and decisions in these villages.

### 3.5.5 Tier 5 Small Villages with a range of infrastructural, social and community facilities



These are smaller settlements generally ranging in population from 150 – 400 people with some essential infrastructure (i.e. Council water and/or sewage facilities) and a range of community infrastructure that provide for convenience and daily needs of the local population and surrounding area. They also provide some small-scale employment opportunities and local level community facilities, such as primary schools, churches, local sporting facilities and a community hall.

**Policy SS P10**

**It is the policy of the Council to support the sustainable development of tier 5 settlements.**

**Objective SS O14: Development within tier 5 settlements**

Within these settlements the Council shall facilitate development subject to compliance with objectives SSO1- SSO6 and the following:

- a) The scale of new residential schemes for development shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development and shall be located within or immediately contiguous to the core area. In this regard any development shall enhance the existing village character and create or strengthen a sense of identity and distinctiveness for the settlement.
- b) New commercial developments shall generally be located within the core area and shall contribute positively to the village street-scape.
- c) New community and social facilities shall be provided in conjunction with residential development as required.

### 3.5.6 Tier 6

These are smaller settlements with limited essential infrastructure and services and fall within the definition of a ‘settlement’ as outlined below. They generally have one or more existing community or other local facilities.

**Policy SS P11:**

**It is policy of the Council to facilitate sustainable development within tier 6 settlements and ensure that these settlements retain their rural character.**

**Objective SS O15: Development within tier 6 settlements**

Within these settlements the Council shall facilitate development subject to compliance with objectives SSO1- SSO6 and the following:

- a) Permitted growth will be very small scale and on an incremental basis and must be reflective of the rural nature of these settlements and will only be permitted on infill and brownfield sites within the core area. It is intended that these infill sites will accommodate residents of the village.
- b) Single units or very small-scale commercial or employment generating development will be encouraged, provided it is of a scale appropriate to the village setting, the infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate same and adjoining uses are not adversely affected.

c) Where there is no sewage treatment plant, a sewage treatment shall generally be by means of individual treatment systems subject to satisfactory site assessment and compliance with EPA guidelines.

d) Where there is public sewage and water, and where there is capacity within same, a limited number of units may be permitted around the core area. In this case no one proposal shall be larger than 4-5 houses, depending on the existing housing stock and the pattern and grain of the village.

#### **Objective SS O16: Tier 5 & 6 Village Design Statements**

Where appropriate and subject to resources the Council will assist Community Groups in the preparation and implementation of community led village design statements or local development framework plans for settlements within Tier 5 and 6.

## **Part 2: Rural Settlement Strategy**

### **3.6 Background**

#### **3.6.1 National Context**

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) recognises the long tradition of people living in rural parts of Ireland and promotes sustainable rural settlement as a key component of delivering balanced regional development. The NSS called for settlement policies in development plans and their implementation in the administration of planning to take into account both the differing demands for housing in rural areas and varying rural development contexts. Different policies are needed, for example, for areas with declining populations as compared with areas in which there are overspill issues associated with proximity to large cities or towns.

The sustainable rural settlement policy framework in the NSS puts forward four broad objectives:

- To sustain and renew established rural communities and the existing stock of investment in a way that responds to the various spatial, structural and economic changes taking place, while protecting the important assets rural areas possess.
- To strengthen the established structure of villages and smaller settlements both to support local economies and to accommodate additional population in a way that supports the viability of public transport and local infrastructure and services such as schools and water services.
- To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and the natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.
- To ensure that rural settlement policies take account of and are appropriate to local circumstances.

The NSS also acknowledges that demands for housing in rural areas arise in different circumstances and that, taking account of the policy framework above, it was normal in policy terms to distinguish between:

- Housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by persons working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas (rural generated housing), and
- Housing in rural locations sought by persons living and working in urban areas, including second homes (urban generated housing).

The NSS emphasises that as a general principle, subject to satisfying good planning practice in matters of site location, positioning on sites, design and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value, rural generated housing needs should be accommodated where they arise.

The NSS indicates that urban generated housing should take place, in general, within the built up areas on lands identified through the development plan process for integrated, serviced and sustainable development.

The NSS identifies four broad categories of rural area types with differing development circumstances that require tailored settlement policies in the development plan process. The four different types of rural areas are:

- Rural areas under strong urban influences
- Stronger rural areas
- Structurally weak areas
- Areas with predominately dispersed settlement patterns.

In rural areas under strong urban influences, the NSS stresses that development driven by cities and larger towns should generally take place within their built up areas or in areas identified for new development through the planning process.

In stronger rural areas, the NSS suggested that the extensive village and small town structure had much potential in accommodating additional housing development catering for persons working in larger cities and towns but desiring a rural lifestyle.

In structurally weaker rural areas, the NSS emphasised the importance of accommodating any demand for permanent residential development, while acknowledging the importance of supporting the urban structure of such areas as well.

The NSS recognises that some persons from urban areas seek a rural lifestyle with the option of working in or travelling to and from, nearby larger cities and towns. Smaller towns and villages have a key role in catering for these types of housing demand in a more sustainable way. However, sustainable development of villages requires that such development be of a design, layout and scale appropriate to the village. Furthermore, priority should be given to locations where development can be supported by public transport, thus reducing reliance on car based transport.

### **3.6.2 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, April 2005**

These guidelines, issued following from the publication of the NSS, outline guidance for Planning Authorities in preparing policies in relation to housing development in rural areas. The policies and proposals in these guidelines are based upon and advance the framework outlined in the NSS. The guidelines present reasonable, workable and sustainable development plan policies that are responsive to the dispersed settlement patterns and tradition of living in rural areas in Ireland, as well as the objectives of carefully planning for the growth and development of larger towns and cities, while also encouraging high quality and well located rural development.

The Guidelines advise each Local Authority to undertake an analysis and adopt a localised rural housing policy, as applicable to its administrative area. It is recommended that, in supporting housing development patterns in rural areas that are sustainable, policies and practices of planning authorities should seek to:

- Ensure that the needs of rural communities are identified in the development plan process and that policies are put in place to ensure that the type and scale of residential and other development in rural areas, at appropriate locations, necessary to sustain rural communities is accommodated,
- Manage pressure for overspill development from urban areas in the rural areas closest to the main cities and towns such as the gateways, hubs, and other large towns (generally towns in excess of 5,000 population).

Limerick County Council's rural housing policy has had careful regard to the guidelines and in preparation of the policy, the following has been assessed:

- planning application trends and population trends,
- proximity of rural areas to larger urban centres and the resulting pressure for rural housing in the countryside in these areas,
- areas which are experiencing stagnation or population decline,
- implications of less restrictive policy in certain areas of the County.

## **3.7 Rural Development Strategy**

The Council's rural development strategy is based on promoting sustainable rural development aimed at maintaining vibrant and viable rural communities while also seeking to protect the amenity, recreational and heritage value of the rural landscapes and countryside of the County.

The implementation of the settlement strategy, as set out in Part 1 of this Chapter and the conservation and protection measures in Chapter 7 - Environment and Heritage are considered to be essential towards achieving this aim.

The designation of settlements for development enables the Council to promote the strengthening of villages and settlements and to provide for the development of rural communities.

### **3.8 Policy Formulation**

The approach taken towards the accommodation of residential development in the countryside has been twofold. In the first instance small scale settlements were identified and are referred to herein as ‘Tier 6 Settlements’. These are small scale settlements or small villages with an established identity that were considered suitable for the development of small scale housing schemes and/or single dwelling houses.

The second part of the approach was to determine the capacity of the countryside to absorb one-off housing having regard to issues in terms of environmental sensitivity, population trends, vacancy rates and the existing level of development in the area. In this regard the following actions were taken:

1. Environmentally sensitivity areas including; – Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas, Scenic Areas were identified and mapped.
2. Population trends have been mapped in terms of each Electoral Division (ED). The period taken was from 1996 to 2006.
3. Vacancy rates for dwellings were mapped in relation to each electoral division having regard to Geodirectory database.
4. Local areas within each ED that are clearly under significant development pressure were mapped. The information was taken from the CSO census of population and the Geodirectory database.

#### **3.8.1 Review of 2005 County Development Plan Rural Housing Policy**

In the rural areas of County Limerick, the settlement strategy in the 2005 County Development Plan, divided the County into five policy designations, namely: ‘Area of Strong Urban Influence’, ‘Electoral Divisions on Outer Edge of Area of Strong Urban Influence’, ‘Area of Strong Agricultural Base’, ‘Extended Structurally Weak’ and ‘Structurally Weak’ areas. This approach is generally in accordance with the Governments Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

The policy in relation to rural housing contained in the 2005–2011 County Development Plan was, in certain areas, based on local needs which required applicants to demonstrate that they were functionally or socially related to the rural community in which the proposed site was located. Other areas, where population stagnation or decline has been occurring, were not subject to housing need.

The proportion of single rural houses has remained generally consistent, particularly since 2005 (and the adoption of the 2005 County Development Plan).

The table below provides an indication of the continued demand for one off houses in the countryside.

**Table 3.2 Number of ‘one off houses’ permitted per year in County Limerick**

Year	Total ‘one off houses’ granted in County Limerick
2001	821
2002	708
2003	687
2004	855
2005	732
2006	574
2007	616
2008	481

Source: Central Statistics Office

When the figures for 2001 to 2008 are combined, a total of 5,474 single rural houses were permitted over that eight year period. Whilst the Council acknowledges the role of rural housing in sustaining rural communities, it also recognises that uncontrolled and excessive one-off urban generated housing in the countryside is not sustainable in the long-term and measures need to be put in place to regulate this form of development. A concern arises that if ‘one-off rural housing’ is permitted at the current levels, then irreparable damage will be done to the environment and the legitimate aspirations of those brought up in the countryside to continue to live within their own communities is likely to be jeopardized.

### 3.8.2 Rural Population Trends

Limerick County has experienced significant population growth in recent years. Table 3.3 below outlines the split of population between urban and rural areas in County Limerick over the last 3 census periods.

<b>Table 3.3 Urban / Rural percentage split of population for the County &amp; City Environs</b>				
	<b>Urban<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rural<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>City Environs</b>	<b>% pop increase of County</b>
<b>County 1996</b>	37.29	62.71	21.56	
<b>County 2002</b>	39.3	60.7	24.29	1996 – 2002: 7.32%
<b>County 2006</b>	40.85	59.15	25.74	2002 – 2006: 8.43%
<sup>1</sup> Urban includes all the main towns of the County & includes Caherdavin which is now contained within the Limerick City boundary due to a city boundary extension in 2008.				
<sup>2</sup> Rural includes the villages and smaller settlements & the open countryside				

As the table above demonstrates, in 2006 over 40% of the County lived in the main towns of the County whilst the remaining 59.15% of the population lived outside of the main towns in the smaller villages and open countryside. The percentage of the total population living in the rural area has shown a moderate decline in recent years with urban areas showing a slight increase. Notwithstanding this, 5,474 single rural

houses were granted permission in the open countryside of County Limerick between 2001 and 2008. The existing rural housing policy in place in the 2005 Limerick County Development Plan appears to have reduced, to some extent, the pressure for development in the areas close to the City which have historically shown pressure for development, whilst some ED's in the extended structurally weak and the structurally weak areas show signs of growth. However, the areas proximate to Limerick City continue to show pressure for development of single rural houses.

The rural area of County Limerick was divided into five different control zones in the 2005 Limerick County Development Plan to reflect the pressure in different areas for rural development and these areas were used in the development management functions as guidance for the application of the rural housing policy for dealing with planning applications for houses in the open countryside.

This plan continues the approach of the 2005 Limerick County Development Plan with some modifications for the rural area policy boundaries. It is proposed to provide for three different rural area designations in place of the five designations contained in the 2005 Plan as outlined in Section 3.9.1 below.

### **3.9 Rural Settlement Policy**

One-off housing refers to individually designed, detached houses primarily located on large un-serviced sites in the open countryside. The overriding aim of the Council's approach to one-off houses in the countryside is guided by the DEHLG *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines*.

The planning authority recognises that the continued trend towards single houses in the open countryside is unsustainable and has implications for the key rural resources of agricultural land, water quality, landscape and heritage as well as undermining the growth and use of existing services and facilities in the towns and villages. In addition the proliferation of one-off rural houses does not strengthen rural communities in the long term. The strengthening of rural communities can only be achieved in the long term through making settlements more attractive places to live and providing employment opportunities.

To this end the Planning Authority will favour appropriate development within the designated villages and settlements over urban generated rural housing.

#### **Policy RS P1**

**It is a policy of the Council to Provide for the development of sustainable rural housing in the County in accordance with the 'Sustainable Rural Housing' guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.**

**Policy RS P2**

**It is a Policy of the Council to ensure that the provision of rural housing will not detract from the County's natural and built heritage, economic assets and environment and the planning authority will have regard to the relevant development plan objectives.**

**Policy RS P3**

**It is a policy of the Council to apply a presumption in favour of granting planning permissions to applicants for rural generated housing where the qualifying criteria set down in objectives RS O1 to RS O8 are met and where standards in relation to siting, design, drainage and traffic safety set down in the Plan are achieved.**

The Council recognises and accepts the importance of rural housing in meeting local housing needs and in sustaining rural services such as primary schools, post offices and village shops. The Council also accepts the genuine desire of people who are born and raised in the countryside who wish to reside within their own community.

Having regard to national guidelines and research and analysis of trends throughout the County, a rural housing policy is put forward which accommodates 'rural generated housing' in all areas whilst recognising the need to protect certain rural areas from urban generated development.

**3.9.1 Rural Area Types**

In accordance with the NSS and 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities', April 2005 document, the County has been defined into different rural area types based on different development demands and needs. These areas are described below and the extent of each is shown on the Rural Settlement Strategy Map 3.2.

In order to accommodate 'rural generated housing' and protect certain rural areas from urban generated development it is necessary to define 'rural generated housing' and to distinguish between differing rural areas.

**Rural areas under strong urban influence:** Part of the rural areas within commuting distance of Limerick City and Environs are experiencing pressure from the development of urban generated housing in the open countryside. Continued high levels of single rural houses in these locations would inhibit the growth of the County's urban areas which would result in a failure to achieve the growth targets, particularly of the City and Environs.

The key development plan objectives in these areas seeks to facilitate the genuine housing requirements of the rural community as identified by the planning authority in the light of local conditions while on the other hand directing urban generated



development to areas zoned for new housing development in cities, towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

**Areas of strong agricultural base:** The rural areas that traditionally have had a strong agricultural base, that are restructuring to cope with changes in the agricultural sector and have an extensive network of smaller rural towns, villages and other settlements. In these areas, the focus of urban generated housing should be in the network of settlements to support the development of services and infrastructure and to take pressure off development in the open countryside.

**Structurally Weak Areas:** The rural areas generally exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline as well as a weaker economic structure based on indices of income, employment and economic growth. These rural areas are more distant from the major urban areas and the associated pressure from urban generated housing.

### 3.9.2 Local Rural Persons

The Council recognizes the needs of local rural people who wish to live or work in the area in which they grew up. The following **3 criteria** arise in assessing applicants under this category:

1. The applicant must come within the definition of a '**Local Rural Person**'  
and
2. The proposed site must be situated within their '**Local Rural Area**'  
and
3. The applicant must have a 'Local Rural Housing Need'

a) A '**Local Rural Person**' is a person who is living or has lived in the local rural area for a minimum of **10 years** prior to making the planning application. This includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area.

b) The '**Local Rural Area**' for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally, but not exclusively, within a **10km** radius of the applicant's family home. Where the applicant is located less than 10km from the County boundary the land mass available will be 314km<sup>2</sup>. Where the proposed site is of a greater distance but the applicant can demonstrate strong ties with the area of the proposed site, e.g. strong family, landownership, or employment links or being within the same parish as the applicant is from, then these cases and other exceptional circumstances will each be considered on their individual merits. A local rural person excludes those persons from within Tier 1 of the County Settlement Hierarchy and the Tier 2 town of Newcastle West. [see exception in point (c) below] .

c) For persons living within the town of Newcastle West to qualify to build a single house within the rural area of Strong Agricultural Base, and in exceptional circumstances the Newcastle West Rural Electoral Division, they would need to have been born in and lived permanently in Newcastle West prior to 1990 and the application site must be within 10km of the applicant's family home.

d) An applicant who satisfies a '**Local Rural Housing Need**' is defined as a person who does not or has never owned a house in the 'local rural area' and has the need for a permanent dwelling for their own use in the rural area.

### 3.9.3 Long Term Landowner

A long term land owner is defined as a person who has owned a minimum of 10 hectares of land in the rural area for a minimum period of 15 consecutive years.

#### **Objective RS O1: Single Houses in Area under Strong Urban Influence**

It is an objective to recognise the individual housing needs of people intrinsic to the rural areas located within the areas defined as '*rural areas under strong urban influence*'. Such needs may be accommodated on lands within the rural area under strong urban influence, subject to the availability of a suitable site and normal proper planning and sustainable development criteria.

It is an objective of the Council to permit single houses in the area under strong urban influence to facilitate those with a ***genuine rural housing need*** in the area.

In order to demonstrate a genuine rural housing need, any of the following criteria should be met:

- (a) the application is being made by a long term landowner or his/her son or daughter; or
- (b) the applicant is engaged in working the family farm and the house is for that persons own use; or
- (c) the applicant is working in essential rural activities and for this reason needs to be accommodated near their place of work; or
- (d) the application is being made by a local rural person(s) who for family and/or work reasons wish to live in the local rural area in which they spent a substantial period of their lives (minimum 10 years).

#### **Objective RS O2: Single Houses in Area of strong agricultural base**

It is an objective to recognise the individual housing needs of people intrinsic to the rural area located within the rural areas defined as the '*areas of strong agricultural base*'. Such needs may be accommodated on lands outside of the '*Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence*' subject to the availability of a suitable site and normal proper planning and sustainable development criteria.

It is an objective of the Council to permit single houses in the area of strong agricultural base to facilitate those with a ***genuine rural housing need*** in the area.

In order to demonstrate a genuine rural housing need, any of the following criteria should be met:

- (a) the application is being made by a long term landowner or his/her son or daughter seeking to build their first home on the family lands; or
- (b) the applicant is engaged in working the family farm and the house is for that persons own use; or

- (c) the applicant is working in essential rural activities and for this reason needs to be accommodated near their place of work; or
- (d) the application is being made by a local rural person(s) who for family and/or work reasons wish to live in the local rural area in which they have spent a substantial period of their lives (minimum 10 years) and are seeking to build their first home in the local rural area.

**Objective RS O3: Single Houses in Structurally Weak Areas**

To help stem decline and strengthen structurally weak areas, it is an objective of the Council that in general, any demand for permanent residential development should be accommodated, subject to meeting normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Note: Refer to additional requirements regarding rural housing in Chapter 7.2 of this plan regarding landscape character areas and Objective EH 017: Scenic Views and Prospects.**

**Objective RS O4: Holiday Home Development**

Holiday home developments should be concentrated within existing towns, villages and settlements thereby minimising the impact on the open landscape. Such developments should respect the existing fabric of the settlement, both in scale and design.

Proposals to reinstate, conserve and/or renovate existing, vacant, derelict or disused buildings for holiday accommodation, in particular in the Structurally Weak Areas, will be given favourable consideration subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective RS O5: Refurbishment / replacement of Traditional Rural Dwelling**

The retention and sympathetic refurbishment, with adaptation if necessary, of traditional dwellings in the countryside in sympathy with the character of the existing building will be encouraged in preference to their replacement.

Planning permission will generally only be granted for replacement of a dwelling where it is demonstrated that it is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved, where the building is not of architectural merit.

In this instance consideration will be given to the replacement of an existing dwelling with a new dwelling at the same location, subject to appropriate design, scale of building and normal planning considerations. Local rural housing need shall not apply in this instance.

**Objective RS 06: Refurbishment of rural structures of merit**

Consideration will be given to the reuse, refurbishment and conversion of structures of merit in all areas subject to satisfying the normal planning and sustainable development criteria and being in sympathy with the character of the existing building and surrounding area. Local rural housing need will not apply in this instance

**Objective RS 07: Accommodation for dependant relative in rural areas**

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of accommodation for older people and dependant relatives attached to the existing family home subject to compliance with the following criteria:

Accommodation for dependant relatives by way of extension to the existing dwelling shall:

- Be attached to the existing dwelling
- Be linked internally with the existing dwelling
- Not have a separate access provided to the front elevation of the dwelling

**Objective RS 08: Occupancy Condition**

Require that any house which is granted planning permission in the rural areas designated 'Areas under strong urban influence' and 'Areas of strong agricultural base' will be subject to a requirement of occupancy of seven years upon the applicant.



## Urban Settlement Strategy

- Tier 1: The Gateway
- Tier 2: Key Towns
- Tier 3: Centres on Transport Corridors
- Tier 4: Towns & Villages
- Tier 5: Small Villages
- Tier 6: Small Settlements

## Limerick Road Network

- National Primary Routes
- - - National Secondary Routes
- Regional Routes

Limerick City Council Administrative Area















## Chapter 4

### Housing

This Chapter presents policies and objectives for housing based on the following main principles:

- **Strengthening the Settlement Structure**

The guiding principle is one of orderly, sustainable development, strengthening the core of the settlements and ensuring that developments integrate and complement existing or new communities. A range of appropriate mixed residential development, and the provision of community infrastructure in tandem with such development, plays a crucial role in strengthening the settlement structure of the County, by attracting and maintaining resident populations.

- **Sustainability**

It is necessary that the fundamentals of sustainability are applied to ensure there is integration of the school, community facilities, employment, transport and amenities with housing development in a timely and cost effective manner.

- **Social inclusion**

The Council through its role as a housing authority can contribute to social inclusion through ensuring there is equal and fair distributions of social and affordable housing, taking into account the principles of sustainability and improving quality of life. The Council recognises that social inclusion is a priority of the National Development Plan 2007-2013.

- **Co-operation with Voluntary Housing Agencies and others**

The Council recognises the potential of partnership in the provision of infrastructure and serviced land for social, voluntary and private housing, where possible. Such co-operation in the delivery of housing at a local level is an example of best practice where local people identify a local need and engage in the process of addressing the local issue with the Council.

- **Provision of adequate zoned land for accommodating population projections**

The Council seeks to facilitate the provision of adequate zoned land in accordance with the settlement strategy of this County Development Plan and the Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Council and Clare Local Authorities to accommodate the projected increasing population, changing household sizes and housing needs, including affordable and social housing.

## 4.1 Introduction

The DEHLG in its Statement of Strategy 2008 -2010 states the following as a high level objective for housing:

*‘To contribute to national social and economic development through the promotion of quality housing in sustainable communities, including through investment and policy frameworks to support the provision of accommodation for low income groups.’*

Limerick County Council has a dual role in relation to housing. As a planning authority it has statutory powers which regulate and control private and public housing development through the development management procedures as set out in the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010. In its role as a housing authority, the Council provides dwellings for households in need of accommodation, who are unable to provide accommodation through their own resources, and assists other agencies that contribute to the housing requirements of the County. Section 95 (1) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 to 2010 requires each Planning Authority to include the provisions of a Housing Strategy in its Development Plan. The Housing Strategy is the mechanism adopted by the Council to ensure that the housing needs for the existing population and future population of the County are provided for. The Council has prepared a Joint Housing Strategy with Limerick City Council and Clare County Council which is included as part of the County Development Plan. Each Council must ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned in the plan, to meet the requirements of the Strategy, and that a scarcity of such land does not occur at any time during the period of the plan.

The Council has identified a settlement structure, which is detailed in Chapter 3 of this Plan. The guiding principle is one of orderly and sustainable development by strengthening the core of the settlements.

The housing policy statement ‘Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities’, launched by the DEHLG in 2007, outlines the Departments vision to guide the development of the housing sector over the next decade. The key objective outlined in the statement is to build sustainable communities, integrated in terms of tenure-mix and cultural/ethnic diversity, and to meet individual accommodation needs in a manner that facilitates and empowers personal choice and autonomy. The Council concurs and proposes objectives in accordance with the Department’s guidelines.

The quality of the living environment is critical to the social and economic well being of an area. The provision of modern services for health, education, recreation, and modern technologies such as telecommunications and fibre technology sustain viable communities and support appropriate levels of population growth in the County. While the delivery of many of these services is not the responsibility of the Council, the Council endeavors to support and promote the delivery of such services through ensuring that

land is zoned appropriately for such purposes and through design criteria of proposed developments in the planning application process.

## **4.2 General Housing Policies**

### **Policy HOU P 1: Adequate Zoned Land**

**It is policy of the Council to facilitate the provision of adequate zoned land in accordance with the Core Strategy targets for 2016-2022, and the provisions of the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the Joint Housing Strategy to accommodate the projected increasing population, changing household sizes and housing needs, including affordable and social housing.**

### **Policy HOU P 2: Social Inclusion**

**It is policy of the Council to promote housing policies that are socially inclusive.**

### **Policy HOU P 3: High Quality Living Environment**

**It is policy of the Council to promote high quality living environments in the interest of quality of life and sustainable communities.**

### **Policy HOU P 4: Delivery of Services**

**It is policy of the Council to promote the provision of, and timely delivery of, quality services, employment opportunities and community infrastructure, in appropriate locations compatible with housing development and in tandem with proposed residential development as required to form sustainable communities.**

### **Policy HOU P 5: Partnership**

**It is policy of the Council to actively encourage participation in the housing sector through partnership arrangements and the provision of infrastructure and serviced land for social, voluntary and private housing, where possible.**

### **Policy HOU P 6: Existing Residential Areas**

**It is policy of the Council to support and enhance existing residential areas by:**

- a. supporting the development of high quality residential development that both individually and cumulatively has regard to the pattern and grain of existing development,**

- b. ensuring the expansion of towns and villages shall be in the form of a number of well integrated sites within and around core areas, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy outlined in chapter 3 of this Plan, and**
- c. using powers under the Derelict Sites Act to acquire and secure the redevelopment of derelict sites.**

### **4.3 Housing Density**

Housing density plays an important part in ensuring that the best use is made of land that is available for residential development in the settlements throughout the County. In the interest of the principles of sustainable development the Development Plan should seek to maximise the use of zoned and serviced residential land so that:

- a) The loss of agricultural land is minimised;
- b) The cost of providing services and supporting infrastructure is minimised and the potential of existing infrastructure and any associated investment is maximised by the Council;
- c) Unnecessary urban ‘sprawl’ is prevented, thereby reducing the need for ‘greenfield site’ development;
- d) Energy, transport and natural resources are used efficiently;
- e) Better access to existing services and facilities; and
- f) More sustainable commuting patterns.

The Council shall have regard to the DEHLG, May 2009 publication ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, in assessing planning applications.

Higher densities must not be achieved at an unacceptable amenity cost to the surrounding dwellings, and the residents of the proposed development. A high quality of design and layout conducive to a good quality living environment, including the availability of adequate shopping, social, transport and leisure facilities, are essential if increased residential densities are to be acceptable.

#### **Objective HOU O1: Density of Residential Developments**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote, where appropriate, increased residential density in the exercise of its development management function, and in accordance with the ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual’, DEHLG, May 2009.
- b) Encourage increased densities that contribute to the enhancement of a town or village by reinforcing street patterns or assisting in re-development of backlands and centrally located brownfield sites.

#### **4.4 Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare Local Authorities, 2010 - 2017**

Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 places the onus on all Local Authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy for their areas. Limerick County Council, Limerick City Council and Clare County Council have prepared a Joint Housing Strategy for the 2010-2017 period which must be incorporated into this Plan. The Planning Authorities must ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned to meet the population targets of the Midwest Regional Planning Guidelines and the requirements of the Joint Housing Strategy and that a scarcity of such land does not occur at any time during the period of the Plan.

The Joint Housing Strategy provides for housing the existing and projected future populations of the development plan area in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development for both private and social housing. One of the key observations of the Joint Housing Strategy following its analysis of the housing market in Limerick and Clare is that due to falling market prices houses have become affordable raising the possibility that there is little or no need for 'affordable housing as introduced by Limerick County Council in the Limerick County Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011. The 2005 strategy required that up to 20% of zoned residential land be set aside for social and affordable housing. The Joint Housing Strategy requires up to 20% of zoned residential land to be allocated for social housing only.

Social housing is defined as rented housing provided either by the local authority, a voluntary or co-operative housing body, the Health Service Executive, or private landlords under a leasing arrangement with the Local Authority. Affordable housing is defined as owner-occupier, or shared ownership housing, provided at a price below market value.

##### **Objective HOU O2: Joint Housing Strategy**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Require that developers comply with Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 through the options as outlined in the 2002 and 2010 Amendment Acts.
- b) On land zoned in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans for residential development or for a mix of residential and other uses, developers will be required to provide housing for social housing, in accordance with the '*Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Limerick City and County Councils and Clare County Council, 2010-2017*'.

##### **Objective HOU O3: Social Integration**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote social integration between persons of different social backgrounds,
- b) Provide for a mix of house types and sizes to meet the demand throughout the period of this Plan, and

Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 November 2010 (as varied May 2017)

- c) Utilise the range of housing initiatives to assist households in acquiring or improving a dwelling suitable for their needs.

## **4.5 Special Needs Housing**

### **4.5.1 Accommodation for the Elderly**

The Council is committed to accommodating the needs of older people by the provision, or facilitation of nursing homes and sheltered housing developments. These facilities should be located within settlements in order to enhance overall quality of life, increase their links with, and accessibility to, local amenities, and therefore, reduce the likelihood of rural or social isolation. In respect of sheltered housing or homes for those with disabilities, and for older people, these uses shall be located close to existing clusters or central to the community and convenience retail facilities and amenities.

#### **Objective HOU O4: Independent Living**

It is the objective of the Council to support the concept of independent living for older people within their community and will ensure where possible that housing for such is integrated with mainstream housing.

#### **Objective HOU O5: Location Criteria for Residential Care**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that the maximum distance from sheltered housing and nursing homes shall be no more than 300 metres safe walking distance to community facilities, convenience retail facilities and amenities. Exceptions shall only be made where suitable sites cannot be found, an urgent need is being addressed, and at least one amenity/facility can be provided in situ, and
- b) Ensure that permission for a change of use from a residential dwelling to a nursing home shall only be granted in cases where such a use would not give rise to a traffic hazard and where the building can be adapted to a satisfactory level of accommodation.

**Objective HOU O6: Subdivision of Dwelling to Accommodate Dependent Relative**

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of accommodation for older people and dependant relatives within the existing family home subject to the compliance with the following criteria:

- Accommodation by way of extension shall be attached to the main dwelling.
- There shall be an internal connecting door with the main residence.
- The extension shall be subservient to the main dwelling.
- In a rural location any external door shall not be located on the front elevation.
- On vacancy of the unit the accommodation shall be integrated with the main dwelling. No such unit shall be used as rental accommodation.

There will be a presumption against proposals for detached independent units within the curtilage of a dwelling regardless of urban or rural location. Proposals must accord with planning considerations such as residential amenity, environmental and public health standards, and traffic safety.

**4.5.2 Accommodation for Students**

Purpose built student accommodation has particular requirements in terms of design and location. It should be located so that it has convenient access to the university and colleges, particularly on foot, bicycle and public transport and, generally within urban or suburban centres or within college campuses. They are generally relatively high-density projects with a range of facilities appropriate for student living. The subdivision of dwelling for the purposes of providing rented student accommodation will not be viewed favourably by the Council.

**Objective HOU O7: Quality of Student Accommodation**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of high quality student accommodation in appropriate locations. Proposals shall adhere to the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual', published by DEHLG, May 2009, and 'Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Local Authorities', published by DEHLG 2007, and any subsequent revision of these guidelines.

**Objective HOU O8: Change of Use of Student Accommodation**

It is the objective of the Council that, in general, proposals for change of use from student accommodation to other types of accommodation shall be resisted unless it is adequately demonstrated that there is an overprovision of student accommodation in the County. In the event of such proposals being given favourable consideration the obligations under Part V, of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 shall apply.

### 4.5.3 Accommodation for Travellers

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 is the legislative framework within which accommodation needs of the traveller community are to be addressed. Local Authorities are statutorily required to prepare programmes to meet the existing and projected needs of travellers in their areas. The current Traveller Accommodation Programme is for the period 2009-2013 as adopted by the Council in October 2008.

#### **Objective HOU O9: Traveller Accommodation Programme**

It is the objective of the Council to provide appropriate housing accommodation for the Traveller Community in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 and any subsequent programme formally adopted by the Council.

### 4.5.4 Accommodation for Persons with Sensory/Physical/ Intellectual Disabilities

The Council acknowledges that various categories of disability give rise to a range of housing needs. With regard to the provision of multiple units in a proposal developers are advised to consider 'Good Practice Guidelines on Accessibility of Streetscapes' developed by the LGMSB Access Sub-Group. The guidelines are intended to assist with practical advice and guidance in assessing and implementing proposals to improve streetscapes, from the perspective of accessibility.

#### **Objective HOU O10: Design of Accommodation for People with Special Needs**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities through the provision and/or adaption of appropriate accommodation.
- b) Promote the construction of houses as "lifetime adaptable homes" in accordance with the DEHLG policy (NG/82 Construction Guidelines).

In this regard:

- Proposals must comply with Part M of the Building Regulations
- Proposals for residential estates are required to provide a number of house types including single storey dwellings which are considered more suitable for the accommodation needs of people with special needs and more conducive to 'lifetime adaptable homes'.

#### **Objective HOU O11: Accommodation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

It is the objective to implement government policy in relation to the provision of accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers.

#### **Objective HOU O12: Accommodation for Homeless**

It is the objective of the Council to continue to support the recommendations of the local inter-agency Limerick County Homeless Forum and its homeless strategy.



## 4.6 Design of Residential Development

The design of residential development is a crucial aspect of any proposal as it has far reaching consequences for the long-term well being of the community. Density as discussed above is an important consideration at the design stage of a residential development. Poor aspects of design can rarely be ‘fixed’ retrospectively once a residential development has been built. In this Plan the Council aims to provide a systematic analysis of how a residential development, when submitted as a planning application, measures against criteria as required by the ‘Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide – A Companion Document to the Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas,’ by the DEHLG May 2009. The aim is to optimise sustainability throughout the process of the building of a residential development, from the design stage, to the final product of a person living in an energy efficient dwelling, connected to existing or improved infrastructural and community services such as education, transport, amenities, etc. The design of residential estates should be guided by the principle of universal design, which is the design of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Designers of housing estates should aim to:

- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, and minimize the need to use cars;
- Deliver a quality of life which residents and visitors are entitled to expect, in terms of amenity, safety and convenience;
- Provide a good range of community and support facilities, where and when they are needed and that are easily accessible;
- Present an attractive, well-maintained appearance, with a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm that is easily maintained;
- Are easy to access for all and to find one’s way around;
- Promote the efficient use of land and of energy, and minimize greenhouse gas emissions;
- Provide a mix of land uses to minimise transport demand;
- Promote social integration and provide accommodation for a diverse range of household types and age groups;
- Enhance and protect the green infrastructure and biodiversity; and
- Enhance and protect the built and natural heritage.

All residential developments of 5 houses or greater will be required to submit a sustainability statement and social infrastructure assessment – see Development Management Guidelines, chapter 10.

The following are important sources of guidance:

- 1) Buildings for Everyone (National Disability Authority) 2002.
- 2) Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the following website location <http://www.universaldesign> . This enunciates seven key principles, internationally recognised as central to universal design; the website also contains a valuable

- checklist in designing buildings and a list of built environment resources and standards.
- 3) 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, DEHLG, 2007,
  - 4) Good Practice Guidelines on Accessibility of Streetscapes developed by the LGMSB Access Sub-Group.

**Objective HOU O13: Residential Development Design**

It is the objective of the Council to have regard to the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual', DEHLG, May 2009 and the settlement strategy as set out in chapter 3 of this Plan, to assess any proposals for multiple unit housing developments in urban areas, towns and villages.

**Objective HOU O14: Mix of House Types**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that residential development including residential development undertaken by the Council provides a mix of house types and sizes including single storey dwellings that are easily adaptable for the living requirements of those with special needs.

## 4.7 Rural House Design

Proper site selection and good house design can ensure that a dwelling is more easily assimilated into the landscape and can make a dwelling more efficient, practical and suited to the needs of its occupants. The Council are currently preparing design guidelines for individual houses in the countryside. These will explain the key design principles relevant to the characteristics and landscape of rural Limerick that need to be considered when proposing new rural houses or renovation of existing houses. The Council is not seeking to have all houses look the same and the guide encourages new and imaginative designs provided they complement their surroundings.

**Objective HOU O15: Promote the Principles of Appropriate Rural Design**

It is the objective of the Planning Authority to assess planning applications for rural dwellings in accordance with the standards, layout and design outlined in the development management guidelines of this Plan.

**Objective HOU O16: Design and Landscaping of New Rural Dwellings**

It is the Councils objective to:

- (a) Encourage new house designs that respect the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape;
- (b) Promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design by encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design and layout; and

c) Require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominantly indigenous/local species and groupings.

#### **4.8 Regeneration of Vacant and Derelict Sites**

**Objective HOU O17: Regeneration of Derelict Sites**

It is the objective of the Council to use its powers under the Derelict Sites Act to acquire and secure the redevelopment of derelict sites.

**Objective HOU O18: Re-utilisation of Redundant or Obsolete Urban Structures**

It is the objective of the Council to promote the re-utilisation of suitable redundant or obsolete structures in appropriate cases.

#### **4.9 Regeneration Agencies in Limerick City**

Following the publication of the Fitzgerald Report commissioned by the Government in 2006 to investigate the issues regarding social exclusion in areas in Limerick City and environs, new special purpose Government Agencies for the Southside and Northside of Limerick City were established by Government Orders June 2007. The Regeneration Board oversees the planning and implementation of a comprehensive and integrated regeneration programme for Moyross and St.Mary's Park on the Northside of the City and Southill/Ballinacurra Weston on the Southside of the City. Southill is adjacent to the county boundary.

It is acknowledged that the regeneration of these areas in the city are of vital importance for the development of Limerick city, Limerick County, the Gateway and the Midwest region. Thus, Limerick County Council has a strong commitment to supporting the Regeneration Programmes for Limerick City and to working with all the other relevant players implementing the provisions of regeneration.

**Objective HOU O19 Limerick Regeneration Agencies**

It is an objective of Limerick County Council to support the initiatives of the Limerick Regeneration Agency and any regeneration initiatives implemented.



## Chapter 5

# Economic Development

This Chapter presents policies for economic development based on the following principles:

The overall goal of the Planning Authority is to ensure sustainable economic development. This means that land uses are facilitated to nurture economic enterprise and allow it to function and expand as may be necessary, in such form and pattern that is sustainable in environmental, social and economic terms.

The Planning Authority's chief responsibilities in respect of economic development are:

- A. To ensure that economic development is located and of a form that does not have adverse environmental impacts: this is achieved through policy and development management standards and guidelines;
- B. To protect and facilitate through land use zoning, service priorities, and critical interventions, the range of land uses and developments required to sustain and improve the economy in real terms.

## **Part One: Economic Overview**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Following a sustained period of unprecedented economic growth, there has been a sharp downturn in the performance of the national economy within the last year, as part of a global ‘credit crunch’. The Irish economy is vulnerable due to its reliance on exports, being a small open economy. In addition the recent construction boom relied on low interest credit, which is now in short supply. Any prospect of recovery in construction is exacerbated by low demand for property and the surplus of property to demand in many areas. These recent changes come on top of a longer-term process of rationalisation in the traditional industries, and of decline in agricultural employment.

The Mid-West region and the County are particularly vulnerable in a number of ways. Limerick County relies on manufacturing to a significantly greater extent than the national average: 19% of the workforce are employed in manufacturing compared to 12.6% nationally (CSO 2006). Secondly, the County shared in the national property boom. In 2006, 11.3% of the active workforce were employed in construction. Thirdly in the rural areas there has been extensive transformation of agriculture and the food industry. The food industry has been undergoing an extensive rationalisation over many decades. In respect of agriculture itself, the proportion of the active workforce accounted for by this sector more than halved in the ten years up to 2006 (Table 5.1 below).

An important consequence of the economic downturn is rising unemployment. In July 2009 the number of people on the live register in Limerick (City and County) according to the CSO Live Register Analysis was 21,791, which is nearly double the equivalent at this time last year (11,448). According to the ESRI Economic Quarterly of Spring 2009, the national unemployment rate could reach 16.8% of the labour force by 2010. This compares very unfavourably with the rate it had been in 2006, which was 6.1%.

To date the economic downturn has affected the sectors of construction, and manufacturing most directly. It also affects other sectors of economic activity. Retail and tourism are affected as, both locally and internationally, people’s spending power is reduced due to the increase in the number of people who are unemployed, the reduction in the average take home pay, and due to a prevailing climate of uncertainty.

It is vital that Limerick positions itself to take maximum advantage of those emerging and future likely trends and developments, that would bring economic opportunities; and to counter existing and future threats. Important trends and developments that Ireland can capitalise on are likely to be found in renewable energy, through demand for high quality food products, through hi-tech industry and in international services. Due to higher than world average wage costs, Irish exporters are likely to rely on products and services where the emphasis is on quality and innovation rather than on product cost per se. Investment in scientific research and education are likely to be of paramount importance (‘Building a Smart Economy’ Govt 2008).

More specific to Limerick, it is important to utilise such assets as the County has in order to address the challenges posed by the current economic downturn. The County of Limerick has important assets in its natural resources, its skill base, and in its economic and educational institutions. In the County, the Plassey National Technology Park and the University of Limerick, which are mutually adjacent, stand as prime examples of the kind of progress that has been achieved over the last few decades in the County.

The Port at Foynes and the Shannon Estuary is recognised as a significant core asset for economic development in the region. The Estuary provides a strategic transit gateway whilst the Port facilitates trade from many industrial sectors critical to the ongoing sustainability and competitiveness of the region. The existing deep water facility at the Port and existing logistical operations provide a transit hub for a diversity of industries in the region including traditional manufacturing, extractive industries, general cargo, and emerging renewable energies.

In the context of more cost effective and sustainable transport patterns, it is likely that the role and function of the Port and Estuary as a transport hub will increase. The location of the Port, its existing rail connection to the national network and the naturally occurring deep water areas of the Shannon estuary directly adjacent to Foynes presents significant opportunity to provide for enhanced maritime activities. The Council will encourage industries elsewhere in the estuary, so as to spread some of the prosperity generated by these industries throughout the region, and at the same time, by generating local employment and help reduce commuter traffic. It is important that a range of sites, both in terms of site type and location to suit the different types of users are available. This should assist in providing a more diverse base to the local economy thereby minimising possible effects of adverse changes in the economy as a whole.

There is also scope for the development of industries outside of manufacturing and enterprise, for tourism, agriculture, forestry and renewable energy generation. It is particularly important to protect and develop natural and cultural resources in situ in a way that will sustain local rural employment and communities.

A number of measures are proposed to address the economic situation within the Region. This includes a proposal to establish a Joint City/County Economic Development Committee to address the competitiveness of the City Region in light of international economic influences.

## **5.2 Policy Framework**

For effective achievement of the aforementioned strategic goals in economic development it is proposed that the Planning Authority act in accordance with the following policy framework.

Most new jobs in the County will be created in those activities in the forefront of Ireland's economic recovery, which as noted above, lies in hi-tech manufacturing and enterprise, with emphasis on export. Important sub-sectors of energy and waste, and logistics and transport should also be given recognition as they each have special requirements. It is important that all these sectors are recognised and reflected in the zoning of appropriate lands and in development management standards and guidelines. Strategic provision is made for key enterprises in those economic sectors with most potential.

More specific to one sector of economic activity, there is also a need for retail development to provide a range of services and goods, principally for the community but also in connection with tourism. It is crucial that retail floorspace, in its pattern and form, is sustainable, i.e. that it serves the community with a quality service that is reasonably convenient and accessible to all, consonant with the frequency with which that service is needed. The viability of retailing is dependent on the success of manufacturing and other income generators, for disposable income (to be spent on retail and tertiary activities).

Planning policies should be framed to ensure the County's key natural resource base is protected, and also to address new possibilities, such as in energy, forestry and agri-tourism. The overall importance of agriculture, and of the County's natural resource base, is given specific recognition. Tourism has important untapped potential in Limerick, which if development could bring in much needed revenue as well as improving quality of life. Tourism and rural diversification must be related to the sustainable development of natural and cultural resources.

### **Policies on Employment and Economic activity**

#### **Policy ED P1: Adequate provision of serviced and zoned lands**

**Ensure that adequate provision is made in terms of objectives and measures, to contribute in an effective way to employment targets within the County. This will include making sure there is adequate quantity and range of serviced and zoned lands in appropriate locations.**

#### **Policy ED P2: Hierarchy of employment centres in concordance with settlement strategy**

**Complement the aims of the settlement strategy and hierarchy in a mutually reinforcing and sustainable manner through a hierarchy of employment centres established at Regional, County, and local centres.**

#### **Policy ED P3: Protect the County's resource base**

**Protect the County's resource base from inappropriate land uses, and promote practices to secure the long-term future of natural and cultural resources.**



**Policy ED P4: Recognise local economic activity**

**Recognise the contribution of home-based economic activity, small scale community enterprise, rural activities based on resources in situ, artisan workshops, local services, education and tourism and recreation projects and facilities to enhance local economies.**

**Policy ED P5: Retail development**

**Ensure that retail development, complies with the recommendations of the *Joint Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region, 2010-2016* and any subsequent amendments thereof.**

**Policy ED P6: Tourism development**

**Facilitate measures to improve the tourism product of Limerick County in tandem with Shannon Development, the Shannon Regional Tourism Board, Fáilte Ireland and local development agencies.**

**Policy ED P7: Integrated planning of the Shannon estuary**

**Facilitate integrated planning to develop the capacity of the Shannon Estuary as a prime transport, industrial development and tourist asset. Limerick City and County Council will promote overall sustainable development within the Shannon Estuary and support all legislative environmental commitments provided in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary, inter alia The EU Habitats Directive, The EU Birds Directive, The Floods Directive and the Water Framework Directive.**

**Policy ED P8: Infrastructural capacity**

**Improve infrastructural capacity, taking a strategic approach to ensure that infrastructure serves the requirements for economic development in a timely and cost effective manner.**

It is essential that the Council continues to develop its resource capabilities, promote the county and its key assets, and work closely with other agencies in protecting and stimulating needed investment into the county. It is essential to have a realistic approach, but one that is ambitious and sustained over a long period, that is agreed amongst all relevant agencies to pump-prime investment. Hence the importance of the work of the Limerick County Development Board, and also the importance of the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (a 30 year land use and transportation plan).

### **5.3 Employment trends and projected requirements**

Adequate land must be set aside and infrastructure geared to meet the needs of economic development considered desirable over the plan period. An assumption is made for the purposes of this Plan that there will be no appreciable net inflow or outflow of residents to jobs. This means that the ratio of employment growth to population growth will be the same as that estimated for the Mid-West Region as a whole by the Mid-West Regional

Authority. For every 100 additional people resident in the County by the end of the Plan period 57 jobs will have to be created (Source: Mid-West Regional Authority, August 2009). With an extra population of 32,800 projected for Limerick County by 2022 (Mid-West Regional Authority, September 2010) this means that there will be a requirement to facilitate 18,700 new jobs by 2022: this is not taking into account any additional requirement to compensate for unemployment. As indicated above unemployment is already over 21,000 between Limerick City and County. In order to take the current high levels of unemployment into account it is reasonable to add 10% to the above new jobs figure to take the effect of unemployment on demand for new sites. The accumulated total for new jobs then becomes 20,500.

Provision for employment, in service priorities and land use zoning has to be carefully distributed across different economic sectors and across the County. The Planning Authority must work with other stakeholders to help realise economic potential, meet the requirements of businesses, and foster balanced geographical and inclusive development. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of those who are employed by industrial group according to the 2006 census (Table 5.1). The broad industrial groups correspond directly with land uses.

	County Limerick % of active labour force of selection of industrial groups			State
	1996	2002	2006	
<b>Broad Industrial grouping</b>				
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>6.88</b>	<b>4.62</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>23.48</b>	<b>20.59</b>	<b>19.15</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>7.07</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>11.32</b>	<b>11.5</b>
<b>Commerce, insurance, business and finance services</b>	<b>16.85</b>	<b>22.31</b>	<b>21.93</b>	<b>27.13</b>
TOTAL active labour force	41,454	<b>50,666</b>	59,614	

**Table 5.1 Percentages of total active workforce working in a selection of key industrial groups, County Limerick and State**

Source: CSO Census returns, 1996, 2002 and 2006.

\*The additional population expected in the region is 101,000 by 2022 and the additional number of jobs expected to be created is 58,000 (Source: Mid-West Regional Authority, September 2009)

A number of key features are to be noted from the above table:

- The significant growth in the active workforce in the County. This is due to a combination of growing population and decreasing unemployment up to 2006.
- The decline in the relative importance of agriculture, although the rate of decline has decreased.

- While manufacturing has declined in importance in terms relative to the active workforce, there has been a slow growth of employment in this sector measured in absolute terms.
- The strong growth in employment in construction over the entire period.
- The importance and strong growth in commerce, insurance, business and finance services, particularly in the earlier period of 1996 to 2002.
- The lower proportion of the above ‘services’ category in the County as a whole in comparison with the State, and the higher proportion of agriculture and manufacturing.

## **Part 2: Policies and specific Objectives by industrial sector**

### **5.4 Secondary Sector: Industry and Enterprise**

#### **5.4.1 Background**

Industry and enterprise together as sectors are crucial as drivers of economic growth. In this context, enterprise means small and medium scale businesses in light industry as well as in internationally traded services such as in software, telecommunications and financial services. These sectors play a leading role in improving Ireland’s versatility and technological advancement, giving it a greater competitive edge in international markets, and thereby creating revenue and employment. Businesses in other sectors such as in retail and property will rely on the capacity of manufacturing and enterprise to raise incomes and stimulate confidence locally. In view of the growth role for industry and enterprise, as stated above, it is reasonable to assume, for the purposes of this plan that provision will have to be made for 80% of the 20,500 projected new jobs in industry and enterprise: that is, up to 16,400 jobs will have to be provided for. To ensure that there is an adequate range of sites to meet different requirements it is important to match the quantity and extent, availability, affordability and the quality of sites with the characteristic requirements of those enterprises that are most likely and desirable.

In respect of geographical spread, it is considered that industrial and enterprise employment should be distributed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. 70% of new industrial and enterprise employment should be located in the core area of County Limerick corresponding to the Gateway (the City environs and Annacotty). This concentration is important both to foster the critical mass of the Gateway, and take advantage of its strategic position. The degree of concentration relates to the ratio between population growth allocated in the Core Strategy (Chapter 2 of this Plan) to the core zones of the County and the remainder of the County: the allocations of population growth to the core and remainder are 19,500 and 13,300 respectively, with the core zones thereby accounting for 60% of total population growth to 2022.

The actual percentage of available development land in the County which is within the Gateway amounts to 70%, not including Annacotty.

Table 5.2 Main sites zoned, developed and undeveloped for industrial use and marine related industry.

Position in settlement hierarchy				
	Area	Total (ha)	Developed (ha)	Undeveloped (ha)
Sites zoned industrial in Gateway	Castletroy/Ballysimon	263.17	109.27	153.90
	Raheen Mungret	686.50	327.30	359.20
	Annacotty <sup>2</sup>	42.37	24.37	18.00
Key towns (zoned industrial)		109.98	53.89	56.09
Centres on transport corridors (zoned industrial)		112.44	44.36	68.08
Askeaton Industrial zoned lands		97.7	12.31	85.34
Foynes (zoned Marine Related Industry)		186.21	61.33	124.88
Foynes Island (zoned Marine Related Industry)		40.47	0	40.47
Aughinish (zoned Marine Related Industry)		433	305.12	127.88
Large One off sites (unzoned)	Gouldings	7.60	7.60	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1979.44</b>	<b>945.55</b>	<b>1033.84</b>

The Plassey Technology Park has 80 hectares of developed land and this yields 4000 jobs. This means 50 jobs for every hectare of land, or 1 job per every 200 m<sup>2</sup>. The density in Raheen industrial estate is approximately the same. This equates to the 40 m<sup>2</sup> per job standard at 20% site coverage and single storey.

Applying this standard to all sites means that in order to accommodate enough business to support 16,400 jobs, there should be at least provision for 328 hectares of land either serviced or ready for servicing for these uses, at a suitable range of locations for the range of needs. Of course there are certain industries with processes that typically require large sites and have a corresponding low employment to land ratio. It is reasonable to add 300

hectares to allow for the possibility of these types of industrial establishments within the lifetime of this Plan (in the large industrial estates at Castletroy, Raheen and in the Shannon Development site at Askeaton, see below). The total accumulated figure is therefore 620 hectares.

The above table shows the amount of land available for industrial development is still in excess of this figure. These figures do not include the extensive undeveloped areas of commercial zoned land in which enterprise uses are open for consideration. They do not include land that might also become available for use, as some factory buildings become unoccupied. Most of this land has industrial land use zoning. Where it is not zoned it is in an established industrial area, or of mixed industrial use such as at Foynes and Annacotty Business park. These latter two areas are proposed for zoning in this Plan. All the zonings are contained in Local Area Plans, although there is one site near Askeaton, of 90.4 hectares (i.e. 226 acres) that was zoned strategically in the current County Development Plan. This is Shannon Development owned land.

#### **5.4.2 Industry and Enterprise Policies**

A key priority is to ensure that adequate lands are zoned for industrial and enterprise use, and hence protected from inappropriate uses that would prejudice their coherent development. Zoning also creates clarity to help long-term business planning. Industrial and enterprise development should be facilitated only where there are existing lands already serviced or capable of being serviced within the lifetime of the Plan. In general, such development should take place within or at the edge of existing towns, and the size and range of sites should reflect the position of towns in the settlement hierarchy. Sites for industry and enterprise must have good connections to the regional and national road network; where industrial processes and accompanying traffic can occur without interfering with residential or other amenities in these settlements. Most of the requisite lands are already zoned in Local Area Plans for the various towns, but because of the strategic importance of Annacotty Business Park in the Gateway and Foynes in the Shannon Estuary, suitable sites are zoned for industrial and enterprise use in these locations in this Plan.

##### **Policy ED P9: Facilitation of range of sites for industry**

**The Council shall facilitate and work pro-actively with development agencies to secure an adequate range of locations for both large scale and small-scale industrial development and for enterprise at key locations throughout the County in accordance with the settlement strategy.**

##### **Policy ED P10: Ensuring no adverse environmental impacts**

**The Council shall ensure that industry and enterprise are in an appropriate location and form for their context, taking into account their likely impact on residential and other amenities, service and environmental carrying capacity.**

**Objective ED O1 Economic Regeneration**

The Council will work with all bodies involved in assisting employment generation and rural and urban economic development in the county through the County Development Board; to ensure that projects and programmes are relevant and appropriate to needs; and work in accordance with the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan to:

- a) Support small manufacturing businesses by identifying suitable sites and offering reasonable terms for accommodation through the Business Support Unit
- b) Assist in area based renewal projects in urban and rural areas selected for their potential for renewal and sustainable development;
- c) Be prepared to use compulsory purchase powers to assemble sites and assist in support of the strengthening and renewal of villages and town centres to meet these aims;
- d) Emphasise quality of design, amenity and accessibility for all, and facilitate modes other than private transport.
- e) Ensure all projects and programmes are poverty proofed.

**Objective ED O2: Location of industrial and enterprise land**

The Council shall ensure the protection of suitable lands from inappropriate development that would prejudice its long-term development for industrial and enterprise uses and make adequate, serviced and suitably located Council owned land (zoned where appropriate) available for industrial development. Such lands are in general within the defined settlements, in order to facilitate more sustainable commuting patterns and contribute to the economic development of towns. The following are the terms which developments shall be expected to meet:

- a) they are appropriate to the respective area in terms of size and type of employment generating development to be provided;
- b) they would not result in adverse transport effects; and
- c) they would have no significant detrimental effect on the surrounding areas or on the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupiers.

In respect of the layout of developments and their plot ratio, the Council will seek to ensure that there is not over-development of sites, to allow for incidental amenities and parking and for future expansion in situ. The Council will take into due consideration the context of the site, including the prevailing grain of development and mixture of uses in assessing development proposals; and the character and history of the activity to which the proposal relates.

**Objective ED O3: Non industrial / enterprise uses within industrial estates**

It is the objective of the Council to permit proposals for development other than for business, general industrial, storage and distribution uses within identified industrial zones only where it can be clearly demonstrated that: they do not give rise to adverse environmental impacts; they do not compromise the provision of a sufficient supply of industrial land within the plan area; and where the proposal is for retail uses they are ancillary to a permitted zoned use.

**Objective ED 04: Safeguard Strategic Development locations along the estuary**

It is the objective of the Council to safeguard the Strategic Development Locations at Foynes Port, Foynes Island and Aughinish Island for the sustainable growth and development of marine related industry and industrial development at Askeaton.

All proposed developments shall be in accordance with regional and national priorities and the SEA Directive, Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, Shellfish Waters Directive, Floods Directive and EIA Directive.

Buffer zones shall be incorporated into proposals for developments where necessary to preserve potentially valuable habitats, for example, areas of estuary, shallow bays and inlets, mudflats, lagoon, salt marsh and woodland habitat which occur at or surrounding these Strategic Development Locations. The extent of such buffer distances shall be established in consultation with relevant statutory bodies. Detailed botanical, faunal and ornithological surveys should be undertaken in relation to proposed developments at these Strategic Development Locations to fully consider the potential effects of the development and inform how to best avoid significant ecological effects.

**Objective ED 05: Safeguarding Askeaton industrial park.**

It is the objective of the council to ensure that the 97.76 hectare site at Askeaton, which is owned by Shannon Development, is safeguarded for the accommodation of large establishments of regional importance (see Map 5.1). The application of appropriate mitigation measures for this zone as detailed in SIFP Vol 2 appendices C and D, the Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report of the variation to this plan to incorporate the SIFP will apply for proposed developments within this zone. An overall masterplan for the site outlining the proposed infrastructural provision, including the provision of SUDs, shall be provided.

**Objective ED 06: Marine Related Industry**

Land zoned for Marine Related Industry, shall provide for marine related industry and large scale uses that create a synergy with the marine use. Marine related industry shall be taken to include the use of land for industry that, by its nature, requires a location adjacent to estuarine/deep water including a dependency on marine transport, transshipment, bulk cargo or where the industrial process benefit from a location adjacent to the marine area.

**Objective ED 07: Appropriate marine related industrial development of Foynes and deep water facilities in the Shannon estuary**

(a) It is the objective of the Council to ensure that the marine related industrial zoned land in Foynes is safeguarded for the accommodation of port related uses and other industrial activities (see map A2 in Appendix 1). The lands indicated in the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan are also included in this zoning. The application of appropriate

mitigation measures for this zone as detailed in SIFP Vol 2 appendices C and D, the Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report of the variation to this plan to incorporate the SIFP will apply for proposed developments within this zone.

(b) Support the expansion of the Port at Foynes and promote the economic and industrial development of the Shannon Estuary as a strategic transport, energy and logistics Hub serving the County and wider region by utilising naturally occurring deep water characteristics and by identifying and safeguarding existing and future strategic transportation links, subject to fulfilling the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the conservation objectives of the Lower River Shannon SAC site.

(c) Support the consideration of new deep water berthage within the estuary to enhance the strategic economic function of the Port subject to compliance with the ecological objectives of the Lower River Shannon SAC site and other policies of the County Development Plan.

#### **Objective ED 08: Annacotty Business Park**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate the sustainable development of Annacotty Business Park, of a scale, phasing and character compatible with surrounding land uses, and road network. 42.38 hectares of land is zoned in and around the Business Park for this purpose, which is indicated on Map 5.2. All buildings and associated services shall be contained within this area, and a buffer zone, of width of 20 metres abutting the undeveloped north-western portion of the site, be suitably landscaped to screen development from dwellings on the Clyduff road. An appropriate buffer zone must be considered for any future planning application on these lands in the interests of protecting the residential amenity of the area.

#### **Objective ED 09: Location of industry or enterprise in brownfield sites**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate industry or enterprises in brownfield sites with previous established industrial or commercial use, or derelict sites in a commercial, industrial or mixed use area, subject to the following considerations:

- a) The use should be appropriate to the scale and context of the site, taking into account traffic and other impacts on local infrastructure and neighbouring land uses and amenities;
- b) Structures of conservation merit should be re-used and not replaced;
- c) The works are necessary for the proposed economic activity or activities.

#### **Objective ED 010: Start-up enterprise developments**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that sites and buildings suitable for start-up enterprise developments are identified in urban locations, safeguarded, and wherever possible, made available at an affordable price. Measures include:

- a) The use of suitable Council lands, and
- b) The acquisition of lands through the County Enterprise Board.



### 5.4.3. Prevention of Major Accidents

The Seveso II Directive 96/82/EC is an EU Directive to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and to limit the consequences of such accidents for human beings and the environment. In Irish law, the current regulations through which the Directive is transposed are 'European Communities, Control of Major Accidents Regulations' S.I no 74, 2006. This includes controls on the siting of new Seveso sites, modification to existing Seveso sites and controls on new developments (e.g. residential areas in the vicinity of existing Seveso sites). It applies to establishments where dangerous substances are or may be present in specified threshold quantities.

A Seveso site is an industrial company that has notified the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health as meeting a specified threshold for quantities of hazardous substances as outlined in the European Communities Regulations 2006.

At present there are two industries which are established Seveso Directive sites within Limerick County: namely Irish Bulk Liquid Storage in Foynes; and Gouldings Fertilisers in Askeaton, and a third in process, this is the Atlantic Fuels depot at Foynes, to which the Directive will also apply. Consultation distances are established within which there is an obligation to consult with the Health and Safety Authority and Limerick Fire service over any development proposals.

#### **Objective ED O11: Proposals for new establishments**

It is the Objective of the Council in assessing applications for new development or expansion of existing development involving hazardous substances, to have regard to:

- a) the Major Accidents Directive (Seveso II),
- b) potential adverse impacts on public health and safety; and
- b) the need to maintain appropriate safe distances between establishments covered by this directive and residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural interest or sensitivity.

#### **Objective ED O12: Proposed development adjacent to existing establishments**

The Health and Safety Authority has established consultation distances surrounding establishments designated as containing hazardous substances. It is the objective of the Council, in addition to normal planning criteria to ensure that new developments such as transport links, locations frequented by the public and residential areas in the vicinity of existing Seveso sites, within these specified distances, comply with the requirements of the Major Accidents Directive.

The Council will consult with the Health and Safety Authority regarding any such proposals.

**Objective ED 013 Tourism in the Shannon Estuary**

It is the objective of the Council to promote tourism in the estuary subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive but also in line with good tourism and planning practice in order to ensure that the attraction of the estuary is not compromised by overdevelopment or unsuitable development.

**5.5 Tertiary Land Uses:****5.5.1 Retail**

Colliers CRE consultants have undertaken a 'Joint Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region for 2010-2016'. This Strategy replaces the two previous Strategies applying to the County; namely the Mid-West Retail Strategy 2002-2011 and the County Limerick Retail Strategy 2003. The Council will comply with its recommendations and have regard to the to the National Retail Guidelines 2005, and any update or replacement of that document.

**Policy ED11: Retail development**

**It is the policy of the Council to facilitate retail development where it is in accordance with**

- a) Retail Planning Guidelines, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) 2005, and any subsequent amendments thereof.**
- b) The Joint Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region, 2010-2016 insofar as it applies to the County, including any subsequent amendments thereof.**

**Assessment of regional retail market in 2010**

The Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016 states that based on its quantitative assessment "there is no need for any further retail floorspace provision in the region as a whole through to 2016 (the end date of the new Retail Strategy)". This is "due to the Mid-West already being overshopped, the huge scale of the retail development pipeline and the limited forecast growth in consumer retail expenditure per head through to 2016" (vii Executive summary par.14).

In the period 2002-2009 retail floorspace supply in the area covered by the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West has doubled to reach 532,000 square metres (p14). In addition there are outstanding planning permissions for 119,904 square metres, which would represent a 23% addition to current stock (p36). That this is in excess of demand is evident from the high vacancy rate of retail properties, at 86,000 square metres (p14). Most of the expansion in retail development occurred in the suburbs of Limerick, and at the expense of the city centre. Between 2002 and 2009 the city centre's share of all retail

space has declined from 36% to 17%. (Table 3.2, p35). In addition, weaker shopping centres in towns and villages have also suffered. The recent economic downturn has made the negative impacts of excessive retail development all the sharper.

### **Retail Hierarchy**

The purpose of the retail hierarchy is to indicate the appropriate roles of different retail centres across the region, thereby helping to determine the appropriate distribution of new retail floorspace. The type of goods sold, eg whether comparison or convenience goods, and the extent of floor space that is appropriate depends on the position of the centre within the retail hierarchy.

The hierarchy provides the means to:

- Recognise the role and importance of Limerick city centre;
- To define the role of shopping centres in the wider Limerick Metropolitan Area;
- Enhance the region's competitiveness by clearly identifying the key centres in the hierarchy;
- Strengthen the role and function of key centres around the Mid-West;
- Ensure that there is a good geographical distribution of key centres in the hierarchy;
- Differentiate between centres within the different levels of the hierarchy to overcome the issue of classification being indicative.

The County Retail hierarchy is defined in two steps: the first step refers to the county as a whole and distinguishes the city centre from retail centres in the county, excluding the metropolitan area. The second step refers to the metropolitan area. This distinction was made to emphasise the primacy of the city centre in terms of regional shopping provision. For the purpose of this Plan only the city centre and centres within Limerick county are highlighted in both tables.

<b>Mid-West Retail Hierarchy</b>		
Tier 1-City Centre		<b>Limerick City Centre</b>
Tier 2- Major Town centres	Level 1	Ennis
	Level 2	Shannon <b>Newcastle West</b>
Tier 3-Town centres	Level 1	<b>Abbeyfeale</b> Kilrush
	Level 2	<b>Rathkeale</b> <b>Adare</b> <b>Kilmallock</b>
Tier 4- Neighbourhood and Village centres	Level 1	<b>Small towns</b>
	Level 2	<b>Village Centres</b>
Tier 5- Local/Corner shops		Smaller villages/crossroads-rural shops (post offices, creameries, public houses, petrol filling stations)

**Table 5.3 The Retail hierarchy for the Mid-West Region****Table 5.4: The Retail Hierarchy for the Limerick Metropolitan Area**

<b>Limerick Metropolitan Area</b>		
Tier 1		<b>Limerick City Centre</b>
Tier 2	Level 1	<b>Dooradoyle ( Crescent Shopping Centre)</b>
	Level 2(District Centres)	Caherdavin <b>Castletroy</b> Parkway Roxboro Moyross

## **Strategies for individual centres**

The Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region recommends that, there should be different strategies targetted at different centres in the above hierarchy, in order to ensure balanced growth and change. These strategies are expressed here in the form of policies targetted at different tiers and centres in the retail hierarchy.

### **Limerick Metropolitan Area (Tier 1).**

#### **Policy ED 12**

**The Council endorses the retail strategy for Limerick City Centre to:**

- a) Protect and promote the City Centre's role as a National Tier 2 centre at the top of the Mid West Hierarchy and a Gateway into western Ireland;
- b) Encourage the development of substantial new retail floorspace in the City Centre and extensions thereto, in order to allow the City Centre to recapture trade it has lost to other retail schemes across Metropolitan Limerick, and to reconfirm its position as the dominant retail location in the region;
- c) Adopt a pro-active stance to help assemble site and remove bureaucratic hurdles to facilitate retail development on complex urban sites.

#### **Policy ED 13**

**It is the policy of the Council to implement the strategy for those parts of the Metropolitan Area of Limerick that fall within the county, and as follows:**

- 1) In relation to **Dooradoyle (Crescent Shopping Centre)**
  - a) It is the policy of the Council to encourage reinvestment, upgrading and limited expansion of retail floorspace within the Crescent Shopping Centre where it does not alter its role and function with respect to Limerick City Centre and the retail hierarchy;
  - b) Allow additional floorspace for ancillary facilities such as banks and other financial services, restaurants and public houses, offices and leisure, social and community uses.
- 2) In relation to **District Centres in the Limerick Metropolitan Area** ,
  - a) To maintain the role and scale of the District Centres as primarily convenience shopping centres capable of supporting a main food shopping trip;
  - b) To support reinvestment and regeneration of existing district centres on the proviso that it does not change their role and scale;

- c) To ensure District Centres remain as primarily convenience goods and service centres, and not to develop into primarily comparison goods retail destinations;
  - d) Not to allow them to expand significantly above the 10,000 sq metre threshold set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
- 3) In relation to **Out of Centre** locations,
- a) Not to permit any more more retail floorspace;
  - b) Not to permit any new foodstores, including discount stores. They should be part of existing or new centres;
  - c) To consider new neighbourhood centre and/or local shops where they would serve new areas of housing development or to meet areas of deficiency.

### **Major Town Centres and Town Centres (tiers 2 and tier 3, levels 1 and 2)**

#### **Policy ED 14: Major town centres and town centres**

**It is the policy of Limerick County Council, in relation to major town centres and town centres outside of the metropolitan area of Limerick to:**

- 1) Major town centre Tier 2, Level 2 (Newcastle West)**
  - a) Support the improvement of retail facilities in Newcastle West Town Centre through the provision of modern shop units and a modest growth in floorspace.
  - b) Maintain its mixed use and function.
- 2) Town centre, Tier 3, Level 1 (Abbeyfeale)**
  - a) Support the improvement of retail facilities so as to improve the service they provide to their local catchment population.
  - b) Encourage the provision of tourism and visitor-orientated retail provision to capitalise on the inherent potential inherent in this centre.
- 3) Town centre, Tier 3, Level 2 (Adare, Kilmallock and Rathkeale)**
  - a) Support these towns as important centres for the provision of convenience goods and retail services.
  - b) Encourage the provision (where not already provided) of good quality convenience outlets capable of supporting a main food shopping trip in or on the edge of the town centre.
  - c) Support the provision of non bulky and bulky comparison goods outlets in the town centre where these are aimed at meeting the needs of the local catchment population.

**Policy ED 15: Neighbourhood and village centres, and local shops**

**It is the policy of Limerick County Council in relation to neighbourhood and village centres, and local shops to:**

**1) Neighbourhood and village centres**

- Support the provision of modern convenience goods stores, of an appropriate scale, and associated retail and service units to enable these centres to meet the day to day needs of their local catchment population.

**2) Local shops**

- a) Support the provision of small scale shops to meet the day to day requirements of local people.
- b) Promote local shops to meet a gap in provision where this would achieve regeneration benefits.

**Policy ED 16**

**It is the policy of Limerick County Council to co-operate with all neighbouring Local Authorities and within the area of its remit, the Limerick Regeneration Agency, to ensure a balanced pattern of retail provision in accordance with the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016, and with National Retail policy.**

**Policy ED 17**

**It is the policy of Limerick County Council to take a pro-active approach to the protection and improvement of town and village centres to serve their local catchment areas.**

It is a fundamental part of the national retail strategy to seek to direct new retail development to town centres and thereby capture the benefits that this can bring forward in terms of protecting and enhancing existing centres, sustainable development and social inclusion. It is important to ensure that the scale and function of the proposed retail development accords with that of the centre in which it is situated.

**Objective ED O14: Provision of shops in Core Retail Areas**

It is the objective of Limerick County Council to recognise the role of retailing as a key contributor to a vital and viable town centre by encouraging the provision of shops in the “Core Retail Area”.

**Objective ED O15: Sequential test**

It is the objective of the Council to stringently apply the sequential test to the assessment of all retail proposals, other than those intended to serve a local population.

The amount of information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the sequential test should be proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Whilst all retail applications apart from small shops and neighbourhood centres should be supported by a sequential test assessment, the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West region recommends that development in excess of generally 2,000 sq.m (gross) in the Metropolitan Area and generally 1,000 sq.m (gross) in the remaining area located on the edge or outside of identified town centre locations, should provide a more detailed retail impact assessment.

**Objective ED O16: Detailed Retail Impact Assessment**

It is the objective of the Council to require a detailed retail impact assessment for development on the edge of or outside of identified town centre locations:

- a) developments generally in excess of 2,000 sq.m (gross) in the Metropolitan Area; and
- b) developments generally in excess of 1,000 sq.m.(gross) in all other part of county Limerick.

**5.5.2 Tourism****Background**

Limerick has considerable potential for tourism, which remains largely untapped, notwithstanding its proximity to Shannon international airport. Lack of investment in tourism products has reinforced the perception that Limerick is a transient stop on the way to more recognised tourist destinations. Nevertheless, Limerick has a diversity of attractions, existing and latent, juxtaposed in a relatively small land area, both natural and cultural, and that could or already does appeal to people with a wide range of interests. There have been a few important initiatives in recent years, which have begun to address the shortcomings of the County's infrastructure, facilities and amenities, in respect of tourism:

- Foynes has a flying boat museum and is the subject of a joint Limerick County Council/ Shannon Development 'Themed Towns' initiative (this is further taken up in the Shannon Estuary Chapter 9).
- Ballyhoura Development Ltd, a local development company, has been very active in planning and promoting tourism projects in east Limerick. Among its initiatives are:
  - a) The 'Ballyhoura Attractions Cluster Development Strategy' 2003, with a hub and spoke system centred in Kilmallock and development of different themes and looped drives, cycling routes and walks.



- b) The mountain bike trails in the Ballyhoura mountains, which at 90km is one of the longest of its type in Europe.
- There is a plan of actions for south-east Limerick to develop this area as a new tourism cluster, in the Shannon Development Tourism Strategy 2008-2010, a strategy prepared by Shannon Development and the Shannon Regional Tourism Board:
  - a) Kilmallock is the subject of ambitious conservation strategies under the titles of 'Kilmallock Town Walls Conservation and Management Plan' and 'Kilmallock Walled Town Public Realm Plan'.
  - b) Lough Gur is a candidate site for World Heritage Status: An Environmental Management Plan has been drawn up, a joint initiative between Limerick County Council and Shannon Development.

The latter area has benefited from recent improvements to walkways. It has also continued to benefit from the leadership of the local community in cultural events and guided tours. Kilmallock has an annual medieval festival.
- There has been considerable expansion in quality tourism accommodation in the the County. Most of this has been in Limerick environs, and with the expansion of hotel accommodation in the City, this has led to a marked concentration of accommodation in the County's largest urban centre.
- West Limerick too has benefited from the following projects:
  - The upgrade of Curraghchase Forest Park with new pathways, cycleways and recreational facilities;
  - The upgrading of 16 kilometres of the Great Southern trail between Ardagh, Newcastle West and Barnagh.

The current tourism strategy for the Mid-West region '*Shannon Development Tourism Strategy 2008-2010*' emphasises the potential of promoting the region on the basis of its 'multi-purpose' identity, as well as its location on the western seaboard. A Tourism Forum for County Limerick has been established specifically to promote the County as a tourism destination.

The Limerick County Development Board stresses the importance of a longer more theme-based approach to appeal to mass markets, and special interest tourism. Strengths that are highlighted are specific areas, settlements, heritage features and traditions with a distinctive identity. The following is a list of some of the County's key strengths:

- Areas such as the Ballyhouras, the Galtees, Lough Gur, and the Shannon Estuary;
- Features and panoramas of natural distinction and beauty such as the Knockfierna, the Barnagh gap and the Clare Glens near Murroe;
- Artefacts of the cultural heritage including many of Limerick's numerous castles, churches, monastic establishments, houses, and gardens and parks. These would include individual structures; parks such as Curragh Chase Park; and towns and villages of distinctive character and appeal. Limerick is blessed with many villages and small towns of marked appeal and potential. Highlights include the planned village of Adare; the walled town of Kilmallock; and the port town of Foynes.

- Events and entertainment can and do use and complement the physical heritage of places to create a memorable sense of place and community.
- The potential of trails in respect of theme based or activity holidays, including the Ballyhoura mountain-bike trail, and the Great Southern Trail between Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale in Limerick.
- The potential of niche tourism activities including agri-tourism and angling.

### **Tourism Policies**

It is important that Limerick County Council plays a pro-active role, where possible, in assisting with the development of the County's latent tourist potential. There are certain resources upon which tourism is ultimately reliant and at the outset these must be identified and protected.

#### **Policy ED P18: Development of tourist attractions and facilities**

**To promote the development of tourist attractions in a systematic and strategic way, in co-operation with Shannon Development, the Shannon Region Tourism Board, the Limerick Tourism forum and local development agencies.**

#### **Policy ED P19: Sustainable development of tourism facilities**

**To promote the development of sustainable tourism facilities and amenities without damage to the local environment's essential qualities or features and their requirements for conservation and management.**

Implicit in the aforementioned policies is the assumption that features of key importance will be identified either in the County Development Plan or in Local Area Plans together with their associated amenities, and that any developments that affect, or are likely to affect these features significantly, will be assessed in accordance with their impacts, ensuring that the essential integrity of these features are protected. The Development plan identifies key areas and broad categories of feature that are of importance to conserve in respect of their heritage value and sensitivity, in the Environment Chapter 7.

There is an often delicate balance to be struck between cultural and natural attractions and associated facilities and amenities designed to cater for various tourist requirements. There are four different scenarios which the Planning Authority must respond to if there is to be an adequate framework for planning tourism facilities in a sensitive yet pro-active manner.

1. Public facilities and amenities of a type and scale incidental to natural, cultural or recreational attractions;
2. Larger scale tourism developments such as hotels, restaurants, and holiday homes, which can be located singly or in clusters: these can be located away from the tourist attractions and should generally be located in settlements where services exist, and the use of which thereby can support these settlements and reduce pressure on the tourist attractions

3. Niche tourism and rural based activities: these might include pony trekking, paint balling, quad racing. The suitability of their location depends on the requirements of the use, its impact (such as noise and associated traffic) and any special characteristics that the environment has to offer the proposed use.
4. Uses that bring new life to the built and natural heritage: the use and restoration of old buildings as guesthouses, museums or as restaurants, expansion of the programme of construction of cycling and walking routes or by encouraging owners to reinstate historic gardens.

**Objective ED O17: Tourism facilities and environmentally sensitive areas**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that tourism facilities, are not located or designed where they would be significantly detrimental to environmentally sensitive areas, such as designated ecological areas, areas of archaeological potential or historic landscapes either existing or which may arise in the future.

**Objective ED O18: Facilities and amenities incidental to tourist and recreational attractions and scenic views**

Proposals for public facilities and amenities of a type and scale that are incidental to tourist attractions and associated services shall be permitted where they would

- a): allow these attractions to be enjoyed and accessed by the public
- b): cater for basic needs of the public, incidental to the enjoyment of these attractions;
- c) help to protect sensitive features through information and by appropriate management;
- d) be adequately serviced and managed consonant with the nature of the demand, the environmental setting, and the location vis-a- vis public washing and restroom facilities;
- e) be inclusive to all members of the community.

Applications must be accompanied by a management plan and justified by reference to a coherent, evidence based tourism and recreational strategy applicable to the area.

Such development should not impair the capacity of the national road network as per policies IN P9 and IN P10.

**Objective ED O19: Location of tourism facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to generally require new tourism development to be located within existing settlements where they can best support the provision of services and the general economic vitality of these settlements.

This will also help protect the heritage features that form the basis of local attractions from unwarranted encroachment.

**Objective ED O20: Sustainable forms of niche tourism**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation including eco-tourism; outdoor / adventure sport tourism such as cycling, mountain biking, marathon running, triathlon, hiking, orienteering, sailing, scuba diving, rowing, swimming, horse riding. cultural tourism; and agri-tourism, subject to no adverse ecological or environmental effects, by facilitating the appropriate development and management of suitable non-vehicular access networks, and other ancillary facilities, in accordance with the development objectives and standards of this Plan.

**Objective ED O21: Renovation and adaptation of established buildings for tourism and other appropriate uses**

Proposals involving the use and adaptation of buildings of distinctive merit on architectural or historical grounds for tourist accommodation, museums or restaurants will be assessed depending on

- a) how it will protect the intrinsic qualities of the building and its setting;
- b) how the building and its site would lend itself to the use allowing for possible changes in the long term;
- c) the facilitation of public access to allow the character of the building and spaces to be appreciated;
- d) the availability of services
- e) connections to the local road network and capacity of the road network to cater for traffic generated in a manner that is safe and avoids traffic nuisance.

Flexibility will be exercised in respect of the location of such buildings visa-vis settlements, in the context of the planning gain from the re-use and sensitive adaptation of buildings and spaces of distinctive character, particularly where such buildings are listed for protection. Due care must be exercised in proposed works and in consideration of what is appropriate in terms of use, both for the building and its setting.

Such development should not impair the capacity of the national road network as per policies IN P9 and IN P10

The Council is committed to supporting the development of a wide range of facilities, including accommodation, necessary for the success of tourism in the County. Development should be facilitated where it would benefit local economies, strengthening settlements and giving alternative sources of employment and income to rural households. It is important that development is carefully integrated into the environment so as not to damage its integrity. It is the environmental heritage in its many aspects, which is the resource upon which tourism will ultimately depend.

## **5.6 Primary Sector Land Uses and Rural Development**

### **5.6.1 Agriculture**

#### **Background & Trends**

County Limerick traditionally has had a very strong agricultural base and agriculture still has an important role to play in the County's economy. With 6.8% of the County's workforce engaged in agriculture in 2006, this is significantly above the national average, which is 4.6%.

Within agriculture, dairying is by far the most important activity. There is also some raising of beef or store cattle, horse breeding and poultry, in certain areas. There is very little tillage in Limerick. The agricultural sector has reflected the national trend of declining employment in agriculture and the County continues to display a reduction in the numbers employed, although between 2001 and 2006 the rate of decline has slowed in comparison with previous inter-censal periods (399 or 100 a year compared to 1000 or 200 every year between 1991 and 1996).

Another challenge to the County is the agricultural quality of land. 44.5% of the land area is considered as being agriculturally disadvantaged, with approximately 69,960 hectares classified as less severely disadvantaged and 49,636 hectares as more severely disadvantaged according to the Department of Agriculture. These areas are concentrated mainly in the west, south and east of the County.

Although the agricultural sector has faced fundamental influences that changed its structure and role, it will continue to play a key role as a building block for a strong and diversified rural economy. Given the rural nature of the County, agricultural activity is also important in maintaining the viability of towns and villages. Rural areas have a vital contribution to make in the achievement of balanced development.

#### **Agricultural Development Policy**

The Planning Authority will support and facilitate agricultural developments and improvements where the developments are considered in relation to their likely impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area.

**Objective ED O22: Agricultural developments**

The Council will normally permit development proposals for agricultural development where:

- (a) they are appropriate in nature and scale to the area in which they are located;
- (b) the proposal is necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding or enterprise;
- (c) where the proposal involves the erection of buildings, there are no suitable redundant buildings on the farm holding which would accommodate the development;
- (d) the development is not visually intrusive in the local landscape and, where the proposal is for a new building(s) and there are no suitable redundant buildings, the proposal is sited adjacent to existing buildings and suitably visually integrated in the holding; and
- (e) the proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this Plan.

Appropriate small-scale on-farm agricultural diversification will play an important role in retaining rural communities. These types of applications will be favourably considered where the scale and nature of the activity is appropriate to the location, and the proposal can be satisfactorily integrated into the rural landscape. Typical uses could include those such as the following, defined as examples of farm based diversification into non-agricultural activities in the CAP Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (p141):

- Provision of tourism facilities. The type of facilities envisaged would be renovation of farm buildings for tourism purposes, walking, cycling, angling, pony trekking, bird watching etc.
- Development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, speciality food provision, open farms etc.
- Development of farm shops selling home/locally grown and manufactured products.

**Objective ED O23: Farm diversification**

The Council will normally permit development proposals for farm diversification in the open countryside where the proposal:

- (a) would not negatively affect public health or agricultural operation on neighbouring farms;
- (b) the proposal is of a size and scale which is sympathetic to and which does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area; and
- (c) the proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this plan.

All development in the countryside will be required to respect the appearance and character of the rural landscape.

Notwithstanding the overall policy of locating enterprise development in appropriately zoned lands in and adjacent to settlements, consideration will also be given to small-scale enterprise proposals in the countryside. These small-scale enterprises will generally be family owned and operated businesses and will need to satisfy traffic, public health and amenity and environmental requirements.

**Objective ED O24: Home-based employment**

It is the objective of the Council to normally permit proposals for employment generating development which involve the change of use or new development for purposes of home-based employment where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a) the proposal is of an appropriate scale for its location; and
- b) the proposal will not give rise to adverse environmental, health or transport effects or be prejudicial to residential amenity.

**Objective ED O25: Expansion of existing industrial or business enterprises in the countryside**

It is the objective of the Council to normally permit development proposals for the expansion of existing industrial or business enterprises in the countryside where:

- a) the resultant development is of a size and scale which remains appropriate and which does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area; and
- b) the proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, public health, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this plan.

### 5.6.2 Forestry

Forestry is an important renewable resource with a major role to play in sustainable rural development. The National Government is committed to developing a strong forestry sector in Ireland and has set a target to increase the national forest estate from 9% to 17% of land cover.

In addition to the direct benefits, forestry also has an important impact on rural economies through the development of related industries and rural tourism. The main forest amenity areas in the County are provided at Currachase, Galteewood, Clare Glens and Ardpatrik.

Concerns of many rural communities that a proliferation of large-scale monoculture plantations would lead to changes in the landscape and increase the sense of isolation has lead to the introduction of afforestation targets by species and the requirement for planning permission involving plantations of 50ha or more. Planning permission is

required for initial afforestation of 50 hectares or over, and conversion of any area of high broadleaf of over 10 hectares to coniferous also requires planning permission.

The area of the County under forestry at the end of 2003 was 22,614 hectares or 8% of the total land area, which compares with a national average of 9.9%, and an EU average of 24%. Most of the forestry consists of commercial plantations, which are predominantly coniferous. These are faster growing and can grow well even on poor soils. They are mainly located in the poorer soils of the uplands in West Limerick, and in the Ballyhouras, Galtees, and Slieve Felim mountain ranges. Broadleaves make up 13.5% of the total which compares unfavourably with the national average of 21%.

The Forest Service, within the Department of Agriculture, oversees forestry policy on behalf of the Government. The Forest Service is implementing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with a view to ensuring that all timber produced in Ireland is derived from sustainably managed forests. In September 2000, they produced a number of policy documents on various aspects of forestry management to ensure the highest standards of sustainable forestry management.

In order to provide strategic guidance as to the appropriate location and type of new planting, Local Authorities can produce Indicative Forestry Strategies for their own counties, in tandem with the Forest service, and in accordance with national guidelines.

## **Forestry Policies**

The future siting of forestry in the County will be considered on the basis of the Landscape Character Assessment as outlined in the Environment and Heritage Chapter 7 (Map 7.4). Recommended height limits for forestry development will include:

- **Western Uplands:** Forestry shall be confined to below 280m above sea level to protect intact remnants of peatland habitat.
- **Southern Uplands:** No further forestry development over 280m above sea level.
- **Knockfierna Hill:** This area shall not be considered for forestry.
- **Ballyhoura/Slieve Reagh:** Forestry shall be confined to infill and below 300m above sea level.
- **Galtee Uplands:** Forestry development will be confined to below 300m above sea level, following consultation with the Wildlife Service and National Parks as much of the Galtees is a candidate for Special Area of Conservation.

### **Policy ED P20 Support sustainable forestry**

**It is the Policy of the Council to support the forestry sector and the development of associated industry on suitable land as identified in the Landscape Characterisation of the County as follows;**

- a) in a manner that protects the environment of the County, while ensuring that the diversity and character of the countryside is maintained;**



- b) ensuring that afforestation is not located in a manner that will adversely impact on the amenities of adjacent landowners or adversely affect the maintenance of the public road;**
- c) encouraging the consideration of the visual impact of forestry so that planting conforms to the overall landscape pattern particularly on elevated sites avoiding overall straight lines or regular shapes; and**
- d) encouraging the development of forest parks, viewing areas, parking areas and other tourism related amenities within afforested areas.**

The Council will continue to work with the Department of Agriculture to prepare an Indicative Forest Strategy (IFS) to help guide the future location and character of the forest industry in County Limerick. It will also aim to identify the potential that future afforestation can make towards the establishment of high quality forests serving a variety of purposes including timber production, rural development and off farm incomes, tourism and the enhancement of the environment in the County.

#### **Objective ED O26: Indicative forestry strategy**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Prepare an Indicative Forest Strategy for County Limerick in consultation with the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and other relevant bodies, and
- b) Implement the policies and objectives outlined in the Indicative Forestry Strategy and to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policies and objectives of the Indicative Forestry Strategy for County Limerick.

#### **Objective ED O27: Broadleaves and Amenity schemes**

It is an Objective of the Council to:

- a) Strongly encourage the planting of broadleaves in particular those of native origin where soil and site conditions permit. The Council will also encourage the use of native seed stocks and strongly encourages the use of ecologically friendly planting schemes such as the Native Woodland Grant Scheme.
- b) Encourage the use of Amenity Schemes such as the Forest Service's Neighbourwood Scheme.

### **5.6.3 Mineral Extraction**

It is recognised that the aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) and concrete products industry contribute significantly to the economic development of the County by the proper use and management of natural resources for the benefit of the community, and by

the creation of employment opportunities. The Council recognises that these products are the essential building materials in our homes, farms, factories, schools and offices and that infrastructure projects of all kinds from water treatment plants to road projects to sewage works depend on a continued supply of aggregates and concrete products.

The National Guidelines on Quarries and Ancillary Activities for Planning Authorities, 2004, as published by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government forms the guiding document against which applications for quarries and ancillary activities will be considered in County Limerick. The Guidelines document also seeks to identify those issues that can give rise to land use and environmental issues which require to be mitigated and controlled through the planning system, and suggests best practice in dealing with them.

The Guidelines document requires Local Authorities to identify and safeguard major deposits, which may have a regional or national importance. This does not imply a blanket ban on other forms of development, but consideration should be given to the fact that the proximity of major new housing developments for example, could effectively sterilise such deposits.

**Objective ED O28: Mineral extraction**

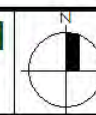
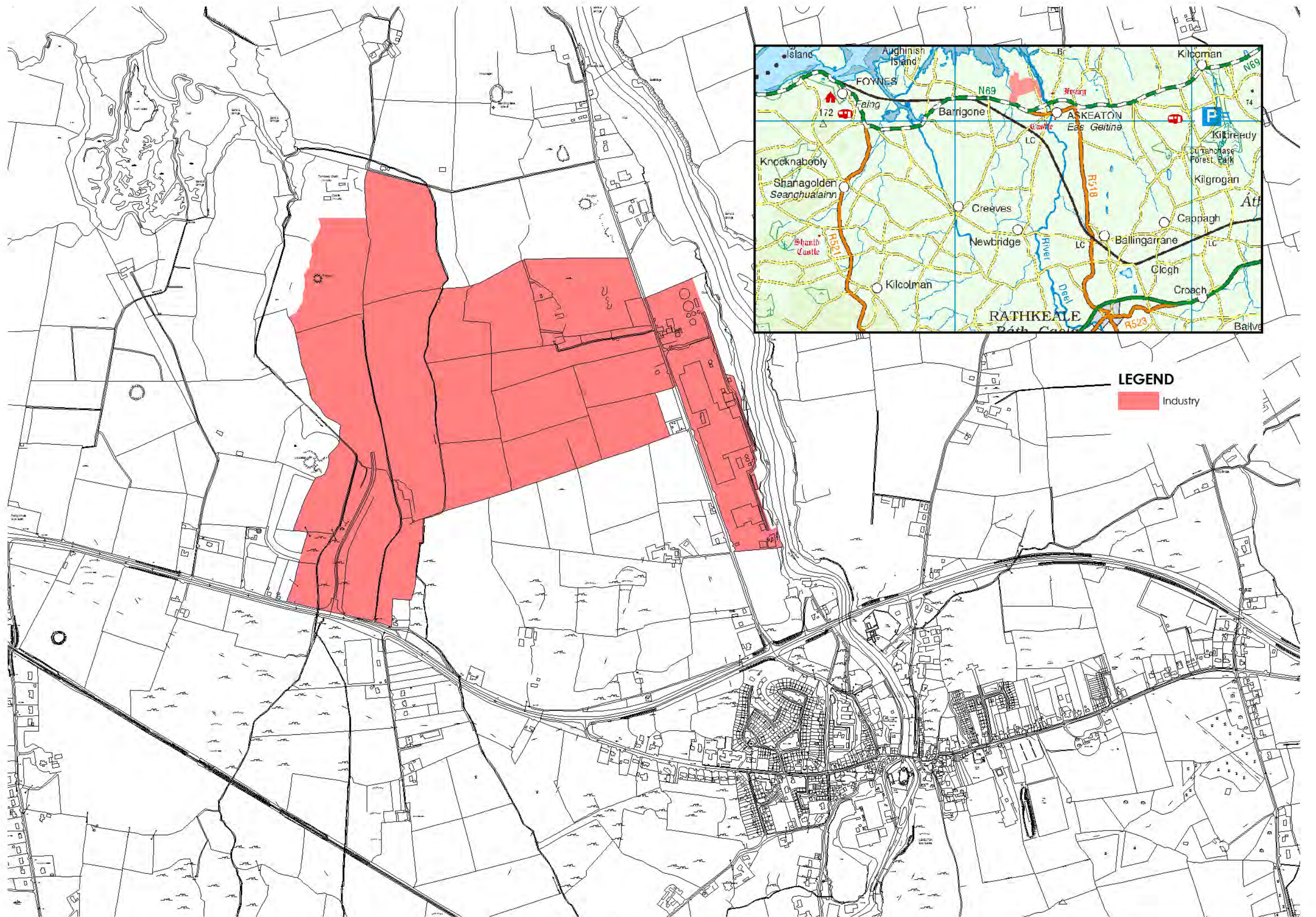
It is the objective of the Council to identify areas containing significant aggregate resources and to safeguard these valuable un-worked deposits for future extraction.

**Objective ED O29: Mineral Extraction and Environmental Impacts**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) minimise environmental and other impacts of mineral extraction through rigorous application of development management and enforcement requirements for quarry and other developments; and
- b) in particular, to have regard to visual impacts, methods of extraction, noise levels, dust prevention, protection of rivers, lakes and other water sources, impacts on residential and other amenities, impacts on the road network (particularly with regard to making good any damage to roads), road safety, phasing, re-instatement and landscaping of worked sites.

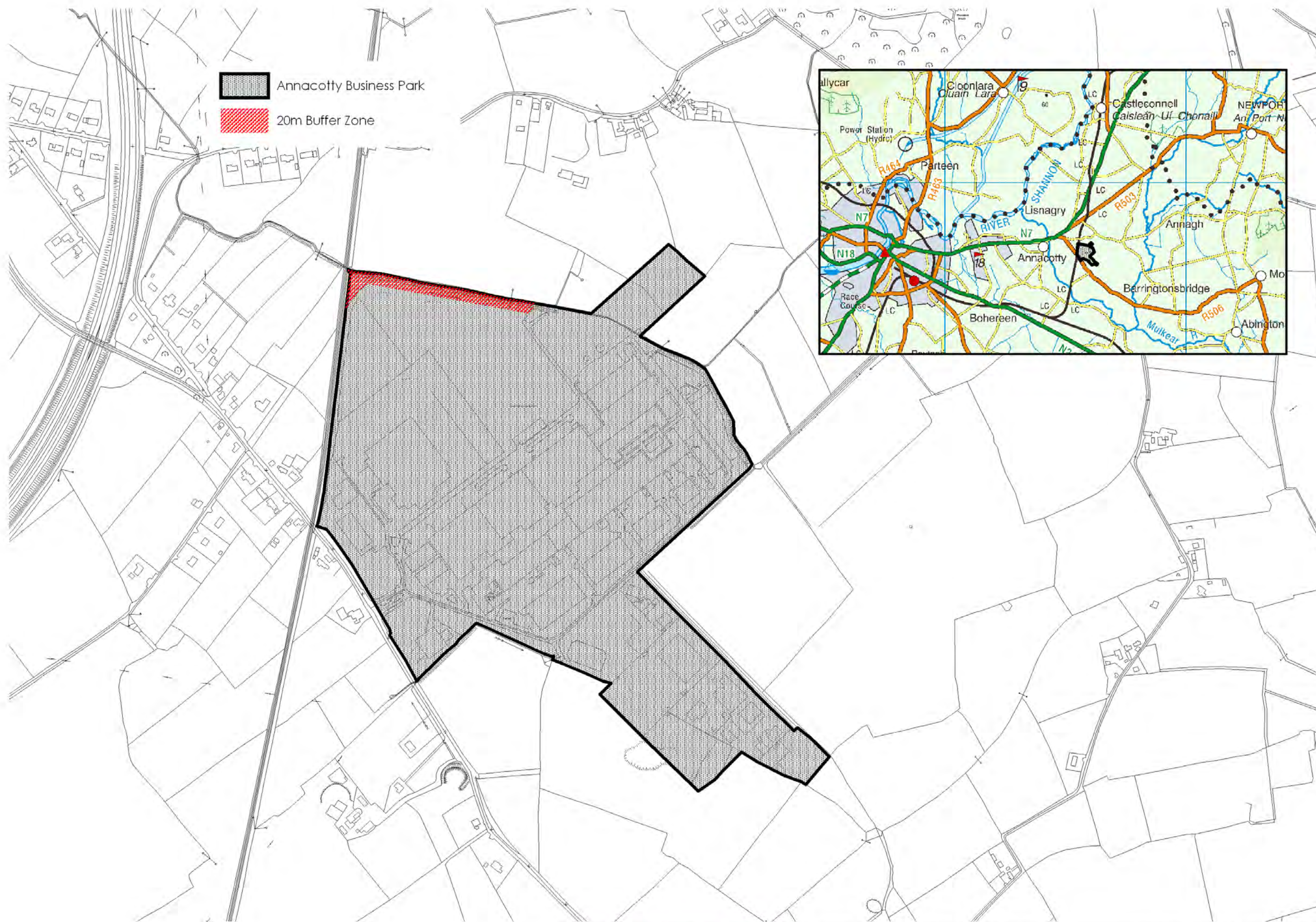














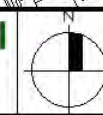






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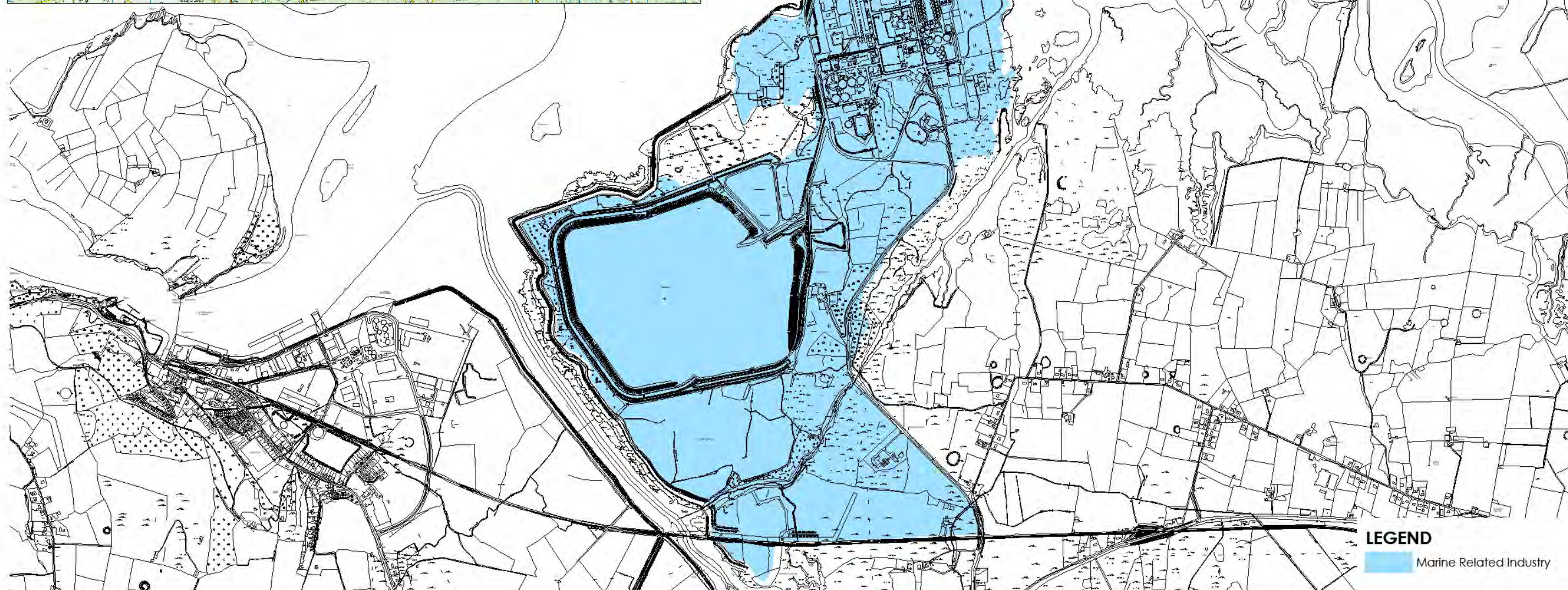
Marine Related Industry











**LEGEND**  
 Marine Related Industry





## Chapter 6

# Community and Recreation

This Chapter presents policies and objectives for community, recreation and leisure facilities based on the following principles:

- **Sustainable and balanced communities**

Promote at the earliest stage of planning, the provision of services and facilities that are compatible with housing development and that are required for sustainable and balanced communities.

- **Strengthen settlements**

Strengthen the fabric of towns and villages through the promotion of adequate provision of community services and facilities of high standard, which are age appropriate and accessible for all age groups and sectors of society, in the most appropriate locations in partnership with all relevant bodies and groups.

- **Provision of co-ordinated facilities and services**

Promote the provision of, and optimum use of, co-ordinated community facilities and services to facilitate social integration, and integrated community development through state, local authority and voluntary sector partnerships.

- **Retention of services and facilities**

Ensure the retention of services and facilities in the County in partnership with all relevant bodies and groups and to work with the local communities to enhance the use of physical resources.

## **6.1 Definitions of Community Infrastructure and Recreation**

### **6.1.1 Community Infrastructure**

Community infrastructure refers to the complex system of facilities, programmes and social networks that improve quality of life. The term community infrastructure is more encompassing than community facilities as they contribute to capacity building in a community, thereby supporting a sustainable community. From a planning perspective under the remit of the County Development Plan, community facilities are non-residential land uses with the principal purpose of providing a service or facility to a local community. Such uses may include, but are not limited to: community, educational, social, health, childcare, cultural, religious and leisure facilities. Such facilities have a significant impact on quality of life and must be distributed in the County in tandem with population growth to maximise efficiency, accessibility, and in accordance with the hierarchy of settlements established by this plan in the interests of sustainability. Opportunity should be taken to integrate complementary development of education, community, sports and commercial facilities where possible to create community hubs or more specifically recreation and sports hubs.

While the Council is not responsible for the provision of some community infrastructure, such as health care facilities, and schools, its role is to use measures such as land use zoning and development standards to enable the establishment of such infrastructure in optimum locations.

### **6.1.2 Recreation and Leisure**

Recreation is defined as ‘comprising all positive activities in which a person may choose to take part that will make his or her leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable, and personally satisfying’ according to Teenspace 2007. ‘Teenspace’ is the current government policy document from the Minister for Children regarding a national recreation policy for young people. It is considered that this definition is applicable to all ages.

## **6.2 Introduction**

Social infrastructure plays a crucial role in strengthening the settlement structure as determined by the settlement hierarchy identified in the Plan under the Council’s settlement strategy, by attracting and maintaining resident populations. Through supporting communities, settlements become places attractive to live in offering educational facilities, employment, delivery of local services and amenities.

The dispersed nature of the population in Limerick limits the economic viability of providing public, social and cultural services. Furthermore, the community sector is under considerable pressure due to changing work patterns and hours, and levels of resourcing and volunteering. The current economic climate and that envisaged in the

lifetime of the Plan is a further constraint on social infrastructure and community initiatives.

A key component of the community and recreational infrastructure is to continue to support the development of such activities in a co-ordinated manner to ensure the use of the existing facilities is maximised, and identifying with other agencies, future needs. The Planning Authority encourages a ‘whole-of-life-cycle’ approach to the provision of community and recreational services. It is necessary that the fundamentals of sustainability are applied to ensure there is integration of the school, community facilities, employment, transport and amenities with housing development in a timely and cost effective manner. Such considerations are crucial to developing high quality sustainable settlements throughout the County according to the settlement hierarchy of this Plan and to enable settlements to serve their rural hinterland.

Over the last decade residential and economic development has facilitated the provision of a range of community and recreational facilities. In some areas of the County however, this provision has not kept pace with the growth of residential development and the level of community, recreational and cultural facilities remains inadequate to serve the needs and expectations of the local community. Where residential development is located away from necessary facilities, there is a greater dependency on private modes of transport. This situation can be remedied where facilities, necessary for everyday living, are located within walking distance of residential development. It is essential to strike a balance between the residential mix and the associated social, economic and recreational facilities provided in order to achieve more balanced and largely self-sufficient communities.

The Council shall continue to use its powers under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 to prepare a Development Contribution Scheme requiring developers to contribute to the development of amenities in the County. In recent years the Council has facilitated the development of many amenity projects either directly, or in partnership with other agencies and community groups. These projects ranged from public parks, playgrounds, tourism, youth facilities, arts/culture, swimming pool, and broadband facilities.

The Council, through the Community and Enterprise Department are in the process of establishing, with other agencies, a recreational strategy for the County for the whole of life cycle. The aim of the strategy is to identify the recreational needs of the County and provide an integrated strategy capable of delivering, maintaining, and managing facilities to meet these needs.

**COM P1      It is the policy of the Council to seek to improve the provision of community infrastructure and recreational opportunities for the wider community in co-operation with relevant bodies, in a sustainable manner in accordance with the settlement strategy of this Plan.**

**Objective COM O1: Identify Community Infrastructure and Recreational and Leisure Needs of Settlements**

It is the Council's objective to identify through the Local Area Plan process, or the preparation of village design statements, social and community infrastructure needs of settlements throughout the County having regard to their population targets. Appropriate phasing shall be required for developments to ensure that such facilities are provided in tandem with the completion stages of the development.

All residential developments of 5 houses or greater will be required to submit a Sustainability Statement and Social Infrastructure Assessment – see Development Management Guidelines, Chapter 10.

**Objective COM O2: Provision of Community Facilities**

It is the Council's objective to ensure new residential developments incorporate appropriate provision for community and recreational facilities for the benefit of local residents or are located within easy access to such facilities. In assessing new applications for housing the Council shall seek, where necessary, services that are required to meet the needs of the community, and/or impose levies to assist in the provision of community facilities through the Development Contribution Scheme, or contribute to services already provided.

**Objective COM O3: Community Infrastructure Strengthening the Settlement Core**

It is the Council's objective to strengthen the fabric of towns and villages and service neighbouring rural communities through promotion and provision of co-ordinated, good quality community facilities, and whole-of-life recreational services and initiatives, which facilitate social integration and integrated community development through state, local authority and voluntary sector partnerships.

**Objective COM O4: Co-operation with Other Agencies**

It is the Council's objective to:

- a) Ensure the retention of services and facilities in the County in partnership with all relevant bodies and groups and to work with the local community to enhance use of physical resources.
- b) Continue to co-operate with statutory bodies and other agencies including the voluntary sector, residents, business and environmental groups to counter disadvantage and social exclusion and secure improvements in the quality of life.

**Objective COM O5: Accessibility for the Wider Community**

It is the Council's objective to:

- a) Seek the provision of appropriate, inclusive and accessible, safe amenity, recreational open space and community facilities that are available for all sectors of the community, both urban and rural at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work.
- b) Ensure that community facilities, recreation, play and leisure facilities are fully accessible to all users and are compliant with current legislative requirements.

**Objective COM O6: New Development**

Proposals for recreation, leisure and community facilities and extensions, conversions and reuse of existing facilities shall be permitted where it can be demonstrated that such facilities will:

- (a) be accessible to local residents, pedestrians, cyclists and those with special mobility needs;
- (b) not significantly detract from the amenity and character of the surrounding area; and
- (c) provide adequate access and parking facilities.

**Objective COM O7: Safeguarding Existing Facilities / Change of use**

It is the objective of the Council to protect existing community, leisure and recreation facilities from change of use or redevelopment to other uses, unless the following requirements are clearly demonstrated:

- a) There is no longer a need for the existing facility. This should take into account the long-term needs of the community, the type and recreational and amenity value of such provision; or
- b) A replacement facility of equal or greater community leisure or recreational benefit is to be provided for the respective area and made available prior to the commencement of development. The location of the replacement facility shall be at least as accessible as the existing facility, or
- c) The retention or enhancement of the facility can best be achieved by the redevelopment of a small part of the site that will not significantly affect its sporting, recreational or amenity value.

**Objective COM O8: Multi-Use of Facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to encourage the optimal use of community facilities, and in assessing planning applications for community, health, education or leisure uses, the Council will expect proposals to facilitate multi-purpose uses through their design and layout.

### 6.3 Health Facilities

On January 1st, 2005, the new Health Service Executive was established, with full operational responsibility for the running of the health services in Ireland. The former Mid-Western Health Board, of which County Limerick formed part, is now part of the Health Service Executive, and is known as HSE West. The HSE provides a wide range of community services through health centres throughout the County.

Health facilities in the County continue to develop. During the 2005-2011 County Development Plan private hospitals have been granted planning permission adjacent to the Mid-West Regional Hospital in Dooradoyle, on the Dock Road, Ballykeefe in 2005 and in Adare in 2006. A substantial extension to the Mid-West Regional Hospital in Dooradoyle has also been completed.

#### **Objective COM O9: Location of health care facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to encourage the adequate provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, covering the entire spectrum of facilities from hospitals to the provision of appropriate community based care facilities, in suitable locations subject to proper planning considerations, and the principles of sustainable development.

#### **Objective COM O10: Emergency Services**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate the accommodation for emergency services including fire services, rescue services and acute care, in locations that facilitate ease of access and safe functioning with respect to the road network.

### 6.4 Educational and Library Facilities

There are a total of 118 Primary Schools in County Limerick, 4 of which are special needs schools. County Limerick VEC is involved directly in the provision of post-primary provision throughout the County and is a co-patron of the Community School in Hospital. Currently there are 21 post primary schools in County Limerick. The total number of post primary schools in the County has decreased in recent times. However, the economy of scale, enhancement of education facilities and infrastructure, and the enrichment of, and access to, more comprehensive curricular opportunities has increased significantly. A strategic partnership approach, spearheaded by County Limerick VEC in relation to a county-wide spatial strategy at post-primary level, seeks to ensure that each rural locality has easy access to the most qualitative, modern learning opportunities and infrastructural facilities. Third level education is provided by Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick School of Art and Design, Mary Immaculate College- University of Limerick and University of Limerick in the city and the environs.



The Council acknowledges the importance of the third level institutions including University of Limerick and Limerick Institute of Technology to Limerick city, county, and the Midwest region. The quality of these institutions are important assets to the Gateway status of the region to providing internationally recognized education, employment opportunities, attracting economic investment into the region as well as contributing the recreational, amenity and cultural needs of the county.

The Public Library Service is socially inclusive and plays a very important community role as centers of knowledge, information and culture. Public Libraries have the added advantage of being open to everyone whatever their age, education and nationality. They are an important resource for the promotion of community development, for social integration and, increasingly, a focal point for people of all ethnic backgrounds.

The Governments National Library policy, 'Branching Out/Future Directions (2008 - 2012)', identified the Library Service as having the potential to make a major contribution to two overall government objectives;

- a) To ensure Ireland moves rapidly to embrace the opportunities of the Information Society to support economic, social progress and a more participative democracy; and
- b) To establish an inclusive society in which citizens could participate fully in the social and economic life of the country.

Since the adoption of the 2005-2011 County Development Plan, the County Council has completed a new area office, library and arts centre in Rathkeale, and renovated and constructed the area office, library and fire station in Kilmallock.

Since 2005 refurbishment has been completed in the library in Glin. Disability access improvements have been completed at a number of libraries and the County library headquarters has been relocated to Lisanallta House in Doordoyle.

#### **Objective COM O11: Location of Schools**

It is the Council's objective to facilitate the educational authorities in expanding schools in tandem with residential development. Educational facilities shall be located where possible, in close proximity to other community services, and accessible by various modes of transport and have regard to the principles of social integration. Multi-use of school facilities, for other community programmes and initiatives other than mainstream education shall be encouraged, in order to maximise resources and support sustainable communities.

#### **Objective COM O12: Reservation of Lands**

It is the Council's objective to facilitate the development of new and upgraded schools through the identification of, and reservation of, suitable lands and in this regard will co-operate with the Department of Education and Science in planning, zoning for, and

providing for both primary and secondary schools. This will have regard to the settlement strategy of this Plan and the ‘The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government’, July 2008.

#### **Objective COM O13: Library Services**

It is the objective of the Council to make provision for new library facilities, or extensions to existing facilities, sufficient in their overall extent, quality and distribution to meet the needs for library services in suitable locations.

### **6.5 Arts, Culture and Irish Language**

In its Arts policy, Limerick County Council recognises the value of the arts to the social, cultural and economic development of the County, and their impact, direct and indirect, on the County’s communities.

The guiding principles of the policy are:

- a) *to create* an environment that nurtures the individual artist
- b) *to implement* an inclusive wide ranging and quality arts programme
- c) *to provide* enhanced opportunity of access to the arts for the people of the County
- d) *to demonstrate* that participation in the arts is not only life enhancing but often life transforming
- e) *to contribute* through the medium of the arts to the creation of a strong cultural identity for County Limerick
- f) *to support* existing arts infrastructure
- g) *to identify* and develop new, appropriate arts infrastructure initiatives.

Limerick County Council Arts Office annual programmes reflect these guiding principles and are implemented on an art form and geographical spread throughout County Limerick. Annual programmes include; the development of the County Limerick Youth Theatre, the County Limerick Youth Choir, wide ranging arts initiatives for primary and post primary schools, an integrated dance programme that includes disabled and non-disabled people, a music programme that includes a classical music series, a community women’s’ singing group, a wide ranging literature programme that is built around resident poets and writers, and the establishment of the National Michael Hartnett Poetry Award and the associated literature and arts festival.

#### **Objective COM O14: Arts**

It is the objective of the Council to consider the arts as playing a central role in the promotion of the County as a quality location to live, and invest in, and the enrichment of the quality of the life for the existing population. Its role as a leisure time activity will also be promoted through the Council’s Recreational Strategy.

Ghlac an Chomhairle Contae le Scéim faoin Acht Teanga agus beidh na moltaí sa phlean sin á chur i gerích de réir a cheile faoi mar atá sa scéim. Beidh seirbhís trí Ghaeilge á chur ar fáil don phobal agus beidh fáilte roimh gnó trí Ghaeilge leis an gComhairle.

**Objective COM O15: Gaeilge agus Logainmneacha (Irish and Placenames)**

Caithfear aon nuafhorbairt cónaithe a dhéanfar a ainmniú i nGaeilge nó i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla mar choinníoll den chead pleanála. Beidh an Chomhairle freagrach as grinnfhiosrúchán agus roghnúchán ainmneacha oiriúnacha i gcomhairle leis an gCoimisiún Logainmneacha más gá agus breathnóidh sí ar na logainmneacha atá ann cheana féin, ar stair agus ar oidhreacht áitiúil an cheantair.

Any new residential developments shall be named in Irish or in Irish and English as a condition of the planning permission. The Council will have responsibility of vetting and selecting appropriate names in consultation with the placenames commission, and/or local historians if required, and having consideration for the existing placenames, history and local heritage of the area.

## 6.6 Childcare Facilities

The development of the childcare sector is critical to the future economic, social and human resource development of County Limerick. A supply of childcare places is necessary in order to promote participation in the labour force and increase and sustain economic productivity. The availability of childcare is a significant determinant in enabling citizens to access training and self-development opportunities. The provision of childcare is generally accompanied by the provision of ancillary family and social supports. Successive OECD reports (2005, 2006) have pointed to the contributions which early childhood education can make to child development. Research undertaken by Pobal shows the positive impacts that can be derived from school aged childcare services in terms of addressing educational disadvantage. Ireland's National Spatial Strategy (2001) identifies childcare as one of the health and family well-being services that should be available at local level.

Since 2001 County Limerick Childcare Committee has been allocated responsibility by government for animating and supporting the development of the childcare sector in the County. The Committee, which operates under the aegis of Limerick County Development Board, employs a team of development officers who work with groups and individuals to compile childcare development plans and make funding applications. Therefore, by pursuing collaborative approaches, based on partnership and parity of esteem, a number of organisations in County Limerick can make positive and tangible contributions to promoting the development of a vibrant childcare sector. Childcare facilities are accommodated in appropriate premises, suitably located with sufficient open space in accordance with the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.

The Council will facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in a manner, which is compatible with land-use and transportation policies, and adheres to the principles of sustainable development and social inclusion. In particular, the location of childcare facilities shall minimise travel distance and maximise opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

Suitable locations for childcare facilities are as follows:

- Town and neighbourhood centres,
- Areas of concentrated employment,
- Large scale retail developments,
- In or within close proximity of schools and educational facilities,
- In or adjacent to community centres, and
- Adjacent to public transport nodes.

#### **Objective COM O16: Provision of Services**

It is the objective of the Council to permit the provision of part-time, full day care and after school care facilities provided that:

- a) the activities would not cause an unacceptable level of disturbance to the amenities of people living nearby;
- b) traffic and car parking generated by the development would not have an unacceptable impact or be a hazard to road safety; and
- c) the development is of a suitably high quality standard to benefit the children using the facility, and
- d) the location is sustainable, minimizing the amount of car trips.

#### **Objective COM O17: Childcare Strategy for the County**

It is the objective of the Council to support and facilitate the Childcare Strategy for the County prepared by the County Childcare Committee in accordance with the 'Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities', DEHLG 2001.

### **6.7 Burial Grounds**

The Council continues to the work with the local community regarding the maintenance of burial grounds, and recognises the importance of the conservation of such facilities as having an important historical and cultural value.

#### **Objective COM O18: Conservation**

It is an objective of the Council to protect burial grounds and encourage their rehabilitation and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles.

**Objective COM O19: Provision of burial grounds**

It is the objective of the Council to

- a) continue to provide non-denominational burial plots in burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds based on a number of factors including population served, cost of development and other considerations, and to encourage local community groups and/or individuals to develop, manage and maintain new burial facilities.
- b) be pro-active and to give technical advice in the identification/investigation of possible burial sites in the Castletroy, Monaleen, Ballysimon and Annacotty areas.

**6.8 Social Inclusion**

Combat Poverty define social inclusion as ‘ensuring the marginalised and those living in poverty have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives, allowing them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.’\* Social exclusion is defined by the same source as ‘the process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, low education or inadequate life skills. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and little chance of influencing decisions or policies that affect them, and little chance of bettering their standard of living.’ The Council through its role as a planning authority can contribute to social inclusion through promoting an equal and fair distribution of opportunities and services for the population throughout the County, taking into account the principles of sustainability and maximising resources. The Council recognises that social inclusion is a priority of the National Development Plan 2007-2013. Limerick County Council with other local anti-poverty agencies is currently in the process of producing a Local Anti-Poverty Social Inclusion Strategy.

\*[www.combatpoverty.ie/povertyinireland/glossary](http://www.combatpoverty.ie/povertyinireland/glossary)

**Objective COM O20: Social Inclusion**

It is the objective of the Council regarding social inclusion:

- a) to promote a more inclusive society by contributing to the alleviation of social exclusion, poverty and deprivation, and to include those who are socially disadvantaged and marginalised in decision-making,
- b) to promote, through the planning system, more inclusive and integrated communities,
- c) to encourage the integration of community facilities within new and existing communities, and to discourage proposals that would cause unnecessary isolation or other access difficulties, particularly for people with disabilities, older people and children.

## 6.9 Inclusive Access

Inclusive access can be achieved cost effectively by proper design and management of access at the right time. The following are the principal commitments of Limerick County Council in relation to inclusive access to date:

- Limerick County Council is one of the many local authorities in Ireland that are committed to the principles of the Barcelona declaration project.<sup>1</sup>
- Under the Disability Act, 2005, Local Authorities are obliged to carry out access audits and implementation plans for all its properties and services. In keeping with this, a comprehensive access audit has been carried out by the Council in 2006.
- The Council is committed to a five year implementation plan based on this access audit. This plan covers the accessibility of the physical environment, accessibility services and information themselves, and procurement. To date, the Council has engaged in extensive investment of over €2.869 million in various projects on this plan.

The Council has led by example and will continue to ensure that the accessibility of the environment for all is improved in accordance with priority and opportunity. All developments should accord with specific standards of design to ensure that access to buildings and around spaces is as inclusive as possible.

The following are three important sources of guidance:

- 1) Buildings for Everyone (National Disability Authority) 2002.
- 2) A code of practice for heritage buildings and sites (NDA 2009, currently in Draft form).
- 3) Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the following website location <http://www.universaldesign> . This enunciates seven key principles, internationally recognised as central to universal design; the website also contains a valuable checklist in designing buildings and a list of built environment resources and standards.

### **Objective COM O21: Universal Access**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that all new developments involving public access achieve minimum standards as set out in the Development Management section of this Plan and in the NDA 'Buildings for Everyone' 2002 and any subsequent amendments to this national guidance.
- b) Promote high standards in universal access in new developments involving public access in accordance with Universal Design principles.

<sup>1</sup> The Barcelona Declaration 1995 is a Europe wide declaration committing signatory authorities to a wide range of actions to improve access for the disabled, emanating from a conference 'The City and the Disabled'. Even though non-statutory it is a powerful declaration to which many local authorities throughout Europe are now committed. Each adhering Local Authority is obliged to undertake an implementation of the plan and to establish structures for on-going consultation with people with disabilities and their representatives.

- c) Secure retrospective improvements to the existing access network, where opportunity arises and available resources allow.
- d) Investigate the scope for a more systematic approach to enable extension of the public access network on universal access principles, to identify gaps, and address a wide variety of local needs and priorities.
- e) Priority shall be given to developments with high pedestrian demand, and developments with significant impact on areas identified as having particular accessibility problems.

## **6.10 Leisure and Recreational Facilities**

Significant progress has been made in the development of public open space in the County. Approximately 933 hectares of open space has been zoned in eighteen local area plans throughout the County. A new high quality neighbourhood park in Castletroy was opened in 2008. Funding was secured by the Council from the FAI towards providing an all-weather pitch in each of the Electoral Areas in the County. These new pitches are located in Abbeyfeale, Rathkeale, Patrickswell, Hospital and Cappamore. The Council also secured funding from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism for a new swimming pool and leisure in Askeaton, which opened to the public in 2007. The local community in Askeaton and the Council part-funded the swimming pool and leisure complex.

### **6.10.1 Playgrounds**

The Play Policy for County Limerick was adopted in 2005. Subsequently, playgrounds have been provided funding from the Development Contribution Scheme and this has been spent on developing playgrounds in Newcastle West, Kilmallock, Cappamore, Abbeyfeale, Askeaton and Castleconnell. Currently proposals are at the design stage for playground developments in Rathkeale, Croom, Bruff and Kilfinane. In 2008 the Council launched a Community Playground Grant Scheme.

#### **Objective COM O22: Playgrounds**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote the increase of public high quality and safe play opportunities available to children.
- b) Ensure that surfaces and play equipment provided in public playgrounds or publicly funded playgrounds conform to the Irish standards for play equipment and surfacing.
- c) Continue to promote the objectives of the County Limerick Play Plan.
- d) Seek the provision and suitable management of safe surfaced children's play areas in new housing developments, and to implement measures to find suitable sites for their provision in existing residential areas.
- e) Engage with the community to assist and support them in the provision of playground facilities

### 6.10.2 Open Space

The Council will expect open space provision in new residential developments to demonstrate the following principles:

1. Open space shall be provided and designed as an integral component of any proposal.
2. Areas should be of a demonstrable recreational or amenity value. Small dysfunctional open spaces are to be avoided.
3. Open space shall be easily accessible from all dwellings which the space is designed to serve.
4. The design and location of open spaces should have regard to the amenities of nearby dwellings. For example, open space and associated play areas shall be overlooked by the front of dwellings for maximum surveillance in the interest of safety.
5. Natural features shall be protected and incorporated into the open space.

#### **Objective COM O23: Quality of Open Space**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote and facilitate the provision of high quality, well designed open space for all at a convenient distance from homes and places of work.
- b) Apply the standards of the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Urban Design Manual (DEHLG May 2009) as appropriate. With regard to apartment developments the standards of the Guidelines on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DEHLG 2007) shall apply.
- c) Seek the provision of appropriate managed open space, play areas or other informal amenity areas for the benefit of local residents in all housing developments. To meet this standard, suitable areas of land shall be identified and reserved for the provision of public open space, in line with the standards set out below and in the Development Management Guidelines in Chapter 10.

#### **Objective COM O24: Existing Passive Open Space**

It is the objective of the Council generally to maintain existing passive open spaces in that use and only permit other development which is complementary to the open space function.

#### **Objective COM O25: Active Open Space**

It is the objective of Council to promote the provision of active open space uses for parks, outdoor recreational activities, sports centres, sports pitches, outdoor recreational training centres at appropriate locations taking into account environmental considerations, traffic safety, and impact on amenities in the area and the settlement strategy of this Plan.



### 6.10.3 Walking Routes, Cycling Routes and Rights of Way

Limerick County Council recognises the importance of cycling and walking as a mode of transport and recreational activity which is potentially accessible to the wider community. The Council has spent €200,000 from the Development Contribution Scheme in the area of mountain biking and €200,000 has been spent in developing Curraghchase Forest Park. For short trips walking and cycling are cost effective, non-polluting and highly flexible modes of transport that foster improved health and wellbeing. The provision of designated cycle routes, walking trails/ pathways and improved road surfaces also supports tourism by facilitating cycling and walking holidays, and enhances the local tourism product. There are a number of walking routes in the County. Such routes open the amenity asset of the County and they provide opportunities for the enhancement of quality of life and health.

Cycling will be encouraged through the provision of on and off-road cycle routes and traffic management measures that give cyclists priority. New and upgraded road developments will be encouraged to integrate cycle lanes. These will include urban/village developments and short distance cycles. Cycle routes need to be well provided for in terms of parking infrastructure at the destination. The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020-Smarter Travel' Department of Transport, and any subsequent manuals issued under the umbrella of this Framework will form the basis for informing the design of cycle facilities.

Since the adoption of the 2005 -2011 County Development Plan Limerick County Council secured funding of over €433,000 from Fáilte Ireland under the NDP Tourism Product Development for development and upgrade works to the Great Southern Trail in particular the dismantled railway from Barnagh to Newcastle to Ardagh. The development of the Great Southern Trail is part of a national designated cycling and walking route between the towns of Newcastle and Abbeyfeale. The works consist of the provision of a path for 12km, associated drainage, fencing, signage and repair to structures.

#### **Objective COM O26: National Cycle Policy Framework**

It is the objective of the Council to support the policies of the 'National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 – Smarter Travel', Department of Transport, April 2009.

#### **Objective COM O27: Co-operation with Other Agencies**

- a) It is the objective of the Council to co-operate with representative bodies of walking and cycling groups, landowners, farmers, local groups and communities, and others to support the improvement and development of walking and cycling routes in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- b) It is the objective of the Council to commence an assessment into the feasibility of working in partnership with state, private and voluntary sectors to develop a walking and

cycling policy for the county within the lifetime of the Plan with a view to establishing a register of walking routes, legal status of same, the mapping and promotion of guided walks and developing links with neighbouring counties.

**Objective COM O28: Encourage Active and Healthy Lifestyle**

a) It is the objective of the Council to promote the development of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling facilities in the towns and villages to minimise the dependence on private motor vehicles and to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. New and upgraded road developments will be encouraged to integrate cycle lanes. These will include urban/village developments and short distance routes.

b) It is the objective of the Council to promote and support the County Limerick Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011 and the pending County Recreational Strategy 2010 – 2014 when fully assessed and adopted by elected members.

**Objective COM O29: Proposed Developments and Design Considerations**

It is the objective of the Council to:

a) Encourage the successful incorporation of safe and efficient cycle ways, accessible footpaths, and pedestrian routes, and general cycling facilities into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses. (Refer to Development Management Guidelines)

b) Provide cycle ways, where appropriate, as part of all road improvement / redesign schemes ensuring, where possible, that cycle ways and footpaths are effectively separated from major vehicular carriageways,

c) Prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.

d) Require planning applications for residential, commercial, retail, community, educational and industrial developments to demonstrate the proposal's accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

e) Seek provision of appropriate, well-designed pedestrian ways for residential development proposals to link with amenities and facilities. Such proposals shall adhere to the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Urban Design Manual (DEHLG May 2009)

**Objective COM O30: New Developments and Right of Way**

It is the objective of the Council to generally support the creation and preservation of public rights of way in urban and rural areas and initiatives for establishing walking routes, where appropriate, in order to facilitate general accessibility. In order to link amenities and facilities, the Council may have to seek the provision of pedestrian ways as a condition of planning permission.

### 6.11 Forestry and Recreation

The use of forestry within public areas, such as the Curragh Chase Forest Park, provide the people of the County with a valuable amenity for pursuing leisure and recreational activity, while at the same time providing a useful attraction for tourism purposes. See section 5.5.2 in Chapter 5 Economic Development in relation to tourism.

#### **Objective COM O31: Forestry and Recreation**

- a) It is the objective of the Council to encourage the multiple use of forestry with public access available, to promote leisure, recreational and tourism activities in a safe and environmentally sustainable manner.
- b) The Council will encourage access to forestry for walking routes, mountain bike trails, bridle paths, and other non-noise generating activities. Proposals shall have regard to the Forestry Service 2006 publication, 'Forest Recreation in Ireland – A Guide for Forest Owners and Managers'.

### 6.12 Waterways and Recreation

The Shannon Estuary and other watercourses in the County provide opportunities for water based recreational activity and alternatives for tourism and recreational development. It is considered that the Shannon Estuary and Deel estuary are under-utilised for leisure purposes. Developments involving the provision of on-shore facilities to develop and utilise the potential of these waterways for water-based sports and leisure activities such as swimming, diving, sailing, angling and similar activities will be considered, subject to satisfaction of planning, environmental, archaeological and safety considerations.

#### **Objective COM O32: Accessibility to Waterways**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote and protect and improve public accessibility to the County's rivers and lakes, and
- b) Protect the Shannon Estuary, rivers, and lakes from ecological damage.
- c) Seek the provision of a riparian corridor/ buffer zone, where appropriate and subject to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, along river banks and streams for the purposes of providing habitat, river maintenance, access for anglers, walkers and to not permit development encroaching on these corridors where appropriate.

#### **Objective COM O33: New Urban Development and Waterways**

It is an objective of the Council to encourage new development in urban areas including the environs, towns and villages to front onto waterways, and where possible the developer to provide new public walkways to acceptable safety standards along the waterways which may include the provision and maintenance of public rescue equipment, signage and communication facilities.

**Objective COM O34: Development Associated with Water Sports**

The Council will only permit proposals for development associated with water sports adjacent to waterways where the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) The proposed facilities are compatible with any existing use of the water including non-recreational uses;
- b) The development will not negatively impact on water quality, ecology, visual or environmental amenity;
- c) The development shall demonstrate that it is sensitively designed to minimise any negative visual impact on the amenity of the site.
- d) Any slipways shall be made available for use at all times by the water emergency services.

**Objective COM O35: Support the Midwest Regional Strategy for Developing Water Sports**

It is the objective of the Council to support the New Strategy for Developing the Water Sports Sectors 2009-2011 launched by the Midwest Regional Authority, April 2009 as an EU programme to develop the marine leisure sector and its positive economical, and environmental impacts in North Tipperary, Clare and Limerick.

## Chapter 7

### Environment and Heritage

This Chapter presents various policies and objectives for Environment and Heritage having regard to the overall aims of the Council as follows:

- To properly protect, manage and enhance the natural and built environment and cultural heritage for the benefit of the existing and future generations.
- Promote the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage, cultural heritage, archaeological heritage, landscape, architectural heritage, historic and designed landscapes, biodiversity and the built environment as important elements of the long term economic growth and regeneration of the County.
- Promote high standards for conserving and restoring the built environment and promote its value in improving living standards and its benefits to the economy.
- Ensure that the principle of ‘polluter pays’ and the precautionary approach to environmental impacts are key elements of any policies that deal with environmental and heritage matters.
- Ensure that water and air quality shall be of the highest standard to ensure the long term economic, social and environmental well being of the County’s resources.

## **7.1 The Role of the Planning Authority**

The value and importance of the County's natural heritage is recognised both by individuals and a range of diverse groups. Community groups have established networks of neighbourhood walks and corporate bodies have constructed bird-watch locations in their grounds. Limerick County Council maintains the spectacular riverside walks in the Clare Glens. As the Planning Authority for the area, the Council has a crucial role to play in the protection and enhancement of the County's environment and heritage. The demands being placed on our environment, both natural and built, to satisfy the needs of farming, forestry, industry, housing, transport, leisure and urban growth are ever-changing and increasing. The principal role of the Planning Authority is to strike a balance between the two. It seeks to maintain a high quality environment while satisfying economic and social needs. The planning system guides the development and use of land in the public interest and the common good in a sustainable fashion.

In the future environmental quality will likely offer more opportunities than constraints. There are jobs and, therefore income, in tourism, agriculture, forestry and the service sector. All these depend on a quality environment. As most of the land in County Limerick is owned and managed by private individuals, practical responsibility for sustainable development rests with them. However, it is the overall aim of the Planning Authority to allow development within the capacity of the environment, to avoid irreversible damage, have regard to the preservation and conservation of the County's natural and man-made assets in co-operation with the appropriate bodies and interests.

At national level Ireland has recognised the importance of its natural and built heritage through becoming a signatory to international conventions. These include the Florence Convention for the Protection of the European Landscape, the Valetta Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage and the Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage. These international commitments are backed by appropriate legislation, which has implications at local level, and the Planning Authority has cognisance of this. European Union Directives also have implications in regard to how the Planning Authority, and those developing and using land in the County, conduct their business. As legislation is enacted, or Directives are translated into domestic law, the Planning Authority will respond to the evolving situation. If necessary, it will review the Development Plan to take account of any changes that may be necessary during the lifetime of the Plan.

## **7.2 Heritage**

### **7.2.1 Heritage Legislation and Policy**

There is a large range of heritage-related legislation and in this section reference can be made only to key elements of Irish Heritage Legislation. Much of the Irish material has been informed by European Directives and this aspect of Irish Heritage legislation is covered in more detail later in the chapter. To further complicate the situation, legislation that at first glance might not appear to have a connection with heritage issues could exert a huge influence on it. One example of this is EC Directive 97/11/EC, the Directive relating to Environmental Impact Assessment which in

planning terms can often exert a huge influence on the local environment and by extension local Heritage.

Listed below is some of the key heritage legislation:

**Heritage and Planning legislation:**

- Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010
- Heritage Act 1995

**European Directives (EIS and SEA)**

- EC Directive 97/11/EC (Environmental Impact Assessment)
- EC Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

**Natural Heritage:**

- The Wildlife Act 2000
- EU Birds Directive (79/409/EC)
- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)

**Archaeology:**

- National Monuments Act 1930 and subsequent amendments
- National Cultural Institutions Act 1997

**Built Heritage**

- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999.
- Part IV (Architectural Heritage) Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2010
- Closely connected with legislation are international conventions which, when ratified, though not part of legislation often influences Government and by extension planning policy. Examples of this would include the Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe or the European Landscape Convention, also called the Florence Convention that came into being in 2004 and to which Ireland is a signatory.

**7.2.2 Appropriate assessment (Article 6 Assessment of the Habitats Directive)**

As outlined above one of the important pieces of legislation that exist for the protection of habits and by extension species in the EU is the Habitats Directive. In recent years this has been used increasingly and amongst its contents one of the most important is Article 6. What this part of the Habitats Directive is designed to do is to ensure that European designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas are adequately protected from the adverse effects of development. Article 6 determines the links between land use and conservation. As

part of this process it is necessary for development proposals to be assessed in order to determine their possible effects on the designated site. In this regard Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive state the following:

**Habitats Directive<sup>1</sup> – text of Article 6(3) and 6(4)**

Article 6(3) *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to **appropriate assessment** of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public*

6(4) *If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for **imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature**, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.*

*Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest”*

### **7.2.3 Limerick's Natural Environment**

Within County Limerick there exists a wide range of habitats, some are natural but there are many others which have evolved and been maintained as a result of management over long periods of time. These range from the Shannon estuary, to the Galtee uplands, with the central agricultural lowlands also being a valuable habitat. Such areas are coming under increasing pressure from development so there is a growing need for policies which will manage and conserve what is best in Limerick's landscape while at the same time successfully integrating suitable development.

In relation to designated sites and species the Planning Authority recommends that potential developers consult as early as possible with the relevant agencies (such as the Fisheries Board or the Parks and Wildlife Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and the Planning Authority in order to ensure that conservation concerns can be integrated into applications at as early a stage as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna



## 7.2.4 Conservation and Management of the Environment

### **Policy EH P1: Sustainable Management and Conservation**

**It is the policy of the Council to ensure the sustainable management and conservation of areas of natural environmental and geological value within the County.**

Many obligations have been placed on different agencies, not least the local authority, with regard to the conservation of sites and species. Currently many of these sites are being re-designated with boundaries being altered by the Parks and Wildlife Section of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In line with its responsibilities the County Council will pursue the following objectives to protect these sites and species.

## 7.2.5 Sites and Species Protection

The Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas in County Limerick are identified in Map Guides 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 in volume 2 of this County Development Plan. One of the habitats that is under the greatest threat in Limerick is peat land habitat. This faces a range of threats, from afforestation, agricultural improvement and also the development of wind farms.

### **Objective EH O1: Nature Conservation Sites**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Maintain the conservation value of those sites as defined in the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2010 (SPAs, SACs) or lands proposed for inclusion by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, as well as any other sites that may be so designated during the lifetime of this plan.
- b) Ensure that development projects and development plans likely to have significant effects on European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) are subject to an appropriate assessment and will not be permitted under this plan unless they comply with article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- c) .Maintain the conservation value of all Natural Heritage Areas and also Natural Heritage areas proposed for designation by the DEHLG as well as any other sites that may be so designated during the lifetime of the plan

### **Objective EH O2: Species Protection**

It is the objective of the Council to seek to protect plant, animal and bird species that have been identified by the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Wildlife Act and the Flora Protection Order in line with national and EU legislation

### 7.2.6 Conservation outside Protected Sites

**Objective EH O3: Conservation of Peat Land Sites which are not protected sites**

(a) It is the objective of the Council to seek the conservation and protection of features of natural interest such as appropriate woodlands and hedgerows, wetlands and uplands and places of high bio-diversity interest.

(b) It is the objective of the Council to co-operate with NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Services) and other interested parties in order to develop a high level wind farm deployment zone map based on appropriately detailed ecological site assessment of the upland blanket bog and heath areas within the county.

In addition the issue of the designation of much of West Limerick as a Special Protection Area has to be considered. The designation is for the purposes of the conservation of the hen harrier. It is often difficult to ascertain the presence or absence of this species from development sites. The presence of wind farms can pose a collision or displacement risk to harriers. Where such risk has been established and no mitigation measures are possible permission will not be granted for these developments. Wind energy developments can also pose a risk to other listed species such as grouse.

The issue of forestry in the uplands is also to be considered and while much of the forestry being planted in individual increments lies below the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) threshold, cumulatively it can often exceed the 50 hectare limit that requires an EIS. In such situations where such cumulative limits have been reached the Planning Authority will request an EIS.

### 7.2.7 Areas of Geological Interest

While an area such as the Burren in County Clare has been regarded as the premier geological attraction in the Mid West Region, this is not to say that there are not several areas of geological interest within the County. In the northern part of County Limerick, immediately close to the estuary areas such as Barrigone, some of the same characteristics as the Burren are exhibited. Individual sites such as Linfield Quarry, close to Pallasgrean in the east of the County are also important parts of Limerick's geological heritage. Linfield is noted for its basalt formations, which may well be unique in the country.

**Objective EH O4: Conservation of Geological Sites in County Limerick**

It is the objective of the Council to seek the conservation and protection of features of geological interest within the County, particularly those that would have been recognised in the past as Areas of Scientific Interest or by the Geological Survey of Ireland as being of particular value.

### 7.3 Landscape and Visual Amenity

#### 7.3.1 Trees, Tree Preservation Orders and Hedgerows

Trees, particularly native species, hedgerows and woodlands make an important contribution to the landscape of County Limerick. They provide shelter and visual screening in addition to supporting a wide range of wildlife.

Trees and in particular groups of trees can be locally important landscape features and when properly incorporated into development can help to integrate them into the surrounding landscape. Sensitively designed development can capitalise on this to ensure that landscape features such as trees play a part both in adding to the development's setting and also in helping the development to blend in with its surroundings.

Where trees and groups of trees are of particular importance in a local area and may be at risk from surrounding activities, consideration will be given to the making of tree preservation orders. It is proposed to carry out a survey of trees in the County, particularly those under threat and, where warranted, make tree preservation orders

It is important that new planting in the County serves not just to contribute to tree regeneration generally, but ensures that the age mix of trees within the County assures that there is always replacement stock at differing stages of growth.

#### 7.3.2 Enhancing Tree Cover within the County

##### **Objective EH O5: Enhancing Tree Cover**

It is the objective of the Council to preserve and enhance the general level of tree cover within the County, both in the countryside at large and also in the County's towns. The Council strongly encourages the establishment of native species, in particular broadleaf species.

##### **Objective EH O6: Landscaping and Development**

It is the objective of the Council to

- (a) Ensure the adequate integration of development into the landscape by the retention of existing trees and landscape features and/or suitable planting.
- (b) Encourage, where appropriate, the use of native species. The lay out of landscaping planting and features to act as wildlife corridors within developments, particularly residential developments, and linking with other habitats in the area will be encouraged.
- (c) Resist the removal of substantial lengths of roadside boundaries. Where an alternative, suitable site is available for the development, applicants should consider such an alternative on the basis that avoids the necessity for widespread boundary removal. Only in exceptional circumstances should roadside boundaries be removed.

### 7.3.3 Landscape Assessment and Landscape Character Areas

County Limerick possesses a very varied landscape which is important not just for its intrinsic value and beauty but also because it provides for local residents and visitors both in terms of a place to live and also for recreational and tourism purposes.

The importance of landscape and visual amenity *vis a vis* the role of planning is recognised in the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010. The Acts require that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and prospects. It also requires objectives for Landscape Conservation Areas, Areas of Special Amenity and also for the assessment of landscape character. This approach towards landscape issues (based on the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's 2000 guidelines) stresses the distinctiveness of differing kinds of landscape and how differing kinds of development can best be integrated within them. The landscape character areas have incorporated the scenic views and prospects of earlier County Development Plans, which will ensure continuity between, and further development of, landscape policies for the County. It is hoped to further develop the process of landscape characterisation for inclusion within Local Area Plans and in time to further refine the Landscape Character Areas themselves.

**Policy EH P2: It is the policy of the Council to promote the distinctiveness and where necessary safeguard the sensitivity of Limerick's landscape types through the landscape characterisation process and also where possible to develop the means to successfully integrate differing kinds of development within them.**

### 7.3.4 Landscape Character Areas

There are ten differing landscape areas in Limerick identified in Map 7.4. They are as follows:

1. Agricultural Lowlands
2. Ballyhoura /Slieve Reagh
3. Galtee Uplands
4. Knockfierna Hill
5. Lough Gur (See Map 7.5)
6. Shannon Integrated Coastal Management Zone
7. Southern Uplands
8. Tory Hill
9. Slieve Felim Uplands
10. Western Hills/Barnagh Gap/Sugar Hill

#### 7.3.4.1 Agricultural lowlands

This is the largest of the Landscape Character Areas in the County and comprises almost the entire central plain. This landscape is a farming landscape and is defined by a series of regular field boundaries, often allowed to grow to maturity. This well

developed hedgerow system is one of its main characteristics. In terms of topography the landscape is generally rather flat with some locally prominent hills and ridges. The pastoral nature of the landscape is reinforced by the presence of farmyards.

**Objective EH O7: Agricultural Lowlands Landscape Character Area**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- (a) Encourage, where housing is permitted, design that reflects existing housing stock, such as the two-storey farmhouses which are a feature in the area.
- (b) Encourage retention of existing landscape features such as hedgerows and trees and their incorporation into landscaping for new developments.
- (c) Discourage development of locally prominent sites.
- (d) Encourage the regular arrangement of turbines with equal spacing in proposed wind farm developments, which take field boundaries into account.
- (e) Encourage development within existing settlements.

**7.3.4.2 Ballyhoura /Slieve Reagh**

This is a locally dominant range of hills running along the Cork boundary. The lowland component of this landscape character area is generally a farmed landscape but the range of hills provides an upland backdrop. The lower reaches of Ballyhoura are pastoral in character but this changes as altitude increases and the vegetation cover changes to commercial forestry interspersed with upland grassland and the remnants of peat bogs.

**Objective EH O8: Ballyhoura/Slieve Reagh Landscape Character Area**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- (a) Where housing is permitted encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area coupled with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites.
- (b) Strongly encourage retention of earth bank field boundaries particularly in the more upland parts of this area, as the screening abilities of landscape features in this area are limited.
- (c) Encourage use of species native to this particular area in landscaping developments. Species native to the upland parts of this area could be used, such as mountain ash and birch.
- (d) Ensure that forestry applications subject to planning are confined to infill and below 300m above sea level, as much of the Ballyhouras is a Special Area of Conservation.

- (e) Applications for wind energy will be only be considered in the areas open for consideration in Map 8.4.
- (f) Encourage development within existing settlements.

#### 7.3.4.3 Galtee Uplands

This is the most visually striking of all Limerick's uplands. The foothills are generally a farmed landscape with an enclosed field pattern and scattered farmsteads but as altitude increases open heath-land replaces the closed fields. The open upland terrain of the higher reaches of the Galtees coupled with starker colours caused by the vegetation cover of heather, provides a strong visual contrast to the enclosed pastoral landscape below. Much of the Galtees are a candidate for Special Area of Conservation.

#### **Objective EH O9: Galtee Uplands Landscape Character Area**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- (a) Only permit housing development above the 230m contour line in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) Where housing is permitted, encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area coupled with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites.
- (c) Applications for wind energy will be open for consideration within the Galtee Uplands Landscape Character Area within the area indicated as open for consideration on map 8.4 which is delineated to the south by the road network. In the event that any wind energy application be determined to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site permission will be refused.
- (d) Ensure that forestry developments, which are subject to planning, are confined to below 300m above sea level, following consultation with the Wildlife Service and National Parks.
- (e) Encourage development within existing settlements.

#### 7.3.4.4 Knockfierna

This is one of the most dominant hills in the centre of the County. The vegetation cover of the hill is generally upland grassland with a well-developed field boundary system. The hill is important not just for its scenic value but also because of the variety of archaeological sites that exist on it.

**Objective EH O10: Knockfierna Landscape Character Area**

- (a) Housing development shall be confined to below 150m elevation in order to protect the scenic amenity of the area, except in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) The use of high quality site-specific designs incorporating materials that assist the integration of the development into the landscape is encouraged.
- (c) The breaking of ridgelines or selection of locally prominent sites within the Knockfierna Landscape Character area is strongly discouraged.
- (d) This area shall not be considered for forestry applications that are subject to planning requirements.
- (e) This area is considered unsuitable for wind energy development.

**7.3.4.5 Lough Gur**

Lough Gur is perhaps the most significant archaeological site in the County. Topographically it is made up of a series of rolling hills surrounding the lake, which is the centre point of the area. The landscape is pastoral with a long history of human habitation. The presence of a wide variety of archaeological monuments is one of the characteristic features of the area.

**Objective EH O11: Lough Gur Landscape Character Area**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- (a) Safeguard the visual amenity of the area and to have regard to the views and prospects in and out of Lough Gur.
- (b) Restrict development including residential development in the area of Special Development Control, shown on map 7.5 except in exceptional circumstances. Appropriate tourism development and extensions to existing properties, which respect the special character of Lough Gur will be considered.
- (c) To have regard to the archaeological importance and richness of the area indicated in Map 7.5 as a zone of archaeological amenity. Any developments within the zone will be required to provide for an archaeological examination during the course of excavations or other ground disturbance.
- (d) To safeguard the existence of Natural Heritage Areas and the Wildfowl sanctuary when assessing applications for development in the area.

**7.3.4.6 Shannon Coastal Zone**

This zone comprises a large area of northern County Limerick and is bounded on one side by the Shannon Estuary while its southern boundary is defined by the gradually

rising ground, which leads onto the agricultural zone and the western hills to the south west. The presence of the estuary is the defining characteristic of the region. The landscape itself is generally that of an enclosed farm type, essentially that of a hedgerow dominant landscape. This differs from the other agricultural landscapes of the County in that the field patterns, particularly close to the estuary, tend to be less regular than those elsewhere in the County.

**Objective EH O12: Shannon Coastal Zone Landscape Character Area**

It is the objective of the Council:

- (a) Where housing is permitted encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area coupled with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites.
- (b) To protect the views and prospects along the N69 (see Map 7.6), as a priority for the Planning Authority. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. domestic extensions and/or a suitably screened dwelling for a son or daughter of a landowner where the son or daughter is engaged in full time farming or other exceptional circumstances) will development be allowed between the road and the estuary. Where housing is permitted single storey high quality design together with sensitive site location and landscaping is required.
- (c) To encourage the use of site-specific designs with careful attention to landscaping. Finishes such as plaster finish, which will assist in integrating the development into the landscape, are encouraged.
- (d) All of the above (a to c) does not apply within the settlements of the Shannon Coastal zone.
- (e) To permit holiday homes only within existing settlements.
- (f) To rigidly adhere to best practice in the installation and use of wastewater treatment systems, given the proximity of the Shannon and the importance of water-based habitats in the area, to ensure that no deterioration in water quality takes place.
- (g) This area is considered as being unsuitable for wind energy except for the townlands indicated in table 9.1 in Chapter 9, which are open for consideration for this form of development, subject to appropriate assessment of wind energy development in this area on the adjacent European sites.
- (h) Where wind farms are permitted it is recommended that single lines of equally spaced turbines shall be considered, in order to limit the visual and landscape impact.
- (i) Development shall be encouraged within existing settlements.
- (j) Development identified under the SIFP will adhere to the mitigation measures for landscape management as appropriate.



### 7.3.4.7 Southern Uplands

The Mullaghareirk range of hills, which straddles the County Limerick, Cork and Kerry boundaries, is the principal defining feature of this landscape character area. This is a gently undulating range of hills which rises to almost a plateau near the Cork border. Vegetation cover ranges from improved hill grassland, which tends to be wet in nature to disturbed peat land habitats, such as blanket bog, dry and wet heath. Few of these habitats are intact, occurring only in patches interrupted by commercial forestry and improved grassland. Commercial forestry most of which is nearing maturity is a dominant feature of this area.

#### **Objective EH O13: Southern Uplands Landscape Character Areas**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- (a) Where housing is permitted encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area coupled with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites.
- (b) Strongly encourage use of landscaping plans, taking into account existing topography and landforms in efforts to blend developments into the surrounding landscape. Retention of existing landscape features and their integration and use in helping development to blend into the landscape is of great importance in any upland area.
- (c) Not permit further forestry developments that are subject to planning permissions over 280m above sea level.
- (d) Encourage development within existing settlements.
- (e) This area is open to consideration for wind energy development.
- (f) Where wind farms are permitted a random spacing with random layout shall be considered in proposed wind farm developments to limit the visual and landscape impact.

### 7.3.4.8 Slieve Felim Uplands

The Slieve Felim Hills located in the north east of the County are the most dominant feature in this part of the County. Though not particularly high (the most important peak is 395m), it is because of the low-lying surrounding landscape that they appear such a dominant feature. The hills themselves are rounded in shape lacking the starkness that some of the Galtee range to the south possess, and are generally pastoral in character in that almost all the hills show evidence of enclosure for agricultural purposes, with a well-developed field boundary system in place.

**Objective EH O14: Slieve Felim Landscape Character Area**

It is an objective of the council to:

- (a) Not normally permit housing development at or above 220m elevation, in order to protect the scenic amenity of the hills, except in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) Strongly encourage the use of designs based on the existing housing stock of the area and reuse of existing structures.
- (c) Encourage the construction of new agricultural developments as part of existing agricultural complexes where possible.

**7.3.4.9 Tory Hill**

Tory Hill is an isolated locally prominent hill which is within 2km of the town of Croom and is visible from the Cork/Limerick road. It is an important feature in the surrounding countryside, and is of geologic importance as it is a limestone hill with deposits of gravel, which have been left since the last ice age. The hill supports areas of scrub and woodland as well as limestone grassland. The dominant nature of the hill, which rises from the surrounding flat landscape, magnifies the effect of development.

**Objective EH O15: Tory Hill Landscape Character Area**

It is an objective of the Council that there is a presumption against development in this location.

**7.3.4.10 Western Uplands**

This is an upland area, which begins approximately 5km to the south west of Newcastle West with the Barnagh Hill area, which already has been designated as a scenic route in previous County Development Plans. This hill range dominates the surrounding landscape to the east and is clearly visible from Newcastle West. Because of this and the extensive traffic through the region on the N21 any visual disturbance would be very obvious. The Barnagh Gap/Sugar Hill area in particular deserves separate treatment within this region. The area generally has an upland character with isolated farmsteads, improved grassland punctuated by blocks of forestry, which is one of the characteristics of the area. This part of the County has been among the most heavily modified by forestry.

**Objective EH O16: Western Uplands Landscape Character Area**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- (a) Where housing is permitted encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area coupled with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites.
- (b) Discourage the selection of locally prominent sites.
- (c) Encourage the use of local landform and landscape features coupled with sensitive landscaping in order to screen development.
- (d) Ensure that forestry that is subject to planning permission is confined to below 280m above sea level to protect intact remnants of peat land habitat.
- (e) This area is open to consideration for wind energy development.
- (f) Where wind farm development is permitted a random spacing layout shall be considered to limit the visual and landscape impact.

### **7.3.5 Incorporation of Views and Prospects into Landscape Character Areas**

The views and prospects as shown on Map 7.6 and listed below are incorporated into the landscape character areas as follows:

- Ø Shannon estuary from Foynes to Glin, which is incorporated into the Shannon Estuary Integrated Coastal Management Zone.
- Ø The Galtee and Ballyhoura Mountains which has been incorporated into the Ballyhoura/Slieve Reagh and Galtee Uplands.
- Ø Sugar Hill, which has been incorporated into the Western Hills Landscape Character Area.
- Ø Clare Glens which now lie within the Agricultural Lowlands.
- Ø The route south of Ballylanders to the County boundary, which lies within the Ballyhoura Slieve Reagh Landscape Character Area.
- Ø Barnagh Gap which has been included in the Western Hills Landscape Character Area.
- Ø Lough Gur has been included as its own Landscape Character Area.
- Ø The views and prospects in the south west of the County close to the villages of Broadford and Ashford in the Mullaghareirk Mountains.
- Ø Tory Hill has been included as its own Landscape Character Area.
- Ø Additional views and prospects from Kilfinnane towards Ballinacourty Cross have been added in this draft plan.

### **7.3.6 Scenic Views and prospects and Tourism**

Scenic views and prospects can also be considered in the context of potential tourist attractions. In recent years much effort has been made to enhance the attractiveness of County Limerick as a tourist destination. Views and prospects can be an attraction in their own right and can serve to complement other nearby attractions and can contribute to providing a package of attractions in a particular area. Examples include the routes in the south east of the County such as those close to Galbally and Ardpatrick and Ballylanders which provide an additional attraction for the area to complement the Ballyhoura Mountain bike trail. New recreational cycle routes, with Kilmallock as a hub, have also been developed in this area. The Lough Gur and Tory hill views and prospects further complement the attractions of Lough Gur itself. In the east of the County the route close to Murroe makes an attractive walking route to complement the attractions of the Clare Glens.

The scenic views and prospects in the west of the County such as the coastal route from Foynes onwards and the upland scenic drive from and including the view from the Barnagh Gap help provide the basis of a number of attractions which include Foynes, the medieval town of Askeaton and Curraghchase Forest Park. These routes are indicative of the scenic nature of the surrounding landscapes.

### **7.3.7 Attractions of Individual Views and Prospects**

Views and prospects also have local amenity value. In the Slieve Felims for instance the scenic route is part of the wider Slieve Felim Drive and is a pleasant local walk fringed with mature trees both conifers and deciduous. Like the Barnagh gap route mentioned below this route allows walkers to see different aspects of the landscape of east Limerick from the upland areas, often with forestry cover to the more intensive agricultural areas of the lowlands.

The area around Lough Gur with its pleasant rural setting and views of the lake and its well developed hedgerows is also an attractive local amenity and is widely used by locals and visitors alike.

The views and prospects running from Kilfinnane to Ballinacourty also render this an attractive route, a route that is flanked by tall mature trees. Views of the surrounding landscape vary from rolling hills with well-developed field boundaries to an old demesne landscape towards the end of the route. In addition a high arched stone bridge over the roadway provides an attractive historical feature.

The views and prospects near the Barnagh Gap is close to the Great Southern trail and with its own views and pleasant setting would provide an ideal complement to the route along the trail and help to provide variety for walkers, or indeed a scenic journey for those who wish to travel by car. The views from this route take in varying scenery both upland and low land which indicates the different landscapes in this part of Limerick.

Other routes such as that along the N69 from Foynes are less suitable for walking purposes due to the busy road network yet at certain points along them they provide opportunities for visitors and locals alike to stop and enjoy the view. Similar to this would be the route from Ballylanders towards the Cork boundary, which though busy allows opportunities for drivers to stop and enjoy views of the Galtee Mountains.

The views and prospects which are incorporated into the County Development Plan indicate parts of the County that are valuable amenities for locals and visitors alike and which properly conserved could help to provide the basis for further development of the tourist industry in County Limerick.

#### **Objective EH O17: Scenic Views and Prospects**

(a) It is the objective of the Council to safeguard the scenic views and prospects by integrating them into landscape character areas, which will ensure a more balanced approach towards landscape issues within the County.

(b) In areas where scenic views and prospects are listed in Map 7.6 there will be a presumption against development except that which is required in relation to farming and appropriate tourism and related activities, or a dwelling required by a long term land owner or his/her family that can be appropriately designed so that it can be integrated into the landscape.

(c) The Planning Authority will exercise a high level of control (layout design, siting, materials used, landscaping) on developments in these areas. In such areas site specific designs are required. It should be noted that in areas outside these delineated areas, high standards will also be required.

### **7.3.8 Historical landscapes**

The character of landscape change in Ireland has until recent years been piecemeal and gradual which has ensured the survival of a rich upstanding archaeological heritage in addition to the survival of features such as field boundaries and old demesnes. All these features play their part in telling the story of Limericks past. Historical landscapes can be defined as the archaeological and historical elements that survive in the current landscape. Limerick is rich in such areas. Lough Gur is well established in public imagination. However areas around and including the town of Kilmallock and villages of Adare and Knockainey are also important from an archaeological and historical perspective.

Quite apart from their historical interest such landscapes can form the basis of specialist tourist attractions. The environs of Kilmallock coupled with the historic town itself, is one instance where part of County Limerick could, through its historical interest, provide the basis for a specialist tourist attraction.

Carrying out such an historical landscape assessment would be a valuable step towards not just documenting the past landscapes of Limerick but also a valuable tool in tourism and heritage promotion.

**Objective EH O18: Historical Landscape Characterisation:**

It is the objective of the Council during the lifetime of the plan to develop an historical landscape appraisal process, which will identify key historical landscapes within County Limerick.

**7.4 Environmental Quality****7.4.1 Water resources**

Current and pending European directives such as the Water Framework Directive and the Nitrates Directive will have implications for County Limerick in dealing with the problems associated with preserving water quality in the County. The water framework directive deals with water quality in relation to all water bodies including rivers, lakes, ground waters, coastal and estuarine waters and wetlands.

**7.4.1.1 Protection of Surface and Ground waters****Objective EH O19: River Basin Management Plans**

It is the objective of the Council to implement the programmes of measures developed by the River Basin District Projects under the Water Framework Directive in relation to:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a) Surface and groundwater interaction  | b) Dangerous substances                |
| c) Hydro-morphology                     | d) Forestry                            |
| e) On site wastewater treatment systems | f) Municipal and industrial discharges |
| g) Urban pressures                      | h) Abstractions                        |

Wetlands throughout the County are under increasing threat from filling and developments works. Such wetlands are an important part of the ecology of the County and play a part in the regulation of flood waters in the County as a whole.

Where wetlands or environmentally designated sites are located within zoned lands they will be protected and remain unaltered. It may be necessary to incorporate a suitable buffer zone in order to safeguard these sites. Where such wetland areas occur they will be considered in the context of sustainable urban drainage and for their ecological value and their zoning shall reflect this.

**7.4.1.2 River Basin Management**

At the moment a River Basin Management plan is in preparation for the Shannon River Basin. This is a management plan designed to protect and improve the water quality of the river basin both in terms of surface and ground water. It identifies the possible sources of pollution and through the mandatory measures of the Water Framework Directive has identified actions necessary in order to improve the water quality of the region.

**Objective EH O20: Ground Water and Surface Water Protection and River Basin Management Plans**

- a) It is the objective of the Council to protect ground water resources of the County and surface waters of the County. There will be a general prohibition on the filling of wetlands and surface water features.
- b) In assessing planning applications and their consequences for ground water the Council will implement the measures put forward in the Limerick Groundwater Protection Plan.
- c) It is the objective of the Council to implement the measures recommended in the River Basin Management Plans.

### 7.4.1.3 Ground Water Protection

One of the most effective ways of ensuring the protection of ground water is to use ground water protection schemes as part of land use planning. Ground water is a resource on which we depend heavily in County Limerick to fulfil much of our domestic water needs. This requires careful protection to ensure that the quality of this resource is maintained and where possible enhanced. The Groundwater Protection Plan of the County is an essential tool in enabling Planning Authorities to take into account both geological and hydro-geological factors in locating potentially polluting developments so that the chances of ground water contamination is reduced to a minimum.

**Objective EH O21: Septic Tanks & Proprietary Systems**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems which are required as part of a development, comply with relevant guidelines and that they are constructed only where site conditions are appropriate. In respect of groundwater, it is a requirement that as part of the required site assessments the local groundwater conditions as identified in the groundwater protection scheme and the Shannon River Basin Management Plan are properly assessed in informing the Groundwater Protection Response

There is a dynamic balance to be struck between ensuring that normal development needs are facilitated while the water resource base upon which all land uses and habitats depend is protected. According to the Draft Shannon River Basin Management Plan (called here the Shannon RBP for short), this balance is under strain in many places, posing a special challenge if the State is to meet the terms of the Water Framework Directive. The Basin Management Plan finds that 51% of the entire length of surface water bodies in the Shannon river basin district is not of 'good' or 'high' status. 25% of the area of the Shannon basin's groundwater is also of poor quality (Shannon RBP Draft 2009, p25). Specifically with reference to Limerick, much of the north of the County's plain is of poor status: this coincides with a

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regional aquifer where the bedrock is limestone and there are generally shallow soils. Extensive areas of surface water in the County are either of moderate or poor 'ecological status' suffering in particular from eutrophication, principally, but not exclusively, from diffuse sources of nitrate enrichment.

In order to deal with public health and environmental issues, the Planning Authority requires that sites will be assessed in accordance with the EPA manual entitled Wastewater Treatment Manuals: Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2000), and any subsequent amendment. The person carrying out the assessment will be in possession of certification of completion of the appropriate training course and be able to provide appropriate insurance indemnification.

#### 7.4.2 Air Quality

**Objective EH O22: Air Quality**

It is the objective of the Council to protect air quality through the regulation of direct and fugitive emissions from industry.

#### 7.4.3 Noise and light Emissions

In today's modern world particularly with the pace of development the nuisance factors associated with both noise and light have increased. In part these can be minimised through appropriate design and by ensuring that developments are not making use of unnecessary lighting. In terms of development proposals the Planning Authority will require a lighting plan for developments indicating that while sufficient light is being incorporated for safety purposes that it is properly directed. In addition developments that seek to make the best possible use of natural light are inherently more cost effective than those that are designed in such a fashion so as to require lighting during normal daylight hours.

Traffic using transport infrastructure can pollute clean air and surface drainage can pollute water bodies. Noise levels and exhaust fumes can intrude on the peace and quiet that residents and users of amenities should reasonably expect to enjoy.

To address the noise impact of transport infrastructure nominated authorities where relevant are obliged to comply, and to secure compliance with Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (SI 140), which transposes EU Directive 2002/49/EC. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are the national supervisory body charged with advising on the implementation of the Directive and with ensuring national compliance. Provisions include strategic noise mapping and action plans to address or mitigate the noises when they exceed certain thresholds at point of hearing: Limerick County Council may be affected by this provision by 2012.

**Objective EH O23: Noise**

It is the objective of the Council to prevent public noise and light nuisance through the regulation of industrial and construction activities.



Note: Noise nuisance caused by commercial or industrial or other sources will be addressed under noise nuisance legislation.

#### **7.4.4 Climate change**

One of the challenges facing the County is that of climate change. This has been identified in the Planning and Development (amendment) Act, 2010 as one of the issues to be tackled in planning policy documents such as this. The question of climate change cannot be considered separately from that of future resource shortages such as that of oil shortage. This section of the plan should be read in association with other chapters such as Infrastructure and Settlement.

The Limerick Clare Climate Change Strategy (2006) is the means through which the targets set out in the national climate change strategy will be achieved. Substantial changes in both transport and settlement patterns are required as is the further development of alternative energy in order to achieve the carbon savings that are necessary in order to establish Limerick as a low carbon generating economic entity.

The Limerick Clare Energy Agency has prepared a Climate Change Strategy and Energy Balance Strategy for County Limerick and County Clare, which deals with low carbon economy. To achieve this there will need to be huge changes in how we use and produce energy and this has implications for the location of future development in the County and indeed how these developments are carried out.

Limerick County Council intends to pursue the goal of a low carbon economy under the following headings:

1. Presenting a renewable energy strategy as part of the review of the County Development plan. Bio- mass in particular in an agricultural County has huge potential
2. Consolidating development patterns as required under the DEHLG “Residential Density Guidelines in Urban Areas”, May 2009.
3. Introducing energy conservation measures in its sustainability statement-see Development Management chapter. Developments will be encouraged to use the best available technology and design in order to achieve as much energy savings as possible. This will relate not just to materials but also to the operational phases of developments. The use of ecologically friendly building materials and the use of recycled materials with lower embodied energy demands than conventional materials will be encouraged.
4. The development of district heating schemes will be encouraged. These could work hand in hand with local producers of bio-mass in order to begin and sustain a local bio-mass industry.

**Objective EH O24 Renewable Energy Strategy:**

It is the intention of the Council to produce a strategy for the promotion of all aspects of renewable energy technologies in County Limerick and to work with other Local Authorities and agencies to achieve that end.

**7.5 Limericks Archaeological Heritage****7.5.1 Background**

Limerick is extremely rich in the diversity and quality of the archaeological monuments and landscapes within the County. There is a high rate of survival of monuments, which is largely due to the pastoral nature of farming in the County. To date there are over 7,000 sites and individual monuments recorded in Limerick. These range from isolated pits to the inspiring ruins of the friary at Askeaton. They include the graves, homes, farmsteads and towns of our ancestors. They are an intrinsic part of the landscape, they form our immediate environment and pattern our experience and outlook, and they are part of what makes the County unique. They are also, however, a fragile and irreplaceable resource. Limerick County Council is dedicated to safeguarding the archaeological heritage of the County.

The location of each archaeological monument is provided in the Record of Monuments and Places, which is maintained and up-dated by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, a branch of the National Monuments Service. The 1994 amendment to the National Monuments Act established the Record of Monuments and Places on a statutory basis. The record is organised on a county by county basis, with a set of maps and a catalogue of sites. The set for County Limerick was published in 1997 and copies are available for public consultation in the Council's Planning Department and in all the County libraries. Under the provisions of Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments Act Amendment any person proposing **any works** (this includes exempted development) 'at or in relation to such a monument' has to give two months notice to the National Monuments Service. Sites continue to be discovered, **some** of those found subsequent to the publication (1997) have been included in the Site and Monuments Database which is available on the website [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie). Archaeological remains are also to be found in riverine, lacustrine and in estuarine and marine- foreshore, inter-tidal, and underwater environments. Limerick is particularly rich in these environments which include, *inter alia*, the River Shannon, its estuary and its tributaries, as well as the lakes and other watercourses around the county. There is the potential for previously unknown and unrecorded underwater archaeological sites to exist. These could include sites such as wharves, jetties, quays, piers, fish traps, anchorages, bridges, fording points, rock-cut steps or caves. In addition, there is a potential for artefact remains, such as boats, from all periods of history and prehistory to exist. Section 3 of The National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987 provides for the protection of sites of historic wrecks and lists of known wrecks are available on the website <http://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-monuments-service-shipwreck-inventory-of-ireland>

There are certain sites in County Limerick in State ownership or guardianship or that have been served with temporary preservation orders. These sites are included in Appendix 3. Under the 2004 Amendment to the National Monuments Act any of these sites or sites deemed National Monuments in the care or guardianship of the Local Authority will require Ministerial Consent for works in their vicinity.

The Planning Authority is fully committed to preserving the site and setting of our archaeological heritage. Since the adoption of the first development plan in 1967 Limerick County Council has recognised the archaeological landscape at Lough Gur, creating an area of Special Development Control around the archaeological landscape. In the latest Area Plan for Kilmallock the Council has created areas of Special Development Control to preserve and enhance the setting of the medieval town walls. There is a stated preference under National Policy for preservation in situ. Consequently, the Planning Authority recommends that issues of archaeological heritage be addressed as early as possible by potential developers, through consultation with the relevant agencies, the Planning Department and the Authority's archaeologist. The Planning Authority may request potential developers to carry out archaeological assessments in areas adjacent or in the vicinity of Recorded Monuments. Proposed developments can have a visual as well as a physical impact on the archaeological remains and developers are advised to consider the setting of the monuments in the wider landscape when considering areas for development potential. In regard to Underwater archaeology, the Local Authority will require a licensed Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment that includes, *inter alia*, detailed desk-top studies with all relevant documentary research including the catographic sources and geophysical/bathymetric studies that may inform on discoveries or known sites in an area, a detailed coastal and foreshore/intertidal archaeological assessment undertaken at the lowest mean tides, and, if appropriate, an archaeological diver assessment. The results to be amalgamated with the terrestrial assessment to provide the overall archaeological heritage of the particular study area. The Planning Authority will refer all proposed developments likely to impact on the archaeological heritage to the National Monuments Service.

### 7.5.2 Archaeological Heritage Objectives

Developers should take into account the archaeological provisions of the Development Management Guidelines.

The following objectives are set by the Planning Authority:

#### **Objective EH O25: Preservation of the Archaeological Heritage**

It is the objective of the Council to seek the preservation (in situ, or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all known sites and features of historical and archaeological interest. This is to include all the sites listed in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

**Objective EH O26: Preservation of the unrecorded/newly discovered archaeological heritage**

It is the objective of the council to protect and preserve (in situ, or at a minimum, preservation by record) all sites and features of historical interest discovered subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.

**Objective EH O27: Protection of the setting of archaeological monuments**

It is the objective of the council to ensure that any proposed development shall not have a negative impact on the character or setting of an archaeological monument.

**Objective EH027A: Preservation of the Underwater Archaeological Heritage**

It is the objective of the Council to seek the preservation (in situ, or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all known and all previously unrecorded sites and features of historical and archaeological record in riverine, lacustrine, estuarine and or marine environments.

**Objective EH O28: Sarsfield's Rock**

It is an objective of the Council to protect and preserve Sarsfield's Rock and its setting as a Historic Site and to ensure that any proposed development shall not have a negative impact on the character or setting of this historic site. Sarsfield's Rock has been added because of its excellent views of the north eastern part of the County. In addition the proximity of the Templebraden Church, its historic context and its attractive setting to the rock adds to the amenity value of the Rock.

**Objective EH O29: Assessment and recognition of archaeological landscapes**

It is an objective of the council to designate archaeological landscapes as part of an ongoing appraisal for Historic Landscape Characterisation of the County.

**Objective EH O30: Raise public awareness and encourage active participation**

It is an objective of the Council to generally raise public awareness of the archaeological and historic heritage and to assist and encourage active participation by the public following consultation with National Monuments Service, in the conservation, consolidation and presentation of landmark sites, where this is appropriate and subject to available resources.

## **7.6 The Built Environment**

### **7.6.1 Our Architectural Heritage**

Architectural heritage has several definitions and meanings for people. A useful rule of thumb (which is actually the legal situation) is set out in the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999 which provides the following definition:

- (a) structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings,
- (b) groups of such structures and buildings, and

- (c) sites, which are of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

A rich architectural heritage has survived to the present day in County Limerick. While there are impressive demesne features and large houses in the County, most of the County's architectural heritage has come from vernacular traditions with local craftsmen sometimes borrowing from the traditions of classical architecture to construct buildings that met local needs.

This rich architectural heritage contributes enormously to the overall built environment and, indeed, helps to give it definition in terms of place and character for those that live and work in the county as well as those who visit here.

### **7.6.2 Protected Structures**

There are now over 1400 buildings, structures and features listed in the Record of Protected Structures (see volume 3). The Record will continue to be added to as structures, buildings and features of merit are identified and as resources permit.

The Council has made huge use of the funding provided under the Local Authority Conservation Grants Scheme. It has also helped owners of protected structures in applying for funding under other schemes such as:

- The Buildings at Risk Scheme: Heritage Council.
- The Civic Structures Grant Scheme.
- Significant Places of Public Worship Scheme.

The Planning Authority has achieved a very significant amount in this regard, but recognises that it must assist the principal stakeholders of this heritage, the owners and occupiers of these buildings, to maintain and care for their properties in appropriate fashion. The Planning Authority has also been instrumental in assisting the owners of such properties identify other sources of assistance either through direct grant aid or by fiscal measures available under the Finance Acts.

The application of protected structure status to buildings and structures is a positive step to their well-being. It does not preclude redevelopment or improvement from taking place although protected structures are protected through removal from the exempted development provisions. Under the provisions of Part IV of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 the owner of a protected structure may seek a Declaration from the Planning Authority. This document is a statement of which works can be undertaken and details those works that would require a grant of planning permission. Owners, developers, tradesmen and contractors are advised to contact the Planning Authority at the initial stages of preparing a work scheme to obtain advice and guidance.

The Planning Authority accepts that the continued well-being of a protected structure may involve it being put to a new use. This may well involve its adaptation. In fact, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2010 defines protection as including "conservation, preservation and improvement compatible with maintaining the

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character and interest of the structure”. Consequently, the Planning Authority will require the maintenance of architectural character, retention of features that contribute to the character and respect for the structure’s setting. Developments of, or in proximity to, protected structures, which would seriously affect their character, will not be permitted. It is recognised that there may be a requirement for development works, which would underpin the viability of a protected structure without adversely affecting its character, to be undertaken in close proximity to the main building or principal buildings on a site.

Furthermore, it is recognised that seriously dilapidated buildings may have their character affected, in a beneficial way, through a comprehensive programme of conservation works.

If a building is deemed to be of National or International importance the Planning Authority advises that agencies, such as the Department’s Built Heritage and Architectural Policy Section or specialist organisations, such as the Irish Georgian Society, be briefed as early as possible in order to prevent delays and difficulties during the planning process. Where a structure of considerable significance is concerned, experience has shown the value that pre-planning discussions have in this regard.

### **7.6.3 Architectural Conservation Areas**

Where groups of buildings, including villages, small towns, elements of larger towns and streetscapes are concerned the Planning Authority relies upon the provisions in the planning legislation, which permits the establishment of Architectural Conservation Areas. The creation of areas with such a status does not preclude development but the development permitted must be of a high standard and complement the surviving architectural styles.

Architectural Conservation Areas are present in the following locations: (The maps for Architectural Conservation Areas are contained in Volume 2).

Abbeyfeale, Adare, Askeaton, Ballysteen House, Bruff, Cappamore, Castleconnell, Castletroy, Croom, Dromcolliher, Foynes, Glin, Hospital, Kilfinnane, Kilmallock, Limerick Regional Hospital, Lough Gur, Montpelier, Newcastle West, Rathkeale

Limerick’s architectural heritage also includes historic gardens and designed landscapes. Recent research work by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage has demonstrated that the county has a far higher concentration of wrought landscapes than any other county in Ireland. This is an element of the country’s heritage which is being increasingly recognised and valued both aesthetically and as a potential resource that may be exploited for economic, social and tourism reasons. Where appropriate the Architectural Conservation Area mechanism may be used to protect and preserve such places.

#### 7.6.4 Architectural Heritage Objectives

##### **Objective EH O31: General Protection of Structures**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) seek the protection of all structures (or, where appropriate, parts of structures) within the County, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and listed in the Record of Protected Structures. The record will continue to be developed on an ongoing basis, as resources permit, in accordance with the criteria laid down in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
- b) As resources permit, determine the extent of the curtilage of protected structures.

##### **Objective EH O32: Promotion of Conservation of Protected Structures**

It is the objective of the Council to promote the benefits of protecting structures and the positive effects that conserving the architectural heritage has in areas of economic activity such as tourism. To this end the Planning Authority will continue to develop, publish and distribute comprehensive advisory manuals, booklets and leaflets to all property owners of Protected Structures and structures within Architectural Conservation Areas advising them of the opportunities available to them as the owners of such properties.

##### **Objective EH O33: Re-use of Protected Structures**

It is the objective of the Council to encourage the re-use of protected structures while recognising that such an objective will require adaptation and modifications of the building, including the construction of extensions. However, the Planning Authority will require the maintenance of essential architectural character, retention of features of special interest and respect for the structure's fabric, plan, form and setting. The development of, or on, a protected structure which would have a significant adverse impact upon its character will not be permitted. Developments in proximity to a protected structure, which would seriously affect its character, amenity, or setting will not normally be permitted.

##### **Objective EH O34: Establishment of Architectural Conservation Areas**

a) It is the objective of the Council to identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and to define them as Architectural Conservation Areas. Additional Architectural Conservation Areas may be identified and included during the lifetime of the Plan.

b) It is an objective of the Council, during the life time of the Development Plan, to undertake a detailed survey and appraisal of all Architectural Conservation Areas designated under the Development Plan, where appropriate. A set of both general and site specific policies, objectives and guidelines will then be formulated for each Architectural Conservation Area. These measures will be adopted as a means of ensuring the continued preservation, protection and enhancement of the special character of our Architectural Conservation Areas.

**Objective EH O35: Protection of Architectural Conservation Areas**

a) The Planning Authority will seek to protect buildings of merit that demonstrate past design or construction practices within an Architectural Conservation Area as this can damage the integrity of an area.

b) Conservation, restoration and reconstruction is the preferred approach in Architectural Conservation Areas.

c) The Planning Authority will not permit insensitive developments that compromise the character or integrity of Architectural Conservation Areas and will seek to have large-scale developments respect the morphology and layout of a town or village.

d) Development proposals on sites in the vicinity of an Architectural Conservation Area will only be permitted where it can clearly be demonstrated that the development will not materially affect the special character or the integrity of the area, its amenity and setting. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, landscape and setting.

**Objective EH O36: Historic Gardens, Designed Landscapes and their associated Non Structural Elements**

To protect important non-structural elements of the built heritage associated with a Protected Structure such as historic gardens and parkland, and curtilage and demesnes features such as hedgerows and terracing, individual trees and shelterbelts, copses and woodland, as well as walls and ha-has, the areas they occupy and in their vicinity will be defined as Architectural Conservation Areas. Additional Architectural Conservation Areas of this type may be identified and included during the lifetime of the Plan. The Planning Authority will not permit insensitive developments that compromise the character of such Architectural Conservation Areas. Development proposals on sites in the vicinity of an Architectural Conservation Area will only be permitted where it can clearly be demonstrated that the development will not materially affect the character, integrity, amenity and setting of the Area.

**Objective EH O37: General Protection of Architectural Streetscapes**

It is the objective of the Council to protect the character of the medieval towns, post-medieval features and 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> streetscapes in the County having due regard to their architectural character, plot pattern and street patterns when assessing planning applications for development.

**Objective EH: O38 County Council Works**

In undertaking works on elements of the built heritage the County Council shall adhere to the standards advocated by the Principles of Conservation set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities and the advice contained in the new series of Maintenance of Older Buildings Booklets published on an ongoing basis by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Traditional building skills will continue to be engendered and fostered throughout the organisation in appropriate fashion as resources permit.

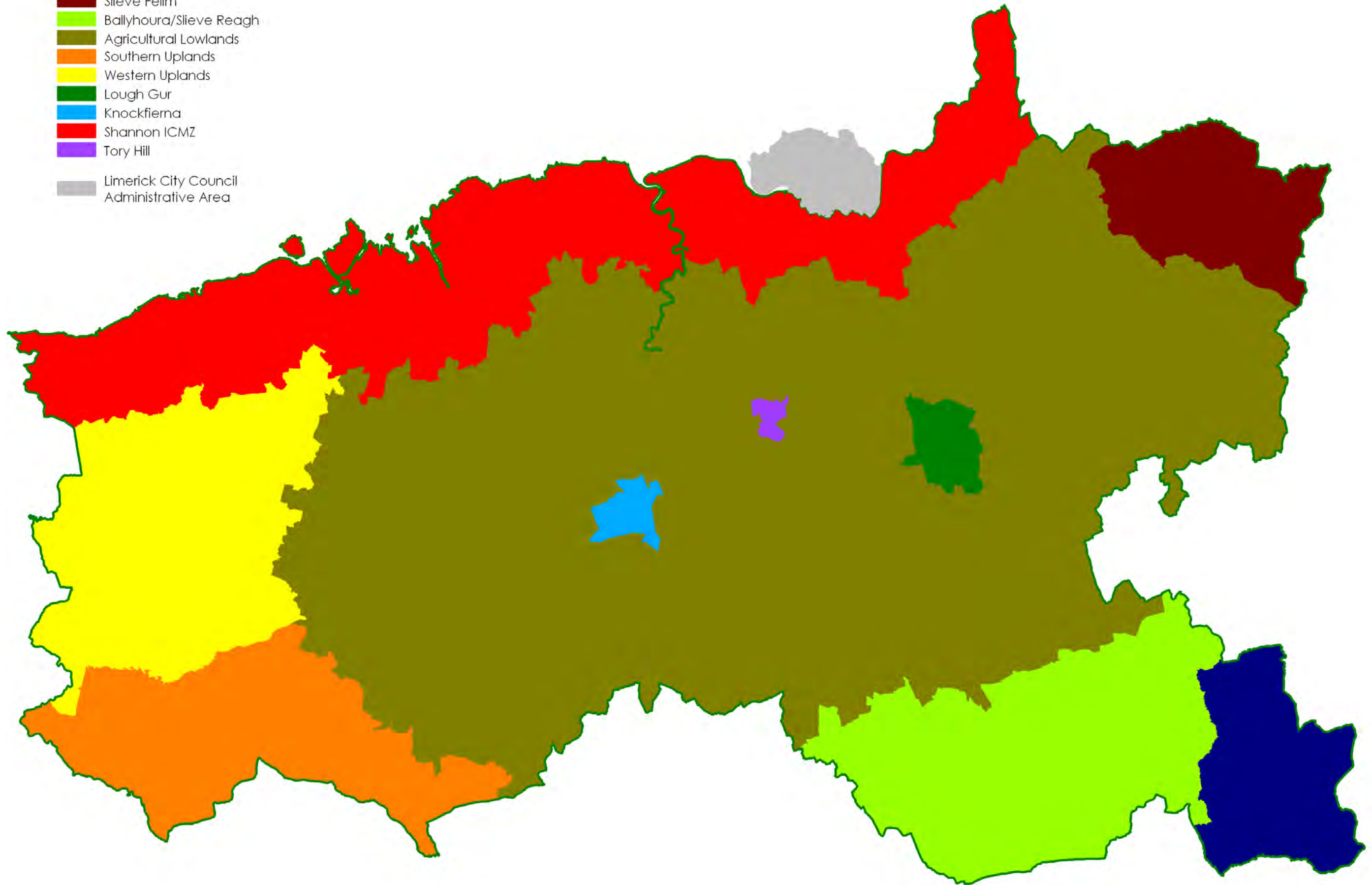


**Objective EH O39: Aiding & Funding Conservation & Restoration Works**

It is the objective of the Council to assist and encourage, resources permitting, active participation by heritage groups, community associations, and local people in the conservation and restoration of landmark buildings and structures.

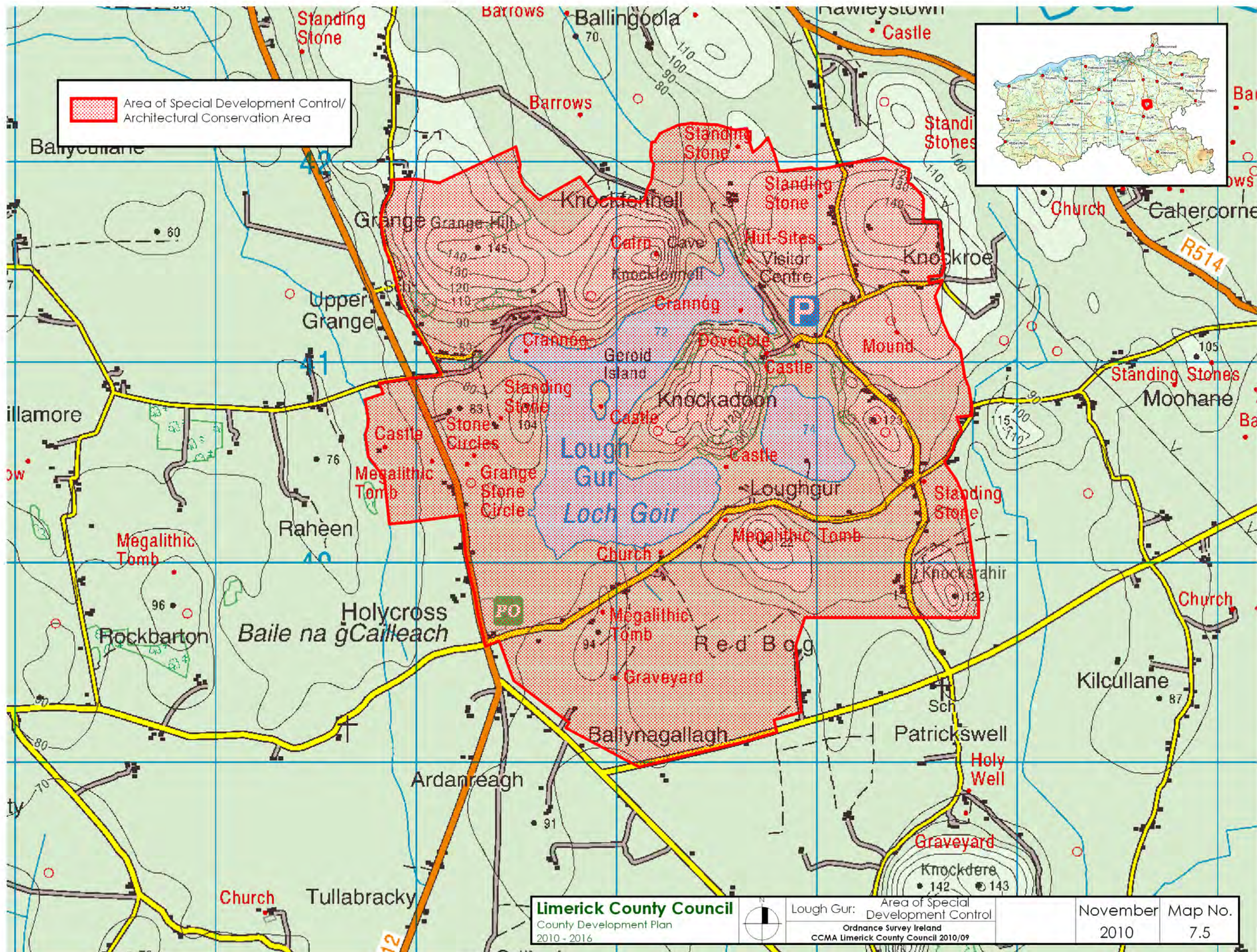


- Galtee Uplands
- Slieve Felim
- Ballyhoura/Slieve Reagh
- Agricultural Lowlands
- Southern Uplands
- Western Uplands
- Lough Gur
- Knockfierna
- Shannon ICMZ
- Tory Hill
- Limerick City Council  
Administrative Area







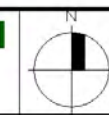
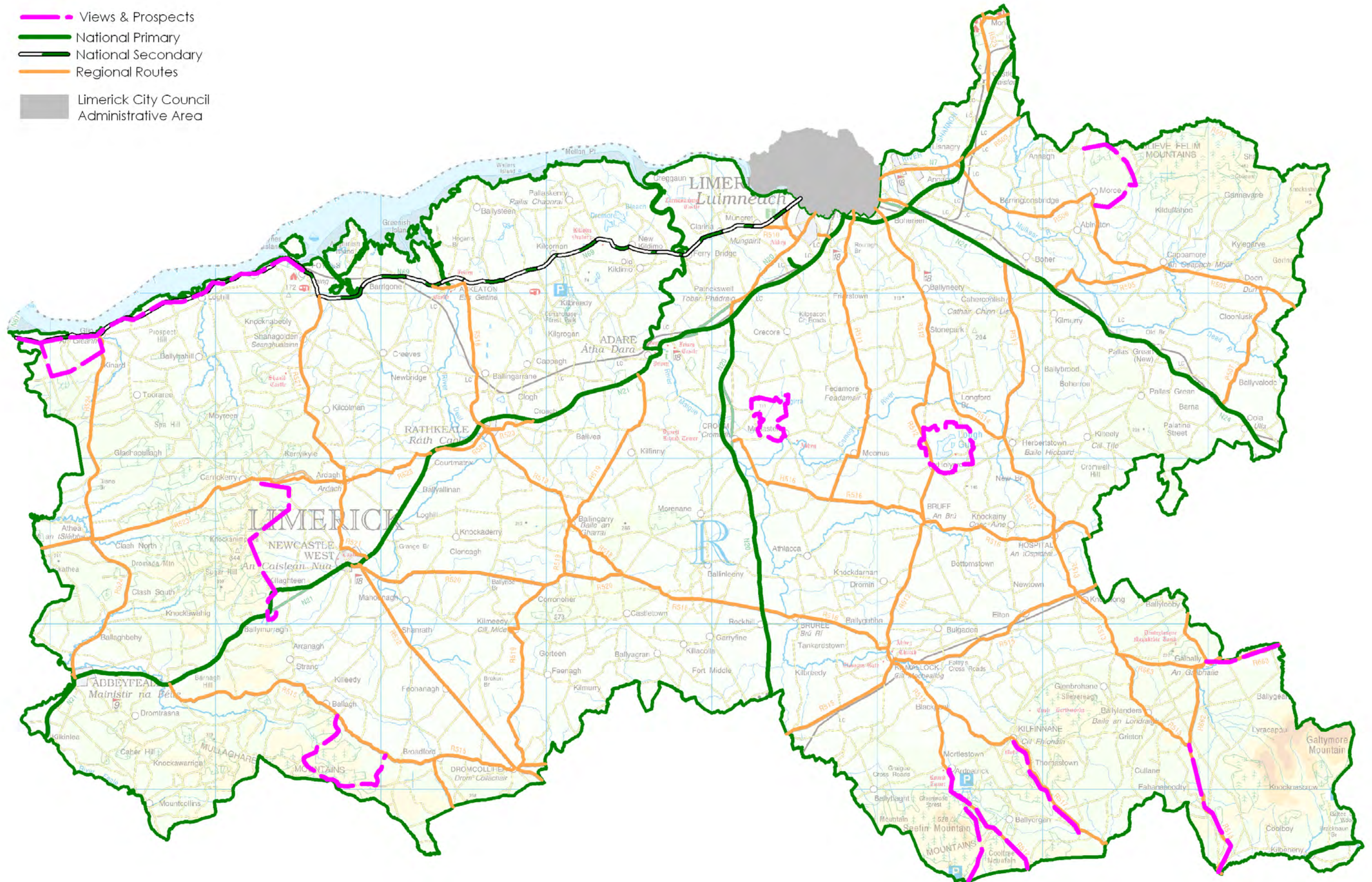








- Views & Prospects
- National Primary
- National Secondary
- Regional Routes
- Limerick City Council Administrative Area









## Chapter 8

# Transport and Infrastructure

### Access and Transport, Water Services, Energy, and Waste

This Chapter presents various policies and objectives on infrastructure and on an integrated land use-infrastructure framework. They have been developed in accordance with the core strategies that have been set out in this Plan:

- Infrastructure and land use should be managed and developed together, in a manner that will lend support to the social and economic well being of the community whilst protecting the environment for future generations.
- An integrated approach should be adopted towards transport to encourage patterns of transport use that are sustainable. There shall be emphasis on reducing dependence on the private motorcar, improving inclusive access and traffic safety. Means of travel alternative to the car such as public transport, cycling and walking shall be facilitated and encouraged.
- The County's energy, water and transport assets should be safeguarded, enhanced and utilised in a sustainable and efficient manner, and land uses and investments planned accordingly.
- Wastes, both solid waste and wastewater, should be managed in a manner that minimises its generation, maximises recycling and recovery and protects the environment.

## 8.1 Overview

It is an obligation of the Planning Authority in the County Development Plan to set out infrastructural objectives for its area over the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

There is a need for a modern and comprehensive infrastructure to facilitate real economic and social development. Since the adoption of the County Development plan 2005 - 2011, much progress has been made in infrastructural development, and there are also continuing commitments notwithstanding the recent economic downturn.

Against this background, there is a need for a long-term strategy, that is evidence based, and which establishes a set of priorities and policies for infrastructure. The County Development Plan establishes a framework for action that is important even if as may emerge, many of the elements of the Plan are not realised within its lifetime. Yet only by articulating a proper policy framework can the Council be ready to take opportunities when they come, to pose the right questions, and to establish the seeds of positive change. Many of the outstanding elements in the 2005 County Development plan will also be continued in this Plan.

## 8.2 Transportation and Access

### 8.2.1 Background

Limerick enjoys certain advantages in terms of its location, natural assets and infrastructure. There are programmes to improve infrastructure in the Government's 2006-2015 Transport 21 Programme, the Rural Transport Initiative, the strategic *Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010*, and the *County Development Plan 2005 - 2011* as varied. The Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) is currently being prepared for the region. The latter document will set the strategic framework for land use and transport over the next 30 years.

The Programme for Government commits the Department of Transport (DoT) to:

- Reducing travel times
- Improving safety
- Reducing congestion
- Providing real commuting choices to people
- Protecting the environment.

Local Authorities play an important role in providing and integrating the land use and infrastructure framework for an efficient, safe, sustainable and inclusive transport system. The objective of the Council's Corporate Plan 2003-2009 is to:

‘To provide and maintain a safe and effective transportation network within the County incorporating the principles of sustainable development, social inclusion and environmentally friendly work practices.’

The Council is committed to an overall strategic policy for access and transport in the Development Plan. This incorporates the aims of facilitation, provision, and

management of socially inclusive and quality transport infrastructure and systems; and matching these aims with ensuring that the pattern and form of development is integrated with infrastructure in such a way as to minimise the need for travel by private car, and optimise the support for systems (modes) of transport alternative to this.

**Policy IN P1: Integration of transport with land use**

**The Council shall seek to develop a robust evidence-based framework of decision making in infrastructure and development management, to ensure the efficient and timely provision of suitable facilities for access when and where needed. The Council shall also require that the facilities and the land uses they would serve are mutually integrated so as to make optimum use of investment in transport infrastructure. To this end the Council shall seek in particular to implement the provisions of the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) once fully assessed and adopted.**

It is expected that the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) will be of key importance in the development of an efficient framework of decision making in land use and infrastructure planning, and in development management. The MWASP is intended to assist in the strategic scope of decision making across Local Authority boundaries and over a thirty year time span. The Council shall also have regard to national and regional guidance where relevant and as referred to elsewhere in this Plan.

### **8.2.2 Integration of Land Use and Transport**

The greatest contribution to Ireland's rise in carbon emissions in the last decade has been in transport. This is primarily due to the rise in car ownership and the reliance on the car.

Transport contributes disproportionately to the rise in carbon emissions, causing the County to exceed limits set down by the Kyoto protocol, and thereby incurring likely fines unless these emission levels can be reduced. In Limerick the transport sector accounted for 33% of all energy related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2005, representing a 148% increase since 1990 (Source: Limerick-Clare Energy Agency: Limerick Clare Climate Change Strategy 2007).

Limerick County is characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern. It is accepted that, in the long term, the proportion of people living in towns and villages should increase, concentrating on the larger towns or towns with most potential on transport corridors, to be close to, and support shops, places of work, and school. This would help develop a sustainable role for settlements at different levels, and reduce the dependence on cars for routine journeys.

In addition to the need for an appropriate settlement hierarchy and land use zoning good quality design of places is important in encouraging sustainable travel patterns and transport use.

It is in this context that the requirements for vehicular access and parking must fit. The specific requirements of different uses, and certain users, for the convenience of vehicular access can be accommodated but in a careful people friendly design and management of the environment.

**Policy IN P2: Suitability of Facilities**

**It is policy of the Council to ensure that quality facilities are provided, designed and retained for access suitable for all to serve the social, economic and recreational needs of the community, in a manner that is sustainable, of good quality design and safe.**

**The following values shall be paramount:**

- a) **Maximisation of sustainable travel patterns**
- b) **Promotion of modal shift away from private road transport**
- c) **Inclusive access**
- d) **Public safety and security**
- e) **Minimisation of environmental impact directly and indirectly.**
- f) **Cost-effectiveness in the delivery and appropriateness of the infrastructure to purpose.**

**Policy IN P3: Land Use planning and accessibility**

**It is policy of the Council to ensure that considerations of accessibility and mobility are properly incorporated into the assessment and planning of land uses and services, and that land uses are connected to good quality transportation infrastructure.**

**Policy IN P4: Promotion of sustainable patterns of transport use**

**It is policy of the Council to seek to implement in a positive manner, in co-operation with other Authorities and agencies, the policies of the Mid-Western Regional Planning Guidelines, and the Department of Transport Policy ‘Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020’ to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel, and greater use of sustainable forms of transport, including public transport, cycling, and walking.**

**Objective IN O1: Promotion of Sustainable Travel**

The Council will work with local communities, landowners, businesses, educational establishments and development agencies, in promoting sustainable travel patterns and transport use through the following means:

- a) Measures identified in Local Area Plans;
- b) Strategic use of the local development fund;
- c) Tie in with urban and village renewal schemes and programmes;
- d) Requirements for infrastructure layouts and facilities in development proposals;
- e) Planning agreements for works commensurate with the scale and impact of new developments;
- f) Require the submission of mobility management plans (also known as workplace travel plans) for schemes in the categories specified in subsection 10.11.2 (Development Management); and

g) Require demonstration of minimisation of car dependence in schemes as part of Mobility Management Plans and also in other schemes requiring Sustainability Statements as specified in subsection 10.3.

**Objective IN O2: Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTAs)**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Use the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) as a Strategic Transport Assessment (STA) to inform all zoning decisions likely to generate significant additional traffic, and to inform infrastructural commitments likely to have significant affect on traffic patterns;
- b) Require developers to undertake Transport Assessments (TTA's) where new developments are likely to have a significant effect on travel demand and the capacity of surrounding transport links. In this case independent suitably competent consultants shall be required to carry out these assessments;
- c) Have particular regard to relevant and up to date data, guidance and advice from the following bodies: the Mid-Western Regional Authority, DEHLG and the Department of Transport, and insofar as development might affect the national road network, the National Roads Authority. The NRAs Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines, (NRA September 2007) will be referred to as a key source of guidance;

If a traffic and transport Assessment identified necessary on-and-off site improvements, the developer will be expected to fund the improvements by entering into a formal agreement with the Council. The thresholds for Transport Assessment are, in accordance with Traffic Management Guidelines and, where specified, the NRA Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (NRA, September 2007) and Retail Planning Guidelines (DEHLG, 2005) and any subsequent updates or replacements.

These thresholds as follows:

- i) Traffic to and from the development exceeds 10% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road.
- ii) Traffic to and from the development exceeds 5% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road where congestion exists or the location is sensitive.
- iii) Residential development in excess of 200 dwellings.
- iv) Retail and leisure development in excess of 1000m<sup>2</sup>.
- v) Office, Education, and Hospital development in excess of 1000m<sup>2</sup>.
- vi) Industrial development in excess of 5,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- vii) Distribution and warehousing in excess of 10,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- viii) Retail warehousing developments with gross floorspace in excess of 6000 metres (NRA Policy Statement and Retail Planning Guidelines). These should be close to a road network with sufficient capacity.

In certain circumstances where their cumulative impact warrants or where the transport infrastructure is under pressure may be required to undertake transport assessments even if they fall below any of these thresholds.

### 8.2.3 Inclusive Access

It is important that the full spectrum of needs are taken into consideration in the planning and design of transport and access infrastructure, at every level, both strategically in the layout of land uses and networks, and at the level of design of buildings and spaces.

#### **Policy IN P5: Socially Inclusive Access**

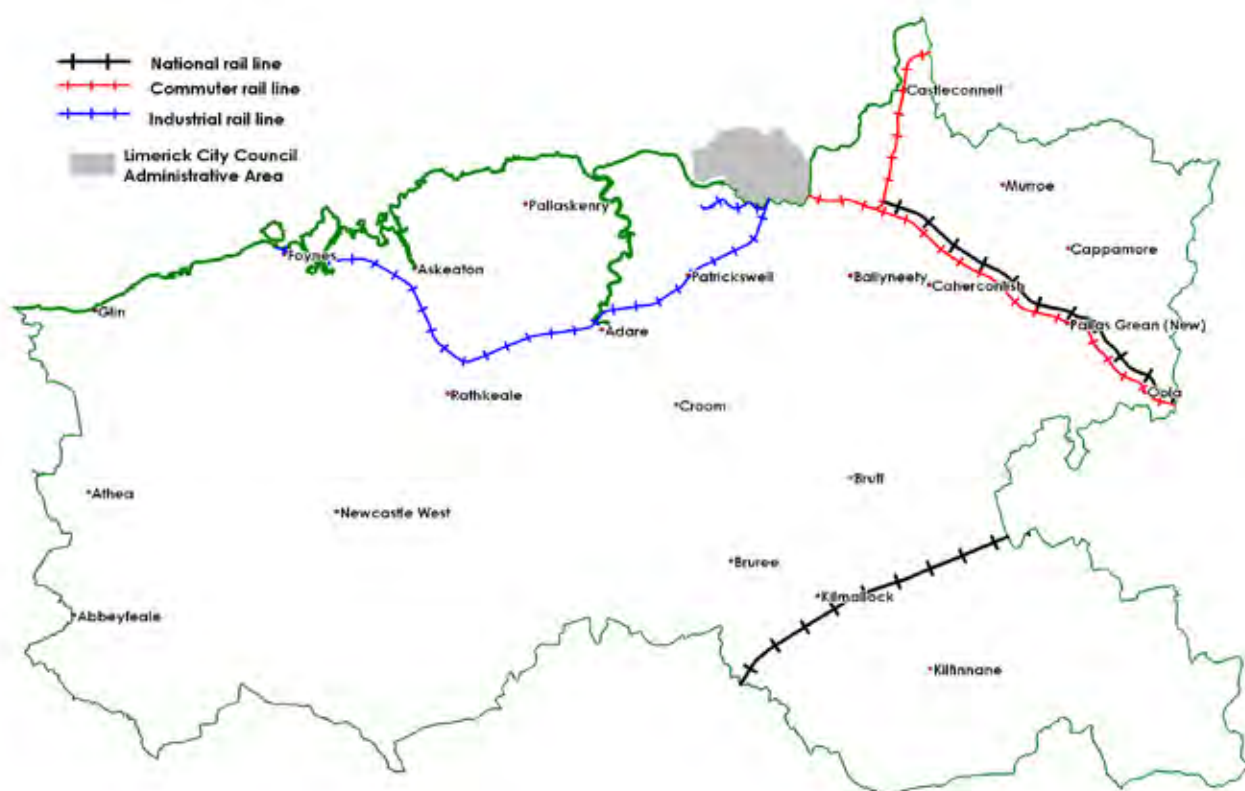
**It is policy of the Council to ensure that in the design and planning of infrastructure and the integration of land use, infrastructure and transport modes that the widest spectrum of needs, including pedestrians, cyclists and those with diverse cognitive, mobility and sensory abilities and impairments, are taken into account.**

### 8.2.4 Public Transport

According to the 2006 census only 2.23% of the County's residents use public transport in journeys to work, compared to 8.9% in the State (81% use private motor transport compared to 70% nationally). This very low use is not surprising given the dispersed nature of settlements in Limerick County, the extensive road network, and the increase in car ownership in recent years.

Having a service for people, and of quality and reliability, are essential prerequisites if the public transport system is to become a viable alternative to private transport. However, with such a dispersed settlement and a well-established road network, there is not sufficient population concentration in the County to support a commercially operating public transport service to many towns and villages. Bus services along the main transport corridors from Limerick City are good but there is very poor service to most of the minor towns and even Kilmallock, one of the two key towns in the settlement hierarchy, is poorly served. Rural Bus, a local company subsidised by the Department of the Gaeltacht, Rural and Community Affairs, plays a vital role in filling in the gaps in public bus service in outlying rural areas.

There are three railway lines with passenger service that run through the County, but only one operating station within the County (and Colbert station in the city). Of the three railway lines with trains offering a passenger service in the County itself, two are in the north-east, these are the Limerick to Limerick junction line and the Limerick to Ballybrophy line (that runs through Castleconnell). Both lines are part of the Limerick to Dublin route: on the latter in addition, there is a regular commuter service from Castleconnell to Limerick that has recently been introduced. Passengers wishing to go from Limerick to Cork have to pass through Limerick junction, to connect to the main Cork to Dublin railway line. Limerick junction, despite its name, is in fact in Tipperary. The Cork to Dublin railway is the third line with a passenger service to run through Limerick County. However there is no operating station on this line within the County, as the railway stations in Knocklong and Kilmallock are closed. The nearest station to Kilmallock is at Charleville, 10 kilometres away. The railway system is shown on map 8.1 below.



**Map 8.1: Existing Rail Lines**

There are three other railway lines, or remnants thereof, in the County, which are either no longer used or which have been effectively dismantled. These are the Limerick to Charleville line (there has already been significant development on this line including parts of the N20); the Limerick to Tralee line (via Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale) and the Limerick to Foynek line. Iarnrod Eireann supports the protection of the Foynek line for future possible re-use as a railway line. It does not consider the other two to be viable either in the short term or long term future.

It is in the context of the uneven provision of services and infrastructure that the following objectives are formulated. The objectives focus on building on commitments to improvements in infrastructure for public transport; on protecting transport assets; and on identifying opportunities for park and ride that should not be compromised from encroachment by development.

**Policy IN P6: Protection of public transport assets and facilitation of public transport.**

**It is Council policy to protect strategic public transport assets; to facilitate accessibility by public transport in development layouts; and to support the enhancement of public transport infrastructure and use through initiatives such as park and ride. To this end the Council shall seek, in particular, to implement the provisions of the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) once fully assessed and adopted.**

**Objective IN O3: Quality bus services and facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) promote suitable facilities and co-operate with other agencies and neighbouring local authorities in developing a high quality and coherent system of bus facilities. Measures that will be promoted include bus lanes, quality bus corridors, appropriate shelters, and real time information at bus stops;
- b) identify and pursue opportunities for bus corridors, bus priority measures and transport hubs in Local Area plans, taking into account MWASP findings and recommendations.
- c) ensure adequate provision for bus routes and facilities in development proposals as appropriate, including in road construction and alteration and in the layout of all developments. Bus Eireann shall be consulted on all proposed residential schemes, retail centres and major employment centres, and on all changes to roads and layouts which may impinge on existing bus facilities, or affect or provide opportunities to improve bus facilities.
- d) protect bus lanes/quality bus corridors on the following routes:
  - 1) From Raheen roundabout to link with the city boundary at the Ballinacurra road, as identified in the Southern Environs Local Area Plan.
  - 2) Castletroy as identified in the Castletroy Local Area Plan 2009.
  - 3) The Castletroy bus lane will also extend beyond the boundary of Castletroy Local Area Plan to the junction of the R455 with the M7

**Objective IN O4: Provision for park and ride**

It is the objective of the Council to support the provision of park and ride facilities involving extensive car parking, and bus parking, as appropriate, served by regular and frequent public transport services. Their location, exact siting, design, scale, associated uses, and terms of management including parking tariffs, shall be based on the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan. It is important to ensure they are effective in their purpose of modal transfer and do not exacerbate local traffic congestion. The Council shall generally favour all significant transport interchanges, such as at railway stations and at entrances to the city, that will encourage modal transfer from private to public transport or from rail to short run bus journeys. The Council shall consult with all relevant stakeholders, including Bus Eireann, Limerick City Council, and insofar as their network may be directly affected, the National Roads Authority and Iarnrod Eireann at all stages in the planning and development of such proposals.

**Objective IN O5: Protection of rail infrastructure**

It is an objective of the Council to protect the following transport assets in rail infrastructure from inappropriate development that would compromise their safe operation or long term development:

- a) Operating Railways of Limerick to Dublin via Ballybrophy and Castleconnell;
- b) Those portions of railway line within Limerick between Limerick to Limerick junction and between Limerick junction to Charleville.



- c) Rail infrastructure not in current use: the Limerick-Foynes line. The Council will ensure that no development or activities which would interfere with the possible re-use of the Foynes Limerick rail link will be permitted
  - d) The spur line to the cement factory at Mungret for freight use.
- Elsewhere the Council will continue to protect for amenity purposes the abandoned railway corridors from Limerick to Abbeyfeale and from Limerick to Charleville as long distance walking and cycling routes.

**Objective IN O6: Improvement of rail infrastructure**

It is an objective of the Council to, where feasible, work with Iarnrod Eireann to promote improvements to extend the reach of passenger and commuter train services to more areas within the County, with the following priorities:

- a) Improvements to the Limerick-Foynes line, for both freight and passenger use, with railway stations (and associated park and ride) at Patrickswell, Adare, and Foynes.
- b) The protection and redevelopment of Kilmallock railway station on the Limerick junction to Charleville railway line.  
Proposed developments for stations additional to the above will also be considered in consultation with Iarnrod Eireann.
- c) Improvement to the Limerick-Mungret spur railway line including consideration of stations and park and ride to enable it to be used for commuter passenger services.

**Objective IN O7: Rural Transport**

It is the objective of the Council to encourage initiatives to ensure that people with limited or no access to private transport in areas with no usable public transport and including people with reduced mobility, are able to access the full range of employment, retail, cultural and leisure facilities.

In this regard, the Planning Authority will work closely with County Limerick and North Cork Transport Group Ltd (Rural Bus) the local company set up to administer the rural transport programme for the County.

### 8.2.5 Cyclists and Pedestrians

Cycling and walking are to be encouraged as they are both an environmentally sustainable means of movement and are a useful form of exercise, suitable to people of different generations and levels of fitness. Both activities, and in particular that of walking, also offer the advantages of being non-intrusive, quiet and safe. For this reason too, provision of infrastructure for walking should also be suitable for those with impairments; and infrastructure provided for pedestrians should be provided and designed according to the criteria and specifications of 'Universal Access'. The Council acknowledges the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights (1988) which seeks to improve facilities for pedestrians and access for people with mobility needs. Where there is a coherent system of walkways and cycle routes that are convenient, comfortable, accessible and attractive, this can help encourage people to walk or cycle

even for longer journeys, and also can add to the County's attraction as a tourist destination.

Although a reasonable proportion of people walk to work, nationally the proportion of people that cycle is low compared to some of our counterparts in the continent: 1.9% of journeys to work in comparison to Germany where the average is 9%. It is against this background that the Government's policy document 'Smarter Travel: A Policy framework for Sustainable Transport' aims to achieve that 10% of all our trips will be bike by 2020.

The following table, from the 2006 census and the 1991 census, shows the decline in proportion of residents in the County who either walk or cycle to school or work. The only percentages that have remained stable are those of the older children and adults walking to school or work. The proportions of people cycling in particular are very low, and the drop in the proportions of secondary school pupils cycling to school from 11.47% to 1.96% is particularly noticeable. This decline is notwithstanding the increased urbanisation of the County, which should make average journeys shorter.

**Table 8.1 Percentages of those going on foot or bicycle to school or work, by age and category 1991 and 2006 (Source: CSO, Census of Ireland, 1991 and 2006)**

Category	1991		2006	
	On foot	Bicycle	On foot	Bicycle
5-12 yr olds to school	39.48	3.80	24.60	0.46
13-18 yr olds to school or college	27.47	11.47	24.28	1.96
Over 15 to work	11.30	3.68	11.44	1.48

Source: CSO Census 1991 and 2006

It is important to reverse these trends in the interests of sustainability, social inclusiveness and healthy living. The provision of a relevant quality infrastructure is crucial if people are to be persuaded to walk or use the bicycle for a variety of day-to-day journeys, and for purely recreational purposes. Another element of importance is of developing sustainable land use patterns and land use-transport interface. This has already been addressed both earlier in this Chapter and elsewhere in this Development Plan.

#### **Objective IN O8: Cycle and pedestrian facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to encourage the successful incorporation of safe and efficient cycle and pedestrian facilities, and accessible cycleways, footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for residential, educational, employment, and recreational developments. Consideration will be given in these schemes to existing or proposed routes where applicable.

Cycle facilities shall be incorporated into the design and layout of developments schemes as appropriate including road schemes and development schemes in accordance with the National Cycle Policy Framework, Department of Transport, 2009, and any subsequent documents to be released on foot of same, providing guidelines and standards.

### **8.2.6 Road Network and Use**

The road network (Map 8.2) is a vital part of the County's transport infrastructure, in real terms the most important of all elements of this infrastructure due to the widespread use and reliance on road transport for economic movements as well as for social journeys. Proper management of use, maintenance of roads, and improvements to the network is vital from a variety of perspectives. A comprehensive plan and management should allow the road network to develop in accordance with the requirements of settlements, land uses and other infrastructure as they are planned to expand in a sustainable manner:

- to ensure that the network is as safe as possible;
- allows smooth traffic flows for the effective functioning of economic land uses and for quality of life;
- in a manner that does not negatively impact on the local environment;
- in a manner that protects investment.

The entire road network of the County is associated with a dispersed settlement pattern, which can undermine the capacity for a convenient public transport system with widespread coverage. The dispersed pattern of settlement, in contrast to the concentrated location of most jobs and services, reinforces the reliance on cars to make daily journeys. In recent years there has been a phenomenal rise in car ownership in the County, compatible with national trends. The number of cars in the County associated with households has more than doubled in the fifteen year period from 30,036 in 1991 to 67,491 in 2006 (CSO 1991, and 2006). A high proportion of people travelling to work, shopping, and schools, do so by car. According to the 2006 census, 80.45% of those in the County working away from home travelled by private road transport other than bus. The number of cars (and trucks) has more than any other sector, been responsible for the unsustainable increase in carbon emissions noted earlier in this Chapter. At a local level, it has led to pressure on the condition and capacity of the road network in many areas. It must be borne in mind that much of the road network was built for traffic levels far lower than common today.

#### **Policy IN P7: Road Safety and Capacity**

**To seek the improvement of road safety and capacity throughout the County, through minimising existing traffic hazards, preventing the creation of additional or new traffic hazards in the road network and securing appropriate signage.**

**Objective IN O9: Substandard roads**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that on roads that are sub standard, either in terms of their width, (less than 3m), alignment, surface condition or junction with the nearest main road, development will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. A presumption in favour of family members and long term landowners will be considered in exceptional circumstances, where no alternative site is available, or where the only alternative access available is onto a strategic regional road as designated in the County Development Plan

**Objective IN O10 Land uses and Access Standards**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that any development involving a new access to a public road or the intensification of use of an existing access onto a public road that would compromise the safety and capacity of the road network, will not be permitted unless the new or existing access meets the appropriate design standards.

**Objective IN O11: Road Safety Audit**

Applications for developments belonging to any one of the following categories or where the Council so require, shall be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit, in accordance with National policy in the following categories of development:

- a) New public roads, including residential roads,
- b) Major road improvement works on all public roads,
- c) Traffic management schemes including quality bus corridors and cycle tracks,
- d) Development schemes,
- e) Major junction improvement works,
- f) Any scheme that materially affects vulnerable road users, and
- g) Major maintenance schemes.

Road safety audits will be carried out independently of the design team, shall be undertaken by an experienced auditor or team of auditors, and in accordance with guidance set down in 'Traffic Management Guidelines (DoT 2003) and insofar as the national road network is affected, the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA, January, 2009) (vol. 5) HD 19/09' which may also be used in lieu of the Traffic Management Guidelines for the local and regional road network. A Road Safety Audit will always be required for any development incorporating a new proposal onto a national road, or where the development may give rise to an increase in traffic on an existing access to the national road. A road safety audit will also be required for a change of layout of an existing access to a National Road.

**Objective IN O12: Improvements to regional and local roads**

It is an objective of the Council to provide for and carry out sustainable improvements to sections of Regional roads and local roads that are deficient in respect of alignment, structural condition, or capacity, where resources permit and to maintain that standard thereafter.

**Objective IN O13: Reservation of corridors for major road improvements:**

It is an objective of the Council to support major improvements by reserving such corridors of any such proposed routes free of developments that would interfere with such improvements.

**8.2.6.1. Strategic Regional Roads**

The regional road network provides important links between the towns and villages and the city. They supplement the national road network. Yet whereas regional roads account for 13.41% of the road network in the County, they accounted for 33% of the accidents between 1990 and 2007. It is important to find ways of improving the safety standards in these roads, and their capacity. An important first step is to restrict accesses onto these roads: this would reduce non-essential traffic on local journeys using this network, minimise the potential for traffic conflict or collision, and would also allow these roads to be improved in situ in the future.

Strategic regional roads are selected as they are particularly busy and important regional roads. In the National Development Plan 2007-2013 there is a 'Strategic Non-National Roads Investment Measure' reflecting this priority. The need to avoid unnecessary new accesses onto strategic regional roads has been enunciated in the 'Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, (April 2005).

If strategic regional roads are particularly important within the network of regional roads, this also tends to mean that these roads can be very busy. Their capacity, standards of safety, and scope for improvement has been compromised over the years by the amount of development fronting these roads with a proliferation of individual accesses. It is crucial that further frontage development is restricted, to prevent the premature obsolescence of these roads and in order that the capacity of these roads in their principal function as strategic roads is retained and enhanced.

The following Table 8.2 and Map 8.3 identifies the strategic regional roads in County Limerick.

**Table 8.2 List of Strategic Regional Roads**

R521-Foynes/Newcastle West
R522-Newcastle West/Dromcolliher/County Boundary
R518-Askeaton/Rathkeale/Ballingarry/Bruree/Kilmallock
R520-Newcastle West/Junction with R518 (towards Kilmallock)
R511-Limerick/Fedamore/Junction with R516
R512-Limerick/Bruff/Kilmallock/Kilfinnane/County Boundary
R513-Junction with N24/Caherconlish/Herbertstown/Hospital/Knocklong /Ballylanders/County Boundary
R503- Junction with N7 to County Boundary (towards Newport)
R525- Castleconnell to O'Briens Bridge
R505-Junction N24/Cappamore/Doon
R510-Junction with Raheen roundabout (R526) / Quins' cross roundabout/ Mungret roundabout (N69)
R526-City boundary to Colopys Cross-Patrickswell

### Policy IN P8 Strategic Regional Road Network

It shall be the policy of the Council to protect the investment in the Strategic Regional Road Network, prevent the premature obsolescence of this network and maintain and improve road safety and capacity.

#### Objective IN O14: Limerick Northern Distributor Road:

It is an objective of Limerick City & County Council to support the Limerick Northern Distributor Road, which will connect the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Road Scheme to the existing R445 (old N7) and adjoining road network to the east of Limerick City which will incorporate Smarter Travel features in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats, Water Framework, Floods, and EIA Directives. Full consideration of all environmental requirements has been made in the progression of the scheme to date. This will continue up to and including project level.

In relation to the LNDR, it is an objective of Limerick City & County Council:

- To ensure all mitigation and monitoring measures outlined in the Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report shall be taken into account at project level. Section 11 of the Natura Impact Report (dated February 2017) for the Proposed Variation provides details of mitigation measures which shall apply to any future development of the LNDR.
- To ensure all mitigation and monitoring measures outlined in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment shall be taken into account at project level.



**Figure 8.2 Preferred Route Corridor for Limerick Northern Distributor Road**

**Objective IN O15: Specific improvements and additions to the strategic regional road network**

It is an objective of the Council to give priority to the protection and improvement of sections of the Strategic Regional road network including the following:

- a) R525 The Montpelier-O'Briensbridge crossing including 60 metre buffer;
- b) R521 Newcastle West to Ardagh, Daar bridge and re-alignment;
- c) R513 Ballyaderg Bridge and realignment;
- d) R506 Annacotty industrial estate to Cappaghmore;
- e) R503 Annacotty roundabout to Newport Tipperary border;
- f) Newcastle West distributor road; and
- g) R512 Kilmallock Road

This list may be updated as resources permit.

**Objective IN O16: Prevention of development involving new vehicular access onto strategic regional roads**

It is an objective of the Council to prohibit development generating additional traffic and requiring direct access onto a strategic regional road. Direct access onto the regional roads shall accord with criteria specified below, and guidelines and standards referred to in the Development Management section of this plan and Department of Transport policy. These criteria include:

- a) Developments in built up areas where access is deemed to be safe and where a 50kph speed limit applies, or
- b) Where the house is required for occupation by a member of the farming community in connection with the working of the farm, and where no reasonable alternative access is available to them and the access is deemed to be safe, or
- c) For immediate family members of long term landowners seeking to build their first home where that access is safe and the traffic levels generated are reasonably low.
- d) Developments considered of strategic regional importance, where there is no reasonable alternative location or access. Such developments shall be subject to a full Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audit.

### **8.2.6.2 National Primary and National Secondary roads**

The network of national roads forms the backbone of the road network of the State and is of paramount importance in efficiently connecting the State's largest urban centres and trading ports together.

Planning policies of Local Authorities in relation to the national road network reflect its importance, and support the national planning guidance by the body charged with overseeing the development and operation of this network, the National Roads Authority (NRA).



**Policy IN P9      Safeguard the Capacity of National Roads**

**It is Council policy to safeguard the capacity of the national road network and road safety standards in accordance with the NRAs (National Road Authority) Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads (May 2006), and subsequent amendments to or replacements of this, including the forthcoming Government guidance on spatial planning and national roads when adopted and the ‘Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines’ (DEHLG, 2005).**

**Policy IN P10      Protection of Corridors and Route Alignments**

**The Council will continue to work with the NRA in protecting corridors and route alignments identified for national roads projects from prejudicial development, in accordance with the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines, Transport 21 and the National Development Plan.**

**Objective IN O17: Established national routes and development management**

It is the objective of the Council in the first instance to channel traffic from new development onto the existing local road network. In this regard, it shall not permit developments that require a new access onto a national road or that would generate additional traffic relying on an existing private or substandard access to a national road. The only exceptions to this policy shall be:

- a) Developments in existing built-up areas where access is deemed to be safe and where a 50km speed limit applies;
- b) Where members of the farming community wish to build their houses for their own occupation, on their own land, only where no reasonable alternative is available to them, and where the developer can clearly show that the exception is clearly warranted in his/her case;
- c) Developments of national or regional strategic importance which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban centres and where the developments proposed have specific locational requirements or are dependent on fixed physical characteristics. In this regard, Limerick County Council shall engage with relevant stakeholders including the NRA, Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Mid-West Regional Authority and, if appropriate, neighbouring Local Authorities to develop a strategy to identify such activities or locations and a set of criteria which would guide development in such circumstances. This strategy will have particular regard to the findings of the Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) and will comply with prevailing Government guidelines on spatial planning and national roads.

In any case the direct access onto the national road shall be of the location and standard in accordance with National Road Authority (NRA) ‘Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads (NRA, 2006)’ and ‘Design Manual for Roads and Bridges’ (NRA, January 2009) and any subsequent amendments. Access shall be assessed having regard to the considerations outlined in the Development Management section of this Plan.



**Objective IN O18: New national routes and development management**

It is an objective of the Council to prohibit the creation of any new access onto all major national road improvement projects. These include existing new stretches of national road and planned projects after construction as outlined below:

1) The following existing new stretches of national road

- a) N8 Cashel to Mitchelstown;
- b) N20, N21, N24, N7 Adare-Annacotty
- c) N20 Croom by-pass
- d) N7 Limerick Southern ring road-Phase 1
- e) N21 Rathkeale by-pass
- f) N21 Headleys bridge to Feale bridge.

2) The following planned projects after construction

- a) M20 Limerick-Cork N21
- b) Adare by-pass N19 Limerick Southern ring road-Phase II, and
- c) N7 Limerick to Nenagh road N24 Pallas Green to Bansha

**Objective IN O19: To protect investment in new and improved sections of national routes in the following list.**

It is the objective of the Council to prohibit frontage development onto the following sections of national routes. Access to development will be limited to well planned access points.

- a) N21-Croagh by-pass
- b) N69-Askeaton by-pass
- c) N24-Grange cross by-pass

**Objective IN O20: Service Areas**

It is the Council's objective to support the National Roads Authority in ensuring suitable service areas serving motorways and high quality dual carriageways.

**Objective IN O21: Protection of Interchanges and Junctions**

It is Council's objective to resist developments likely to compromise the capacity of existing or proposed interchanges and junctions on national primary or secondary roads either individually or cumulatively. The Council shall require that developments likely to generate significant additional trips shall in the first instance be served by an adequate local road network and facilities for alternative travel modes to accommodate this traffic. The Council shall have particular regard to NRA guidance including Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007, prevailing Government guidance on Spatial Planning and National Roads and relevant data and guidance from the emerging Mid-Western Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) to ensure that developments do not compromise existing or proposed interchanges or junctions on the national road network.

**Objective IN O22: Promotion of improvements to the N69 Limerick to Foynes**

It is the objective of the Council to promote the strategic improvement of the N69 between Limerick City and Foynes to facilitate traffic by heavy goods vehicles into this important port from an easterly direction.

The following table sets out the proposed improvement works for the 2010-2016 period, having regard to the objectives in the National Development Plan.

**Table 8.3 Proposed National Road Improvements for the Period 2010-2016**

N18 Galway Road	Southern Ring Road – Phase 2: Complete land acquisition and continue construction of the Limerick Southern Ring Road, Phase 2 scheme in County Limerick
M7 Dublin Road	N7 Route Improvements Nenagh to Limerick: Complete land acquisition and continue construction of the M7 Nenagh to Limerick scheme in County Limerick
M8 Mitchelstown - Cahir	Complete land acquisition and continue construction of the M8 Route Improvements from Mitchelstown to Cahir in County Limerick.
N20 Cork Road	Design, reserve land and commence construction of the N20 upgrade to Motorway standard, which forms part of the strategic Atlantic Corridor and is included in “Transport 21” from Patrickswell to Charleville in County Limerick.
N21 Tralee Road (and Killarney Road)	Design, reserve land for and commence construction of N21 Route Improvements from Adare to the County boundary, as resources become available.  Design, reserve land for and commence construction of a bypass of Adare on a route to the south of Adare to connect with the proposed M20 Cork to Limerick project at a location to the south of Adare as resources become available.
N24 Tipperary Road	Ballysimon to County Boundary: Design, reserve land and commence construction of N24 Route Improvements from Ballysimon to County Boundary, as resources become available.  Western Corridor Improvements (Pallasgreen – Bansha): Design, reserve land for and commence construction of so much of N24 Western Corridor Improvements, as will lie in County Limerick as resources become available.
N69 Tarbert (Foynes) Road	Design, reserve land for and commence construction of N69 Route Improvements from Limerick to Glin as resources become available.

**Objective IN O23: Protection of proposed national road improvements**

‘It is the objective of the Council to protect, where relevant and as identified by the NRA or the County Council as roads authority, the corridors, routes and roads, necessary for the planning, construction, and completion of the improvement works as listed in Table 8.3.’

**8.2.7 Harbours and Airports**

Limerick has an important transport asset in the natural harbour of its estuary. There is one significant port in the County; Foynes, a deep water cargo port; and a jetty for Alcan, the alumina factory at Aughinish, between Foynes and Askeaton. The City docks is close to the County and adds to the range of local employment opportunities.

There is an international airport at Shannon which is only 15 miles from the County and which has been made more accessible with the completion of the Shannon tunnel and road link to the N20 north of Limerick. There is one private aerodrome in Coonagh, formerly in the County but now within the city boundary at Caherdavin.

Policies for Foynes and for harbour development generally are contained in the Shannon Estuary Chapter. In relation to airports and aerodromes of regional importance: the Council will have regard to forthcoming guidelines from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in drawing up guidance for development in public safety zones. The Council will also consult with the Irish Aviation Authority in the drawing up of these guidelines and in assessing proposals likely to affect navigation systems, flight paths and on all airport/aerodrome related proposals.

**Objective IN O24 Enhancing Connectivity with the Estuary**

It is an objective of the Council, as resources become available and in consultation with the NRA, to examine sustainable route options from the N69 to the national primary road network and Limerick Gateway to provide for improved vehicular connectivity

**8.3 Water services and Water Resource Management****8.3.1. Background**

The Council is committed to a scientifically grounded approach to sustainable water resource management. It is important that the Council work in such a concerted way to manage the water resource in keeping with the requirements of development as envisaged in this Plan. A proper approach will reap dividends in terms of human well-being and in environmental quality, and can be cost-effective in the long run. Water resource management entails a range of requirements and these are listed below:

- Ensuring water is reliably available for drinking and for a range of other functions at the right pressure and potable quality,

- Conserving water resources,
- Preventing damaging modifications to, or pollution of surface water bodies, and preventing waterborne pollution itself,
- Protecting groundwater from depletion or contamination,
- Managing flood risk to protect land uses, and
- Ensuring that development is serviced with water infrastructure in a cost-effective manner.

The installation of appropriate infrastructure is a prerequisite if development is to take place to meet the community's needs, without causing damage to the environment. Therefore policies for infrastructure provision, design and management are an integral part of policies for sustainable development. Land use planning and infrastructure planning must occur in tandem. Land uses should only be located where there is an appropriate environment for these land uses, including adequate infrastructure and or management regimes in place:

- to treat and/or dispose of effluent properly, and the receiving environment can absorb the discharged effluent;
- to supply the land uses with a regular and quality water supply in keeping with their needs; and
- to avert unacceptable levels of flood risk, particularly to flood sensitive land uses.

The Planning Authority will have regard to the findings of the Shannon River Basin Management plan (RBP) and the Groundwater Protection Plan when assessing applications for developments and their potential impact on surface water run-off and groundwater sources. These include agricultural developments and developments requiring wastewater treatment. The RBP recommends strengthening controls on new development. All on-site treatment systems are required to be certified on the basis of site assessments in accordance with guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): guidance on single houses is from 2009 and on commercial developments is from 1999 which is due to be reviewed in the imminent future.

#### **Policy IN P11: Management of Water Resource**

**It is the policy of the Council to seek to ensure water resources and services are managed and planned, in association with other policies and objectives in this plan, to meet the following goals:**

- a) **To protect human health and the environment**
- b) **To facilitate the provision of proper water services for domestic and non-domestic requirements**
- c) **To support proper planning and sustainable development, including sustainable use of water resources.**
- d) **To ensure the danger of flooding risk is averted as far as possible and where flooding is inevitable its consequences minimised.**

### **8.3.2 Statutory obligations and criteria**

There are statutory obligations and criteria that must be complied with if the Council is to improve and protect water resources.

The main statutory provisions are as follows:

- The Water Services Act 2007.
- The EU Water Framework Directive - All waters must achieve at least good status by 2015 and that its poor waters do not deteriorate. A Draft River Basin Management plan has been prepared for the Shannon International River Basin District Project (The IRBD Draft Plan for short).
- European Communities Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 2001(S.I. No.254) and 2004 (S.I.No.440) set specific standards to be achieved by urban wastewater treatment plants (for persons equivalent of 500 or over).
- Wastewater Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 (S.I.No.684)
- European Communities (Drinking Water no.2) Regulations 2007.

Under the Wastewater Discharges (Authorisation) Regulations, the Council are required to seek registration or licensing of all wastewater treatment schemes with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA is also the supervisory authority with respect to the operation of public drinking water supplies, with the County Council being the supervisory authority for smaller private supplies (including group water schemes).

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) provides certain supports to local authorities for major water services projects. To be eligible for DEHLG support under its water services investment programme, local authorities must prepare an 'Assessment of Needs', reviewed on a regular basis. The Assessment of Needs comprises a list of projects, ranked in order of priority, requiring State assistance in funding and approval.

The DEHLG has a range of priorities by which to assess projects for approval to the next stage of planning as appropriate and to allocate assistance. The future requirements of hubs and gateways in the National Spatial Plan and the requirement for clean waters under the Water Framework Directive are major priorities. It is important to note that the DEHLG contributes towards that proportion of the cost of a scheme which serves existing dwellings and that no support is available for that portion of the costs associated with the non-domestic sector.

Other programmes receiving funding are the Rural Water Programme, and the Small Schemes programme.

### **8.3.3 Progress since 2005 County Development Plan**

Progress has been made since the adoption of the County Development Plan in March 2005 in relation to water services. Work that has been done includes prevention of leaks in the water conservation programme, the extensive upgrading of group water schemes under the Rural Water programme, and the undertaking of some major capital projects. Major schemes in which Limerick County Council is a partner include the

Limerick Mains drainage project, the upgrading of water supply at Clareville and the laying of the Southern Ring main, which will eventually enable satellite towns and villages around the City to benefit from this supply source. A number of sewerage schemes are very well advanced (for example, Patrickswell, Kilmallock and Mungret sewerage schemes). However, under the Council's own financial initiatives improvements have taken places; including Kilfinnane, Cappamore, Adare, Feenagh and Pallaskenry.

#### **8.3.4 Strategic policy**

The Council will continue to take a pro-active approach towards meeting its statutory obligations, taking a positive inter-agency approach to identify requirements, define problems and risks accurately and work on cost-effective and sustainable solutions. This involves monitoring relevant water parameters, reviewing the pressures on the water resources and carrying out appropriate scientific assessments. Solutions and strategies consistent with this Development Plan will be prepared where there are issues with either the availability of adequate water resources/services for existing developments or indeed issues with a water resource itself. The same principles apply to future development except that these should be located where infrastructure provision is feasible and most cost-effective in the long run.

The following policy outlines its general strategic approach.

#### **Policy IN P12: Catchment Management**

**In seeking the proper development and use of water resources and associated activities the Council will work with relevant authorities to better secure a consistent management approach across river catchments and river basin districts.**

**Particular regard shall be had to the following:**

- a) **The Draft Shannon River Basin Management Plan and the South-Western River Basin District Management Plan in their respective areas of coverage.**
- b) **The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) ground water survey.**
- c) **The Heritage Council Lower Shannon Waterway Corridor Study, 2006, and**
- d) **The OPW in respect of Flood risk data, assessments, and Flood Risk Management Plans.**
- e) **The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary.**

#### **8.3.5 Water Supply, Water Conservation and Sewerage**

The Council is committed to the following objectives in respect of water supply, water conservation and sewerage.

<b>Objective IN O25: Protection of Surface water bodies</b>
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It is the objective of the Council to ensure the integrity of surface water bodies is maintained; and where damaged, to seek, as resources allow, to restore their integrity. Priority will be given to those waters deemed to be sensitive in respect of their uses, and vulnerable due to low assimilation capacity. The Council shall give particular priority to the need to protect human health, designated habitats, and to minimise costs of water/wastewater treatment.

**Objective IN O26: Water services and development**

It is the objective of the Council to match water infrastructure to development requirements in a cost-effective, sustainable and efficient manner in keeping with statutory requirements; while ensuring the pattern, form, and phasing of development that is allowed reflects service and environmental capacity. To this end the Council will monitor the cumulative effects of grants of planning permission on the available wastewater treatment capacity.

**Objective IN O27: Access for maintenance**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that Developments adjacent to water courses will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate provision for access to allow maintenance, clearance and future improvement works or emergency works.

**Objective IN O28: Protection of wells**

It is an objective of the Council to restrict development within the zone of contribution for wells used as sources of water supply, except where it is established to the Council's satisfaction that development would not interfere with the water sources of these wells.

**Objective IN O29: Water Services and Settlement strategy**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate the provision and upgrading of water supply and sewerage schemes throughout the County in accordance with the settlement structure identified in this Plan and as finances permit.

**Objective IN O30: Public mains**

It is an objective of the Council to require that all applications for development, where public mains are available or likely to be available, that the development shall connect into them.

**Objective IN O31: Preference for gravity sewers**

It is the objective of the Council to seek to optimise the use of existing sewerage systems, and to minimise the requirement for additional sewerage pumping stations. First preference shall be given to gravity sewers. Second preference shall be given to utilising spare capacity served by existing pumping stations.

**Objective IN O32: Services Contributions:**

It is the objective of the Council to secure financial contributions from developers, consistent with the Development Contribution Scheme, to support water services necessary to support existing or future developments. Bonds will also be required by the Council to ensure the satisfactory completion and maintenance of water services until the Council takes them in charge.

**Objective IN O 33: Water Supply**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure adequate cognisance is given to the following development requirements in the provision of water supplies. Developers shall ensure that:

- a) there is a secure and regular supply of potable water in keeping with the Drinking Waters Regulations,
- b) water has adequate pressure, and
- c) there is additional on-site storage capacity for community, commercial, or industrial needs consistent with the consumers' ability to cope with supply outage or deficit.

**Objective IN O34: Water Conservation**

It is an objective of the Council to promote the awareness of sustainable water use and to encourage water conservation and demand minimisation by

- a) metering and control of leaks in the Water Conservation programme;
- b) promoting Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and grey water recycling in developments;
- c) minimising the potential for wastage through appropriate design and layout of pipe networks; and
- d) recovering costs of providing water through the use of these services in keeping with Article 9 of the EU Water Directive and the Water Services Act 2007. This is currently applied through the imposition of water charges for the non-domestic sector

**Objective IN O35: Wastewater treatment systems on un-sewered properties**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that all developments requiring sanitary facilities in unsewered locations, are properly installed and maintained with septic tanks or proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems, as appropriate to the development and site conditions, and determined according to a proper site assessment in compliance with relevant guidelines and legislation:

**a) On site treatment systems Independent testing and certification**

The site and the system shall have been assessed in accordance with relevant EPA guidelines and to the satisfaction of the Council by a suitably qualified professional having indemnity insurance, who is from a list of assessors approved by the Council for carrying out such an assessment.

**b) Relevant procedures and solutions**



All site assessments for all on-site treatment systems or septic tanks shall be carried out in accordance with relevant Environmental Protection Agency guidance (EPA). These are as appropriate to their development types:

- i) for individual houses and domestic extensions EPA '*Code of Practice on Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses (October 2009)*' which replaces previous guidance issued by the Agency in 2000;
- ii) for houses accommodating ten people or more, groups of houses, commercial or community developments 'Treatment systems for Small Communities, Businesses, Leisure Centres and Hotels (EPA 1999);
- iii) any subsequent Codes of Practice superseding or updating these and endorsed by the Department of Environment for this purpose;
- iv) any relevant legislation.

The Planning Authority will ensure that all sites for development in unsewered areas are assessed in compliance with the EPA code of practice and taking account of the cumulative effects of multiple developments in such areas.

**c) Discharges to water courses**

Discharges from on-site treatment systems serving individual houses to water courses will not be allowed due to the serious problems including nutrient over-enrichment of rivers and the difficulties of achieving the Water Framework Directive.

### 8.3.6 Flood Risk

It is important to incorporate into planning policy at the outset the risk of flooding, so that land uses that could suffer serious consequences from its effects, can be located away from flood prone areas. It is also important to ensure developments do not exacerbate flooding, through their affect on flood plains, rivers and drainage.

#### **Objective IN O36: Minimise threat and consequences of flooding**

It is the objective of the Council to avert, or where this is not possible, to minimise the threat of flooding in new developments and existing built up areas. Priority will be given to the protection of vulnerable uses that would be seriously affected by the consequences of flood events. The Council will have regard to Government Guidelines, 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' and OPW data and advice in the assessment of all development proposals and any subsequent amendments.

#### **Objective IN O37: Manage river catchments and surface water run-off**

It is the objective of the Council to assist in the sustainable management of river catchments to reduce both the quantity of water run-off and its speed and unpredictability, allow rivers to take their natural flow, and allow flooding only to occur in lower sensitivity areas.

#### **Objective IN 038: Screening for Flood Risk**

It is the objective of the Council to continue to screen for flood risk as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process.

#### **Objective IN O 39: Flood risk management and development**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that land uses are zoned, and developments allowed where there is minimum flood risk, prioritising the protection of certain land uses particularly vulnerable to the affects of flooding. To this end:

- a) The sequential approach to zoning and assessment recommended in 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management', DEHLG November 2009 and any subsequent document will be adopted.
- b) The Council will work with the OPW to ensure up to date data and assessment, and to take a precautionary approach where there are gaps in data. Attention in particular will be given to the records and assessments of past flood events, the position of OPW benefiting lands, and the position of alluvial soils in establishing a preliminary estimate of risk.
- c) It is an objective of the Council to prepare a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for relevant areas of County Limerick.
- d) Require any development proposal in a location identified as being subject to flooding to:
  - 1. Carry out a flood risk / catchment analysis for the development to assess the likely level of flood hazard that may affect the site to the satisfaction of the Council;
  - 2. Design the development to avoid flood levels, incorporating building design measures and materials to assist evacuation and minimize damage to property from flood waters;
  - 3. Demonstrate that the proposal will not result in increased risk of flooding elsewhere, restrict flow across floodplains, where compensatory storage / storm water retention measures shall be provided on site and will not alter the hydrological regime up stream or down stream or at the development location so as to pose an additional flood risk or to increase flood risk;
  - 4. Proposals should have provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff i.e. minimisation of concrete surfaces and use of semi permeable materials and include adequate measures to cope with the flood risk, e.g. sustainable drainage systems.
- e) Have regard to the Office of Public Works Planning Policy Guidance in the design and consideration of development proposals; and
- f) Preserve riparian strips free of development and ensure adequate width to permit access for river maintenance.

All flood risk assessments should have regard to national flood hazard mapping, predicted changes in flood events resulting from climate change and the River Shannon Catchment Flood Risk and Management Plan Studies (CFRAM) when completed by the OPW and the Shannon International River Basin Management Plan. The 'development management justification test' and the 'plan - making justification test' as detailed in The Planning System and Flood Risk Guidance document will guide Council responses to development proposals in areas at moderate or high risk of flooding.

**Objective IN O40: To minimise the impact of structures and earthworks on flood plains and river flow.**

It is an objective of the Council in general not to permit development of the following types in or across flood plains or river channels unless it can be clearly demonstrated using flood impact assessments, that they would not create or exacerbate risk of flooding in sensitive locations such as:

- a) construction of embankments, wide bridge piers or similar structures.

- b) raising of ground levels where this would interfere with natural river flow or currents.

**Objective IN O41: Sustainable Urban Drainage systems**

It is the objective of the Council to reduce insofar as possible, the rate and quantity of surface water run-off from all new developments. Developments should where possible, incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)

## 8.4 Waste Management

Waste Management is regulated in Ireland by the Waste Management Act 1996-2003 and all associated Regulations. Policy in this area is also determined by three major policy statements issued by the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government<sup>1</sup>. The local authorities of Limerick County, Limerick City, Clare and Kerry have jointly prepared a regional waste management plan (The Limerick/Clare/Kerry Waste Management Plan), in accordance with the legislative requirements and the policy statements, to organise waste management in an integrated fashion on a regional basis. The Plan encompasses areas of planning, regulation, collection, recycling, recovery and disposal of non hazardous wastes generated within the region. It sets out the policy for an integrated approach to waste management for the next 25 years in the region. It also recognises the cross regional dimension to modern waste management and does not confine solutions to County or regional boundaries.

The Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government issued the ‘Changing our Ways’ policy statement on waste management in 1998 and the Waste Management Plan was modelled on this policy document. The policy seeks a radical reduction in the number of landfill sites throughout the country, with a move away from small sites serving sub-county areas to larger facilities serving whole counties or regions. The policy also seeks to avoid the development of new facilities where the expansion of existing facilities is available.

There are three civic amenity centres in the County; these are at Newcastle West, Kilmallock and Mungret. They provide recycling facilities for a comprehensive range of waste materials. The centres are intended to be reasonably convenient to all areas of the County.

### 8.4.1 Waste Management Objectives

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<sup>1</sup> These three Policy Statements are: ‘*Changing our Ways: Waste Management, A Policy statement*’ DEHLG, 1998; *Delivering Change -Preventing and Recycling Waste*, DEHLG, 2002; and *Waste Management-Taking Stock and Moving Forward*, DEHLG, 2004.

The Protection of the Environment Act, 2003 states under Section 26(2)(c) that development plans are deemed to include the objectives contained in the Waste Management Plan:

*“The development plan for the time being in force in relation to the functional area of a local authority shall be deemed to include the objectives for the time being contained in the waste management plan in force in relation to that area”.*

Under the same section, it is stated that the objectives of the Waste Management Plan will override the objectives of the Development Plan, where there is a conflict between the two plans. The Regional Waste Management Plan will be reviewed in 2011, and this County Development Plan will take into account any changes that arise from the review of the Plan.

**Objective IN O42: Regional Waste Management Plan**

It is the objective of the Council to implement the provisions of the Waste Management Hierarchy and the Regional Waste Management Plan 2006-2011, and any subsequent review of this Waste Management Plan as it applies to this Council area. All prospective developments in the County will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Regional Waste Management Plan and adhere to those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source-segregation.

Education and awareness is seen as a key measure in successful waste management. The Environmental Awareness Officers employed by Local Authorities spearhead education and awareness at community level whilst the Regional Waste Minimisation Advisor spearheads education and awareness at industry level.

**Objective IN O43: Education and Awareness**

It is the objective of the Council to promote education and awareness on all issues associated with waste management, both at industry and community level. This will include the promotion of waste reduction by encouraging the minimisation, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste within the County.

**Objective IN O44: Polluter pays principle**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure the provision of quality cost effective waste infrastructure and services, which reflect and meet the needs of the community and to ensure that the ‘polluter pays’ principle is adhered to in all waste management activities.

**Objective IN O45: Recycling Facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to require the provision of bring banks or other appropriate recycling facilities as part of the overall development in the case of new or extended shopping centre developments and commercial neighbourhood centres, educational, sports, and recreational facilities. These facilities will be funded and

maintained by the property developers, operational managers or occupiers as appropriate.

**Objective IN O46: Proposed waste disposal**

It is the objective of the Council in assessing planning applications to have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount produced and proposed method of disposal. Developments should ensure that production/disposal methods do not give rise to environmental pollution, result in undue loss of amenity or be detrimental to public health.

**Objective IN O47: Construction and Demolition Waste**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that all significant construction/demolition projects include construction and demolition waste management plans. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities and are required for developments of five or more housing units or commercial or industrial developments on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares.

**Objective IN O48 Provision of transfer facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to support the development of recycling sites/waste disposal sites or transfer stations and associated developments in appropriate locations, subject to normal planning and environmental sustainability considerations. In assessing applications for these types of development, the Planning Authority will have regard to the Groundwater Protection Plan and appropriate response matrix.

## **8.5 Telecommunications and Energy**

### **8.5.1 Telecommunications networks**

Telecommunications has been a key driver of growth in the Irish economy over the last decade. Developments in the telecommunications sector are also critical for the promotion of the broader knowledge economy and information society in Ireland. The availability of advanced broadband technologies in particular is seen as a critical factor for Ireland to develop as an eBusiness hub, but more importantly for the promotion of regional development.

Shannon Broadband Ltd has been established by Shannon Development with the local authorities in Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary and Offaly to provide a basic broadband network for the region. Initially, this infrastructure will be in Limerick City with subsequent connections regionally and to the international networks based in Dublin. The presence of the broadband facility will provide the basic ducts and cable system that will attract major industry/business, which depend on telecommunications.

The Council recognises the importance of telecommunications to Limerick's economy and particularly the e-commerce economy in line with national policy of encouraging the development of broadband and wireless infrastructure.

### **8.5.2 Energy networks**

The availability of energy is of critical importance to the development and expansion of County Limerick. The growth in the national economy has placed strain on the national electricity generating capacity, with a continuing increase in demand for electricity. The supply of electricity has been opened up to competition and new generation plants may connect to the electricity network to transport power from wherever it is produced to where there is a demand for it.

In relation to the transmission and distribution networks, the Council will support the current investment programme to reinforce the national grid in order to meet international supply standards and to take account of rising demand.

A substantial investment programme is currently underway by Bord Gais to enhance and extend the existing natural gas transmission network, which runs between Limerick, Cork, Dublin and Dundalk. In County Limerick natural gas is available to Adare, Annacotty, Ballyneety, Castleconnell, Castletroy and Patrickswell. Further extensions to the gas network into County Limerick will only occur if demand is shown to exist and is of a sufficient nature to ensure the economic viability of such an extension.

### **8.5.3 Telecommunications and Energy Objectives**

The Council will adopt a positive approach to applications for telecommunications infrastructure including broadband and wireless infrastructure in recognition of the importance to the economy, while having regard to the landscape characterisation of the County and normal planning considerations as outlined in the Government Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, 1996 and the Planning Authority's Development Management Guidelines (Chapter 10). Consultation on the provision of energy transmission facilities will take place with Eirgrd whenever necessary in order to ensure the timely delivery of such infrastructure. The role of an efficient transmission network in catering for the energy produced by the renewable energy sector is hugely important.

#### **Objective IN O49: Facilitation of Energy networks**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of energy networks in principle, provided that it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure,
- b) the route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, environmental and cultural impacts;
- c) the design is such that will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring excessive cost, and

- d) where impacts are inevitable, mitigation features have been taken into account or in the case of European conservation sites, the networks will only be accepted if they comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- e) Protected areas – NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance, proximity to structures that are listed for preservation, national monuments etc. have been taken into account.

#### **Objective IN O50: Facilitation of telecommunication facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to support the development of telecommunication facilities and support the timely commissioning of transmission infrastructure. Proposals for the erection of masts, antennae or ancillary equipment for telecommunication purposes will take the following into account:

- a) the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- b) social, environmental and cultural impacts of the infrastructure proposed;
- c) designed so that it will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring expensive cost;
- d) Where impacts are inevitable, mitigation features have been taken into account or in the case of European conservation sites, the facilities will only be accepted if they comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and
- e) Protected areas – NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance, proximity to structures that are listed for preservation, national monuments etc. have been taken into account.

#### **Objective IN O51: Co-location of telecommunication facilities**

It is the objective of the Council to encourage the clustering and co-location of telecommunication masts, antennae or ancillary equipment and more favourable consideration will be given to their location near existing similar type structures.

#### **Objective IN O52: Temporary permissions**

It is the objective of the Council to ensure that where permission is granted for telecommunication masts that it will generally be for a temporary period not exceeding 5 years. This will enable the Planning Authority to review the situation considering changing technology and effect of the development on the amenities of the area.

#### **Objective IN O53: Minimising impact of transmission network**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Minimise the visual impact and the obtrusion of the transmission network (ESB telecommunications etc) throughout the County especially in areas of high amenity;
- b) Encourage the undergrounding of existing and new overhead wires including television cables particularly within areas zoned for development, within settlement boundaries and in areas of high visual amenity, and integrate such under-grounding with surface treatment schemes where possible; and
- c) Ensure that permission for housing developments will be conditional on the under-grounding of all overhead wires and cables.

**Objective IN O54: Broadband connectivity**

It is the objective of the Council to support the co-ordinated and focussed development and extension of broadband infrastructure throughout the County. To this end the Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is ducting for broadband fibre connections:

- a) installed during the installation of services; and
- b) in all new commercial and housing schemes
- c) during any work on road or rail lines.

**Objective IN O55: Co-ordinated development**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate developers and utility providers in meeting the requirements for utility services such as telecommunications, gas and electricity. Pre-planning application discussions with providers of telecommunication and ESB structures are encouraged.

**8.5.4 Renewable Energy Strategy**

In light of the issues of energy security and possible future resource constraints and the issue of global warming the new renewable energy sector looks set to play a bigger role in the economic and infrastructural future of County Limerick. Both bio-mass, wind power, and small scale hydro power and wave power can play a role. The contribution of small scale renewable, following recent changes to planning regulations to facilitate their use is likely to grow. In the absence of some forms of renewable energy such as small-scale hydro-schemes, the areas of the County that may be suitable can only be indicated in general form.

**Bio-energy Production:**

This aspect of renewable energy can lend itself well to collective community or district combined heat and power plants. Sources of bio-mass in Co. Limerick can vary from products specifically grown for use as bio-mass fuels such as Miscanthus or Short Rotation Coppice to animal waste and by products of the food industry.

The forestry sector can also make a huge contribution to the bio-mass sector through the use of by products from the forestry sector as fuel. Forestry thinnings and waste timber can be valuable localised fuel sources.

Technologies such as anaerobic digestion (AD) and dry digestion can play a huge role in helping to manage sources of farm waste in particular and can help to provide an outlet for farm waste, municipal solid waste or by products from the food industry. Anaerobic digestion is the bacterial fermentation of organic waste in oxygen free conditions. The by-product of this is methane and liquid and solid residues, which are high in nutrient values but are in a more easily handled form than the original wastes. This technology would be particularly appropriate for the treatment of farm wastes.



The areas of County Limerick that would be able to support these enterprises would be those with intensive agricultural activities, such as dairying and pig and poultry farming. These are generally located in the Agricultural lowlands and in the Shannon estuary and the Western uplands.

In areas where forestry residues are readily available the opportunity exists to use this to fuel local boilers. Forestry is typically located on more marginal land often in the uplands so in the establishment of such wood burning enterprises issues such as scenic amenity might arise. It is anticipated that such enterprises would take place on or close to existing farms or structures or close to settlements particularly if they are to be part of Municipal Heating Systems which might have a role to play in energy provision in smaller settlements or some agricultural or other enterprises. Generally it is anticipated that anaerobic digestion would take place in the more intensively farmed areas of the County while wood-burning enterprises would take place close to sources of raw materials such as the uplands.

### **Small-scale Hydro-power:**

Traditionally this provided energy for mills and other enterprises in County Limerick and depends on the harnessing of water power flowing from a higher to a lower level. It is usually only possible to exploit hydro-power resources where they occur. It involves the creation of a head pond and weir to provide sufficient depth to draw off water, a headrace –a pipe or channel to carry the water from source to the generation turbine contained within the turbine house and tail race to return the water to its natural course. Creating these structures will have an effect on the course of the river and may have ecological effects. While many of the locations that would have had mills in the past could be expected to provide suitable locations today, ecological and environmental concerns will have to be taken into account such as fish passes to ensure that fish are not drawn into the turbine. This is important for salmonids which during migration may be particularly vulnerable to this. Consultation with both the Fisheries Boards and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are required in order to ensure that fisheries and other ecological issues are taken into account.

The Council will be supportive of such development where these factors have been taken into account.

### **Wind energy strategy:**

This is illustrated in Map 8.4 which shows preferred areas, generally those with more stable mineral soils and closer to grid connections and outside designated sites, areas open to consideration, principally in the west and also areas which are not considered suitable for wind energy due to either scenic or ecological concerns.

Ecological issues are of huge concern in County Limerick with large areas of the southwest of the County designated as Special Protection Areas. The Council will seek to direct wind energy developments away from sensitive sites from both a visual and environmental perspective. The Council will be supportive of wind energy applications that take ecological concerns into account.

Potential applicants are also referred to the Development Management guidelines in Chapter 10.

**Objective IN O56: Support Renewable Energy Developments**

It is the objective of the Council to adopt a positive approach to renewable energy developments having regard to the following:

- a) the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- b) the environmental and social impacts of the proposed development;
- c) impact of the development on the landscape;
- d) where impacts are inevitable, mitigation features have been taken into account or in the case of European conservation sites, the facilities will only be accepted if they comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive;
- e) Protected areas – NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance, proximity to elements of the architectural heritage such as protected structures and architectural conservation areas, national monuments etc have been taken into account.

**Objective IN O57: Siting of Renewable Energy Developments**

It is the objective of the Council to permit the siting of renewable energy developments in appropriate locations for each type of technology, bearing in mind the technology-specific information required as detailed in Development Management guidelines Chapter 10.

**Objective IN O58: Pre-planning discussion**

It is the objective of the Council to facilitate early pre-planning discussion with providers of energy infrastructure and to support local community participation within this process.

**Objective IN O59: Siting of Wind Energy Developments:**

(a) In considering the siting of renewable energy developments in terms of wind energy projects it is the objective of the Planning Authority to permit their siting in appropriate locations as identified in the Landscape Characterisation of the County and Wind Energy Strategy where judged to be in compliance with proper planning and sustainable development with the Development Guidelines for wind farms. These are drawn from the Department of Environment's 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines' (DEHLG 2006) and the Planning Authority shall have regard to these in assessing planning applications.

(b) Surface drainage associated with access roads has to avoid raising the hydrographic peak in down stream rivers after rain events, and has to avoid reducing the water storage abilities of peatland areas and to have in place during the lifetime of the wind farm a storm water flow attenuation system to achieve no net increase in surface water run off to a 1:100 year storm event capacity.

(c) Areas open for consideration for wind energy applications shall be treated on their merits with the onus on the developer to demonstrate why the development should be granted permission. This category has been applied to areas with limited capacity to

absorb wind development but which are sensitive enough to require a site by site and cumulative effects appraisal to ascertain the suitability of the area for development.







**Objective IN O60: Individual Wind Turbines:**

The Council will consider applications for individual wind turbines in areas designated not suitable for wind energy on Map 8.4 on industrial or education zoned lands and which are related to an existing development primarily to serve the energy needs of the applicant. Such applications will need to demonstrate that they will not detract from the amenity value of nearby residential areas and will be subject, where necessary, to the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive which may require appropriate assessment of such developments. Such applications will also be subject to normal planning criteria.

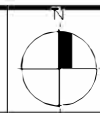
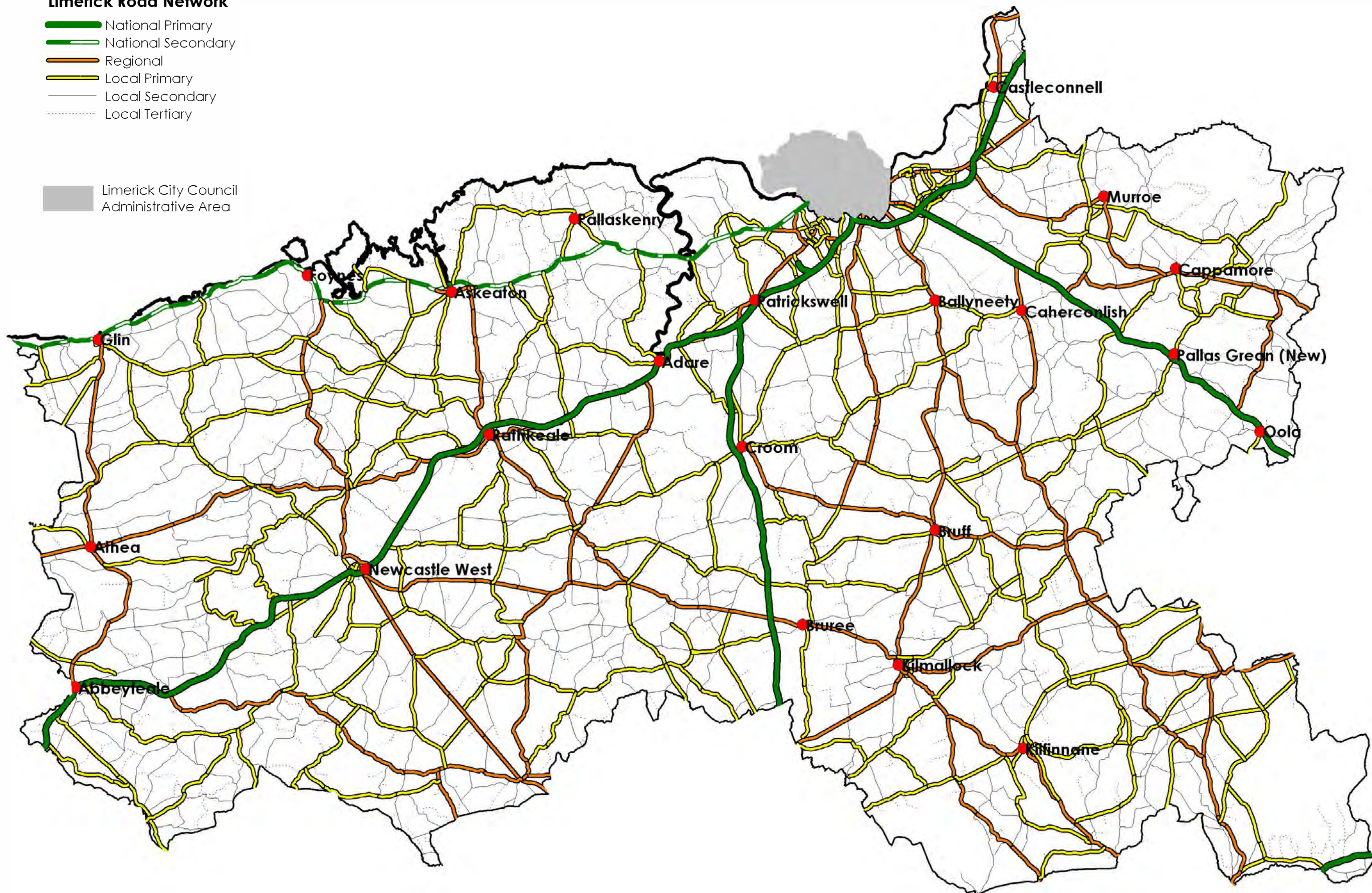




# Limerick Road Network

-  National Primary
-  National Secondary
-  Regional
-  Local Primary
-  Local Secondary
-  Local Tertiary

 Limerick City Council  
Administrative Area









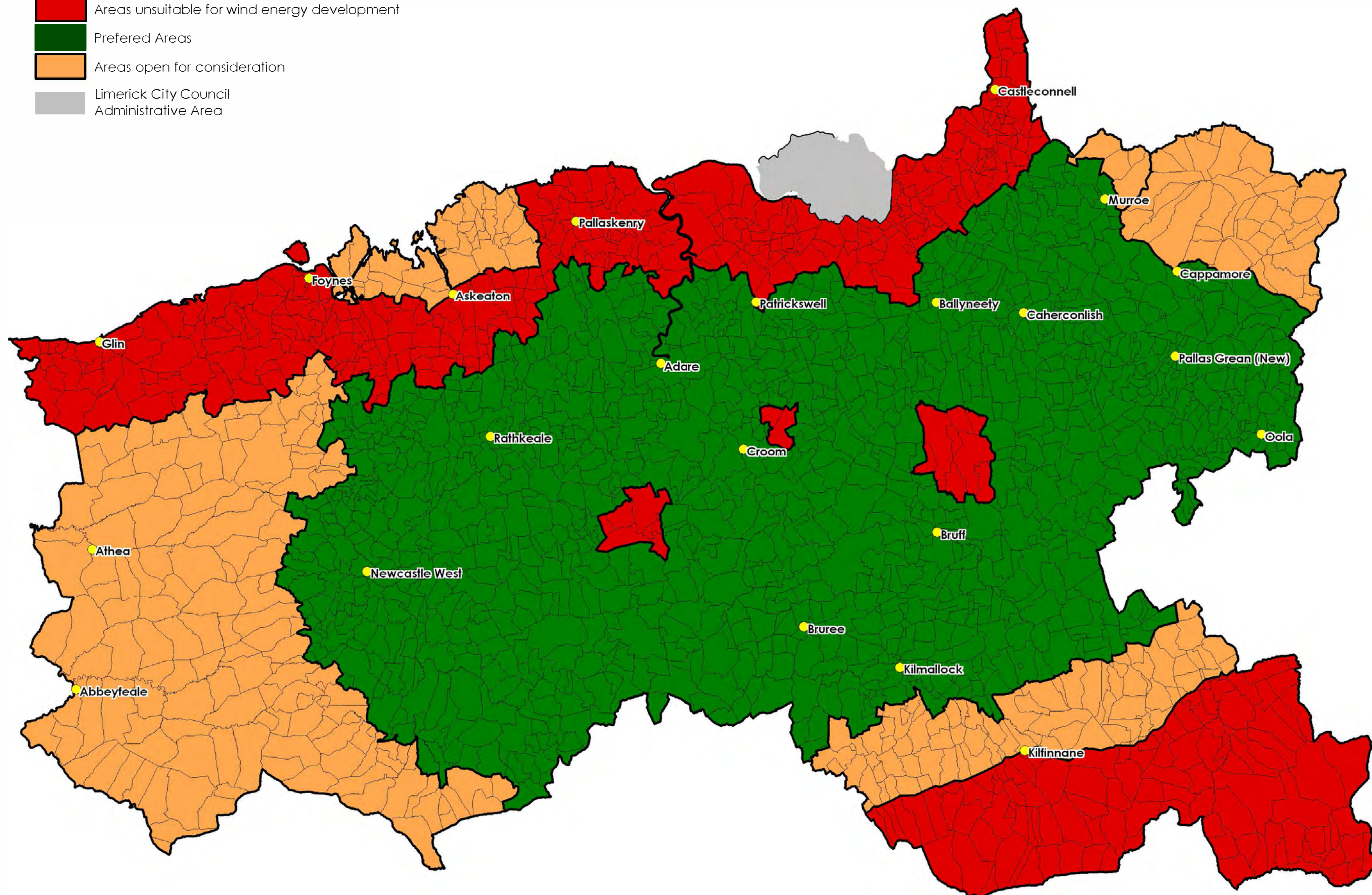








- Areas unsuitable for wind energy development
- Preferred Areas
- Areas open for consideration
- Limerick City Council Administrative Area







## Chapter 9

### The Shannon Estuary

This chapter presents policies for the Shannon Estuary based on the following main principles:

- Supporting and expanding the existing economic base, including port and harbour facilities and related activities, and seeking to diversify the economy through the promotion of industrial/business and employment opportunities, environmentally friendly aqua-culture, maritime, water related recreation and tourism industries in a sustainable manner.
- To properly protect, manage and enhance the natural coastal environment, cultural and built heritage of the Estuary Area.

## 9.1 Introduction

In developing objectives for the Shannon Estuary Zone, the County Development Plan will have regard to the views contained in the County Development Strategy prepared by the Limerick County Development Board and to the Regional Planning Guidelines issued by the Mid West Regional Authority. It will have regard to the plans, action programmes and policies of the other statutory agencies involved in the estuary zone such as Shannon Development, the Shannon Foynes Port Company, Regional Fisheries Boards and neighbouring Local Authorities.

The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP), which is included as Volume 7 of this Development Plan is an important document concerning the future of the estuary. This covers the estuary and the functional areas of the local authorities along it, these being Clare, Limerick and Kerry.

The SIFP identifies areas for marine related industrial development and also contains additional recommendations on tourism and other land uses that fall under the remit of planning. The content of the SIFP in relation to issues that are governed by planning will inform planning policy and guidance for the lifetime of the plan. Limerick City County Council will continue to support the SIFP and its implementation through the SIFP steering group, marketing and environmental sub groups.

Due to the fact that the estuary lies in the functional areas of a number of local authorities and other statutory agencies, and because of the pace of major infrastructural development, such as the Shannon Tunnel and the Docklands project and major industrial initiatives, there is a need for an estuary wide approach towards Planning and Development issues. The Planning Authority will support and participate in such activities.

Closely allied to the question of planning and development in the estuary is that of integrated coastal zone management which in essence is a joint response to development, planning and environmental issues within the estuary as a whole. Limerick County Council will participate in any future working groups associated with any further coastal zone management initiative for the Shannon Estuary.

The Council will support the development of a coherent and mutually supportive framework of both policy and practical actions for the further development of the region.

**Policy SE 01: Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary**

It is a Policy of Limerick City and County Council to support and implement the inter-jurisdictional Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary in conjunction with the other relevant local authorities and agencies. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with regional and national priorities and the SEA Directive, Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, Shellfish Waters Directive, Floods Directive and EIA Directive. All proposed developments shall be informed by the mitigation measures for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 network outlined within the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 (as varied).

## 9.2 Industrial and Business Base of the Estuary

The Shannon estuary is extremely important from an economic viewpoint for both Limerick and the region as a whole. It is extremely important from a shipping perspective. The construction of the natural gas pipeline from Ballylongford in County Kerry will also add to the infrastructure of the area.

Established areas of light and electronic industry, Plassey and Raheen, are located within what has been referred to as the Limerick/Shannon/Ennis triangle. While it is important to encourage existing and new industries in these locations it should also be an aim of the Council to encourage industries elsewhere in the estuary, so as to spread some of the prosperity generated by these industries throughout the region, and at the same time, by generating local employment and help reduce commuter traffic. It is important that a range of sites, both in terms of site type and location to suit the different types of users are available. This should assist in providing a more diverse base to the local economy and thereby minimise possible effects of adverse changes in the economy as a whole.

Lands zoned for industrial and business use should be able to achieve their intended purposes, without being restricted by the presence of other land uses, which are not compatible with nearby industrial zoning. Industrial areas for example should not be located adjacent to tourist facilities.

### **Objective SE O2: Promoting Development**

The Council will seek to promote the economic and industrial development of the Shannon estuary in order to capitalise on its location in the Mid West industrial and business region. Sufficient land will be zoned or identified for industrial and business use through the medium of Local Area Plans or zoning within this Plan including zonings in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary.

The Council will combine its effort with other agencies and local authorities in the region to ensure that development occurs in a coherent fashion for the benefit of the County and of the region as a whole. One location that is important from a regional perspective is the 90ha (226acres) land bank located in Askeaton (see map 5.1 in chapter 5).

### 9.2.1 Ports in the Estuary

Foynes is the major deepwater facility covering ships up to 204m in length. There is a substantial bank of serviced land adjacent to the port and some 300,000 sq. feet of warehousing. Significant open dock space is available and facilities to cater for a variety of cargoes, including liquid bulk and general cargo.

Foynes is the only harbour on the west coast linked to the national rail network. While there is no scheduled freight or passenger trains operating to Foynes, it has a single track line from Limerick City to a terminus adjacent to the harbour entrance. The proximity to Shannon Airport has also assisted communications.

Freight carriage by ship is considerably more efficient than that by other means of transport both in terms of fuel efficiency and the amount of material that can be carried. In a future where increasing oil scarcity will be a major factor in transport planning it is likely that the importance of Foynes as a transport hub and growth centre will increase markedly.

The majority of traffic using the port is to and from the Limerick City direction using the N69 National Secondary Route. The bypass of Askeaton has improved access time for vehicles using the port and the new Harbour Access Road has improved access to the port and reduced port traffic through the centre of Foynes.

### **9.2.2 Marine Related Industrial Development of Foynes**

Foynes' role as a port is likely to expand with additional facilities currently being constructed or proposed. There are strategic benefits to the development of transport links by sea and the Council will favourably consider proposals to develop the port facilities at Foynes. As outlined above, such proposals will be considered favourably in so far as it is possible to ensure that the development of the port does not affect the amenity value and quality of life in the town. Currently within the port area a number of different enterprises have different building designs with different finishes and colours. These detract from the visual amenity of the town when viewed from both the estuary and from locations along the N69.

The Council places strong emphasis on the need to standardise colour schemes within the port area and would encourage the preparation of a design master plan that would serve to coordinate finishes and colours within the port complex is important in any future proposals. All proposals for the development of the port facilities will be assessed with these issues in mind. (See also Objectives in Chapter 5 relating to the Shannon Estuary).

#### **Objective SE O3: Port Facilities**

The Council will support efforts to expand and upgrade the port facilities available in the Foynes Harbour in line with the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary and the Vision 2041 Shannon Foynes Port Company Masterplan.

#### **Objective SE O4: Rail Transport**

It is an objective of the Council to safeguard the Limerick-Foynes rail line against encroachment by inappropriate uses that could compromise the long-term development of the rail facility.

The Planning Authority considers the already existing rail link to be strategically important. This needs to be safeguarded and upgraded so that it may play a more complete role in the further development of the estuary.

**Objective SE O5: Harbours**

The Council will support the provision of harbours along the estuary, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development, while respecting the constraints of the Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area designations.

Any proposals for the development of new sites or the redevelopment of existing sites, which may depend on substances of hazardous waste as industrial raw materials or for storage purposes, requires specialist advice.

**Objective SE O6: Seveso Sites**

The Council will require that advice be sought from the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health on such developments, which involve modifications of existing Seveso establishments, the siting of new developments of the type, or on developments in the vicinity of these types of sites.

The subject of Seveso sites is dealt with more comprehensively in Chapter 5 Economic Development. The Council will be guided by the submissions of the Health and Safety authority and the Fire section of Limerick County Council in relation to issues relating to Seveso Sites.

**9.3 The Coastal landscape**

The landscape of the estuary has a dual character in that it possesses both agricultural and maritime characteristics. While this dual character adds greatly to the charm of the estuary it also adds to its vulnerability to inappropriate development. While there are many coastal areas of scenic beauty in Ireland there are few with the type of landscape provided by the estuary. This makes this landscape type important on a national and not just a County level. This importance is reflected in the emphasis, which the Council places on the protection and successful integration of development into the landscape. It is designated as the Shannon Estuary Zone under the Landscape Character Assessment-see Chapter 7. This designation reflects its importance both as a scenic and amenity asset for tourism within the County.

There is a need to conserve the character of this landscape including monuments and their settings, natural areas, buildings and settlements and their wider contexts.

In relation to forestry development it is considered to be an area particularly suited to broad leaf planting. This is in part because the species composition of such plantations would blend in well with existing hedgerows.

In relation to housing, high standards of design and landscaping will be required. Single storey house design particularly in areas close to the estuary will be encouraged. Location of housing development within settlements will also be encouraged. The protection of the view and prospect along the N69 (See Map 7.6) is a priority to the Planning Authority. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. domestic



extensions or the sons or daughters of a land owner who is engaged in full time farming activities) will development be allowed between the road and the estuary. On the other side of the road only development that is of a high standard and quality of design will be permitted. Such development must comply with the criteria as set out in policies relating to National Primary and Secondary Roads in Chapter 8.

#### **Objective SE O7: Integrating Developments**

Proposals for development within the Shannon estuary will require a high standard of landscaping and design, and should be designed so as to avoid altering the character and integrity of the landscape.

### **9.4 Settlements in the estuary**

The Council, since the last Development Plan, has taken a new approach towards the development of smaller settlements within the estuary. The old framework of development boundaries has been replaced with a policy-led approach which is in line with new guidance from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government -*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)* May 2009. This seeks to ensure a compact and easily serviced settlement format that makes maximum use of existing structures and brown field and infill sites. The adoption of such an approach towards development with lower servicing costs should help to reduce infrastructural costs in the longer term, and as a result making a contribution towards national competitiveness.

In short a new framework for development has been put in place for the settlements of the estuary region. Three of the important settlements in the lower part of the estuary are Foynes, Glin and Loghill. Foynes is the most important of these from an industrial perspective. The extreme sensitivity, from a visual and environmental perspective of these areas, particularly along the coastal roadway from Foynes to Glin, should be borne in mind when considering any new development proposals.

#### **Objective SE O8: Promotion of Balanced Growth**

The Council will endeavour through its settlement strategy programme and zoned lands within this plan and its existing series of Local Area Plans to promote the balanced growth and development of settlements within the estuary. Such development will take into account the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan and will be required to integrate successfully into its surroundings, and to respect the visual amenity of the settlement as a whole.

### **9.5 Alternative energy in the estuary**

While the potential for wind energy development is somewhat limited, because of the low lying topography of the area and because of the scenic amenity of the estuary

zone as a whole, there are other aspects of renewable energy which could, subject to environmental and ecological criteria, be located within the estuary area. On land the possibility for the use of biomass, e.g. anaerobic digestion and wood fuels exist, while within the estuary subject to scenic and environmental considerations the use of wave and tidal power could prove useful.

The townlands open for consideration for wind energy developments are as follows:

<b>Table 9.1 townlands open for consideration for wind energy developments</b>				
Aughinish West	Aughinish East		Glanbane West	Morgan's South
Morgan's North	Toomdeely North		Coolrahane	White Island
Ballinvoher	Ballincanauna		Mitchelstown	Courtbrown
Ballynash	Shannon View	Moig South	Ballyvaddock	Ballyaglish

In the previous plan these areas were designated as preferred areas but during the plan period it became apparent that the constraints imposed by the nearby environmental designations meant that it would be best to ensure that the area would be described as open for consideration rather than preferred in order to better reflect the limitations that might be placed on wind energy development as a result of environmental constraints.

#### **Objective SE O9: Alternative Energy**

The Council will assess wind energy developments within the townlands indicated in the wind energy strategy, subject to good planning criteria and ecological concerns while it will support the development of other alternative energy sources throughout the estuary zone subject to proper planning and sustainable development, while respecting the constraints of the SAC and SPA designations.

While the potential exists within these areas for wind energy, the ecological requirements of the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Areas will have to be taken into account. Turbines can pose a collision or displacement risk to wild fowl and the siting of turbines and layout will have to take these factors into account. It may well be necessary, where no adequate mitigation measures exist to offset these effects, for turbines to locate a distance from the designated sites and to leave a suitable buffer between them and the areas of ecological interest. Developers are encouraged to liaise with the National Parks and Wildlife Service from the earliest stages of the development of each project.

The University of Limerick, Shannon Development, NUI Galway and the ITLG in consultation with local authorities and industry sources in the region has put forward the idea of the Shannon Energy Valley. It is proposed that this initiative would

promote the estuary region as a centre for Energy Research and Development. The Council will support this initiative subject to both resource constraints and the requirements of proper planning.

## **9.6 Tourism within the estuary**

The scenic qualities of the estuary lend themselves to tourism. The estuary is a unique landscape but suffers from having a lack of tourist facilities. It is important to ensure that the provision of these facilities does not harm the very attractions of the estuary.

### **Objective SE O10: Tourism Development**

The Council will support sustainable tourism development in the estuary area provided that there will be no adverse impact on landscape, residential amenity, heritage or conservation interest. The recommendations and objectives contained in the SIFP will be a consideration by the Council in this regard.

The Council will support activity related tourism development along the Shannon Estuary e.g. water sports, including sailing, and on shore activities such as walking, cycling and orienteering. It will be necessary for these activities to demonstrate that they will not have any adverse environmental effects and would not interfere with existing commercial activities and tourist attractions. The importance of Foynes as a tourism centre in the estuary has already been referred to.

The most attractive and successful of tourist attractions are often those that are in harmony with the surroundings of its location and would seek to capitalise on those features from their general location which attract visitors in the first instance.

The Council will support the development of tourist infrastructure which will seek to develop the use of the estuary as an amenity for cruising or boating. It will support the creation of infrastructure within the various settlements along the estuary, which would promote this goal. One of the key attractions of the estuary area is the generally unspoilt nature of the rural environment. Again it would be necessary for such developments to prove that they will have no adverse environmental or ecological impact.

While it may be considered that water based recreational activities would form the base of tourist attractions within the estuary area, the pastoral landscape of this part of the County can serve to provide a setting for other kinds of activities. The Council will support the establishment of a range of tourist activities so that there is a complete package of attractions to cater for as many tastes as possible.

### **Objective SE O11: Tourist Infrastructure**

The Council will support a range of tourism developments, both infrastructural such as accommodation and those which seek to sensitively develop attractions, within the estuary area, taking into account the visual and environmentally sensitive nature of the estuary zone and current and future needs of the tourist industries.

## Stop over for tourism and Commercial Traffic

There has been a recent increase in the number of cruise ships visiting the Port of Foynes. The town itself with its natural setting and the Flying Boat museum has the basis for a series of tourism attractions, which could attract and prompt visitors to remain in the area. The recently published Foynes Theme Town Plan by Limerick County Council indicates many of the local attractions that exist and puts forward proposals for their improvement. It would be necessary in some situations to either remove or alter buildings in order to ensure that the development of the town would be in line with the heritage and tourism focus of the town. The measures put forward in the recently published Foynes Theme Town Plan provide valuable indicators to how the tourism potential of Foynes can be realised.

### **Objective SE O12: Foynes Theme Town Plan**

The Council will have regard to the contents and measures put forward to promote the heritage of Foynes town and environs in the *Foynes Theme Town Plan* and subject to resource constraints will support the measures outlined in the document and will try to implement the measures put forward in the *Foynes Theme Town Plan*.

It is important that both the port aspect of the town's economy and the development of the tourism attractions and the town itself progress in tandem. This will involve a degree of consultation with all parties involved.

### **Objective SE O13: Promote Foynes as a Tourism Destination**

The Council will be supportive of proposed tourism developments within the town, subject to good planning criteria respecting the constraints of the Special Area of Conservation and the Architectural Conservation area designations. In addition such development, through design and layout, should integrate with the existing urban fabric and enhance the attractiveness of the town.

## 9.7 Fishing and Mariculture in the Estuary

Fishing and mariculture have a role to play in the future development of the estuary. Though concerns have been raised about the environmental aspects of fish farming and other maricultural activities such as shellfish enterprises, there can be little doubt that these undertakings coupled with adequate environmental safeguards can play a role in helping to promote prosperity in the estuary area. This would be both in terms of direct employment in the enterprises themselves but also in terms of secondary employment in processing and retailing outlets.

### **Objective SE O14: Mariculture**

The Council will favourably consider development proposals in relation to maricultural enterprises. Such development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they will not have any significant negative effects, either directly or indirectly on the environment of the estuary or on the waters of the surrounding catchment areas.

## 9.8 Environmental issues in the estuary

The estuary area is one of the finest natural deep-water harbours in Western Europe and is one of the most scenically attractive features of Co. Limerick. It is also an important habitat having been designated both as a Special Area of Conservation and also has several Special Protection Area designations. Due to the importance of the estuary as a wildlife habitat possessing both Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area status the Council will require that the vulnerability of the estuary will be taken into account when development proposals are being prepared. The Council will also require that new development proposals will have to demonstrate that they will not have any significant detrimental effects on any of the habitats in the estuary or on any of the designated zones.

### **Objective SE O15: Protected Areas**

Development proposals within areas designated as nature conservation areas (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas for wild birds or Natural Heritage Areas) shall be considered where it has been demonstrated that the proposal would not result in significant direct or indirect adverse impacts on the area, or on protected species and habitats and would fulfil the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Limerick County Council is the lead Local Authority in the Shannon River Catchment Management Scheme and because of this role and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive seeks to protect the waters of the estuary for the purposes of human use, fishing and nature conservation, bathing and other water related activities.

### **Objective SE O16: Water Quality**

Development proposals in the Shannon Estuary Area will be required to have regard to the quality of the water resources in the area. They will be required to demonstrate that they will have no significant adverse consequences for water quality.

Closely related to the issue of water quality is the need to ensure as far as possible those developments are protected from flooding. Attention has recently been given to changing weather conditions and the possibility of sea level rise and associated storm surges and different tidal patterns. For those contemplating developments within areas of the estuary that may be prone to flooding consultation with the Office of Public Works and their databanks on flooding patterns is recommended. In relation to developments within flood prone areas the following policies will apply:

### **Objective SE O17: Flooding and Development**

In areas that are at risk of flooding proposed development will have regard to the Planning System and Flood risk Guidelines and any future amendments or revisions to these guidelines.

**Objective SE O18: Development not Sensitive to Flooding**

Appropriately designed development which is not sensitive to flooding may, subject to proper planning and sustainable development and subject to the incorporation and implementation of the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009), be permitted in flood plains provided it does not significantly alter the flood plain area or otherwise restrict water flow in the flood plain area.

Examples of such developments would include park areas. Development within flood plain areas should have maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff, i.e. minimisation of concrete surfaces and use of semi-permeable materials. On-site ponds to store or attenuate additional run-off could be used, while the use of soak pits could also help to reduce the amount of run-off and spread the dispersal over a greater period of time. This would help to reduce flood peaks. The use of these techniques is desirable in most developments but particularly so in large developments.

**Objective SE O19: Access for Maintenance:**

Developments adjacent to water courses in the estuary area will be required to ensure that there is adequate provision for access to allow maintenance and clearance, future improvement works or emergency works by local authorities.

**9.9 Archaeology in the Estuary**

The Shannon Estuary is an area of high archaeological potential. Numerous recorded monuments are scattered along both sides of the estuary ranging in age from the Stone Age to the late Medieval Periods. The rich archaeological remains indicate the area's importance as a route-way in the early to late medieval times, while recent archaeological surveys of inter-tidal areas in the estuary have uncovered a wealth of archaeological material including evidence of prehistoric settlement dating back to 7000 BC. There are also about 150 shipwrecks over 100 years old recorded for the estuary and under the National Monuments acts all wrecks of 100 years or more have automatic protection. Any potential development impacts on the estuary should therefore be subject to a full archaeological assessment.





## Chapter 10

### Development Management Guidelines

This Chapter sets out the general guidance on the criteria used by the Planning Authority to assess planning applications and gives guidance on criteria that will be applied in assessing particular types of development, particularly in relation to the following areas:

- Sustainability Statement & Social Infrastructure Assessment
- Residential Development Management Guidelines
  - Urban Residential Development
  - Towns & Villages
  - Serviced Sites
- Rural Residential Development
- Economic Development
  - Industrial/Commercial Development
  - Retailing
  - Takeaway Premises
  - Advertising/Advertisements Signs
- Agricultural Development
- Community and Recreation
- Environment and Heritage
- Transport and Infrastructure
  - Parking Standards
- Flooding
- Renewable Energy Developments
- Telecommunications
- Obsolete Structures

## 10.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Development Plan is to facilitate and guide development in the County whilst meeting as far as possible the communities needs and protecting the environment. This is in accordance with the Planning and Development Act which is designed ‘*to make provision in the interests of the common good, for the proper planning and sustainable development*’ of areas. All applications for planning permission will be evaluated against the policies and objectives of this Plan, which have been formulated in light of the needs of sustainable development.

The purpose of this section of the Plan is, firstly, to give general guidance to applicants on the criteria used by the Planning Authority to assess planning applications and secondly, to give guidance on criteria that will be applied in assessing particular types of development. While it is not an exhaustive list of every type of development, it contains the more frequent type of planning applications received by the Planning Authority. Reference to other agencies and national guidelines is also made and these and their latest revisions will be taken into consideration.

## 10.2 General Guidelines

- Pre-application discussion is encouraged and advised as it can eliminate delays at future stages of the planning process, particularly in the case of large developments and the development of sites in sensitive areas.
- Major considerations of the Planning Authority when assessing planning applications will be their impact on amenity, traffic safety, local infrastructure and the environment.
- In general, new developments should be located in existing settlements subject to the more detailed criteria set out in the Settlement Strategy (Chapter 3).
- Retention and refurbishment of existing structures, particularly in the open countryside, is favoured over demolition and new build, where practical and reasonable.
- The use, scale, siting and design of new developments should be sympathetic to their surroundings. Integration of proposals into the landscape is most desirable and the removal of hedgerows and other natural features should only be proposed, if otherwise unavoidable.
- The emphasis is on high quality - in materials, design and landscaping.
- Simplicity in materials, design and finishes should be incorporated.

## 10.3 Sustainability Statement and Social Infrastructure Assessment

As part of the Council’s commitment to sustainability and to ensure the provision of social infrastructure in tandem with developments, a sustainability statement and social infrastructure assessment (SSSIA) will be required with planning applications as set out below.

The SSSIA is the proofing document used in the planning application process for residential developments of 5 or more dwellings and commercial/industrial developments over 1,000sqm to assess compliance with the principles of sustainable development.

In certain cases development under the thresholds outlined above may, at the discretion of the Planning Authority, require the submission of a SSSIA.

A checklist of information to be contained in each relevant planning application is shown below outlining compliance with the principles of sustainability and the availability of social infrastructure in the vicinity of any proposed developments.

***Planning applicants should ensure that all the issues are comprehensively addressed as omissions may delay progress on the application.***

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## **1      TRANSPORTATION**

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To include:

- Railway Station and/or feeder links to other areas
- Bus Station / Bus Stop and/or feeder links to other areas
- Park and Ride Facilities
- Taxi Services
- Cycle ways or provision for cycling
- Footpaths
- Pedestrian Lights and pedestrian crossings
- Traffic Calming Measures
- Demonstrate pedestrian and cycle permeability and connectivity within proposal and with existing community facilities
- Demonstrate provision for inclusive access to cater for people who are mobility impaired
- Demonstrate how given the location of the development vis a vis work, school and shopping facilities, and given existing and proposed transport infrastructure and services, the development would minimise dependence on the car.

**Please identify on a map, the location of the above services/facilities and the areas they serve and show how the above is taken into account in the overall design concept and how the lack of any of these services can be addressed.**

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## **2      ENERGY**

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To include:

- Compliance with BER standards
- Details of how the proposal will minimise energy demand and levels in building design, location and orientation.
- Indicate any re-use / renovation of existing buildings.

- Details of other sustainable design approaches/renewable energy technologies
- Use of renewable materials in construction – give details
- Proposals to minimise construction waste – give details
- Proposals to recycle waste – give details
- Can the development through both design and layout make use of a municipal or district heating system?
- Indicate the location of the nearest recycling facility to the proposed development.

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### **3 ECOLOGY**

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To include:

- Indicate retention, protection and integration in the proposal of any natural features, including trees, shrubs, water courses, topography within and adjoining the site.
- Will the development protect bio-diversity and use native species? Please specify
- Provide details of a management scheme for on-going ecological conservation
- Develop a green framework linking urban areas and surrounding countryside.
- Demonstrate that green areas are provided where they will provide maximum enjoyment and form an integrated part of the building design.
- Show how water quality will be protected during construction and after completion of the development.
- Does the location, orientation and design of external lighting in particular minimise light spill into nearby habitats.

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### **4 DESIGN**

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To include:

- How does the proposed design relate to the principles of urban design from the document ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ May 2009 and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide’
- Submit a design statement as outlined in paragraph 10.4 of these Development Management Guidelines. The detail of the design statement shall be proportionate to the size or complexity of the proposed development.
- Show how the proposal promotes sustainable approaches to housing developments by spatial planning, layout, design and detailed specification.
- Demonstrate how the development has provided a housing mix to cater for different household types and age groups and caters for affordability.
- Demonstrate consideration of the housing needs of persons with disabilities, special needs and elderly within the proposal and that it is guided by the principles of “universal design”.
- Submit a mobility and disability statement for the proposed development.

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## 5 SOCIAL QUALITY

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To include:

- Demonstrate how the proposed development contributes to social integration.
- Show all existing schools, crèches, community and recreational facilities, medical and health care services in the area, the distance of each from the application site and how the proposed development relates to each of these facilities (preferably shown on a map).
- Demonstrate that sufficient capacity exists within local crèches and schools serving the area in line with appropriate guidelines i.e. the numbers of children/students enrolled in the crèche / school in the current academic year vis a vis the maximum numbers capable of being accommodated – contact with crèches/ schools / Department of Education will be required. If enrolment is close to or exceeding capacity please identify if the crèche/school has any plans to overcome capacity issues.
- Calculate the number of additional crèche/school places required as a result of the proposed development.

(In this regard you are advised to refer to the document ‘The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: - A code of Practice for Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local’ 2008 and ‘Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ 2001.

**Having calculated the school requirements resulting from the development scheme, is it considered that the existing education facilities are capable of adequately accommodating the projected need?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, do you propose to address the deficiency identified?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please provide details of how you propose to address this deficiency.

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**Having regard to the development proposal, is it considered that there are adequate childcare facilities to accommodate the projected growth?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, do you propose to address the deficiency in this sector?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, provide details of how you propose to address this deficiency


**Identify on a map the location of the nearest Community Services/Facilities identified above. If there is no such facility, identify the location of the nearest such facility and the distance (in miles/km) from the subject site.**

**Having regard to the above, has a deficiency been identified for community facilities in the area that would serve the proposed development scheme?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, is it proposed to address the deficiency as part of the proposed development?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide details of how this deficiency may be addressed


**Note:**

In relation to item 5 above please ensure that you:

- Include all social infrastructure that has already been provided as part of other residential schemes/mixed residential schemes in the vicinity of the development site.
- Provide details of discussions or agreements relating to other developments (either permitted and not yet commenced or awaiting a planning decision) where the provision of social infrastructure has either been made or offered.

## **10.4 Design Statement**

The Planning Authority will require all planning applications for 5 or more dwellings or a single rural house or commercial / industrial developments over 1,000 sq. metres to include a 'Design Statement'. A 'Design Statement' is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most suitable for a particular site. The statement will usually consist of both text and graphics, but is not intended to duplicate planning application documents. It may be of special value in explaining why the context requires an exceptional – rather than a conventional – design approach. The statement should address all relevant development plan or local area plan design policies and objectives, and relate them to the site. The design statement could outline a justification for the development as proposed and any alternative design options considered.

## 10.5 Residential Development

### 10.5.1 Residential Development – Urban

Applicants for residential development in urban areas are referred to the following documents which will be used, inter alia, by the Planning Authority in assessing such applications:

- ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ DEHLG May 2009 and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide’
- ‘Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities’ DEHLG 2007 and associated guidelines
- ‘Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities’ DEHLG 2007
- ‘Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas’ DEHLG 1998
- ‘Traffic Management Guidelines’ Department of Transport and the Dublin Transportation Office, 2003
- ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments’ Guidelines for Planning Authorities, September 2007
- ‘Manual for streets’ UL Department of Transport, 2007.

**Definition:** A housing estate for the purpose of these standards will comprise of 5 or more new dwellings.

Best Practice Design Guide criteria which shall be used to guide appropriate development are summarized below:

- 1 Context: How does the development respond to its surroundings?
- 2 Connections: How well is the new neighbourhood / site connected?
- 3 Inclusivity: How easily can people use and access the development?
- 4 Variety: How does the development promote a good mix of activities?
- 5 Efficiency: How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?
- 6 Distinctiveness: How do the proposals create a sense of place?
- 7 Layout: How does the proposal create people-friendly streets and spaces?
- 8 Public realm: How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?
- 9 Adaptability: How will the buildings cope with change?
- 10 Privacy/amenity: How do the buildings provide a decent standard of amenity?
- 11 Parking: How will the parking be secure and attractive?
- 12 Detailed design: How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

The following are general good practice guidelines in the development of housing estates:-

- House design should be simple, visually pleasing with the avoidance of use of too-many finishes and over elaborate details. The Design Statement should explain the



context of the proposal with the existing urban setting. It should demonstrate a rigorous design process and show why alternative designs and layouts were rejected by the applicant. It should state the rationale why an exceptional or different design approach is taken if applicable.

- Provision of a variety (within an overall common theme) of house types, sizes, designs, layouts, building lines (staggered/stepped) in any one housing development. Housing estates, particularly large ones should cater for a variety of house types to ensure social mix, large and small detached, semi detached, terraced houses, single storey houses, and apartments. A statement of house mix will be required.
- Houses should be designed in such a manner as to minimise overlooking and overshadowing of adjoining residences and to facilitate future extensions to do likewise. Energy-sensitive siting will be encouraged e.g. south facing developments where possible. Sunlight and daylight studies at a number of points in a housing estate will be required.
- In the case of detached and semi-detached houses, pedestrian access to the rear should be provided (other than through the house).
- Provision of cul-de-sac developments should be avoided unless they form part of a well connected road network. Connected road networks help reduce the sense of isolation and encourage walking and cycling.
- Where open plan estates are proposed, these shall be designed in an integrated manner where the pedestrian has priority. Open plan estates require a better level of road surface treatment such as areas of paviers, cobblelock etc.
- Roads should not dominate the layout of development. Long straight roads should be avoided as these can lead to increased vehicular speed. Vehicle speeds should be managed by buildings and space with physical traffic calming measures being only used as a back-up measure. Well-designed spaces can effectively filter traffic without the need for speed humps or other measures. Details and constructional drawings of watermains, sewer, telecommunication and fibre technology will be required.
- New housing developments will be required to provide for visitor car parking as per standards set out below.
- Through traffic should be eliminated through the provision of a road hierarchy (as detailed below) where possible. Housing layouts, which give priority to the pedestrian, are preferable.
- Adequate and strategically located open space (standards outlined below) fully landscaped with safe pedestrian access is required including appropriate amenity areas, children's play areas and incidental amenity spaces.

- Possible linkages with existing and future residential developments and community and service facilities will be encouraged whether by pedestrian links, cycle ways or locating open space adjacent to existing development subject to good design and high levels of natural surveillance for safety and security. The applicant will be required to submit an assessment of the connectivity of the proposal with existing development and facilities.
- In the provision and design of pedestrian links, unlit long narrow straight links with high walls either side, between or at the rear of properties should be avoided.
- Residential development adjacent to watercourses shall be designed to address the watercourse by fronting dwellings to the river. Proposals shall incorporate suitable public walkway to safety standards by the river with a view to linkages with existing settlements.
- While each planning application for residential development will be considered having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the following are some general development guidelines in relation to housing estates.

**Table 10.1 Design Guidelines for Urban Residential Developments**

Topic	Standard/Guideline
<b>Density</b>	The Planning Authority will have regard to the principles as outlined in the DEHLG publication ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual in considering the density and layout of housing estates. Housing densities should be appropriate to the location of the development in accordance with the settlement strategy outlined in Chapter 3 Settlement Strategy of this Plan and have regard to the pattern and scale of adjoining development.
<b>Design</b>	A high quality of architectural design and layout are the main criteria for achieving a good quality living environment and all housing developments will be assessed against the general good practice guidelines set out in this Plan. In the overall design and layout, ‘people should come before traffic’, with vehicle speed managed by arrangement of building and spaces and traffic calming measures, where appropriate, to provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The Planning Authority will have regard to the principles as outlined in the DEHLG publication ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual in considering the design and layout of housing estates.

<b>Space between dwellings</b>	Minimum 3 metres for full length of dwelling equally divided between the two.
<b>Front Garden length</b>	Generally 6 metres, but where ground floor dwellings have little or no front gardens a 'defensible space' must be created behind the public footpath, such as a planting strip. Notwithstanding this, the importance of maintaining building lines and providing adequate car parking will also be taken into account. Variation in building lines will be permitted provided that there is overall coherence to the design.
<b>Minimum Rear Garden length</b>	In general a minimum back to back distance between dwellings of 22 metres shall apply in order to protect privacy, sunlight and avoid undue overlooking. Reductions will be considered in the case of single storey developments and/or innovative schemes where it can be demonstrated that adequate levels of privacy, natural lighting and sunlight can be achieved.
<b>Open Space</b>	<p>On Greenfield sites, a minimum provision of 15% of the total site area of the site shall be provided as public open space. A variety of types and sizes of open spaces should be provided to cater for active and passive recreational needs for children and adults of all ages.</p> <p>In other cases, such as large infill sites or brownfield sites, 10% of the total site area shall be provided as public open space.</p>
	<p>The minimum unit of open space shall be 200 sq. metres with any one side greater than 10m.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> no account will be taken of incidental open space such as grass margins, left over areas, or an area which due to its nature (marshy) or topography (slope) is deemed unsuitable.</p> <p>The location, siting and design of the public open space will have regard to the following:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of open space types should be provided to serve differing facilities within the development. Both active and passive open space is required.</li> <li>Be well designed of a high visual standard and shall be functional and accessible to all.</li> <li>Provide for the retention of existing natural features.</li> <li>Include proposals for drainage and landscaping of the public open space.</li> <li>Houses shall not be permitted to back onto open spaces.</li> <li>Provide high levels of natural surveillance and overlooking by as many houses as possible.</li> </ol>

	<p>g) Be provided with a boundary fence/wall where open space is adjacent to a main access road.</p> <p>Where the scale or nature of the development does not allow sufficient spaces for the minimum public open space requirements or where the development is close to existing or proposed public parks, the Planning Authority will seek financial contribution in lieu of all or part of the required open space towards the provision or improvement of open space and sport facilities in an accessible location a reasonable distance from the site.</p>	
<b>Boundary Fences/ Walls</b>	Rear/ Side	<p>Between 1.8 and 2.0 metres in height and extending for 3 metres from the rear elevation of the dwelling on the side boundary.</p> <p>These shall be in keeping with the overall design of the estate and generally be of solid block and capped and plastered on their public side adjacent to public open space or public highway.</p>
<b>Parking</b>	See Car Parking Standards Table 10.5	
<b>Trees, Hedgerows and Landscaping</b>	<p>All housing applications will be required to include landscaping plans. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features to form the focus of a housing estate development. Particular attention should be paid in the housing layout to the positioning of underground services and roadways to avoid the removal of these natural features. If some trees and hedgerows have to be removed, planning permission will be conditional on replanting of native trees and hedgerows with a particular emphasis on broadleaf species.</p> <p>All trees, hedgerow and landscape features to be retained shall be identified and appropriately protected with suitably secure fencing prior to commencement of development, details of which shall be agreed with the Planning Authority.</p> <p>There will be a presumption against developments which involve the large-scale removal of sound mature tree and hedgerow species whether they are listed for preservation in this Plan or not.</p>	
<b>Sustainability Statement &amp; Social Infrastructure Assessment</b>	A 'Sustainability Statement & Social Infrastructure Assessment' and a 'Design Statement' is required for all residential development of 5 or more dwellings and certain other developments (See Section 10.3 and 10.4).	

<b>(SSSIA) &amp; Design Statement</b>		
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Due recognition shall be given to protected species under the Wildlife Act 2000 and where possible all efforts will be made to ensure that development will have minimal impact on the natural environment.	
<b>Archaeology</b>	Developers will be required to carry out archaeological monitoring, archaeological assessments and provide buffer areas around archaeological features in accordance with guidance in Section 10.10 of the Development Management Guidelines.	
<b>Recycling</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The design of all dwellings shall take account of the Environment Section requirement for segregated collections of dry recyclable good and organic wastes. Each dwelling shall have sufficient external and internal space for 3 bin system (organic/dry recyclable and residual waste). The design of houses internally (Kitchen/Utilities) should facilitate the segregated bin collection for these waste streams.</li> <li>2. In some instances, communal bottle banks should be incorporated within the footprint of residential developments when glass collection isn't provided within the local area. These shall be provided for in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Section.</li> <li>3. Oil for central heating shall be stored in double skinned storage tanks.</li> </ol>	
<b>Sanitary Services</b>	<p>Provision shall be in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Publication '<i>Recommendation for Site Development Works for Housing Areas</i>' (1998) and the forthcoming revised document from the DEHLG. Each house shall have individual sewer connections to the main sewer.</p> <p>Adequate provision for the disposal of surface water separate from the foul sewerage system is required. Surface water drainage systems should be designed on SUDS principles.</p> <p>Note: In order to promote sustainable residential development in the defined settlements lacking water services and adequate treatment, the Planning Authority will adopt a flexible approach to proposals for interim improvements to public water and sewerage infrastructure, consistent with the policies and objectives of this Plan.</p>	
<b>Roads, footpaths</b>	Construction	Road and footpath design and construction shall

<b>and lighting</b>		be in accordance with DEHLG ' <i>Recommendation for Site Development Works for Housing Areas</i> ' (1998) and any revised document in this regard. The Planning Authority generally expects to see all new roads in residential development designated as 20mph zones, to reduce speeds and accident rates in accordance with DEHLG, Department of Transport and Dublin Transportation Office ' <i>Traffic Management Guidelines</i> ' (2003) and the ' <i>Manual for Streets</i> ' UK Department of Transport, 2007.
	Lighting	Provision in accordance with ESB's publication ' <i>Public Lighting in Residential Estates</i> '.
<b>Road Layout and Design</b>	Major Access Road	Main link within housing areas serving 100-300 residential units. Speeds should be physically constrained by the road layout between 20mph and 30mph.
	Minor Access Roads	Generally serve small groups of houses, up to 50 dwellings. Speeds physically constrained by road layout to 20mph. Some of these will have a shared surface for vehicles and other road users. The use of horizontal alignment constraints backed up by good urban design to keep speeds low. The careful positioning of buildings, landscaping and the use of different materials can help to reinforce the need to reduce speed and reduce the dominance of motor vehicles.  Source: DEHLG, Department of Transport and Dublin Transportation Office ' <i>Traffic Management Guidelines</i> ' (May 2003). The Council will continue to be guided by these guidelines and any subsequent guidelines issued by the Department.
<b>Transport Assessment</b>	A Transport Assessment is required for all major residential development in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 8 Transport and Infrastructure of this plan.	

**Note:** In cases of innovative designs and layouts, the above standards may be relaxed. Their design and layout shall also have regard to the DEHLG '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*' Guidelines for Planning Authorities, May 2009.

In relation to accommodation for the elderly, e.g. by approved Voluntary Housing Organisations, the normal Development Management Guidelines in relation to open space, size of rear gardens etc. may be relaxed/reduced having regard to the

reasonable requirements of the occupants of the dwellings and the ability to manage and maintain such areas will also be a material consideration.

### **10.5.2 Residential Development – Towns and Villages**

Towns and villages in Ireland have a unique character and built form that makes them distinctive from the typical residential estates in the larger cities and towns. However many are in decline and this decline is reflected in the change in the physical character of these settlements. Additions to them have generally been in the form of either ribbon development or loosely scattered development – the tradition of maintaining compactness has disappeared. Rural villages are particularly sensitive to inappropriate development which does not respect the rural character of the location and the pattern of the existing development within the area. New housing will be required to respect the character of existing development within the village.

Limerick County Council is committed to strengthening the settlement structure and reversing the decline in the smaller towns and village in the County. It is the policy of the Planning Authority to foster good design which can help create lively places with distinctive character; streets and public places that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale; and places that inspire through the imagination and sensitivity of designers.

In this regard, the design standards set out in Table 10.1 above should be used as a general guideline by developers in the initial design process for residential development in these locations. Some flexibility may be permitted in the guidelines to ensure the distinctive nature of the town and village is reflected in the design, layout and material used in a residential development. Proposals for the subdivision of houses, infill or backland development will need to conform with the guidelines set out in Section 10.5.5 of this Plan. Therefore, pre-application discussions with the Planning Authority are recommended.

### **10.5.3 Residential Development – Serviced sites**

a) To help strengthen and consolidate the settlement structure and reverse the decline in the smaller towns and villages in the County, residential serviced sites will be promoted in the settlements where services already exist. Residential serviced sites offer a real alternative to individuals wishing to build and design their own houses in small towns and villages rather than the open countryside. Land will be zoned for such purposes through the Local Area Plan process, where considered appropriate.

It is desirable that serviced sites of not less than 0.10 hectares (0.25 acres) are provided on this land, except in exceptional circumstances. Larger sites may be required for housing exceeding 250sqm to allow sufficient space for private amenity space, parking and landscaping.

Whilst individual house design on serviced sites is encouraged, the overall design of the scheme must be consistent in terms of boundary treatments and landscaping.

House designs and layout features, which are overtly suburban in character, will not be acceptable. Traditional forms and materials appropriate to the setting should be used. Relevant criteria from the Section on Urban Design Guidelines above should be incorporated into the overall scheme.

A Master Plan should be produced by the developer showing the overall layout, infrastructure, services and landscaping for the whole of the serviced site during the planning application stage. All future development should be constructed thereafter in accordance with the Master Plan, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

b) Where there are no sewerage facilities or where the existing facilities are inadequate and there are no immediate plans to improve them, a limited number of one off houses, using treatment systems, may be permitted on suitably sized sites within tiers 3, 4 and 5 towns and villages. This would be subject to normal environmental site assessment requirements and the sites would be for “local rural persons” only with a “local rural housing need”. The amount and location of these sites would be controlled to ensure that they would not significantly impact on the fabric and character of the village and its sense of identity and place would be retained. The development would also need to ensure the definition of a strong urban edge resulting in a clear distinction between the urban area and open countryside

Where local area plans / zoning maps exist for towns and villages these sites may only be located on suitable zoned lands.

#### **10.5.4 Residential Development – Rural Areas**

The standards hereunder apply generally to low density residential developments in unserviced areas i.e. where no public water or sewerage scheme is available. They may apply also in areas where water is available i.e. either public or group scheme.

The overall guiding principle will be sustainability - the dwelling must integrate with the countryside in terms of location being such as to fit into a rural backdrop with minimum damage to natural features such as hedgerows and trees. The design should respect the architectural heritage of the area including use of local materials where possible.



**Table 10.2 Design Guidelines for Residential Developments in rural areas**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Standard/Guideline</b>
<b>Site Curtilage</b>	<p>Minimum 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In cases involving the renovation of existing dwellings, smaller sites will be considered where the applicant can demonstrate adequate provision for disposal of effluent and other criteria in the Plan to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.</p>
<b>Road Frontage</b>	Minimum 30 metres
<b>Building lines</b>	See Table 10.9 for building lines on public roads. Dwellings may be staggered rather than be set along a uniform building line and may have an orientation which does not face the public road, subject to the protection of neighbouring residential amenity.
<b>Entrance</b>	<p>Entrance gates shall be recessed 4.5 metres behind the line of roadside hedgerow with side boundaries splayed at an angle of 45 degrees to the public road carriageway.</p> <p>Opportunities for shared use of access or combining access points should be availed of.</p>
<b>Garden Size</b>	No minimum standards are required. However the hard landscaping of areas around dwelling houses shall be limited.
<b>Sanitary Services</b>	Where public services are available (or likely to be), the developer will be required to connect to them.
<b>Water</b>	Each dwelling shall have a viable and secure access to a water supply provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
<b>Sewage – Septic tank systems</b>	<p>Sites should be assessed and systems designed, installed and maintained in accordance with Environment Protection Agency (EPA) ‘<i>Code of Practice on Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses (October 2009)</i>’ which replaces previous guidance issued by the Agency in 2000. In all cases, a full site assessment shall be carried out in accordance with the EPA guidelines. Confirmation of compliance of installation shall be submitted by approved person with appropriate indemnity insurance prior to occupation of the dwelling.</p> <p>The installation of the septic tank and percolation area shall be certified by a competent person.</p> <p>Only one dwelling unit shall be connected to a single septic tank.</p>

<b>Sewage – Proprietary Waste Water Treatment Systems</b>	<p>Sites should be assessed and systems designed, installed and maintained in accordance with Environment Protection Agency (EPA) ‘<i>Code of Practice on Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses (October 2009)</i>’ which replaces previous guidance issued by the Agency in 2000_or any updated version of this document. All systems must have Irish Agreement Board Certification. In all cases, a full site assessment shall be carried out in accordance with the EPA guidelines.</p> <p>Certification by the system manufacturer that it has been properly installed and tested shall be submitted within one month of its installation. The installation of the percolation area/polishing filter shall be certified by a competent person.</p> <p>A maintenance contract for the treatment system for a minimum period of five (5) years, together with a de-sludging contract with a licenced contractor, shall be submitted and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.</p>
<b>Surface Water</b>	Shall be disposed of to soakpits or watercourse(s) adjoining the site and shall not be allowed to flow onto the public road or to adjoining properties. Details shall be submitted with the planning application
<b>Design</b>	<p>Dwelling houses should respect their location in terms of height, scale, materials used and finishes. They should be sited and designed to ensure minimal visual intrusion.</p> <p>Applicants are required to refer to Limerick County Council’s ‘Design Guidelines on Single Houses in the Countryside’, and any subsequent documents prepared by the Council. This document is available to assist applicants on the general design principles. This, however, is not site specific and as such pre-application discussions are encouraged to ascertain the suitability of the dwellings design for a particular site.</p>
<b>Landscaping</b>	Trees and hedgerows of amenity should be retained where possible. Where planting is required the Planning Authority requires the use of native hedgerow species (hawthorn, holly, blackthorn, buckthorn, dog rose, elder, spindle) and tree species (ash, oak, beech, birch, bird cherry, alder, lime, hazel, willow, rowan, scots pine, juniper). Planting should take place on or before the first appropriate planting season after commencement of construction.
<b>Parking</b>	Minimum of 3 parking spaces required within the curtilage of the site
<b>Boundary</b>	The retention of existing front boundary hedges, sod banks and

<b>Treatment</b>	<p>stonewalls are encouraged. If the front boundary or a section of the front boundary is removed it shall be reinstated with native planting and local materials which are preferable to concrete wall boundaries.</p> <p>In this regard it is the objective of the Council to</p> <p>(a) Ensure the adequate integration of development into the landscape by the retention of existing trees and landscape features and/or suitable planting.</p> <p>(b) Encourage, where appropriate, the use of native species. The lay out of landscaping, planting and features to act as wildlife corridors within developments, particularly residential developments, and linking with other habitats in the area will be encouraged.</p> <p>(c) Resist the removal of substantial lengths of roadside boundaries. Where an alternative, suitable site is available for the development, applicants should consider such an alternative on the basis that avoids the necessity for widespread boundary removal. Only in exceptional circumstances should roadside boundaries be removed.</p>
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### 10.5.5 Infill Residential Development in Urban Areas, Towns & Villages

These guidelines relate to the provision of residential developments within existing residential or mixed use developments including along streets in towns and villages. These are particularly encouraged by the Planning Authority particularly on small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, up to larger residential sites.

The following guidelines should be applied to infill sites in street locations:

- The site density, coverage and open space requirements will be considered on a site-specific basis to permit a development to integrate with the existing adjoining development. The development management standards set out for new residential developments may be relaxed in the case of infill developments.
- Design, height, scale, materials used and finishes should respect existing adjacent properties.
- Boundary treatment should ensure an effective screen between proposed and existing development.
- Private open space should provide space for bin and fuel storage areas.

- Car parking provision in accordance with standards outlined in this plan or in cases where this is not possible a contribution to the Planning Authority towards the provision or improvement of alternative car parking in the area.

The design of these infill sites shall be in accordance with the principles set out in 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' May 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual.

### 10.5.6 Apartments and Multiple Occupancy

Planning applications for the development of apartments are subject to the guidelines and standards set out below.

The Planning Authority is aware that in areas of multiple occupancy developments there are a greater number of people. This can adversely affect the amenities of the area - increased traffic generated coupled with car-parking requirements, lack of commitment to (public and private) open space maintenance (particularly when residents may not be the home owners), increased noise, nuisance and general disturbance.

The subdivision of existing dwellings into apartments/flats will not generally be permitted within residential estates designed and developed for single family occupancy.

In-sink macerators are prohibited, as they place a burden on local authority services (drainage system and waste water treatment plants). Kitchen design should facilitate the segregated bin collection for residual/organic and dry recyclables.

**Table 10.3: Design Guidelines for Multiple Occupancy**

Topic	Standard/Guideline
<b>Density</b>	The Planning Authority will have regard to the principles as outlined in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide', and the 'Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines to Planning Authorities', Sept 2007 and any subsequent documents.
<b>Collective Open Space</b>	A minimum provision of 15% of the total gross area of the site.
<b>Storage Space</b>	Fuel and bin storage shall be provided in accordance with the Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities', Sept 2007 and any subsequent documentation. A communal refuse storage area shall be provided and shall:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. be sufficiently sized to satisfy the 3-bin system for the collection of mixed dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste;</li> <li>2. be laid out to allow for sufficient access for waste collectors, proximity of, or ease of access to, waste storage areas from individual apartments and commercial units and access by disabled people;</li> <li>3. have facilities for washing down waste storage areas, with wastewater discharging to the sewer;</li> <li>4. have appropriate signage and instructions with respect to communal waste storage and collection services;</li> <li>5. have adequate ventilation of waste storage areas so as to minimise odours and potential nuisance from vermin / flies.</li> </ol>
<b>Car Parking</b>	<p>1.5- 2.0 spaces per residential unit.</p> <p>2 bedrooms or less - 1 space. 3 bedrooms or more -2 spaces.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Where development is likely to involve significant letting, an innovative parking layout should be proposed to accommodate increased car parking within the curtilage of the site above the standards outlined above.</p>
<b>Visitor Parking</b>	1 space per 2 apartments.
<b>Design</b>	A high standard of architectural design is required throughout. Apartments of a modern design will be encouraged.
<b>Landscaping Plan</b>	As per Urban Residential Guidelines, outlined in Table 10.1
<b>Management</b>	Proposals for on-going management of the development are required to be submitted at the planning application stage.

### 10.5.7 House Extensions

In assessing an application for a house extension, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:-

- ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’, 2009 and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide’ in considering the existing site density and remaining private open space.
- High quality designs for extensions will be required that respect and integrate with the existing dwelling in terms of height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions etc.

- Pitched roofs will be required except on some single storey rear extensions. Flat roof extensions visible from public areas will not normally be permitted.
- Impact on amenities of adjacent residents, in terms of light and privacy. Sunlight and daylight assessment may be required.
- Effect on front building line - extensions will not generally be allowed to break the existing front building line. However a porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted. In terrace and semi-detached situations, extensions which significantly protrude beyond the front building line and/or along the full front of the house will not be permitted.
- Ability to provide adequate car parking within the curtilage of the house.
- On unsewered sites, where an extension increases the potential occupancy of a house, the adequacy of the sewage treatment and disposal facilities should be demonstrated by the applicant. It may be necessary with significant extensions to relocate an existing septic tank or proprietary system and percolation area to comply with environmental and public health requirements.
- Regarding the subdivision of a dwelling to accommodate a dependent relative refer to Chapter 3 – Rural Housing Policies and Chapter 4 - Housing
- The sub-division of a dwelling by means of an extension or conversion of part of a dwelling for the purposes of providing rental accommodation will not be permitted.

### 10.5.8 Waste Water Treatment Plants and Residential Development

Waste water treatment plants can impact on housing, particularly when housing is located adjacent to the plant. In order to minimise this impact, housing shall not be constructed within the following distances from waste water treatment plants:

Size of Plant in population Equivalent	Minimum Distance for Housing
Up to 100 P.E.	50m
101 – 500 P.E.	80m
501 – 1000 P.E.	100m
1,001 – 5,000 P.E.	150m
5,001 – 10,000 P.E.	220m
Greater than 10,000 P.E.	275m

## 10.6 Economic Development

### 10.6.1 Industrial/Commercial Development

Industrial/Commercial development should be located in or adjacent to settlements where infrastructure has been provided and in line with the principle of sustainable development. In assessing an application for such developments, the Planning Authority will consider the development against its impact on the environment. Applications for industrial/commercial developments will be considered having regard to the following:

- **Zoning** of area (if applicable): More favourable consideration will be given to development in their appropriate zones having regard to the Zoning Matrix Table where relevant.
- **Site coverage:** The maximum site coverage for industrial/commercial development on greenfield sites shall be no more than 40% coverage. Site coverage is determined by dividing the ground floor area by the gross site area.
- **Sustainability Statement** is required for all large scale industrial/commercial development above 1,000sqm.
- **Design** of any buildings/structures already on site and in adjacent sites. In existing industrial estates, new developments may be required to adhere to an overall architectural theme to ensure uniformity and co-ordination.
- **Height:** The height of buildings should be no more than necessary for the operation of the business and should take account of the land-uses, character and amenities of the area.
- **Neighbouring uses:** Location relative to adjacent land uses - if the development constitutes a 'bad neighbour' it will not be permitted.
- **Use:** Nature and scale of operations. Full details of proposed use, including industrial processes involved, any toxic materials, chemicals or solvents used should be submitted to the Planning Authority.
- **Hours of operation:** Particularly where the proposed development is located in proximity to residential areas.
- **Services:** Availability of adequate services to serve the development - water, sewerage, etc.
- **Access:** Traffic generation, access and road safety. Generally one vehicular access point will be permitted to serve the development with a minimum carriageway width of 7.5 metres with a 2 metre wide footpath to either side. Adequate turning

areas must be provided within the curtilage of the site unless satisfactory alternative arrangements are agreed with the Planning Authority.

- **Parking:** Functional parking provision (car parking for staff/visitors, loading/unloading areas etc.) in accordance with Planning Authority's vehicle parking standards.
- **Mobility Management Plans:** shall be prepared for enterprises employing a large number of employees.
- **Storage:** All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks etc shall be visually screened from the public areas with adequate screening by fencing or walls of not less than 2 metres in height.
- **Fuel & Waste Storage:** Proposals for and location of safe storage on site and disposal of waste is required. A storage area of sufficient size for all recyclable materials generated from the development to the requirements of the Waste Management Act (Packaging Regulations) 2003 should be provided. All overground oil, chemical storage tanks should be adequately bunded to protect against spillage.
- **Boundary treatment and Landscaping:** Proposals should be accompanied by a survey of existing vegetation on the site and a suitable landscaping scheme using native species to screen the development from public areas. Existing trees and hedgerows of amenity should be retained where possible. No security fencing will be permitted forward of front building line of any industrial or warehouse facility other than during the construction phase of the development.
- **Lighting and noise:** Impacts resulting from lighting and noise from sites should be minimised. A detailed study may be required prior to the commencement of development in sensitive locations (e.g. adjacent dwelling houses, nursing home etc.) to outline probable impacts and mitigation measures.
- **Advertising:** The level and scale of advertising shall be carried out in accordance with criteria set out in this chapter under Advertising/ Advertisement Signs.

### 10.6.2 Small Scale Businesses in Residential Area

There has been a growth in the number of applications for small scale business from people working in their own homes. The scale and nature of operations will be taken into account. Uses such as the repair of vehicles will not be permitted in a residential area. The level of customers/callers will be taken into account. The Planning Authority will permit these in cases where:

- The use of the house for business purposes is secondary to its use as a dwelling and the floor area of the business should reflect this.



- The business serves a local need.
- Adequate parking requirements are met.
- There is no significant loss of residential amenity to adjoining residences in terms of general disturbance, noise, traffic generation etc.

Permission will be subject to normal environmental and planning criteria. Any subsequent change or proposed expansion of the business will need to be re-considered by the Planning Authority to assess whether the premises are still acceptable.

### **10.6.3 Small Scale home-based businesses in rural areas**

In general, commercial activities should be accommodated in towns and villages where existing services and facilities are available. However, the Planning Authority recognises that there is a growing trend of self-employed and small scale industrial and commercial activities locating adjacent to and/or within the curtilage of existing houses in the open countryside. Such activities (include workshops, car parking for articulated trucks and buses etc.) can have a detrimental impact on the amenities of adjacent residents and the rural character of the area. The Planning Authority will therefore seek to balance the need for such proposals against the impact on existing residential amenity and the environment.

Therefore, proposals that involve the change of use or new development for purposes of home-based employment in rural areas will be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- The nature and operation of the use requires that it is located adjacent to the existing residence of the applicant.
- It is of an appropriate design and scale for its location and does not detract from the rural character of the area.
- It would not seriously injure the amenities of adjoining residences in terms of general disturbance, noise, traffic generation, etc.
- It does not adversely impact on traffic safety and capacity in the area, and
- Adequate landscaping/screening is provided.

Permission will be subject to normal environmental and planning criteria. Any subsequent change or proposed expansion of the business will need to be re-considered by the Planning Authority to assess whether the premises are still acceptable.

### **10.6.4 Retailing**

#### **10.6.4.1 General Guidelines**

Colliers CRE consultants have undertaken a 'Joint Retail Strategy for Limerick City, Limerick County and Clare' for 2010-2016. This Strategy will replace the two previous Strategies applying to the County; namely the Mid-West Retail Strategy 2002-2011 and the County Limerick Retail Strategy 2003. The Council will have regard to the National Retail Guidelines 2005, and the emerging Joint Retail Strategy for Limerick City, Limerick County and Clare County and any amendment thereof.

#### **10.6.4.2 Retail Warehouses**

Retail warehouses are generally large scale single retail stores catering for the car-borne customer and specialising in non food products such as furniture, carpets, tiles, DIY, electrical goods etc and other uses such as car sale/showrooms. A retail park generally comprises a number of such warehouses.

It is the Policy of the Council to deal with applications for retail warehouses in accordance with the DEHLG 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' January 2005 and with the emerging Retail Strategy for Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council and Clare County Council.

The Planning Authority will pay particular attention to the following when considering an application for a retail warehouse:

- Type of goods sold - in the event of a grant of planning permission, a condition may be imposed restricting the type of goods sold.
- Size of Building - the size of the premises may be restricted as may the sub-division into smaller units.
- Design of building - due to their scale and size they can have a significant visual impact and a high quality design will be required.
- Landscaping - a comprehensive scheme submitted at application stage.
- Road network in the vicinity and traffic generation are important considerations.
- Parking standards in accordance with those set out in this plan will be required.
- In addition to general servicing requirements, due to the large area of hard surfacing associated with these developments, the Planning Authority will pay particular attention to surface water run-off.
- Impact on residential amenities.
- The accessibility of the proposed development to public transport

### **10.6.4.3 Neighbourhood & Local Convenience Shops**

Neighbourhood and local shops or corner shops have an important role to play in satisfying the day-to-day needs of their immediate area. Local shops within housing estates should generally be integrated with the estate development at the planning application stage.

In assessing an application for a ‘convenience shop/local shop’, the following will be taken into consideration by the Planning Authority:

- Within Neighbourhood Centres the entire gross convenience shopping floor area shall not exceed 900sqm in area, (600sqm in area net).
- § For local / corner shops, a floor area (net) in excess of 40 sq.m. will not be permitted.
- § The design of the shop shall be in keeping with the overall character of the area. A high quality shop front will be required. The level of advertising matter will be strictly controlled.
- § Developments likely to have significant adverse affects on residential amenity will not be permitted.
- § Parking provision - while it is acknowledged that many customers will arrive on foot parking will also have to be provided in accordance with the standards set out in this plan. In addition a servicing/loading/unloading area shall also be provided.
- § The level and scale of advertising shall be carried out in accordance with the criteria set out below in the Advertising Development Management Guidelines.

### **10.6.4.4 Shops in Rural Areas**

The emphasis is on the need to build up the retailing core of settlements. Accordingly there will be a general presumption against shops in rural areas i.e. outside town and villages. Exceptions to this include:-

- Small-scale shops attached to a permitted tourist or recreational development.
- Retail outlets associated with other rural activities where the retail aspect is secondary to the operation - shops selling agricultural produce, crafts, etc.
- The development of a small shop in association with an existing post office will generally be permitted.

#### 10.6.4.5 Petrol Filling Station/Service Stations

The Planning Authority requires an overall integrated design concept using high quality materials and attention to landscaping.

The role of petrol filling/service stations is changing - from being purely for the provision of fuel to the provision of a wide range of goods and services, for example shops, restaurants, fuel depots, etc. Some function as the sole retail outlet for a local area. These uses should be secondary to the use as a petrol filling station and they should not adversely affect retail developments in the town or village where they are located except those which will reinforce the physical fabric of the town or village and give vitality and vibrancy to a town's/village's core.

Applications for retail uses not associated with the motor fuel sales/motor industry will not be considered unless the applicant can demonstrate a need for an outlet at the location. In general the floor area will be limited to 100 sq.m. in size. Uses such as vehicle repair and car sales will normally be acceptable.

Notwithstanding this, its proposed location relative to proximity to junctions and bends, width of road, likelihood of causing a traffic hazard or interference with the traffic flow as well as other planning criteria will also be taken into account in speed limit areas. They will not be permitted in the open countryside.

**Table 10.4: Design Guidelines for Petrol Stations**

Topic	Standard/Guideline
<b>Design</b>	An integrated design dealing with buildings, structures, advertising matter, lighting, overall layout etc. of good architectural merit is an essential part of a planning application.
<b>Access</b>	Generally 2 access points with a minimum width of 7.3 and a maximum width of 9.1 m with appropriate radius of curvature based on road design speed. Proposals for pairing stations (i.e. on opposite sides of major roads or to avoid traffic turning right across a road) may be considered more favourably.
<b>Site Depth:</b>	Minimum 22 metres.
<b>Boundary</b>	The front boundary of the site shall be defined by a wall not exceeding 0.5 metres in height and the area between this and the road edge shall be levelled and laid so that surface water does not pond in the area nor flow onto the public road. A footpath shall also be provided outside the boundary wall.
<b>Location of Structures</b>	The pump island shall not be located closer than 7m from the roadside boundary. No obstruction other than pump island shall be located within 15

	metres of the road boundary. No structures whether permanent or temporary shall interfere with the sight lines of drivers or obstruct pedestrians.
<b>Lighting</b>	All fixtures or fittings shall be provided in such a way so as not to cause a glare to road users or unduly detract from the visual amenities of the area.
<b>Design/ Advertising</b>	Design of stations will be required to be of high standard. Canopies should be appropriate to their setting in terms of height and design and for reasons of visual amenity should be set well back from the public footpath or edge of the public road. Minimal advertising will be permitted and shall generally be restricted to a main identifier sign structure, which shall not exceed 4.5 metres in height. The forecourt and adjacent footpath shall not be used for advertising whether for permanent or temporary structures.
<b>Landscaping</b>	A landscaping plan is required for all applications for petrol filling/service stations.
<b>Parking</b>	Parking requirements are set out in the parking standards table in this plan. The location of such parking will be such as to minimise pedestrian/vehicular conflict.
<b>Surface Water</b>	Surface water from the development will be required to be contained within the site and piped to the public system. No surface water will be permitted to pond within the forecourt, adjoining the boundary walls or along the entrance/exit lanes.

### 10.6.5 Takeaway Premises

#### 10.6.5.1 Takeaway Premises in the defined retail centres

Takeaway premises are often of concern to people who live close by and indeed those living in the wider area when noise and disturbance is generated by increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic drawn into an area. Proposals for takeaway premises will be open for consideration in retail centres and core retail areas, except where:

- The development would be likely to prove detrimental to the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential properties, to the visual amenity and to parking, traffic and litter problems which could not reasonably be controlled by uses of planning conditions, or
- The applicant has failed to demonstrate that a satisfactory ventilation flue could be provided that would not cause problems of noise and fumes for the occupiers of nearby properties and it would not be detrimental to visual amenity, or

- c) Where there is an existing dwelling immediately above, or
- d) A further change of use from retail use (Class 1) would seriously affect the retail vitality and viability of the defined retail centre due to existing concentration of takeaway premises in an area.

#### **10.6.5.2 Takeaway Premises in the small local centres and primarily residential locations**

Many smaller local shopping centres are situated in predominantly residential areas and as such strict adherence to the criteria set above will be required if the uses are to be considered acceptable. In any other location where residential properties are nearby there will be a general presumption against takeaway premises being allowed unless it can be demonstrated to the Planning Authority that criteria a), b) and c) above are adhered to and the noise and general nuisance can be reasonably controlled by restricting the opening hours of the premises and installing a satisfactory ventilation flue. Opening hours outside the hours of 0900 – 2400 may be unacceptable if significant detriment is likely to be caused to amenity of local residents by the operation of a takeaway premises.

### **10.6.6 Tourism facilities and tourism related developments**

#### **10.6.6.1 Facilities and amenities ancillary to tourism and recreational attractions**

Certain facilities and amenities, and associated services, are often required to support the enjoyment of tourism and recreational attractions. Facilities of this type would often include car parks, viewing points, and might include toilets and cafes. Facilities will be permitted, only where it can be demonstrated that they involve as appropriate:

- a) A simple form and function and unobtrusive siting and design so as not to interfere with the visual setting of sensitive visual attractions;
- b) The particular facilities are justified by reference to anticipated demand of the public for the local environmental attractions;
- c) Where based on the popularity of an attraction to the public it would be reasonable to provide certain services such as restroom and refreshment facilities to cater for the public, they should be of appropriate location, design, landscaping and management, to be effective in their immediate purposes and to divert anticipated pressure away from sensitive areas or features;
- d) Where it would require washing facilities and toilets, the facility is properly serviced in keeping with Objective IN O34, EPA guidance and licensing requirements;
- e) There should be adequate capacity in the local public road network to accommodate vehicular and non vehicular traffic generated by the tourist and recreational attractions. This would involve where possible off road car parking sufficient for anticipated demand and strategically located to avoid traffic hazard and nuisance;
- f) Adequate signage, and interpretation panels, to inform and enhance the visitor experience and assist in proper site management;

- g) Inclusive access to basic restroom and refreshment facilities, to certain walks and open areas, taking into account local topographical constraints.

It is imperative that both the facilities themselves, and downstream environmental impacts, are non-obtrusive with respect to the intrinsic character of place and setting that is essential to the amenity value of the attraction; and with respect to local biodiversity, and historic and archaeological potential that is associated with the environment.

#### **10.6.6.2 Sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation**

The Council will promote sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation in the countryside. These include theme holidays and group based activities that take advantage of local and natural resources in a way that enhances the appreciation of place, minimises disturbance to the local environment, and improves the prospects for tourism in the long term. This will be linked to the development of non-vehicular routes through the countryside. Land uses can be associated with particular farms or forests, or special natural features (see below). As a general preference, facilities should be in existing settlements, or in buildings of character requiring renovation or in traditional farm houses. Where new buildings are permitted outside of this framework, they should be modest in scale, sensitively located and designed having regard to existing buildings, topography and landscape, they should be adequately serviced, and suitably managed.

#### **10.6.6.3 Adventure activities requiring special natural features**

There are a range of recreational activities that require resources that are generally only available in rural areas. The following standards and guidelines relate to these activities and to their appropriate setting.

Such land uses and associated works shall be considered under the following criteria:

- a) All planning applications for these adventure / recreational activities involving special natural features should be accompanied by a management plan indicating projected numbers of users, hours of operation, seasons of operation, and an undertaking to protect the natural environment in the form of a risk assessment with proposed amelioration measures in respect of flora, fauna, hydrology, geology and soils.
- b) All proposals should be accessible insofar as possible by sustainable means of transport including public transport and by modes other than the car.
- c) Where the traffic generated is likely to exceed the capacity of the local road network or require changes to the road network that would adversely affect the character of the area, these will not be permitted.
- d) Where the activity is likely to be noise generating, a noise assessment will be required in connection with the application, measuring likely noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive recipients. Noise sensitive uses include all residential uses, passive public amenities, and the bloodstock industry. Where the use involves significant disturbance to any of these noise sensitive uses that use will not be permitted in that location.

## **10.7 Advertising/Advertisements Signs**

Advertising matter will be required to be sympathetic in scale, design, materials and colour and be sympathetic with their surroundings. They should not interfere with traffic safety and they should not obstruct traffic signs.

The Council when considering applications (planning and licences) for advertising signs shall have regard to the provisions contained in the Department of Environment's "Traffic Signs Manual" 1996, and any subsequent national policies in regard to advertising. A licence is required where the sign is on or along a public road and planning permission is required where the sign is on private property. Under the Litter Pollution Act, the Roads Act and the Planning and Development Acts, the Local Authority has powers to remove any sign which is not exempted development or does not have permission under these Planning Acts.

The Council will advise potential applicants on acceptable design of advertisements prior to submitting applications. The following is the Council's policy in regard to advertising. More development specific guidelines are included below. Where a development is not specifically mentioned a potential applicant is advised to contact the Planning Authority prior to submitting the application.

### **10.7.1 General Advertising Policy**

- Encourage the use of hand painted signs and to prohibit plastic box signs, which are internally illuminated.
- Limit the numbers of signs where it is considered they would lead to cluttered appearance at a junction or on a building.
- On buildings and structures of historic, artistic and architectural interest, only permit advertising which is in character with the building or structure.
- Provide an advertising area or advertising facility in central or focal areas in towns or villages and in lay-bys.
- Limit advertising in areas of special amenity, areas where views and prospects of scenic importance are listed, recommended maximum size of 1 square metre.
- Only permit roadside directional signs manufactured by NSAI certified manufacturers in accordance with Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's current standards.
- Restrict the use of advertising structures on public footpaths and on road margins where they conflict with pedestrian or traffic safety or with visual amenity.



- Large advertising hoardings (bill boards) will be prohibited in the countryside and will only be considered as temporary structures in towns and villages where they screen a derelict site.
- Permit fingerpost signs or advance signs for tourist attractions where they do not conflict with traffic safety.
- Permit the use of finger post signs for hotels, restaurants, sports and community facilities, where they do not conflict with traffic safety or visual amenity, within towns and villages.
- Permit the use of finger post signs for B+B's, restaurants or large traffic generating business where they do not conflict with traffic safety or visual amenity, outside towns and villages. The establishment shall be within 5km of the location of the sign and shall not have a finger post sign at more than one junction on a major route.
- Provide properly designed advance signs at the entrances to towns and villages, indicating particular services and facilities by symbols.
- In the interests of road safety and avoiding clutter, it is an objective of Limerick County Council to provide street name signs in all towns, thereby obviating the need for individual directional signs for commercial properties.

### 10.7.2 Shop Front

There has been a noticeable trend in shop front improvement as shop owners realise that a well designed shop front can contribute significantly to the attractiveness of the business. The Planning Authority is particularly anxious to encourage good shop front design, maintaining traditional shop fronts where appropriate, controlling advertising (particularly projecting signs) and generally improving the appearance of retail premises. A well designed shop front forms an integral part of the overall building relating in scale, proportion and vertical alignment as well as to adjoining buildings. Advertising is an integral (not dominant) part of the facade and should be so designed. To achieve this, the Planning Authority will assess a planning application having regard to:-

- Materials: the use of natural materials such as timber, stone and plaster which complement the architectural character of the building itself and reflect existing finishes in the streetscape will be favoured.
- Advertising Matter: ground floor level advertising will be permitted while restricting advertising above this level. (Advertising aimed at the pedestrian rather than the passing motorist). Advertising should be in scale with and not dominate nor interfere with features of the shop front. The numbers of projecting signs (particularly brand projecting signs) will be restricted. The use of traditional hand

painted signs is preferable. The Planning Authority will not favour the use of plastic (PVC, perspex) and internally illuminated signage.

- Shutters: Applications involving roller shutters unless of the open grille or demountable type painted to match the existing shop front will not be permitted. The roller shutters should be located inside the shop front wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity.
- External lighting: The external lighting shall be sympathetic in design and materials to the shop front and the existing streetscape.
- Corporate Image: Developments involving the use of corporate logos/advertising matter/shop fronts should be in accordance with good civic design and with existing streetscape.

### **10.7.3 Industrial Estates/ Enterprise Centres**

In industrial estates/enterprise centres, particularly where there are non-competing uses, the grouping of advertising signs should be considered whereby all the names (and logos) of the establishments located within are placed on a single advertising structure.

This would be located at the entrance and can be accompanied with a layout map of the estate indicating their location. This introduces uniformity and reduces clutter. This is the current practice of Shannon Development. To facilitate this the Council will:

- Encourage the use of grouped advertising signs in industrial estates/enterprise centres.
- Permit on site advertisements small in scale where they are considered not to detract from the environment.

### **10.7.4 Shopping Centres/Retail Parks**

There has been a growth in the number of large retail developments on the outskirts of the City aimed at the car borne population. The need for advertising for such centres is minimal as most centres carry a similar range of goods and services. Given that they are usually strategically located at major traffic junctions, it is the policy of the Council to restrict the number of advance directional signs.

## **10.8 Agricultural Development**

Agricultural buildings and associated works (walls, fences, gates, entrances, yards etc.) while accepting the need to be functional, are required to be sympathetic to their

surroundings - in scale, materials and finishes. Buildings should relate to the landscape and should avoid breaking the skyline.

Traditionally this was achieved by having the roof darker than the walls. Appropriate roof colours are dark grey, dark reddish brown or a very dark green. The grouping of agricultural buildings will be encouraged and use of existing landscaping in order to reduce their overall impact in the interests of visual amenity.

Some agricultural developments are exempt from planning control. However, no new building or structure on a farm is exempt from planning permission unless it has adequate effluent storage facilities. The Planning Authority will require adequate provision for the collection, storage and disposal of effluent produced from agricultural developments. Developers are required to adhere to the Department of Agriculture Guideline entitled 'Guidelines and Recommendations on the Control of Pollution from Farmyard Wastes' and the following Slurry Storage and Slurry disposal/recycling requirements:

- All effluent storage tanks should be constructed to Department of Agriculture and Food specifications.
- The capacities of all slurry, effluent and soiled water tanks and all other tanks for pollutants shall comply with the current Department of Agriculture Guidelines and any subsequent documents/guidelines.
- The applicant may be required to demonstrate that sufficient lands of suitable nutrient status are available within a reasonable distance for the disposal/recycling of organic waste from a proposed agricultural development.

#### **10.8.1 Intensive Pig and Poultry Units**

In assessing an application for intensive pig or poultry units, the Planning Authority will consider and require information on the following:

- Depending on the size of the unit, an E.I.S. may be required. In addition an Integrated Pollution Control licence may be required from the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Scale and intensity of operations including the cumulative impact of similar type developments.
- Waste management including frequency and location of disposal relative to pig and poultry units. In addition, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that there is a stable, secure, sustainable outlet for all slurries and manures from the proposed development. All slurry and effluent shall be stored in concrete tanks constructed in accordance with S123 '*Minimum Specification: Slatted livestock units; Reinforced Concrete tanks*' (DAFF 1994) or other types of structures approved by the Planning Authority.

- Air pollution arising from housing units and effluent storage, transportation and spreading. The control of odour is another important consideration.
- Proximity of development to aquifers and watercourses.
- Units should be located a minimum of 400 metres from the nearest dwelling other than the applicants dwelling. In the case of villages and towns intensive poultry and particularly pig units will be required to be located a much greater distance away from the settlement because of the impacts on residential amenities.
- Animal housing units in terms of design, and associated activities such as cleaning, ventilation and heating.
- Landscaping of site - a comprehensive landscaping plan should be submitted as part of the planning application.

### **10.8.2 Extractive Industries**

Mineral extraction including rock, sand and gravel can have serious impacts on the landscape in terms of noise, dust, vibration, visual intrusion, loss of groundwater supplies, water pollution, loss of habitat, traffic generation and adverse impact on road network. Applications for mineral extraction will therefore be considered on their merits in terms of environmental capacity and potential impacts on certain environmental designations. Particular constraint will be exercised in areas of architectural significance including the attendant lands of protected structures or architectural conservation areas, areas of archaeological importance, recorded monuments, areas of ecological importance and other environment designated areas such as the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). Any application will be assessed in line with the advice contained in the DEHLG (2003) 'Planning Guidelines on Control of Quarries' and advice from the relevant statutory bodies will be sought and considered by the Planning Authority.

Environmental Impacts Statement (E.I.S.) will be required with a planning application where the defined thresholds outlined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2008 are exceeded for certain types of development. In cases where thresholds are not exceeded the Planning Authority may still exercise its powers under Article 103(1) of the Regulation (2001) and require an E.I.S. for sub-threshold development where it considers the effect of the proposed development on the environment is likely to be significant.

In assessing an application for development (whether for a new quarry or an extension to an existing) the need for the development in terms of national importance and the impact of the development on the local economy will be considered together with the following:

- Nature and quantity of aggregate(s) to be extracted, including total and annual tonnage of excavated aggregates;
- Location - relative to dwellings or other development (within 1km of site), aquifers and groundwater, environmentally sensitive areas, special amenity areas and areas of archaeological potential in particular;
- Description of development works including buildings, fixed and mobile plant, roads, fuel tanks, stockpiles, storage of soil, overburden and waste materials, settling ponds;
- Estimated working life of quarry; including phasing programme;
- Working methods, maximum extent and depth of working and hours of operation – frequency of blasting etc.;
- Nature and extent of operations including ancillary processes (such as crushing, concrete manufacturer) and equipment to be used;
- Noise generation and control;
- Dust generation and control;
- Waste disposal - waste rock, unmarketable products etc.;
- Water supply and discharge requirements;
- Impact on water table: minimisation of disturbance to the existing surface and subsurface hydrological regime must be ensured on site and in proximity to the quarry;
- Ecology: Due consideration must also be given to sites of ecological value and designated species which lie outside designated sites;
- Ground Stability: this is not just an issue in shaft mining or underground quarrying but also relates to vertical surfaces left in place after stone or aggregate extraction.
- Transportation arrangements for products and road network in the area;
- Effects on amenity of the area and in particular residential, visual amenity;
- Natural and proposed screening of site;
- Restoration and aftercare proposals – Aftercare proposals should be submitted with the planning application. For example, intended landform gradients and drainage of the site following mitigation and aftercare works. It should be noted that the record of past restoration by the developer will be taken into account.

The Planning Authority will support the extractive industry by issuing planning permission that extends over the estimated life of the quarry. It will be necessary, however that the applicant sets out a phasing proposal for the development to assess the time-scale of the proposal. The Planning Authority will impose strict conditions on planning permissions relating to the appropriate mitigation measures to control the impacts on the environment and surrounding area. In addition, both a standard contribution and a special contribution under the Development Contribution Scheme 2009 – 2013 and a financial bond will be required to ensure appropriate restoration and reinstatement works are undertaken within 12 month of the cessation of works.

The Irish Concrete Federation produces three documents that are of particular use in guiding potential quarry applicants in the management of their sites. These are Environment Code (ICF, 2005), the Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry (October, 2008), and the Archaeological Code of Practices (June 2009). These guidance documents provide advice on best practice in relation to environmental, archaeological, geological and heritage issues. Potential applicants

are requested to have regard to the contents of these documents when designing proposals for quarry developments.

## **10.9 Community and Recreation**

### **10.9.1 Childcare facilities**

Childcare facilities shall be accommodated in appropriate premises, suitably located with sufficient open space in accordance with the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 and any subsequent legislation.

In line with the Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001, DEHLG suitable sites for full day care facilities include; detached houses, sites or substantial semi-detached properties with space for off-street parking, suitable set down and collection points for customers, and space for an outdoor play area. A lay-by facility along the front of the site may be acceptable which facilitates drop-off and enables vehicles leaving and entering the site in forward gear. Other suitable areas include neighbourhood/community centres or schools, facilities in proximity to places of work, for example, an industrial estate and locations on primary traffic routes close to public transport nodes.

Sessional/after-school care facilities may be considered in any residential area as ancillary to the main residential use subject to the criteria outlined above in relation to traffic, parking and open space.

Applicants for childcare facilities are advised to supply the following supporting information as part of the planning application: -

- Nature of the facility – Full Day Care, Sessional, Drop In, After School Care.
- Details of proposed opening times.
- Proposed number and age range of children.
- Proposed number of staff.
- Internal floor area devoted for use.
- Details of external areas for play areas.
- Detailed landscaping/screening proposals.
- Car-parking arrangements. (Parking standards are set out in Table 10.5, page 10-43 – Vehicle Parking Requirements)
- Waste disposal and recycling storage and arrangements
- Whether part of a community initiative that may facilitate a multi-use function for other activities for the wider community, e.g. adult education classes.

It is advised that applicants consult with the Environmental Health Officer, the Chief Fire Officer as well as the Planning Authority in advance of making a planning application.

### 10.9.2 Caravan Parks/Camping Sites

The provision of tourist caravan parks to facilitate the expanding tourist industry is encouraged by the Planning Authority. In assessing an application for a tourist caravan park the following matters will be assessed by the Planning Authority:-

- Location of the development relative to existing services including retail and social facilities.
- Availability of services to cater for the development.
- Impact on existing residential amenities - overlooking, increased traffic and general disturbance will be taken into account.
- Capacity of road to cater for the development - direct access onto national primary or national secondary roads will not be permitted.
- Type and size of development - caravans for all year round occupation will not be permitted.
- Landscaping - every application for a caravan park will be accompanied by a comprehensive landscaping plan both proposed and existing.
- Compliance to Bord Failte's standards for caravan parks will be required.

It is advised that the applicants for a tourist caravan park consult with the Environmental Health Officer, the Chief Fire Officer as well as the Planning Authority in advance of making a planning application.

### 10.9.3 Schools

Proposals shall comply with 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – Code of Practice for Planning Authorities', DEHLG and Department of Education & Science, July 2008.

Waste water treatment plants can impact on schools. In order to minimise this impact, school buildings shall not be constructed within the following distances from waste water treatment plants.

Size of Plant in population Equivalent	Minimum Distance for Schools
Up to 100 P.E.	50m
101 – 500 P.E.	80m
501 – 1000 P.E.	100m
1,001 – 5,000 P.E.	150m
5,001 – 10,000 P.E.	220m
Greater than 10,000 P.E.	275m

#### **10.9.4 Nursing Homes**

In respect of sheltered housing or homes for those with disabilities and for older people or nursing homes, these uses shall be located within settlements and close to community facilities, shops and amenities. The maximum distance from such facilities shall be no more than 300 metres safe walking distance. Exceptions shall only be made where suitable sites cannot be found, an urgent need is being addressed, and at least one amenity/facility can be provided in situ.

Nursing Homes shall comply with the standards laid down in the Statutory Instrument No 317 of 1985 “Homes for Incapacitated Persons Regulations 1985” and any subsequent legislation.

Developers will be required to submit a mobility management plan based on the ‘Mobility Plan – Advice Note’, DTO, July 2002 and any subsequent document, and a connectivity study demonstrating pedestrian permeability and connectivity with existing community services.

Mobility Management can be described as a transport demand management mechanism, which seeks to provide for the transportation needs of people and goods. It can be applied as a strategic demand management tool or as a site-specific (or area-specific) measure. The aim is to reduce demand for and use of cars by increasing the attractiveness and practicality of other modes of transport.

Proposals will be required to include details of all service vehicles including emergency vehicles and how associated turning movements are accommodated on the site.

### **10.10 Environment and Heritage**

#### **10.10.1 Developments in Environmentally Designated Areas**

County Limerick’s identified environmentally designated areas (designated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, DEHLG) include Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. These designations do not imply a total ban on development. However, developments likely to seriously impact on these areas will be carefully controlled in line with sustainable policies and objectives.

The overall emphasis in these designated areas will be quality of design and integration of development into its surroundings. Developments in these areas will therefore be required to minimise their visual impact by careful location on sites, design and landscaping. The design of developments in these areas will be of high standard using traditional materials and finishes.

Prior consultation with DEHLG is advised in cases where a planning application involves developments in environmentally designated areas to ensure that all issues



that are likely to arise are considered and appropriate mitigation measures in habitat sensitive sites are incorporated. In relation to visually sensitive areas, the proposals should have regard to the landscape assessment covered in Chapter 7.

### **10.10.2 Developments in areas of archaeological potential**

The value of archaeological sites and monuments in the County is recognised by the Planning Authority. Applicants are advised to consult the archaeological maps (available in the Planning Authority for consultation) and Local Area Plans in order to ascertain whether their development is located in an area of archaeological potential. Where a development site coincides with an area of archaeological potential the planning application will be referred to the DEHLG for their recommendations. Their views together with the views and concerns of other interested bodies will be taken into account when assessing the planning application.

In cases where it is deemed that the Archaeological Heritage would be affected by a proposed development (due to their location, size or nature), the Planning Authority will require an archaeological assessment. The applicant will be formally requested, as part of the planning process, to have a report prepared by an archaeologist on the archaeological implications, if any, of the proposed development either prior to a decision on a planning application or prior to commencement of development on site.

In relation to development proposals the planning authority will adopt a policy of archaeological monitoring which will be required on developments where the scale and nature of such developments may, in the opinion of the planning authority, have a negative impact on previously unknown archaeological features/artefacts. In areas of residential zoning, consideration will be given to applicants monitoring the entire area rather than considering individual applications within this zoned area on its merits.

### **10.10.3 Developments involving elements of the architectural heritage**

The value of the County's built heritage has long been recognised by the Planning Authority. Applicants are advised to consult the Record of Protected Structures, the lists and maps detailing the boundaries of Architectural Conservation Areas, and other documents, such as Local Area Plans, published by the Planning Authority in order to ascertain whether their development may impinge upon the architectural heritage. Where a development proposal is located either directly on the site of a protected structure or an architectural conservation area, or in proximity to such sites, the planning application will be referred to the prescribed bodies, including the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, for their recommendations. Their views, together with valid views and concerns of other interested bodies and stakeholders, will be taken into account when assessing the planning application.

Any well considered proposals for adaptive redevelopment will make good use of the existing character of a structure and, in combination with new work, redefine a continuing character for it into the future reflecting the values of the present age.

In cases where it is deemed that significant elements of the Architectural Heritage would be affected by a proposed development (due to its location, size or nature), the Planning Authority will require an Architectural Impact Assessment. The applicant will be formally requested, as part of the planning process, to have a report prepared by a conservation architect accredited to the appropriate level, on the implications, if any, of the proposed development on the architectural heritage prior to a decision on a planning application.

In relation to grants of permission for developments involving a protected structure or a building located within an architectural conservation area, the planning authority will adopt a policy of supervision of the project by an appropriately accredited conservation architect. Detailed reports, containing records to the recognised standard, shall be lodged with the planning authority and other appropriate repositories following completion of the project.

## **10.11 Transport and Infrastructure**

### **10.11.1 Development requiring access to public roads**

The potential impact of any development on the public road network is an important consideration of the Planning authority when assessing a planning application for development. All applications for development involving access onto the public road network or the intensification of the use of an existing access will be assessed having regard to:

- 1) Relevant national standards and guidelines :
  - a) National Roads Authority NRA: Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, January 2009 Road Geometry Handbook. This is a standard source of reference for the Planning Authority in assessing the design and position of junctions and sightlines, in relation to all public roads.
  - b) Department of Transport (DoT), Dublin Transport Office (DTO), and DEHLG: Traffic Management Guidelines 2003.
- 2) The following considerations:
  - a) Classification of the public road.
  - b) Speed limit which applies to the road.
  - c) Width and carrying capacity of the road.
  - d) Condition of the road surface.
  - e) Drainage requirements of the road.
  - f) Nature, scale and layout of the development.
  - g) Volume and nature of traffic likely to be generated by the development.
  - h) Design of the access and sightline visibility.

- i) Vertical and horizontal alignment.
- j) Number of access points in the vicinity.
- k) Junctions in the vicinity.
- l) Level of parking required and provision of on-site parking.
- m) Lighting and advertising matter associated with the development.
- n) Footpath and public lighting requirements.

### **10.11.2 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 Strategy' initiative. The County 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 County Council may consider it necessary, subject to specific site characteristics, suburban v rural location, discretion shall be exercised.

The following development proposals shall include a Mobility Management Plan:

- o Office development - office based industry.
- o Retail development – retail parks, single developments, retail warehousing.
- o Industrial development.
- o Warehousing/storage/distribution.
- o Neighbourhood/Town Centre development.
- o Education development – school, colleges etc.
- o Recreational development.
- o 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:

- o Provision of appropriate parking spaces;
- o Develop/improve links within the existing public transport system to help move away from car-based travel;
- o Provide Work Place Facilities for cyclists and pedestrians;
- o Ensure that buildings are accessible to people with varying accessibility needs;
- o Respect existing public rights of way;
- o 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 County 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 & Water Services Department of Limerick County 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.

### 10.11.3 Vehicle Parking Standards

The Planning Authority will require the provision of adequate off-carriageway car parking for new developments and where appropriate grouped parking arrangements, in accordance with the standards set out hereunder. Their provision should not adversely affect the amenities of the area whether by their location, layout or design. Particular attention to the parking needs of persons with disabilities is required in all applications for developments where the public have access. Operational parking (an area for delivery vehicles, loading and unloading) may also be required in some cases to service premises in accordance with standards set out below. Multi-storey car parking and dual/shared usage of parking by a number of users is encouraged. Parking design and layout shall be developed in accordance with DEHLG, Department of Transport and Dublin Transportation Office 'Traffic Management Guidelines' (May, 2003).

In assessing requirements for parking, consideration may be given to the dual use of spaces i.e. where greatest demand for use of spaces do not coincide.

**Table 10.5 Vehicle Parking Requirements**

Land Use	Unit		Parking Spaces per Unit
Retail (Class 1)* Offices/ Banks/Financial institutions (Class 2)* (i.e. where services provided principally to visiting members of the public)	Core Retail Areas**	Any other Area	
	1 per 50sq.m (gross)	1 per 20sq.m (gross) - Up to 1000 sq.m 1 per 12sq.m (gross) Over 1000 sq.m	
Offices (Class 3)*	1 per 70sq.m (gross)	1 per 35sq.m (gross)	

Takeaways	1 per 50 sq.m public floor area	1 per 25 sq.m public floor area	
Restaurant	1 per 16sq.m public floor area	1 per 8 sq.m public floor area	
Bar lounges, function rooms	1 per 8 sq.m net public space	1 per 4 sq.m net public space	
Dwelling	3 bedroom or less 4 bedrooms or more		1 2
Visitor Parking	1 space per every 3 dwellings		
Flat/Apartment	2 bedroom or less 3 bedroom or more		1 1.5
Visitor Parking	Per 2 apartments		1
Bed And Breakfast Accommodation	per bedroom		1
Retail Warehouse	per 20sq.m gross floor area		1
Library	per 25 sq. gross floor area		1
Churches	Per 3 seats		1
Schools -Primary	Per Classroom		2
Secondary	Per Classroom		3
Hospitals	Per bed		1.5
Clinics/surgeries	Per staff member Per consulting room		1 2
Nursing Homes	Per 4 residents		1
Hotel/Motel/Guesthouses.	Per bedroom		1
Light/General industry	Per 35sq.m of Gross floor area		1
Warehousing	Per 100sq. m of gross floor area		1
Conference Facilities	Per 35sqm of Gross floor area		1
Ballroom, Dance Clubs, Community Halls etc.	Per 10sq. m of dance floor and sitting down space		3
Crèches/Playschools/Nurseries	Per staff member Per 5 children		1 1
Cinema/Theatre	Per 3 seats		1
Leisure centre	Per 25 sq.m of gross floor area		1
Golf /Pitch and Putt Courses	Per Hole		3
Playing Pitches	Per Pitch		25

**Notes:**

\* See Schedule 2 (Part 4) of the Planning & Development Regulation 2001

\*\* Core Retail Areas are the town centres (Newcastle West, Abbeyfeale, Kilmallock, Rathkeale, Adare) zoned 'Mixed use' or 'Town centres' in Local Area Plans and the above category shall apply throughout these zones unless otherwise specified in these Local Area plans.

**The above standards may be relaxed/reduced in the following cases:**

1. Where public car parking is available in the vicinity of the development which is adequate both to serve the development and to perform its original purpose, or where such parking provision is proposed.
2. 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.
3. Where on the particular planning merits of the case, it would be unreasonable to require full provision. The merits depend on the development type and on its context. Requirements are relaxed for commercial uses in core retail areas as taken into account in the above table. In addition, requirements for extra car parking spaces can be relaxed for certain land uses, cinemas for instance, when there are extensive periods that they would not be in operation, and in accordance with local spare capacity. The ability to share spaces with other uses should be taken into account in estimating the quantity of extra spaces required over existing and committed provision. The layout of parking and the control of the developer or the Local Authority over the use of these spaces will also be very important.

Either one of the following preconditions shall apply to the reduction in the requirement to provide car parking spaces in situ:

A: Where public car parking facilities have been provided or are to be provided which facilitate the development, in these cases, the Planning Authority will require the payment of a contribution towards the provision and management of such car-parking spaces. The amount of the contribution will be related to the size and the nature of the development.

Or

B: Reductions in requirement where they are justified through a mobility management plan which demonstrates that there is, or will be, a real shift to sustainable travel patterns such as public transport, walking and cycling generated by the proposed development, and existing in the area as affected by the proposed development.

**Increased car parking may be required in the following cases:**

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.

**Table 10.6 Car Parking Dimensions**

Car Parking Bay	2.44 m X 4.88m
Disabled Parking Bay	3.0m X 4.88m
Circulation Aisles	Between 4.3 m and 6.1 metres depending on alignment
Loading Bay	6.1 m X 3.0 m

#### 10.11.4 Motorcycle Parking

Provision for motorcycle parking will be required to accommodate this user and also to encourage modes of transport other than the car. It must also be borne in mind that motorcycles using standard car spaces is not an efficient use of land.

At a minimum, one secure motorcycle parking space shall be required for every 20 car parking spaces. These should be in well lit places, with limited gradients, and the bay surface should be firm, and well drained. There are a variety of possible loop or anchor type devices that could be used for locking the wheel: these must be clear of any gulleys. The parking bays should be of the following dimensions:

**Table 10.7 Motorcycle Parking bay dimensions**

Dimensions should be a minimum of 2.5 metres by 1.5 metres. This may be required to be greater for bays parallel to the kerb to allow for manoeuvrability.

#### 10.11.5 Standards of facilities for pedestrians

People have certain rights, as pedestrians, to expect adequate facilities to live a quality life, in the carrying out of everyday activities, in the public realm. These rights are set out in the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights, 1988.

All layouts should incorporate adequate provision for the pedestrian. The planning Authority will require provision according to the following guidelines and standards:

- Footpaths (unless provision is made for shared surfaces) are required wherever there is likely to be pedestrian demand, in housing areas, and around key visitor attractions, public transport nodes and in town and district centres.
- The Planning Authority is generally in favour of penetrability in the layout of development schemes, involving a coherent set of convenient routes for pedestrian use.
- Pathways that don't follow roads should be reasonably well lit and open, subject to passive surveillance through the orientation of surrounding housing, or passing traffic.
- Construction, condition, drainage, levels, surfacing and width should be in accordance with 'Site Development Works for Housing Areas' for housing schemes (DEHLG, 1998) or subsequent revisions or replacements. Special standards may be required in town centres, public open spaces and busy thoroughfares.
- Footpaths should be at least 1.8 metres in width and its width should be greater where by expected pedestrian traffic. There should be clearance of no less than 1.2 metres between any building and street furniture.
- There should be clearly indicated crossing points at the junctions of pedestrian routes and roads, with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

Further standards are referred to or indicated below under ‘Inclusive Access’.

The Council will have regard to the forthcoming review of ‘Site Development works for Housing Areas’ and the forthcoming guidance document ‘Design Manual for Streets’.

### 10.11.6 Cycle facilities

According to the Dublin Transport Office ‘Provision of Cycling Facilities: A Manual for Urban Areas’ (2006), a cycle network must embody five requirements: these are safety, coherence, directness, attractiveness, and comfort. This document provides a wide range of criteria, standards of design and types of facilities for the bicycle both segregated from and incorporated into urban road carriageways. The ‘National Cycle Framework’ DoT, 2009 provides detailed guidance in regard to cycling and cycling facilities.

Large retail, commercial, industrial and community proposals shall be required to provide adequate covered facilities for the secure parking of bicycles at convenient locations.

Substantial new commercial / office developments will be required to provide a full range of facilities for cyclists such as convenient and secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers.

Secure, preferably sheltered cycle parking facilities should be provided in suitably sheltered locations. Consideration should also be given to linking cycle facilities, including cycle ways, with public transport. In respect of bicycle parking the following table indicates the parking that will be required. The table indicates the ratio of bicycle parking stands to the floor area of a particular use.

**Table 10.8 Bicycle Parking Standards**

	Land Use	
<b>Retail</b>	Local Shops	1 Stand: 50m <sup>2</sup>
	Food Superstores >2500m <sup>2</sup>	1 Stand: 200m <sup>2</sup>
	Retail Warehouse	1 Stand: 100m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Employment</b>	Offices	1 Stand: 30m <sup>2</sup>
	Light Industrial (productive)/Industrial Warehousing (non-productive / storage)	1 Stand: 100m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Hotel, Restaurant, Public House</b>	Hotels/Youth Hostels	1: 8 bedrooms/dorm bed
	Public Houses / Hotel bars public area	1 Stand: 30m <sup>2</sup>
	Restaurants & Hotel restaurants public Conference / Function public area	1 Stand: 30m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Leisure &amp; Assembly Development</b>	Cinema/Theatre	1: 20 Seats
	Fitness Centre/Gym/Leisure Centre	1: 25m <sup>2</sup>



<b>Non-Residential Institutions</b>	Places of Worship	1:50 seats
	Schools (non residential):	
	Primary	1:10 Students
	Secondary	1:5 Students
<b>Residential</b>	Further & Higher Education	1:10 Students
	House	1: House Unit
	Apartment	1: Apartment
	Student Accommodation	1: 10 Students
	Nursing Homes	1: 10 Employee
	Sheltered Accommodation	1: 5 Employees
<b>Sport Facilities</b>	Stadia/Regional Grounds	1: 20 Seats
	GAA/Rugby/Soccer/Tennis/Athletics/ Hockey	10: Pitch
	Grounds – Local Grounds	

### 10.11.7 Inclusive access

The Building Regulations (Part M - Access for the Disabled) sets out the needs of persons with disabilities and these have to be taken into consideration in the design of new and existing structures that allow public access, for example schools, libraries, shops etc. These needs relate, in particular, to access, internal circulation, parking and sanitary facilities. These are due to be updated in 2010. One of the key requirements will be that all buildings will be required to issue Disability Access Certificates, in compliance with the Disability Act 2005.

The Building Regulations however only relate to access within, or at the entrance to buildings. It falls on the Planning Authority to use its powers under the Planning Acts to ensure that public access is designed and managed to be inclusive in the overall environment, not just in buildings themselves. Technical guidance on standards of provision is provided nationally in the National Disability Authority (NDA) guidelines: 'Building for Everyone' (NDA 2002) to ensure adequate universal access; and also in Chapter 13 of the Traffic Management Manual (DTO, 2003). As stated in Objective COM O21 of the Social, Community and Recreation Chapter the Planning Authority will have regard to these guidelines in assessing all applications involving access, and will generally require that the standards outlined are adhered to.

Some of the key standards include:

- Designated car parking spaces should be reserved for people with disabilities in accordance with need. In general, one designated space for every 25 car parking spaces provided for new office, retail, leisure, industrial and commercial uses is required. Their location should be clearly signposted and bays marked. Guidance is available in Section 5.4 of 'Buildings for Everyone' (NDA, 2002).

- These spaces should be located closest to the point of entry to the 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 to suitable standards (dimensions, colour and texture).

A comprehensive range of standards in relation to all aspects of development are specified in Buildings for Everyone, for example, signalled pedestrian crossings, ramped accesses (when they need to be used, and how designed), standards for footpaths, signage and street furniture.

There is also a requirement for a mobility and disability audit for certain schemes. This applies to design, construction and completion stages. The purpose of the audit will be to ensure a particular scheme is being appropriately managed and planning conditions complied with.

#### **10.11.8 National road policy**

The Council will restrict:

- a) frontage development onto national primary and secondary roads; and
- b) development that would compromise the safety and levels of service of national roads

in accordance with National Roads Authority Circular 1/95, Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads and with certain exceptions as specified in Objective IN O16. The Council shall comply with National Roads Authority (NRA) 'Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads (NRA, 2006) and 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' (NRA, January 2009) and any subsequent amendments. The Council will apply stricter standards in relation to new sections of national road as specified in Policy IN P10 and Objective IN O17 and Objective IN O18 Chapter 8.

#### **10.11.9 Strategic Regional Roads**

The Council will restrict frontage development onto strategic regional roads, in order to protect the capacity of these roads and not compromise their management and improvement to enhance their safety and capacity, as per policy IN P8 and Objective INO14, Chapter 8, Transport and Infrastructure.

#### **10.11.10 Building Lines on Public Roads**

The Council will require buildings to be set back a minimum distance from roads according to classification, as per the following table. Exceptions may be made where the applicant can show that acceptable noise levels can be achieved, in the case of

infill development following an established building line, and in built up areas where lower speed limits apply.

**Table 10.9 Building Lines on Public Roads**

<b>Building Lines (Minimum)</b> Measured from nearest edge of road surface.	County Roads and Regional Roads National Primary and National Secondary Roads New National Primary Roads (See Section 12.6.1.2 above for schedule of New National Primary Road)  <b>Note:</b> In order to limit the negative visual impact arising from a series of dwellings along a road in rural areas, dwellings generally should avoid regular minimum set back and be staggered in relation to adjacent development, subject to the amenities of nearby residents being protected and no adverse effect on carrying capacity and traffic safety.	20 metres 30 metres  90 metres  <b>Note:</b> The development may be located closer to the New National Primary road if the applicant can show that acceptable noise levels can be achieved
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## 10.12 Flooding

The Council is committed to avoid, insofar as possible, the threat of flooding in new development or in areas otherwise suitable for development; to ensure structures and earthworks are not if possible located or designed to interfere with natural river courses and flood plains; and to reduce insofar as possible the rate and quantity of surface water run-off, most particularly where the water is likely to damage aquatic habitats and increase the risk of flooding in sensitive areas.

The preferential option should always be to avoid flood risk. There is a need for a sequential approach to land use planning to minimise flood risk and this approach is outlined in the Government guidance document ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management’ (DEHLG, 2009). According to this approach, development should only be allowed in areas of flood risk where there are no alternative reasonable sites available in areas of lower risk.

Where development cannot avoid flood risk, consideration should be given to substituting a land use that is less vulnerable to flood risk. Only where avoidance and substitution are not possible, should consideration be given to mitigation and management of risks. In that case proposed developments will only be considered acceptable if they pass a strict justification test. The concept is explained in the aforementioned guidance document on flood risk management.

The Council have a responsibility to reflect the sequential test through land use zoning, in its general policies, and in its infrastructure and project plans. Preference should be given to development in lower flood risk areas unless there are over-riding circumstances justifying the higher risk site. Where land is zoned for development in flood risk areas the Council itself will be obliged to undertake a justification test. Any development proposals on lands of flood risk, even on land zoned for development, will be required to undertake flood risk assessments. The Council will promote the implementation of sustainable drainage systems, as a means to manage catchments at strategic level, and in respect of individual developments. Guidance on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) is contained in the aforementioned Government Guidelines on flood risk; the 'Interim Code of Practice for Sustainable Drainage Systems' which has been prepared by the UK SUDS working group (CIRIA July, 2004) is also a useful source of reference.

The aim of SUDS is to replicate greenfield runoff characteristics in order to limit the rate and volume of runoff and also to provide a mechanism for protection against pollution that may otherwise be washed into streams and rivers. The specific SUDS design to be adopted will depend on the size, type and location of the development and the characteristics of the catchment.

### **10.13 Renewable Energy Developments**

All methods of energy production have impacts on the environment. Notwithstanding this, the need to adopt a more sustainable approach to energy production is acknowledged by the Planning Authority. A favourable approach to applications for renewable energy developments provided they are environmentally sustainable will be adopted. The cumulative effect of such developments on the landscape and the environment will be taken into consideration.

#### **10.13.1 Renewable Energy Developments other than wind power**

Projects involving other indigenous sources of energy such as hydroschemes, wave and tidal power, solar, landfill gas, biomass, energy crops, forestry waste, biogas from sewage sludge and farm slurry, will be assessed in a similar manner with the policy of the Planning Authority of permitting developments which are environmentally sustainable. In assessing any application, the advice of the relevant statutory bodies will be sought and considered by the Planning Authority.

It is advised that applicants consult with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government as well as the Planning Authority in advance of making a planning application.

<b>Hydro schemes</b>	<b>-information required with a planning application</b>
-	Location, design and specifications of headworks, headrace, turbine house and its internal equipment and tail race,
-	Grid connection works including transformer and transmission lines,
-	Provision for fish passes,

- Details of vehicular passes and vehicular movement,
- Site management measures during construction and operational phase,
- Security fencing and lighting.

**Solar Schemes - information required with a planning application**

- Location design, specifications, orientation, of the development,
- Location and design of control buildings and on site ancillary works if these apply,
- For solar panels on existing structures an outline of the possible visual effects of the development to be provided. For larger scale developments this may take the form of a photomontage,
- Details of grid connections, where applicable, and alterations to existing electricity cables that are open to public view are to be provided. Note, this may not be necessary in the case of stand-alone developments intended to serve individual dwellings.

**Landfill gas - information required with a planning application**

- Location and design of the plant and machinery including the height of the flare stack,
- Details of vehicular access and vehicular movements,
- Provisions for dealing with noise and odours,
- Possible emissions e.g. the flaring of gas,
- Provisions for landscaping,
- Security fencing and lighting.

**Biomass and woodfuel - Information required with a planning application**

Many of these plants may be small and easily integrated within existing farm complexes. However it is likely that they will require planning permission.

- Location, dimensions and specifications of the plant and its internal machinery,
- Sources of raw materials and traffic implications to and from the site,
- Noise from boilers, control buildings if present, handling machinery,
- Removal and eventual destination of by products.

**Anaerobic digesters - information required with a planning application:**

- Safety aspects associated with the handling, transporting and burning of flammable gas,
- Potential odour problems associated with the transport and storage of organic matter and also during the digestion process,
- Volumes of organic waste to be processed and associated traffic implications,
- Location, dimensions and specifications of the anaerobic digestion plant,
- Noise from the generators, gas blowers, pumping equipment and traffic,
- The disposal and nutrient content of the waste end products i.e. both solid organic matter and liquid effluent. These to be incorporated into a Nutrient Management Plan where deemed necessary.

### **10.13.2 Windpower: Micro and macro**

The impact of wind energy development will vary depending on the location of the individual site together with the number of turbines, layout, size, design and colour. The Planning Authority will take a flexible approach to the location within the County of one-off small scale wind turbines, i.e. of the type to which the Planning and Development Regulations 2007 (S.I. No.83) where just above the thresholds specified for exemption (13 metres in height). The location of such developments within settlements and even in areas in Map 8.4 deemed unsuitable for wind energy development, will be open for consideration for small-scale wind turbines. In assessing proposals for micro-wind turbines which due to their height or number are just above the limits of exemption, the developer will be expected to remain below most if not all of the other thresholds specified in the aforementioned Regulations, e.g. in respect of distance of rotor blade from ground, and noise standards.

#### **10.13.2.1 Large wind turbines and wind farms – Design Guidelines**

The following guidelines will form the basis for the assessment of wind farm developments within the County to ensure their impact is minimised. These guidelines are taken from the Department of Environment's 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines' 2006: for more detail developers should refer to these guidelines. In assessing an application for a wind farm the following general guidelines shall be taken into consideration:

- Location - Wind turbines will not be permitted on prominent ridges, valleys rims or other prominent locations.
- Siting - The siting and layout of turbines should take advantage of existing screening within the landscape and where possible should follow and respect local land forms.
- Design - All turbines in a development shall be similar in design and dimensions. All turbine blades shall rotate in the same direction.
- Colour - The colour choice for wind turbines should take into account the background against which the machines will be seen. Developers will be expected to have considered a range of options, this to be reflected in the photomontage submitted.
- Ancillary structures - No structures other than wind turbines and the necessary substation shall be permitted. The structure enclosing the substation shall be finished in an agreed colour and take a form agreed with the planning authority and be designed to minimise visual impact. This shall apply to all ground level components of the development. Landscaping proposals to reduce visibility of the ground level components of the development shall also be submitted.

- Road and associated development to be planned and designed on the basis of the E.I.S. information so as to minimise peat extraction, reduce the necessity for its disposal and mitigate changes in the site's hydrological regime. Access roads shall be uncovered and shall follow the natural contours of the site.
- Fencing shall be only allowed around the substation and not on any other parts of the site unless agreed as part of a rehabilitation programme for on site vegetation. The fencing shall then be permitted for the length of time required to ensure recovery of the vegetation.
- Where possible, grid connections proposals should be identified as part of the Planning application. In sensitive areas these may be required to be buried for part or all of their length underground.
- Windspeed monitoring - The applicant should demonstrate that windspeed monitoring has taken place in the last 12 months prior to the application being submitted and adequate windspeeds are available for the development
- Noise levels shall comply with current guidelines and standards. Wind turbines shall produce no impulse. Proposals shall include noise-monitoring proposals over the lifetime of the development. Should the monitoring indicate that sound levels have been exceeded, then immediate measures shall be taken to reduce the levels e.g. by shutting down the relevant turbine.
- Shadow flicker - Proposals for wind turbines within 500m of a house must demonstrate that the occupants shall be largely unaffected by shadow flicker.
- Electromagnetic effects - The potential electromagnetic effects of any proposal shall be assessed by the applicant in consultation with the relevant bodies prior to lodging the application.
- Aviation - All proposals shall be referred to the Irish Aviation Authority for comment prior to submission.
- Landowners - Turbines shall be no closer than 100m from the boundaries of adjacent properties without the written consent of the landowner in areas preferred for wind farm development. In areas open to consideration they shall be no closer than 150m from the boundary.
- Other wind energy developments - the EIS submitted should take into account the cumulative impact of the other existing or proposed developments in the vicinity of the site.
- Peatland hydrology - The influence that wind farms have on their surroundings varies depending on the sensitivity of the development location. In upland peat sites for example there can be marked effects on peatland hydrology. An in-depth

study of peat morphology, hydrology and vegetative cover to be included in the EIA.

- Ecological survey - Prior to the commencement of the development a base-line ecological survey shall be carried out and submitted to the planning authority for use in monitoring the development. The site shall be re-surveyed on an annual basis for five years after the commencement of the operation of the wind turbines and the information submitted to the planning authority.
- Restoration and after-care programme- devised and agreed upon by the interested parties should be furnished before granting planning permission. An on site hydrological monitoring and amendment programme to be agreed for the construction and operating phase of the development.
- Bonds - Adequate bonds (agreed between the developers and the Planning Authority) shall be provided to meet the costs of agreed remedial and restorative works necessitated by the proposed development.
- Timing and scheduling of site works to take into account the seasonal nature of wild life activities, such as breeding seasons and site conditions.
- Planning authorities may grant permission for a duration longer than 5 years if it is considered appropriate, for example, to ensure that the permission does not expire before a grid connection is granted. It is, however, the responsibility of the applicants in the first instance to request such longer durations in appropriate circumstances.

#### **10.13.2.2 Wind turbines and wind farms: Site selection, Construction and post-construction**

Wind energy developments will not be permitted within those areas as identified in Map 8.4. Wind energy proposals should be located within the zones as identified in the Wind Farm Strategy and comply with the development guidelines for wind farms and objective IN O58 on siting of Wind Energy proposals. The Planning Authority will have regard to the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Wind Energy Guidelines for Planning Authorities (1996) and the revised Draft Government Wind Energy Guidelines (2004) when assessing planning applications.

Turbine layout within a wind farm greatly influences its visual and landscape impact. Differing types of landscapes often require differing layouts to assist their integration into their surroundings. The wind farm developments should be located, wherever possible, within following types of landscapes:

- On agricultural lands, or
- On degraded peats, or
- In a man-modified landscape



In open upland moorland it is recommended that a random spacing with random lay out is used. This is recommended for areas such as the Western and Southern Uplands as designated in the Landscape Character Assessment.

In areas such as the Shannon Integrated Coastal Management Zone single lines of equally spaced turbines are recommended to reduce the scenic impact.

In the Agricultural lowlands a more regular arrangement of turbines with equal spacing is recommended, which takes into account field boundaries.

In relation to archaeological sites it is recommended that turbines be located three times turbine height away to prevent its visual domination. In the case of particularly sensitive sites the applicant may be requested to relocate the turbine.

Windfarms on undesignated lands will normally be permitted, subject to compliance with the general wind energy guidelines above, unless it is clear that the windfarm would affect a designated site, or a site which is in the process of survey/designation. If a development is to go ahead, the following conditions shall apply:

- Avoid deep peat
- Avoid wet areas, flushes and easily eroded soils
- Avoid areas important for rare or endangered breeding birds and other important species
- Avoid bird flight lines
- Avoid construction work outside the period July to October where possible
- Avoid drains discharging onto peat areas
- Avoid stock grazing on disturbed peats

Wind energy development that significantly adversely affects local landscapes, which are popularly used for local informal recreation, is unlikely to be permitted.

### **10.13.2.3 Construction works and post construction phase**

#### **Construction**

The following general guidelines shall be taken into consideration during and after construction:

#### **During Construction**

- The floated road method of construction should be used as widely as possible. Floating roads should be constructed according to standard specifications, by laying geo-textile on the undisturbed bog surface along the route of the road and build the road on the geo-textile.
- Maximum possible use to be made of existing on site roads and laneways.

- Where new roadways have to be constructed, these should follow contours as much as possible, rather than run perpendicular to them and avoid, where possible, areas of deep or regenerating peat.
- Adequate under road methods of transferring of water should be installed in all places of known or suspected water movement, e.g. channels, emphasis on water spreading not water concentrating. Silt traps and small settling ponds should be used where necessary. These should be emptied regularly to ensure correct functioning.
- Sub-surface cabling should be adjacent to or within road shoulders: short cuts across virgin bog will not normally be prohibited.
- Peat spoil from excavated tracks should be used to mask new stone built or stone constructed surfaces, with the exception of cut rock faces.
- Disturbed surfaces suspected of having a poor chance of reverting to a vegetated state should be subjected to some restorative procedures, e.g. appropriate reseeded or mulching.

**After construction:**

- Grazing should be prohibited for three years after construction on peatland sites.
- On site hydrological conditions to be monitored following construction for five years and amended where necessary. Additional drainage relief procedures to be installed where water concentration becomes obvious in areas where it has not concentrated before the development began.
- Where a turbine ceases to operate for whatever reason it should be made operational as soon as possible or be removed.
- Notwithstanding any advances in technology the height and type of turbines will be determined by visual and landscape considerations.

**10.14 Telecommunications**

The following guidance should be read in conjunction with Objectives IN O49 to IN O54 inclusive in order that the Council supports the development of the telecommunication industry and positively supports the extension of broadband infrastructure throughout the County. In particular Objective IN O53 on Broadband connectivity emphasises that the County Council will support the provision of 3G technology, wireline, wireless and fibre to home to encourage the expansion of the broadband network, subject to normal planning criteria being met.

**10.14.1 Broadband**

The Planning Authority will ensure that proper service ducting is installed during the laying of underground services for all development schemes, and in road and rail construction and improvement, in accordance with 'Broadband Infrastructure Specification' (Department of Communications), in preparation for broadband connectivity.

## **10.14.2 Telecommunications Antennae**

### **10.14.2.1 Site selection**

The Planning Authority will consider applications for telecommunication masts, ancillary buildings and fencing on their merits. Such developments should conform to the concept of environmental sustainability - meeting socio-economic objectives while conserving natural resources upon which development depends. The Planning Authority shall adhere to The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication entitled 'Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' when assessing planning applications.

Pre-application discussion with the Planning Authority is advised in all cases. Ideally the long-term plans of the developer should be discussed at the earliest possible stage.

Applications for Telecommunications masts and support structures will be considered in terms of environmental capacity and potential impacts on both the urban and rural landscape. However, some telecommunication structures are Exempted Development under the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001. Further advice should be sought from the Planning Authority on this matter.

The nature of the telecommunications network is a requirement for elevated sites, often in upland areas that can be of high scenic value and protected by some form of environmental designation. Particular constraint will be exercised in or around Protected Structures, recorded Monuments, Areas of Archaeological importance and other environment designated areas such as the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). Due to the limited nature of newer 3G infrastructure, slimline equipment will be considered on or around Protected Structures subject to sensitive design, siting and materials being used. In assessing any application, the advice of the relevant statutory bodies will be sought and considered by the Planning Authority.

Every effort should be made to distance developments from residential areas, schools, hospitals or other buildings used for residential or work purposes on a daily basis. In this regard, the Council will be guided by the DEHLG document 'Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and any revisions of that document that may be issued during the life of this development plan.

Any proposals for development in the areas referred to above will require the applicant to outline in detail the need to locate in a specific location and evidence of consideration of alternative sites. Every effort should be made by the developer to minimise their visual intrusion in the landscape. This will vary depending on their location. A photo or video montage taken from a variety of locations in consultation with the Planning Authority may be required at application stage.

#### **10.14.2.2 Sharing facilities and clustering**

In order to avoid unnecessary proliferation of masts opportunities for co-location or sharing facilities should be thoroughly investigated by the developer. In order to promote sharing of masts within the County and determine where sharing is operationally viable to provide adequate coverage through the County the following requirements shall apply:

- The applicant shall submit either a Discovery Series Map or similar map type (to be agreed with planning authority) to the scale of 1:50,000 indicating the coverage area of the proposed facility.
- The applicant shall submit details of correspondence with other telecommunications operators addressing the sharing of mast facilities in the area.
- All new applications for telecommunication masts and associated facilities will be required where possible to share existing masts where there is an existing mast within the locality which will offer a similar level of coverage and is capable of hosting additional antennae.
- Where it is not possible to share a support structure the applicant will be encouraged to share a site or to locate adjacent to an existing structure so that masts and antennae may be clustered.
- The applicants shall indicate in the application whether they are willing to share the proposed masts with other telecommunication operators.
- Applicants should be aware that an unwillingness to share a mast with other telecommunication operators might prejudice the application, as the proliferation of such masts in certain areas could be injurious to the visual amenity of the area. Sharing of mast facilities would reduce such impacts.

#### **10.14.2.3 Design**

Due to the physical size of the mast structure and the materials used, great care will be needed to minimise the impact through discreet siting and good design. In order to minimise the impact the applicant should fully investigate the different types of masts and support structures available to fit the location on a site-specific basis. Monopole structures are preferable to lattice tripod or square type structures. The design of the antennae support structure should be simple and well finished. Support structures should be provided at minimum height while ensuring effective operation. Colours of mast structures and fencing should be in harmony with their surroundings and appropriate landscaping and screening will be required.

#### **10.14.2.4 Ancillary Developments**

Access roads will be permitted only where essential. Where required, roads should follow the natural contours of the site. It shall be a condition of permission that the land is reinstated at the end of the construction period. In the event that the applicant

shall require the access track to be retained, the applicant shall submit justification as part of the planning application indicating the frequency of visits required to service the facility on the site.

Grid connections where necessary, may be required to be buried for part or all of their length underground in sensitive areas.

#### **10.14.2.5 Health and Safety**

A statement of compliance with the current International Radiation Protection Association Guidelines and National Guidelines relating to the emission of non-ionising radiation shall be submitted as part of a planning application. The statement of compliance should indicate the ambient levels of non-ionising radiation in the area where previously monitored. Where no monitoring level of non-ionising radiation is available the applicant should carry out his or her own survey. The cumulative effect of existing radiation and that emitted from the proposed facility should be clearly indicated and comply with the current national and international Guidelines.

If planning permission is granted, a system of independent monitoring of radiation levels from the proposed development should be established and undertaken periodically. The monitoring locations and regularity of the monitoring will be determined by the Planning Authority.

The Planning Authority may, in appropriate cases, consult with the Irish Aviation Authority on receipt of an application and their concerns shall be taken into consideration.

#### **10.14.2.6 Obsolete Structures**

The Planning Authority will require the removal of obsolete structures and site reinstatement as a condition of planning permission. In certain cases bonding may be required. Within the life of a planning permission, opportunities to modify and improve existing structures may be considered favourably.

#### **10.14.2.7 Duration of Permission**

Due to rapid changes in the technology and design of radio antennae as well the design of support structures:

- Permission generally shall be granted for a temporary period not exceeding 5 years.
- At the end of the 5 year period permission to retain such equipment will be conditional on the replacement of obsolete structures with more modern, environmental friendly designs and the number of telecommunication masts in the area

- Facilities shall be removed and land reinstated to its former condition within 6 months of the expiry of the permission.



## Chapter 11

### Implementation

This chapter outlines the process for the implementation, monitoring and review of the policies and objectives of the Plan and includes the following:

- The resource framework within which the Plan will operate,
- The framework for enabling and securing development,
- Requirements for developer contributions,
- Method for monitoring and review of policies.



## **11.1 Resources**

The primary function of the County Development Plan is promoting, facilitating and guiding the development and use of land in the County. Once the County Development Plan is adopted it will be used as a basis for guiding investment decisions of the public and private sector. While Limerick County Council has a key role in implementing the policies and objective in the Plan, it is constrained in its efforts by limited resources. This factor underlies the need to maximise both financial and human resources, amongst other organisations and individuals.

The Planning Authority can however fulfill the pivotal role of the ‘enabler’, contributing its own resources, and creating conditions where proposals can be brought to fruition and the objectives of the Plan realised. The Plan will be implemented by a combination of encouraging and supporting public, private and voluntary sector investment and the application of its development control powers. The Council may also initiate Compulsory Purchase Orders in order to alleviate constraints on development potential, where necessary.

There are many proposals set out in this Plan over which the Council would have no direct responsibility or control. The expansion of educational facilities, both second and third level for example, is essentially the responsibility of the Department of Education, while the provision of a more frequent bus service falls under the auspices of Bus Eireann. While the Council will make every effort it can to facilitate the provision of social, community and transport infrastructure and facilities, it is not in all instances the direct provider of such services.

## **11.2 Enabling and Securing Development**

The Planning Authority recognises that in making decisions to allocate land or to determine planning applications it will need to take account of all material considerations including the provision of infrastructure necessary to support development, and the reasonable needs for amenities and facilities arising as a direct result of the development. In light of the resource framework highlighted above the Planning Authority and service providers have found it increasingly difficult to provide infrastructure and amenities for new development.

It is the Planning Authority’s view that developers and landowners should make the necessary and appropriate provision for infrastructure, services and amenities including community facilities, where the need for these arises as a direct result of the proposed development.

Provision of satisfactory infrastructure is essential to the proper implementation of the Plans policies and objectives. Development of land often increases the burden on existing infrastructure that has insufficient capacity to enable significant developments to proceed and can also worsen conditions for existing users of the infrastructure and services. Thus developers may be reasonably expected to pay for or contribute to the cost of infrastructure which would not have been necessary but for their development.

Developers may therefore be requested to submit information and assessments to assist the Planning Authority in determining what infrastructure should be provided and the phasing of its provision.

### **11.3 Development Contributions and Bonds**

The Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 provide for the adoption of a development contribution scheme which must be the basis for charging all future development contributions. Section 48 (1) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 outlines that a Planning Authority, when making a grant of permission may include a condition requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities. This section also indicates that such contributions may be related to works benefiting development in the “area of the planning authority” rather than facilitating the proposed development as in Section 26 (2) (h) of the Planning and Development Act 1963. Some exceptions apply to certain development under the contribution scheme where contributions may not be levied, for example, in regard to existing properties and in respect of residential units which are provided in accordance with an agreement made under Part V of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2010 or those provided by approved housing bodies.

Section 48 (1) states that such contributions may be charged “regardless of other sources of funding for the infrastructure and facilities”. This means that funding from the State and the EU is also assessable. It is considered that since the Act no longer attributes contributions to specific developments, and treats the county as a single system, the contributions levied may fund public infrastructure and facilities throughout the county.

The County Council’s Development Contribution scheme reflects the rural nature of County Limerick, the very large number of small settlements throughout the County and the many objectives included in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans, which addresses these factors.

#### **Policy IMP P1: Development Contributions**

**Development contributions will be sought from developers of new development proposals toward the necessary costs and provision of infrastructure and facilities arising from the development and benefiting development in the County in line with the Development Contribution scheme.**

#### **Policy IMP P2: Monitor and Review Development Contribution Scheme**

**It is policy to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Development Contributions Scheme on a regular basis and to review the scheme.**

To ensure the satisfactory completion and maintenance of larger scale developments undertaken by private developers, the Planning Authority will impose as a condition of permission that a cash deposit or security bond be lodged with the Planning Authority, prior to commencement of development.

#### **11.4 Enforcement and Unauthorised Developments**

The Planning Authority, through its enforcement powers under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010, will seek to prevent unauthorised development. Unauthorised development is where development is carried out without a grant of planning permission or does not comply with the conditions attached to a grant of planning permission. The Planning Authority will monitor developments in the County to check if planning conditions are complied with or if permission has been granted in the first instance.

The Planning Authority will take enforcement action whenever it is expedient to do so, having regard to the policies and objective in this Plan and other material considerations.

#### **11.5 Pre-Planning Advice**

Limerick County Council offers an advisory service to potential developers in the form of pre-planning advice. The Area Planner is available for consultation by appointment for any prospective developments in any area. Advice is given on interpretation of policies and objectives, design and the ability of existing services to accommodate the proposed development. This advice is given subject to the stipulations of Section 247 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010, where the carrying out of consultations shall not prejudice the performance of a planning authority or any of its functions. This service is available from the earliest stage of a project and intending developers are recommended to avail of the service and to ring the County Council for information and an appointment.

#### **11.6 Monitoring**

It is important that the policies and objectives of the Plan are monitored and reviewed to gauge their effectiveness as they are implemented. The monitoring process highlights the areas of the Plan which need reviewing and gives an indication as to whether the Plan is achieving its aims. A Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Policies of the Plan has been undertaken to assess whether the current set of policies are in line with the sustainability aims of the Plan.

Section 15 (1) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010 requires the Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan. Under Section 15 (2) of the Act there is a requirement of the Manager to give a report to the Members of the Authority, not more than 2 years after the making of the Plan, setting out the progress

achieved in securing the objectives contained in the County Development Plan. In addition, under Section 95(3) of the Act, the Manager is required to include in this report the progress achieved in implementing the Housing Strategy.

A list of indicators and targets relating to the overall strategic themes of the Plan has been devised as shown in Table 11.1. This will enable the monitoring of the policies in the Plan and provide information on whether the aims of the Plan are being met. The new Plan will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review as is deemed necessary and further areas for monitoring and the use of the data will be examined where necessary.

Limerick County Council has aimed to incorporate the main principles and practices on accessibility in this Plan in line with guidelines from the National Disability Authority. The Council further supports the ‘Disability Proofing Template for Local Government – Barcelona Declaration Project 2001-2004’ and will disability/equality proof the Plan and ensure that the monitoring, feedback and evaluation of the Plan will include an impact measure on the quality of life of people with disabilities.

The Council produces a series of regular monitoring reports in addition to other planning related data as required by the Government. These relate to the key areas of:

- Housing – the monitoring of residential land availability, the supply of housing land and affordable housing
- Employment – the monitoring of employment land availability and the supply of strategic employment land
- Planning application statistics.

**Policy IMP P3: Monitoring the Plan**

**The Planning Authority will continue to monitor the effectiveness of policies and objectives in the Plan and will take account of the changing circumstances in the physical, social and economic environment in order to review and update the Plan.**

**Table 11.1 County Development Plan Monitoring Indicators and Targets**

<b>Strategic Theme Aim</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target (by 2016)</b>
<b>Settlement Strategy</b>		
<b>1. Consolidate, strengthen and develop the local communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population in Structurally Weak areas</li> <li>Population in small towns and villages</li> <li>Dispersed Population in Unserved Rural Areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>To reduce or maintain</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>		
<b>2. Meet housing needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of land available for housing development.</li> <li>Social &amp; Affordable housing provided in new developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase if necessary only</li> <li>To meet social &amp; affordable targets in housing strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Improve access to facilities and services for all especially disadvantaged groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of new dwellings, which meet access-housing standards.</li> <li>Access to new buildings for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase</li> <li>To increase</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and Infrastructure</b>		
<b>4. Minimise energy consumption by transport, and the need to travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of car trips (morning peak)</li> <li>Use of public transport (bus).</li> <li>Cycling as a transport mode</li> <li>Average housing densities in new development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce</li> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>Where appropriate to increase or maintain</li> </ul>
<b>5. Maximise renewable energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of renewable energy projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase where appropriate</li> </ul>

<p><b>6. To maximise recycling/reuse of waste.</b></p> <p><b>7. Minimise pollution</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of waste recycled.</li> <li>To upgrade water services and infrastructure</li> <li>To complete River Basin Management plans in accordance with the Water Framework Directive</li> <li>Greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase recycling and composting in housing and commercial developments.</li> <li>To improve or maintain</li> <li>To improve or maintain</li> <li>To reduce</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Development</b>		
<p><b>8. Consolidate, strengthen and diversify the local economy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply of employment Land</li> <li>Amount of floorspace of new retail development located in existing centres identified in the Retail Strategy as a percentage of total new retail floorspace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>New retail development developed in accordance with the Retail Strategy and Retail Planning Guidelines.</li> </ul>
<b>Environment and Heritage</b>		
<p><b>9. Conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and built environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Architectural Conservation Areas</li> <li>Protected Structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>To increase or maintain</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Protect amenity, ecological and landscape value.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Tree Preservation Order's (TPO's).</li> <li>Number of sites of importance for Nature Conservation adversely affected by development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase TPO's</li> <li>No sites adversely affected by development</li> </ul>
<b>Community and Recreation</b>		

<b>11. Protect open space, recreational and community facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of publicly accessible open space gained or lost.</li> <li>Number of leisure and community facilities lost to other uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>To decrease</li> </ul>
<b>12. Childrens' Play Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of children's playgrounds per population – directly provided by the Local Authority or facilitated by the Local Authority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase or maintain</li> </ul>
<b>13. Protect open space, recreational and community facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of publicly accessible open space gained or lost.</li> <li>Number of leisure and community facilities lost to other uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase or maintain</li> <li>To decrease</li> </ul>
<b>Disability/Equality</b>		
<b>14. Promoting Universal Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility to all types of development and infrastructure, e.g. Footpaths, roadways, parks, etc for people with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 1**

### **Settlements**

This Appendix sets out the following:

- Zoning Maps and Objectives for development in the following settlements:
  - Foynes
  - Murroe
  - Athea
  - Fedamore
  - Montpelier
- Details regarding each of the Tier 4, 5 and 6 settlements and corresponding maps

This Appendix should be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 of Volume 1 of this Plan.



## List of Settlements

### Zoning Maps:

- Athea A-1

- Murroe A-3

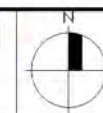
Montpelier A-5

- Foynes A-2

- Fedamore A-4




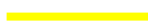

<b>Tier 4 Settlements</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Tier 5 Settlements</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Tier 5 Settlements</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
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Bruree	APP1-19	Ballyagran	APP1-27	Herbertstown	APP1-35
Doon	APP1-20	Ballyhahill	APP1-28	New Kildimo	APP1-36
Dromcolliher	APP1-21	Ballylanders	APP1-29	Kilteely	APP1-37
Glin	APP1-22	Ballyneety	APP1-30	Knocklong	APP1-38
Oola	APP1-23	Broadford	APP1-31	Mountcollins	APP1-39
Shanagolden	APP1-24	Carrigkerry	APP1-32	Pallas Grean	APP1-40
Pallaskenry	APP1-25	Clarina	APP1-33		

<b>Tier 6 Settlements</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Tier 6 Settlements</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Tier 6 Settlements</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Anglesborough	APP1-41	Croagh	APP1-53	Kilmeedy	APP1-66
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Ashford	APP1-43	Elton	APP1-55	Knockainy	APP1-68
Athlacca	APP1-44	Feenagh	APP1-56	Knockdown	APP1-69
Ballyorgan	APP1-45	Feohanagh	APP1-57	Loghill	APP1-70
Ballysteen	APP1-46	Glenbrohane	APP1-58	Meanus	APP1-71
Banogue	APP1-47	Glenosheen	APP1-59	Monagea	APP1-72
Caherline	APP1-48	Glenroe	APP1-60	Nicker	APP1-73
Cappagh	APP1-49	Granagh	APP1-61	Old Pallas	APP1-74
Castlemahon	APP1-50	Kilbeheny	APP1-62	Raheenagh	APP1-75
Castletown	APP1-51	Kilcolman	APP1-63	Strand	APP1-76
Crecora	APP1-52	Kilcornan	APP1-64	Templeglantine	APP1-77
		Kilfinny	APP1-65	Tournafulla	APP1-78





**Settlement Maps Legend**

	Tier 4 Settlement Core		Regional Road
	Tier 5 & 6 Settlement Core		County Road
	Amenity/Open Space		

## **1.0 Introduction**

Three settlements have been selected for the implementation of zoning and additional policy guidance in the County Development Plan. These are Foynes, Murroe and Athea. Foynes was selected because of its importance as a transport and commercial centre while Athea and Murroe had Village Design Statements prepared for them which laid the foundations of the zoning maps and zoning matrix below.

## **1.1 Description of zoning designations**

Land use zoning objectives set out the development objective for all the land within the development boundaries indicated on Maps A-1, A-2 and A-3. The zoning objectives have been delineated having regard to both existing land uses and the need to ensure balanced development within the towns.

## **1.2 Mixed use zoning**

Mixed use zoning permits the widest variety of uses including residential and commercial. It is essential that such uses would be mutually compatible. This zoning, in the centre of the towns, is intended to provide a degree of flexibility in land uses that will allow the widest possible range of activities to ensure the vibrancy of the town centres.

## **1.3 Industry**

This zoning designation applies to Foynes and is primarily to cater for port industries which are heavy industries by nature. A range of uses are permitted which is intended to facilitate the further development of the port by allowing a range of heavy industries within the industrially zoned area.

## **1.4 New Residential and Established Residential**

These zonings indicate established residential developments and provide for new residential development and associated services. While housing is intended to be the main use in this zoning, other uses such as corner shops, crèches and sheltered housing are also envisaged, subject to the preservation of existing residential amenity.

## **1.5 Education/Community**

This zoning provides for local religious, civic, community and educational uses which are intended to serve the local community.

## **1.6 Agriculture**

This zoning is to allow uses which are directly associated with agriculture, and in some cases to reflect existing land uses.

## **1.7 Amenity/Open Space**

This zoning covers both private and public open space and a variety of uses from both active (playing pitches) and passive amenity. Uses which compromise the function of these open spaces as public amenities will not generally be allowed.

## **2.0 Athea**

### **2.1 Population and Current Commercial and Community Services:**

The Settlement Strategy outlined in Chapter 3 of this plan identifies Athea as a Tier 4 Town/Village.

Athea provides a wide range of services including a number of shops, pubs, health centre, restaurant, pharmacy, credit union, petrol station, commercial garages, community centre, garden centre, butchers and school. The 2006 census indicated a population of 377 for Athea. Most of the housing development in recent years has been single houses spreading in a 'ribbon like' format from all roads into the village.

### **2.2 Sewerage and Water Supply**

Development is severely limited by the lack of sewerage capacity. Water supply is also limited as the supply is on the Abbeyfeale network, which is isolated and has no backup reserve.

### **2.3 Objectives for Development**

#### **Objective A1:**

Development shall be directed inside the development boundary of the town as indicated on Map A-1. All development proposals will have regard to the Athea Village Design Statement.

#### **Objective A2:**

- (a) No one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10-15%.
- (b) A variety and choice of house types shall be provided, including single storey dwellings and a mixture of housing densities ranging from 25 per hectare to 10 per hectare for serviced sites in accordance with "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities", May 2009, and any amendment thereof.

#### **Objective A3:**

Development of underused or derelict buildings and sites throughout the village will be encouraged as these afford opportunities for development and also provide opportunities for infill development.

#### **Objective A4:**

On lands zoned 'Mixed use' within the village the Council shall encourage a mix of uses that contribute to the economic life of the village and that are consistent with village centre location and residential amenity. The development of small scale enterprises, shops and local services will be encouraged.

**Objective A5:**

Developments shall not affect the amenity value of the Galey River. Developments adjacent to the river will have to take into account the role of the river as an amenity to the village as a whole and the importance of ensuring that there will be no deterioration in water quality.

### **3.0 Foynes**

#### **3.1 Background and Demography**

The settlement hierarchy which is outlined in Chapter three has identified Foynes as a Tier 3 settlement on a transport corridor. In this case it is the N69 National route way. In the inter-censal period 2002-2006 the town recorded a population of 606 marking an increase in population of 23% which is a welcome reversal in trends from the previous census which showed that Foynes had experienced a population loss.

Foynes is a model estate town which has historic associations with trans-Atlantic transportation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and is developing as a significant tourist destination arising from this. Many structures in the town are constructed of ashlar and rustic limestone, natural slate roofing and timber windows, some with cast iron sashes. A significant number of houses are lime rendered. An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) has been established to protect and enhance the character of Foynes and any development within this area shall comply with objectives for ACAs laid down in Chapter 7.

#### **3.2 Infrastructure**

Currently the sewerage system is untreated. Plans have been lodged with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the development of a new system.

#### **3.3 History**

The town was surveyed in 1837 and its suitability as a deepwater harbour has been recognised since then. The port gradually developed over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but it was its use as a Flying Boat terminus that first brought Foynes to international attention. From 1937 to 1946 Foynes was at the centre of trans-Atlantic air traffic as flying boats travelled across the Atlantic. The development of longer-range land based aircraft and the opening of the airport at Shannon marked the end of Foynes' dominance of air travel. This era in its history has left a legacy that is reflected in the current Foynes Flying Boat museum.

#### **3.4 Port Activity**

Foynes is one of the most important ports in Ireland and its characteristics as a sheltered deepwater port ensures that it will play an important role in the future development of the County and the region as a whole. The transfer of much of the activity of Limerick Port to the Port of Foynes reinforces its importance. Foynes accounts for 23% of all port activity in Ireland and it is Ireland's second largest commercial seaport facility.

#### **3.5 Objectives for development**

##### **Objective F1:**

Development shall be directed inside the development boundary of the town as indicated on Map A-2. All development proposals will have regard to the content of the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan and the Foynes Theme Town Plan.



**Objective F2:**

- (c) No one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10-15%.
- (d) A variety and choice of house types shall be provided, including single storey dwellings and a mixture of housing densities ranging from 25 per hectare to 10 per hectare for serviced sites in accordance with “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, May 2009, and any amendment thereof.

**Objective F3:**

On lands zoned ‘Mixed use’ within the village the Council shall encourage a mix of uses that contribute to the economic life of the village and that are consistent with village centre location and residential amenity. The development of small scale enterprises, shops and local services will be encouraged.

**Objective F4:**

The development of the port, while hugely important for the town and the region as a whole, should be carried out in as sensitive a manner as possible. It will be an objective of the Council to encourage potential applicants to submit a master plan with a view to ensuring that the visual effects of such developments are minimised. Any applications for port activity are to include measures designed to minimise the effects of the proposed development on the residential and visual amenity of the town.

**Objective F5:**

To overcome the issue of under used buildings and sites in the town and associated dereliction, it is an objective of the Council to encourage re-use of such sites and buildings. The submission of a master plan for larger sites may be necessary. Regard must be had to the scenic amenity of Foynes when carrying out such development.

**Objective F6:**

The Council will support the establishment of tourist and recreational activities within the town. It is important to ensure that such developments take cognisance of the need to integrate with the existing town fabric.

**Objective F7:**

Subject to land availability the Council will be supportive of the establishment of a small neighbourhood park in Foynes.

**Objective F8:**

Marine related industry and flooding: Prior to any development taking place on marine related industrial zoned sites full details of any flood mitigation measures shall be furnished. These are to include appropriate design both of buildings and also measures such as attenuation areas and possible flood storage areas within the development.

## **4.0 Murroe**

### **4.1 Population and Current Commercial and Community Services**

The Settlement Strategy outlined in Chapter 3 of this plan identifies Murroe as a Tier 4 Town/Village.

Murroe has experienced a dramatic increase in population since the 2006 Census. In 2006 the population of the village was 624, however based on the number of houses registered on the Geo Directory System it is estimated that the population has nearly doubled since that time, with approximately 482 inhabited dwellings in Murroe currently.

There are a number of existing community and commercial services within the village, including a primary school, community hall, childcare facilities, pubs, petrol station, restaurants, credit union, post office, shops, hair salons, launderette, Church and health clinics.

### **4.2 Sewerage and Water Supply:**

Murroe's sewerage system is working at full capacity at present while there is some capacity in the public water mains.

### **4.3 Objectives for Development**

#### **Objective M1:**

Development shall be directed inside the development boundary of the town as indicated on Map A-3. All development proposals will have regard to the 'Murroe Village Design Statement' adopted by Limerick County Council.

#### **Objective M2:**

- (a) No one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10-15%.
- (b) A variety and choice of house types shall be provided, including single storey dwellings and a mixture of housing densities ranging from 25 per hectare to 10 per hectare for serviced sites in accordance with "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities", May 2009, and any amendment thereof.

#### **Objective M3:**

On lands zoned 'Mixed use' within the village, the Council shall encourage a mix of uses that contribute to the economic life of the village and that are consistent with the village centre location and residential amenity. The development of small scale enterprises, shops and local services will be encouraged.

**Objective M4:**

The area outlined with the dashed boundary and high-lighted with 'P' shall be the subject of a master plan. The submission of an integrated master plan comprising low density housing, recreational and park land elements (together with associated housing) will be sought in order to demonstrate a fully coordinated approach to the development of the village as a whole. This should include details of the overall layout, infrastructure and landscaping including pedestrian links to adjoining areas. Any such master plan will take into account the contents of section 4.3 of the Murroe Village Design statement.

## 5.0 Fedamore

### 5.1 Background and Demography

The settlement hierarchy which is outlined in Chapter three has identified Fedamore as a Tier 5 settlement. The population of the village was 215 according to the 2006 Census.

The Core Strategy in Chapter 2 allocates an additional population of 83 up to the year 2022. This equates to a requirement for an additional 45 new houses.

### 5.2 Infrastructure

A new sewerage scheme was installed for the village in 2002. This is considered adequate for the targeted growth needs.

The village is accessed by the R511 from Limerick City. Fedamore cross, which serves the village off the R511 regional road, is substandard and needs to be upgraded prior to substantial housing being permitted in the village.

### 5.3 History

Fedamore derives its name from *Fiadh Damair*, the wood of Damar. The history of settlement in this area stretches back to the prehistoric period, as is evidenced by the standing stone, known as *Gearán bán*, in the townland of Ballyea during the course of the County Council sewerage works. In addition, two Bronze Age cooking sites (*fulacht fiadh*) were discovered to the South of the village. The density of recorded enclosures and ringforts (including one in the village) testifies to the continuity of settlement into the Early Christian period.

A medieval manor was in existence at Fedamore by 1237. The location of this was to the east of the present village. While there is no surviving standing remains associated with the manor, the sites of a castle, church and holy well, all dating to this period are known. The church and holy well were dedicated to St. John the Baptist in 1410. It is likely that the adjoining graveyard was also in use at this time.

In the post-medieval period, the focus of the village shifted westwards to its present location. A road is depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey for County Limerick 1840 with a number of houses, no longer remaining. This was situated at the eastern extent of the village.

### 5.4 Objectives for development

#### Objective FM1

Development shall be directed inside the development boundary of the town as indicated on Map A-4 and in areas zoned for development according to the land use zoning objectives and land use zoning matrix .

**Objective FM2****Infrastructure and transport**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Design and ensure the provision of a safe junction at Fedamore cross
- b) Require the preparation of a traffic impact assessment and road safety audit for any development over and above 5 residential units.

**Objective FM3****Residential development**

- (e) Development of Residential Development Areas will be in three phases. No development will be permitted in either phase 2 or 3 until the previous phase is at least 75% complete.
- (f) Serviced sites shall be developed only in accordance with a coherent master plan covering infrastructure, phasing and design standards over the entire site.

**Objective FM4****Layout of development on lands on the north-east of the town**

Development of the site on the elevated lands to the north-east of the town will require the following:

- a) While phasing is required on this site any development proposed on the site zoned phase one shall include a master plan for this site and adjoining phase 3 site, indicating a mixture of residential development densities.
- b) A buffer zone will be required to protect the archaeological monuments on the site. No ground-works for construction or landscaping shall take place within 20 metres of the external perimeter of the monument number LI022-214, enclosure.
- c) The post medieval road running along the eastern boundary of the site shall be incorporated into the site and developed as a walkway. Houses shall be orientated so that they face onto this walkway.
- d) A footpath shall be provided along the southern boundary of the site leading to the village.
- e) Vehicular access to the site shall be from the existing main road fronting the site.
- f) The layout of the scheme should be appropriate to reflect the topography and views into the site and also the rural setting of the site. Where boundary walls are proposed, particularly along the road frontage, these should be constructed in natural local stone.

**Objective FM5****Education and community uses**

Land zoned 'Education and Community' located south of the school has been included to facilitate the local interest expressed in developing a nursing home within the village core.

Any development on this site will require the following:

- (a) Vehicular access to the site shall be from the main street running through the village.

- (b) The overall design scheme should reflect the rural setting and must be consistent in terms of scale, proportions and material finish. Traditional forms and materials appropriate to a village setting should be used.
- (c) The development of the pedestrian walkway shall be facilitated through the site in line with the indicative walkway marked on the land use zoning map.

## **6.0 Montpelier**

### **6.1 Background and Demography**

The settlement hierarchy which is outlined in chapter three has identified Montpelier as a Tier 5 settlement ‘Small villages with a range of facilities’. In the inter-censal period 2002-2006 the town recorded a population of 165 marking a decrease in population of 7.3% from 178 in 2002. The Core Strategy in Chapter 2 allocates an additional population of 41 up to the year 2022. This equates to a requirement for an additional 22 new houses.

### **6.2 Water services infrastructure**

Currently the sewerage system is untreated. There were plans for a new sewerage treatment plant across the river at Bridgetown, to which O’Briensbridge and Montpelier would have connected. However there is no prospect of delivery of this scheme in the short term, unless it can be part funded by a developer, with matching funding from the Council.

### **6.3 Access, transport and roads infrastructure**

The bridge between Montpelier and O’Briensbridge is the only vehicular crossing point over the Shannon between Limerick and Killaloe, which makes it vulnerable to excessive traffic loads. This is the background behind proposals to install two new river crossings, one of which is proposed downstream of O’Briensbridge. This, and the accompanying buffer zone, are indicated on map A-5.

### **6.4 History**

Montpelier is a village with its origins in the eighteenth century with the granting of a licence for a fair by local landlord Richard Burke, in 1744. Fairs are no longer held here since the advent of marts in the 1950s. The village has long been at a bridging point but up to 1744 there was no evidence of any village at this location. It would seem to have contemporaneous origins with the larger village of O’Briensbridge which is located on the other side of the bridge in County Clare.

### **6.5 Settlement structure and built form**

The most significant features of the village are the bridge which spans the Shannon, and the fair green, an oval shaped green space, on one side of which runs the main road at its approach to the bridge. There is a loose cluster of buildings around the ‘fair green’, mainly of nineteenth century provenance, which forms the village core. This includes a chapel, which has been extended to form the community centre. An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) has been established around the fair green to protect and enhance the character of Montpelier and any development within this area shall comply with objectives for ACAs laid down in Chapter 7. A significant addition to the mainly

nineteenth century buildings in this area are two small housing schemes by the Rural Housing Association. These were built in the 1970s.

Predictive Flood Zone maps were prepared by JBA consultants on behalf of Limerick County Council. These maps show Predictive Flood Zones A and B and have been used to as a screening tool in preparing the zoning map.

## **6.6 Objectives for development**

### **Objective MP1**

Development shall be directed inside the development boundary of the town as indicated on Map A-5 and in areas zoned for development according to the land use zoning objectives and land use zoning matrix.

### **Objective MP2: In relation to residential development**

- (d) Development of Residential Development Areas will be in two phases. No development will be permitted in phase 2 until phase 1 is at least 75% complete.
- (e) The density, massing and height of development on the lands zoned for residential use on the eastern side of the village should be appropriate to reflect the site features, topography and views (immediate and long distant) into the site. Buildings along the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to the River Shannon shall be orientated to face onto the river and should be of a suitably high design standard to complement their location on the riverbank. Buildings should where possible not break skylines but should be framed by trees to reduce their impact.
- (f) A detailed landscaping plan including a comprehensive survey identifying trees, hedgerow and other vegetation to be retained and incorporated into the new development shall be submitted with any planning application for the lands zoned residential use on the eastern side of the village.

### **Objective MP3: Water services Infrastructure and development**

It is the objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure development proposals provide adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate the proposed development, and that will contribute to an improved water/wastewater infrastructure to meet the village's planned needs.

### **Objective MP4: Protection of route corridor for proposed river crossing**

It is an objective of the Council to reserve a route corridor, including a 60 metre buffer, as identified on map A-5 for a future road bridge crossing of the Shannon in order to alleviate traffic congestion of the old bridge. Proposals for development that will prevent the development of the proposed bridge and associated roads will not be permitted.

### **Objective MP5: Recreational amenities and community facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to

- a) Support the development of access-ways for pedestrians and cyclists along the river, with benches, viewing points, and picnic facilities; and low key water side amenities.



- b) Assess all river-side development proposals for both their direct and indirect impacts on traffic; on the conservation value of the river SAC; the setting of the bridge and fair green; and taking into account possible water safety issues and flood impact.
- c) Support the provision and proper development and landscaping of passive amenities in and adjacent to the Fair Green having regard to their setting and context in the landscape. In relation to the protection of the Fair Green the conservation of the form of the green area and retention of the lawn and existing trees as predominant elements is important.

**Table APP 1.1 Zoning Matrix**

Development/ Zone	New Residential / Established Residential	Industry	Marine Related Industry	Amenity / Open Space	Agriculture	Education/ Communit y	Mixed Use
Dwelling	/	X	X	X	X*	X	O
Apartment / Duplex	/	X	X	X	X	X	/
Guesthouse	O	X	X	X	X	X	/
Hotel	O	X	X	X	X	X	/
Local Shops	O	X	X	X	X	X	/
Regional Shops	X	X	X	X	X	X	/
Take Away	X	X	X	X	X	X	/
Pub	X	X	X	X	X	X	/
Restaurant	X	X	X	X	X	X	/
Cinema, Dance Hall	X	X	X	O	X	X	/
Community Hall -Recreational	O	X	X	O	X	O	O
Community Hall - Functions	O	X	X	O	X	O	/
Nursing Home	O	X	X	X	X	X	O
Health Centre/ Clinic	O	X	X	X	X	X	O
Hospital	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Church/ School	/	X	X	O	X	/	O
Office	O	O	O	X	X	X	/
Car Repair/Sales	X	/	X	X	X	X	O
Crèche / Childcare Facility	/	X	X	X	X	/	/
Petrol Station	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Industry							
Warehousing	X	/	/	X	X	X	X
Light	X	/	/	X	X	X	O
Heavy	X	/	/	X	X	X	X
Wholesale	X	/	/	X	X	X	O
Agricultural Machinery	X	O	X	X	X	X	O
Garden Centre	O	X	X	X	X	X	O
Amusement Arcade	X	X	X	X	X	X	/
Advertising Panel	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Hair dressing Salon	O	X	X	X	X	X	/
Bank	X	X	X	X	X	X	/
Group Housing, Permanent Halting Sites & Transient Sites for Travellers	O	X	X	X	X	X	O
Recycle Centre	/	/	O	O	O	/	/
Open space /sports grounds	O	O	X	/	O	O	O

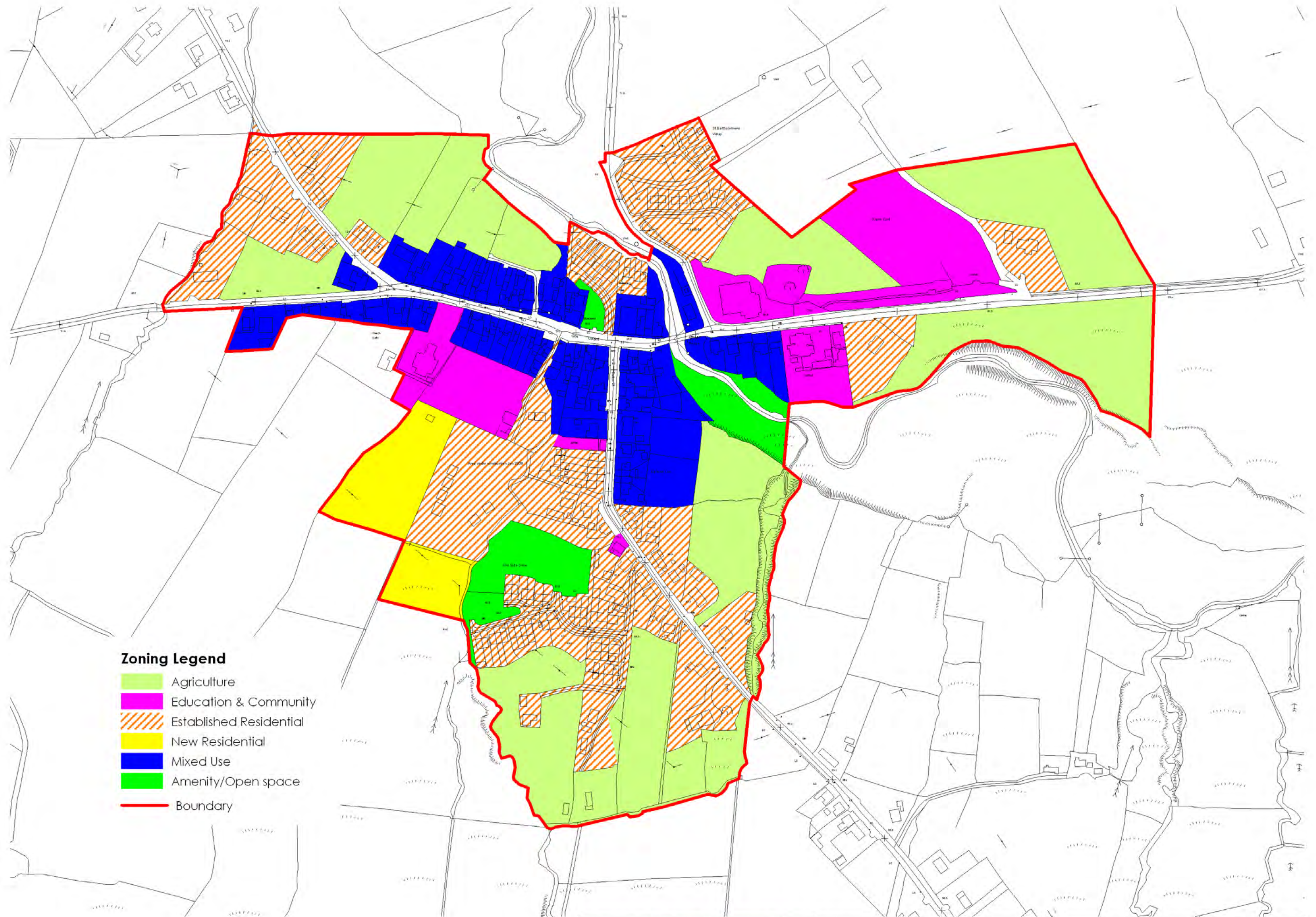
**Key** / Generally Permitted      **O** Open For Consideration      **X** Generally Not Permitted.

\* Except where compliance can be demonstrated in accordance with rural housing policies set out in chapter 3.

In tier 4 – 6 settlements only ‘amenity / open space’ column will apply as there is no zoning other than ‘open space / amenity’ (except in Murroe, Athea, Fedamore and Montpelier).

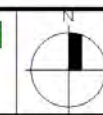






### Zoning Legend

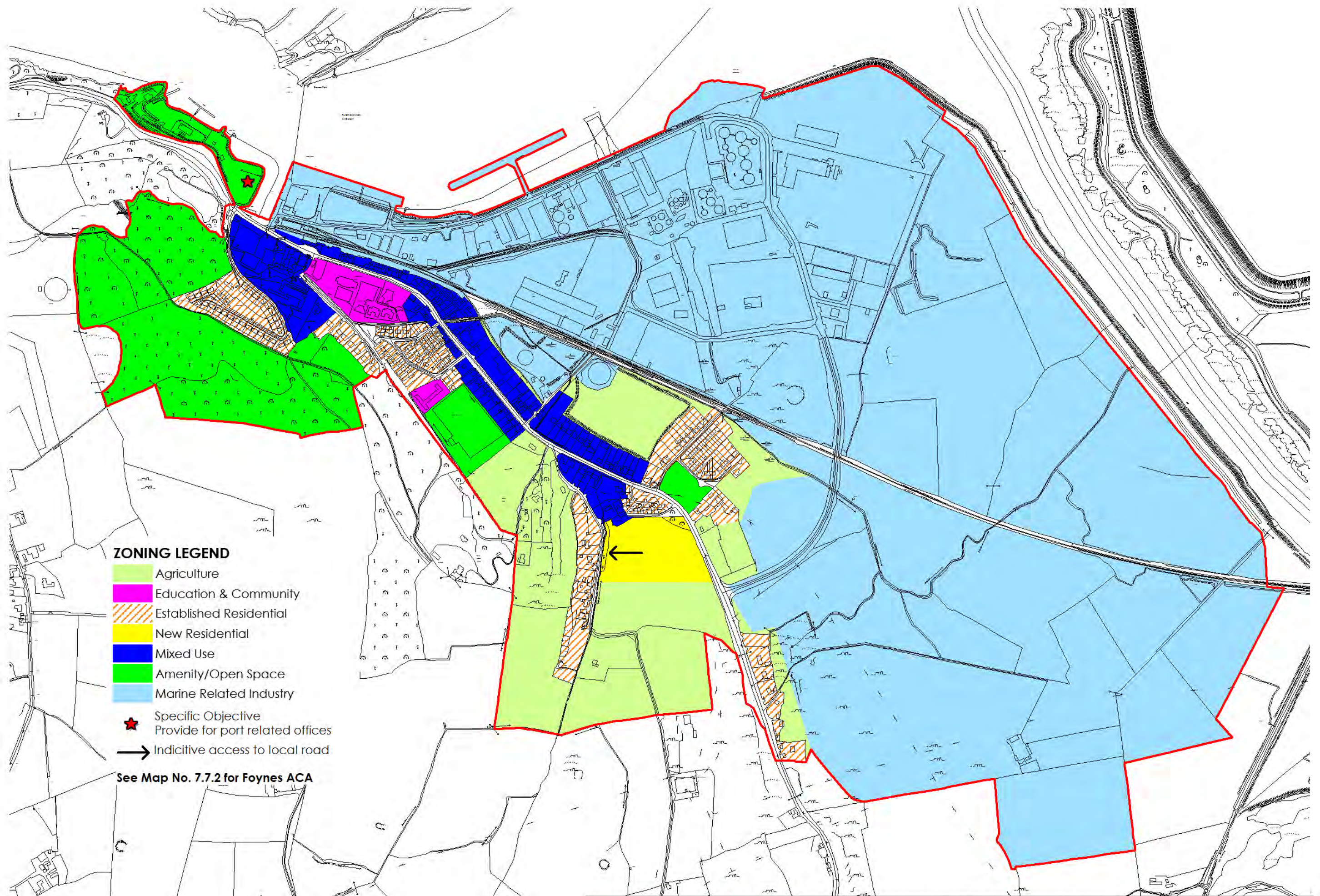
- Agriculture
- Education & Community
- Established Residential
- New Residential
- Mixed Use
- Amenity/Open space
- Boundary







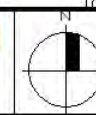




# **ZONING LEGEND**

- Agriculture
- Education & Community
- Established Residential
- New Residential
- Mixed Use
- Amenity/Open Space
- Marine Related Industry
- ★ Specific Objective  
Provide for port related offices
- Indicative access to local road

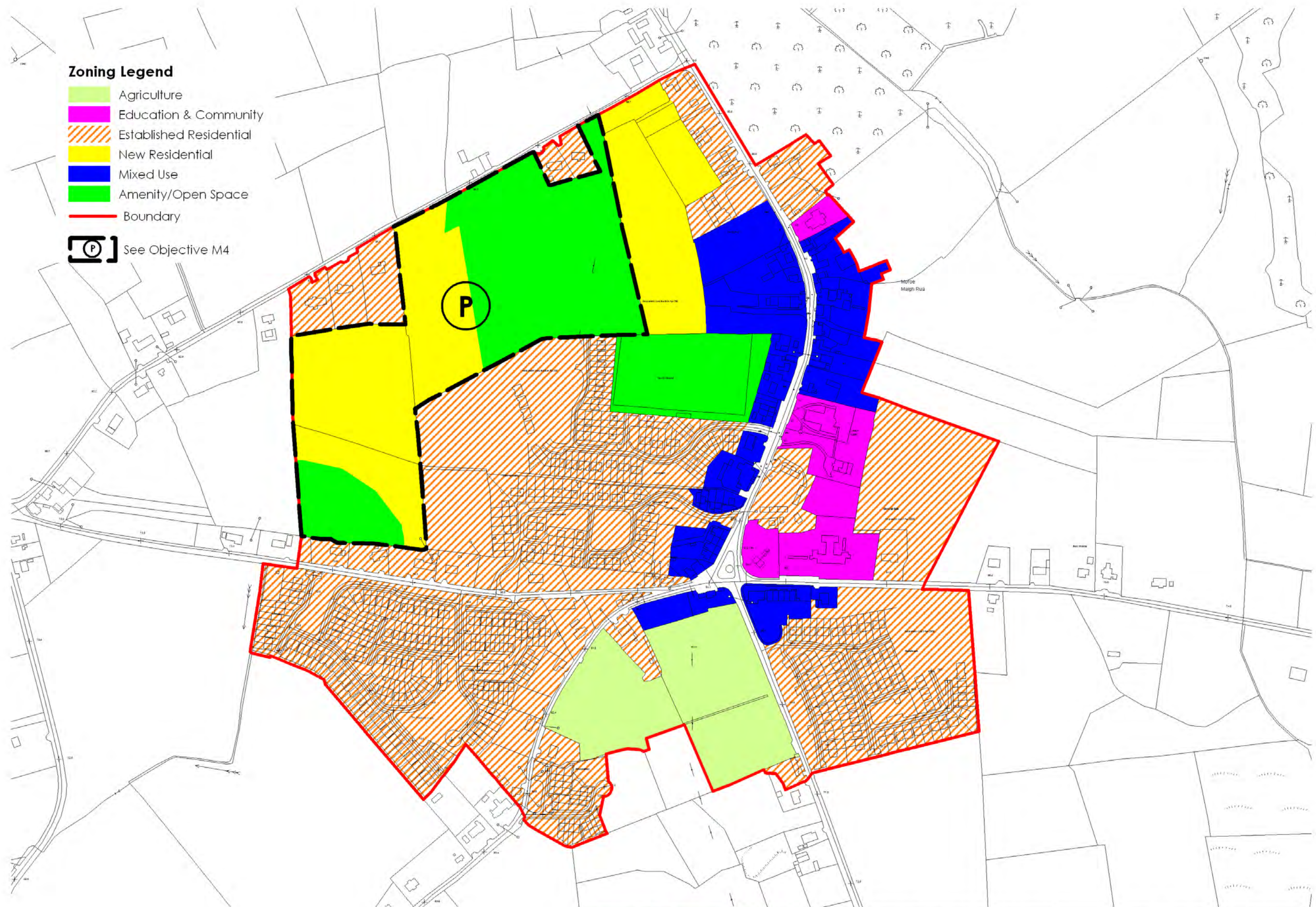
See Map No. 7.7.2 for Foynes ACA







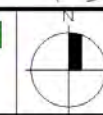




# Zoning Legend

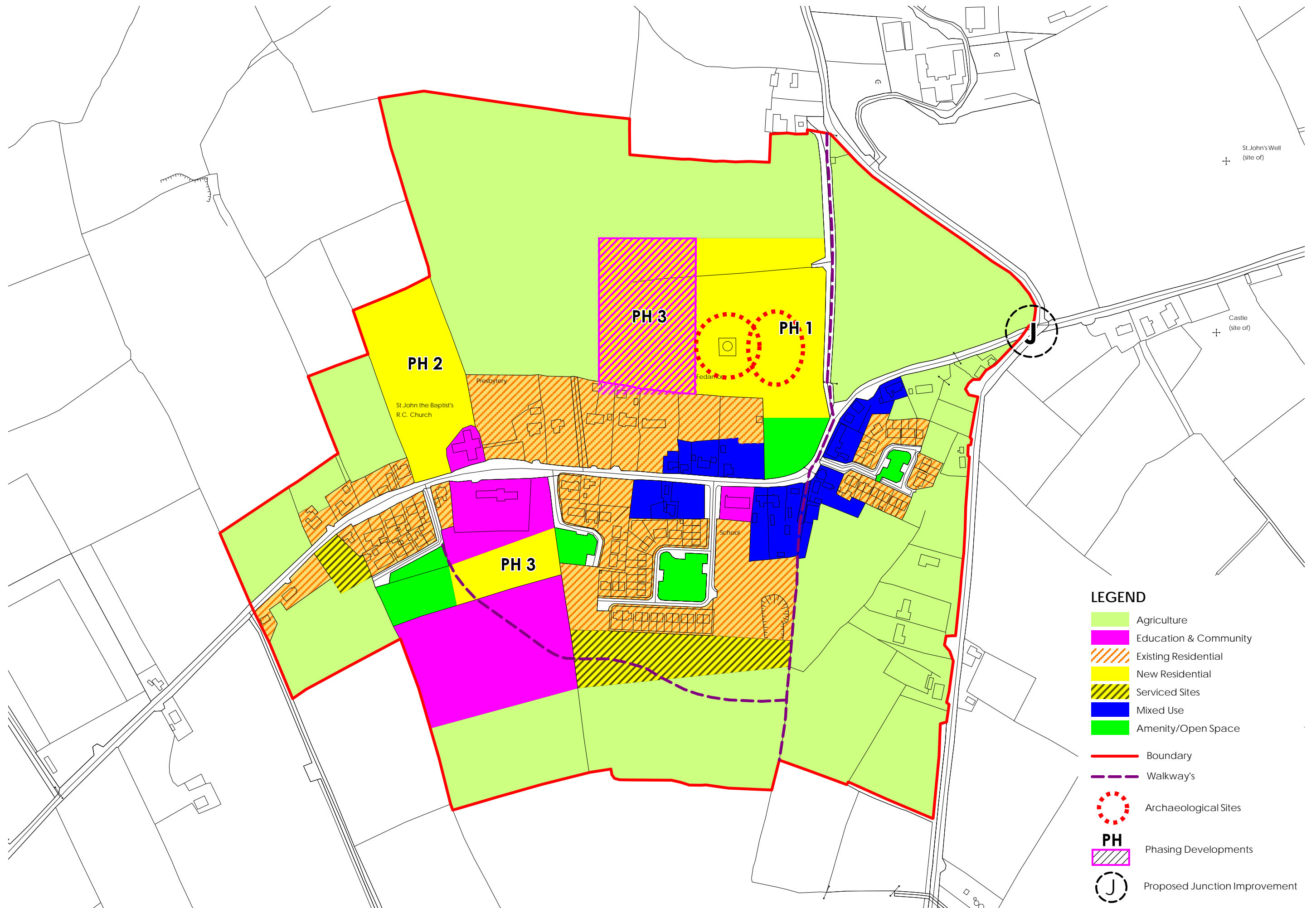
- Agriculture
- Education & Community
- Established Residential
- New Residential
- Mixed Use
- Amenity/Open Space
- Boundary

See Objective M4







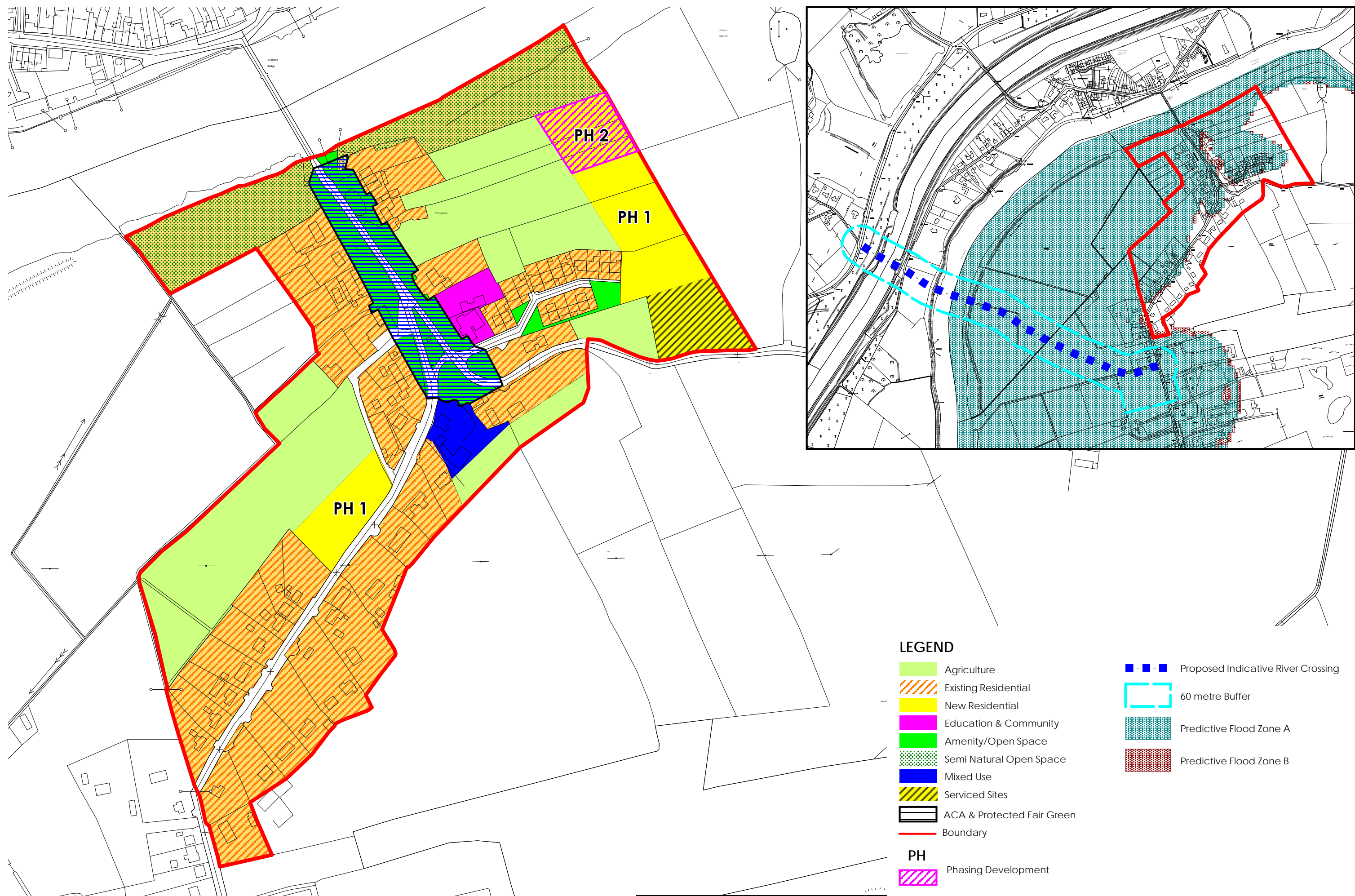


**LEGEND**

- Agriculture
- Education & Community
- Existing Residential
- New Residential
- Serviced Sites
- Mixed Use
- Amenity/Open Space

- Boundary
- Walkways
- Archaeological Sites
- PH** Phasing Developments
- Proposed Junction Improvement





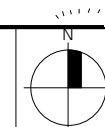
# LEGEND

- Agriculture
- Existing Residential
- New Residential
- Education & Community
- Amenity/Open Space
- Semi Natural Open Space
- Mixed Use
- Serviced Sites
- ACA & Protected Fair Green
- Boundary

## PH

- Phasing Development

- Proposed Indicative River Crossing
- 60 metre Buffer
- Predictive Flood Zone A
- Predictive Flood Zone B





## 7.0 Tier 4 Settlements

### 7.1 Ballingarry – Tier 4 Settlement

Ballingarry had a population of 441 in the 2006 Census. The designation of the village as a tier 4 settlement is a reflection of the wide range of services available in the town. Future development is restricted as there is no capacity in the sewer system at present and there is poor assimilative capacity in the receiving watercourse. The public water system is also working at capacity at present. There are a number of vacant retail and residential buildings in the core area and the re-development or re-use of these buildings is encouraged.

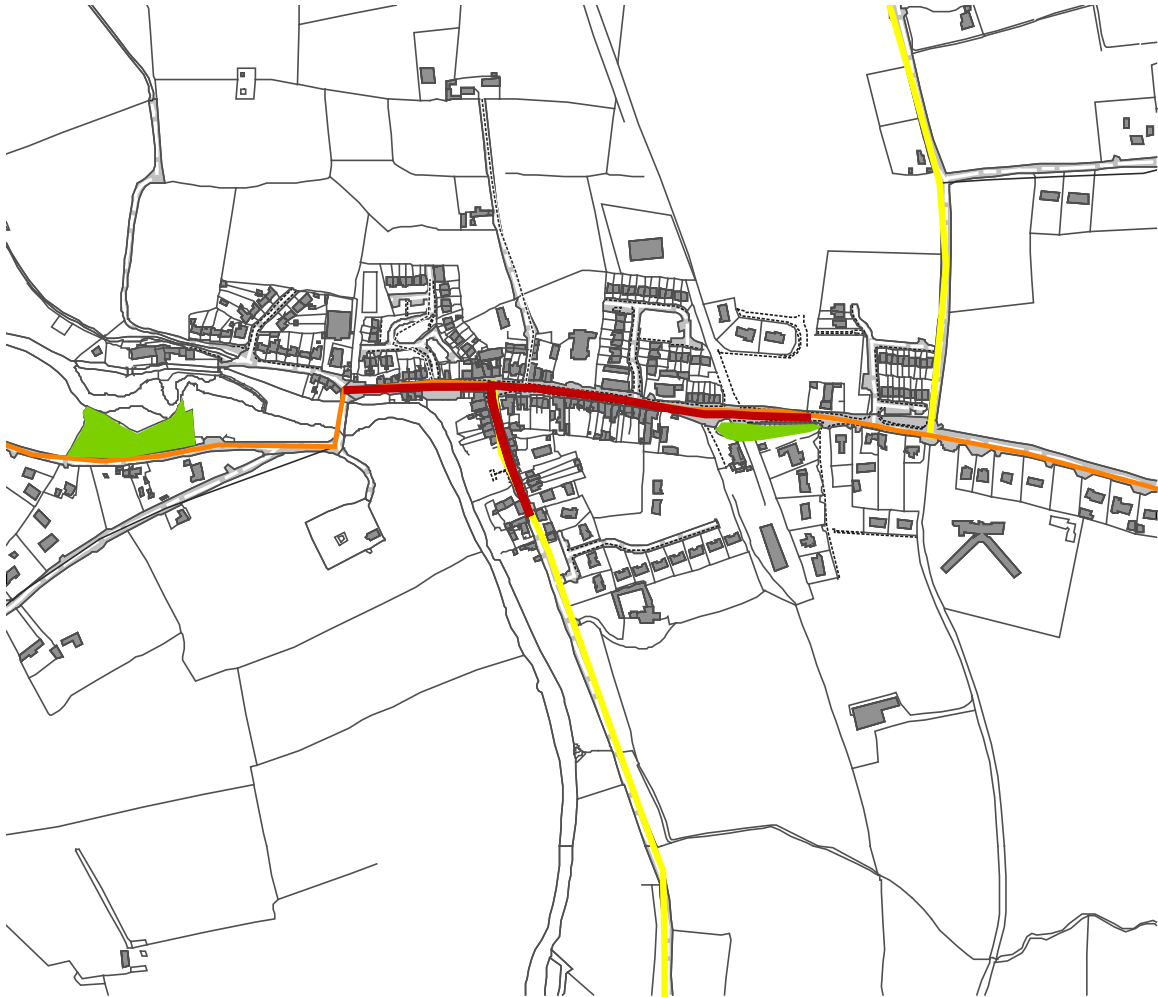


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



## 7.2 Bruree – Tier 4 Settlement

Bruree had a population of 321 according to the 2006 Census. Services within the settlement include a nursing home, shops, pubs, petrol station, primary school, community hall, sports grounds, church, riverside park and Garda station. There is a new sewerage treatment system in place which has capacity to facilitate future development. The provision of water is limited at present but future interlink to Rockhill supply would serve to alleviate pressures on the water supply.

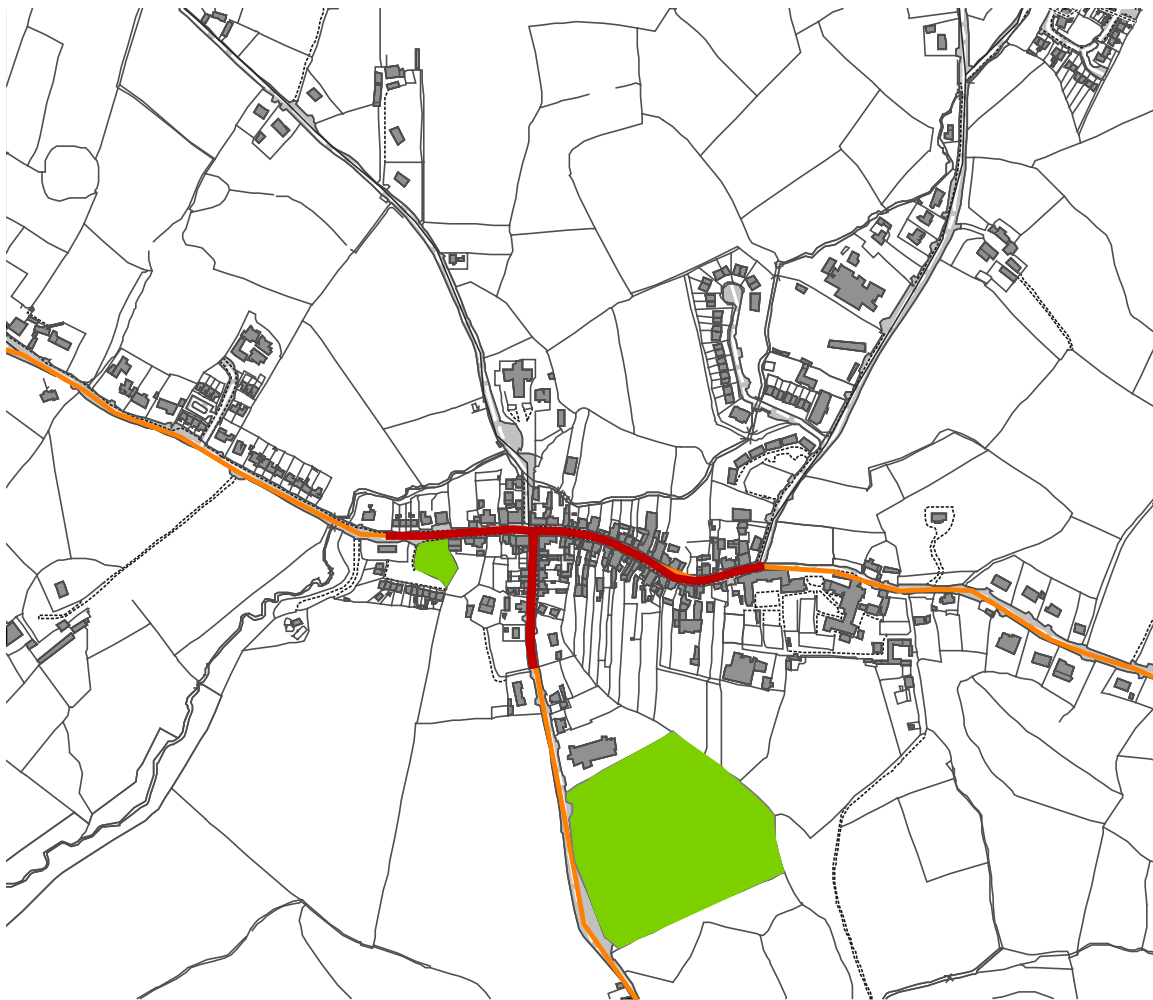


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 7.3 Doon – Tier 4 Settlement

Doon had a population of 439 according to the 2006 Census. It provides a wide range of services which include a bank, Garda station, health clinic, community centre, childcare facilities, sports complex and secondary school. In recent times permission has been granted for residential developments that include in total approximately 90 houses, apartments, a crèche and retail/commercial units. There are a number of vacant retail and residential buildings in the core area, the re-development of which shall be encouraged. The Department of Education and Science propose to develop a new school on lands to the south of the village, which the Council supports in principle.

In terms of water and sewerage services there is limited public water mains capacity but there is capacity in the treatment plant. However there are concerns over the assimilative capacity in the receiving watercourse to adequately dilute increased sewage load.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



#### 7.4 Dromcolliher – Tier 4 Settlement

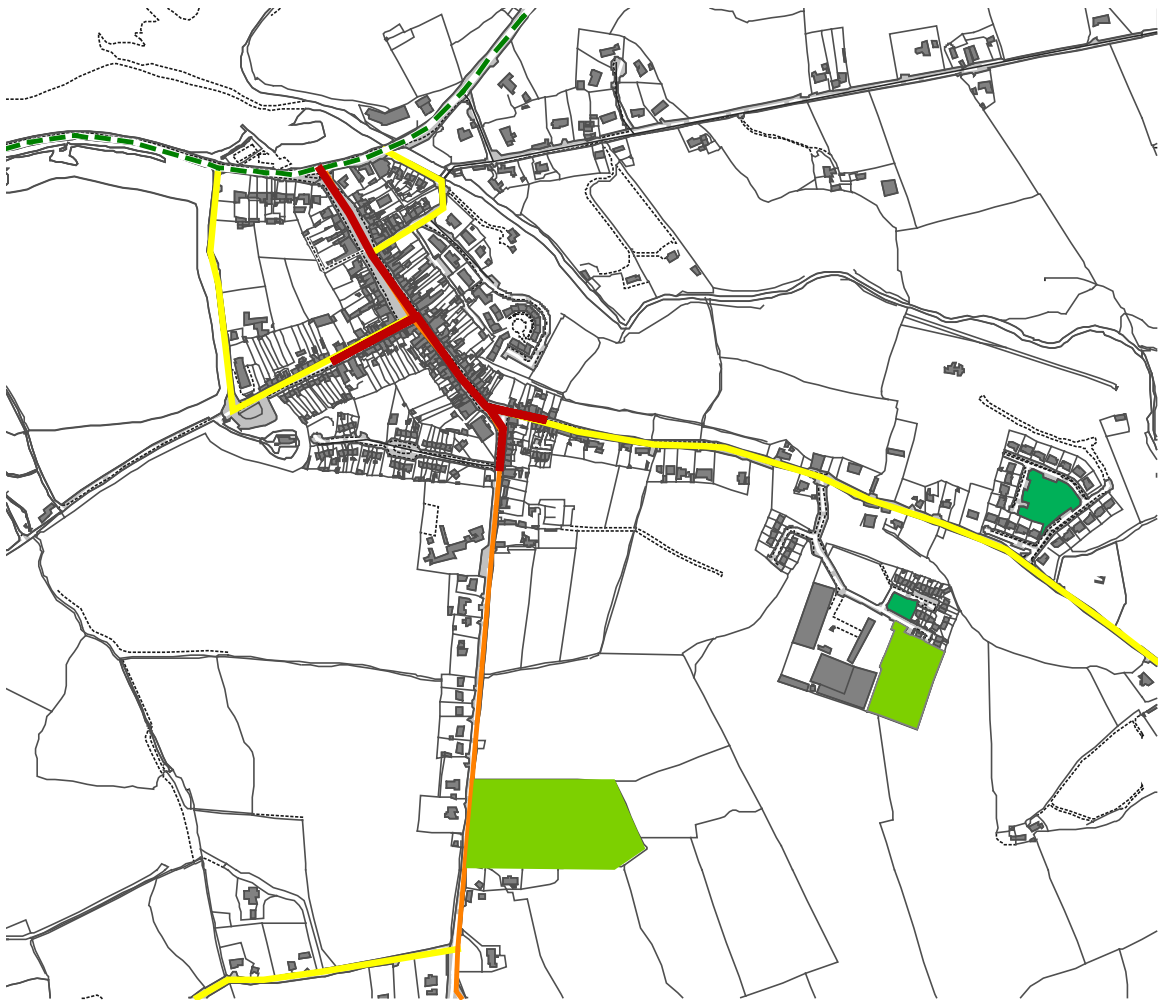
Dromcolliher had a population of 524 according to the 2006 Census. There are many services within the settlement including a bank, fire station, nursing home, shops, pubs, petrol station, primary school, community hall, heritage centre, sports grounds, church and Garda station. There is a secondary school located outside the settlement core. As there is no capacity in the public waste water treatment system development cannot be permitted until the system is upgraded. Water is not a constraint to development at present.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 7.5 Glin – Tier 4 Settlement

Glin is located on the Shannon Estuary approximately 6km west of Loghill on the N69. In 2006 it had a population of 566 people according to the Census. It provides a wide range of services including financial and professional services, a pharmacy, a number of shops, post office, health clinic, day-care centre, community centre, library, churches, primary school, Garda station, hotel, guesthouses, playing pitches, undertaker and restaurant. There is also a public park by the Estuary. The sewerage treatment system is operating at capacity at present and is in need of an upgrade. The provision of public water is also limited.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 7.6 Oola – Tier 4 Settlement

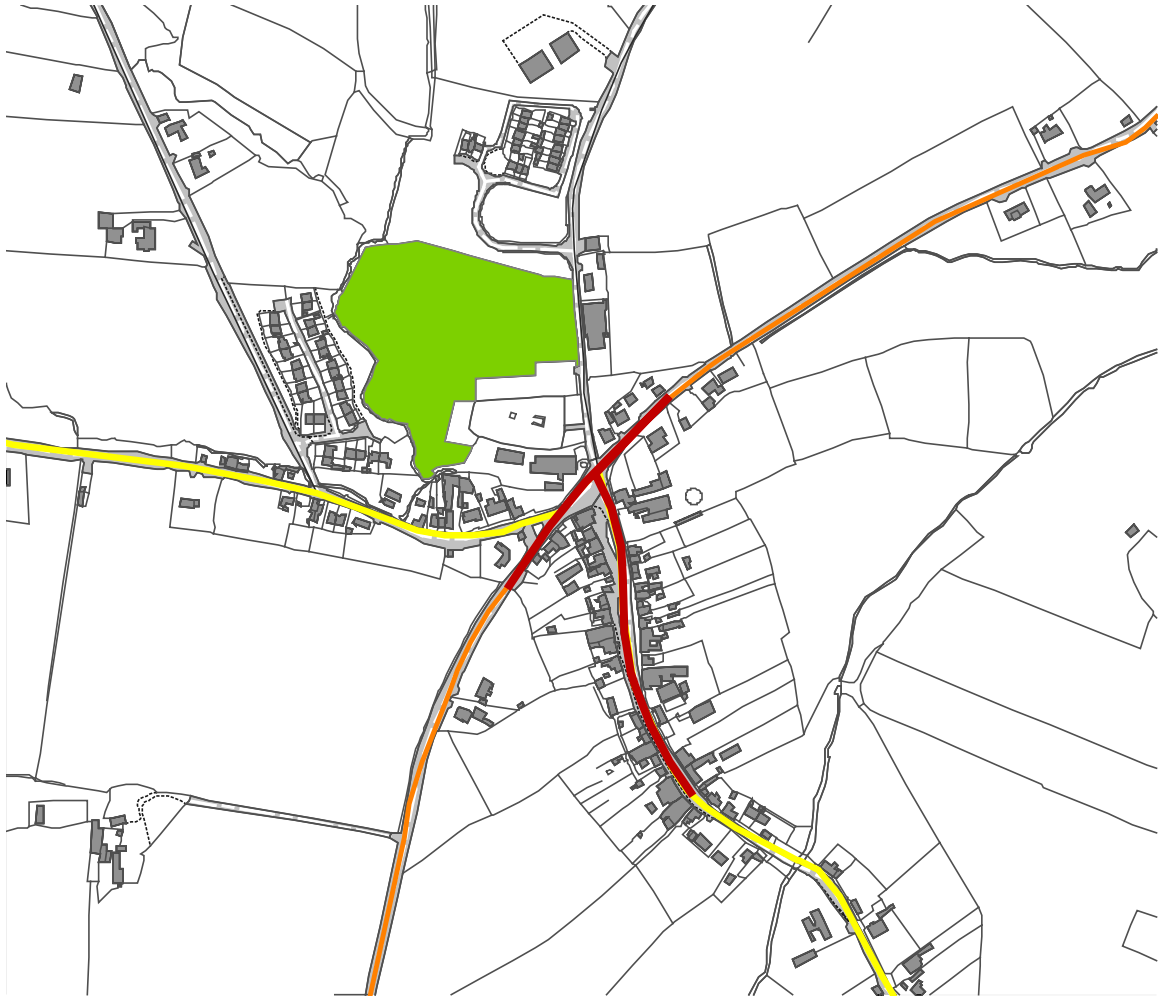
Oola had a population of 386 in 2006 according to the Census. Its range of services includes shops, pubs, primary school, church, sports complex, Garda station, post office and enterprise centre. There is limited development potential within the village at present as the sewerage system is at full capacity and the receiving watercourse is considered to have poor assimilative ability to dilute any increased load. There are also capacity problems with the public water mains.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 7.7 Shanagolden – Tier 4 Settlement

The population of Shanagolden was 292 according to the 2006 Census. Its services include a primary school, church, shops, health centres, community resource centre, Garda station, sports pitch, funeral homes, pubs and petrol station. There is also an industrial estate located north of the village. Shanagolden is on the Shannon Estuary water supply system and there is adequate capacity for the foreseeable future. However, there is no spare capacity in the public sewerage system at present.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 7.8 Pallaskenry – Tier 4 Settlement

In 2006 Pallaskenry had a population of 534. It provides pubs, shops, post office, a credit union, community centre, playing pitches, Garda station, library, primary school, secondary school and an agricultural college. There is capacity in both the sewerage plant and public water supply.

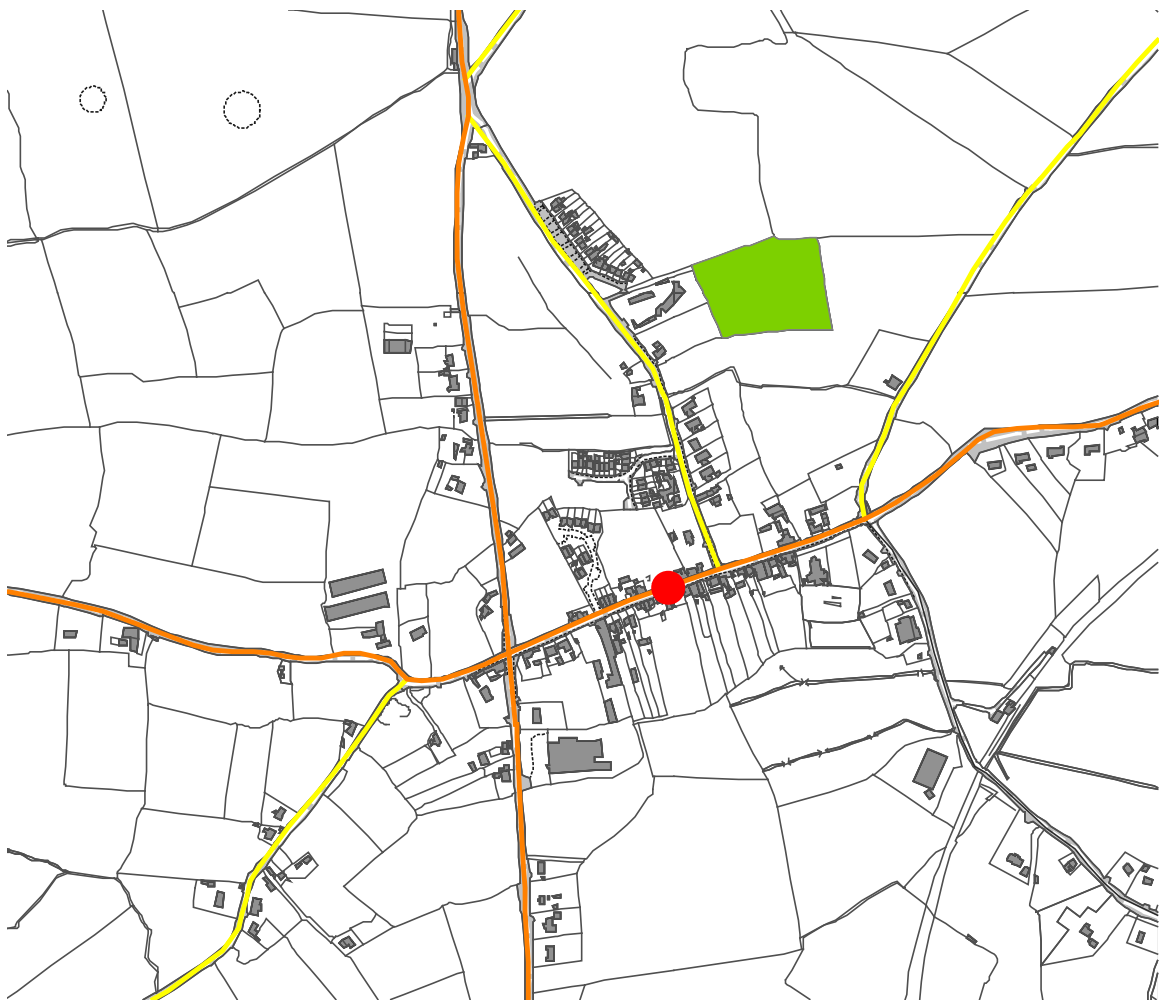


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

## 8.0 Tier 5 Settlements

### 8.1 Ardagh - Tier 5 Settlement

The population of Ardagh in the 2006 Census was 271. It is estimated that Ardagh has approximately 110 inhabited dwellings at present. It provides a range of services including a post office, community centre, primary school, montessori school, leisure centre, community centre, pub etc. It is served by public water mains and public sewer but capacity for both at present is very limited. Because of the lack of assimilative capacity in the receiving water there is no capacity for Ardagh to grow beyond its current population until such time as effluent from Ardagh is pumped to Newcastle West. Access for any potential development should be from the local road L1338 or regional road R523 and not the heavily trafficked regional road R521 (Newcastle West – Foynes).



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

## 8.2 Ballyagran – Tier 5 Settlement

Ballyagran had a population of 183 people according to the 2006 Census. It provides a shop, post office, primary school, church, sports ground and pubs. It does have a public waters mains and sewer. However, sewerage disposal is a constraint for future development due to the lack of capacity in the existing sewerage plant and the poor assimilative capacity of the receiving watercourse.

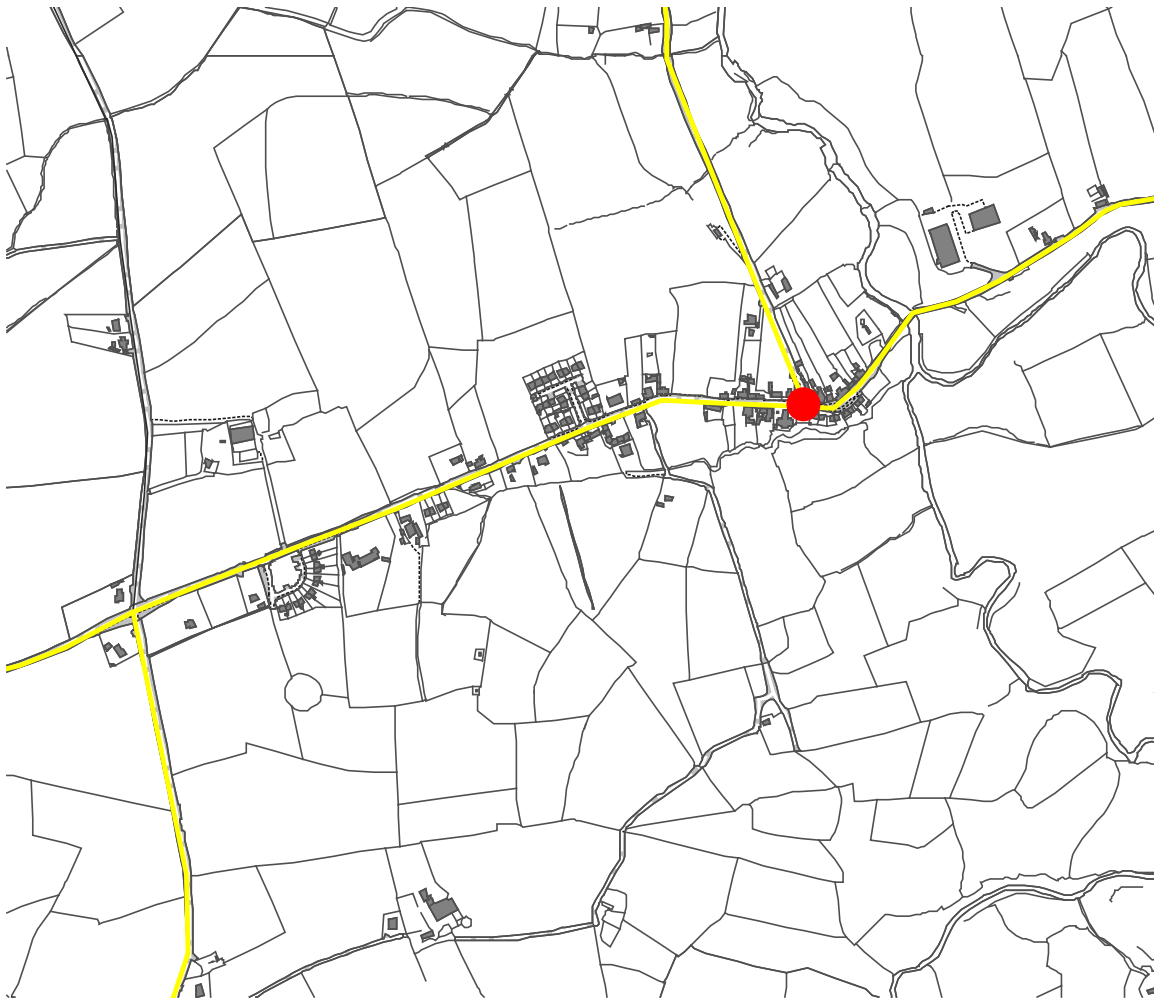


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 8.3 Ballyhahill – Tier 5 Settlement

Ballyhahill had a population of 137 people according to the 2006 Census. It provides a shop, childcare facility, primary school, church, and health clinic. Ballyhahill has a sewerage plant, however, there is little potential for the village to grow beyond its existing population because of the limited assimilative capacity of the receiving water, and the poor performance of the treatment plant. The capacity to provide water is also a constraint for future development as the public well is currently operating at capacity.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



#### 8.4 Ballylanders – Tier 5 Settlement

Ballylanders, according to the census in 2006, had a population of 319 people. It provides a wide range of services including a number of shops and pubs, a childcare facility, primary school, church, day-care and health clinic, Garda station, veterinary clinic, library, post office, and credit union. In recent times permission has been granted for a nursing home, sports complex, independent living units, a number of residential units and a crèche. The future development of Ballylanders is constrained by the poor assimilative capacity of the watercourse taking effluent disposed from the sewerage system. There is also restricted capacity available to provide water to future development.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.5 Ballyneety – Tier 5 Settlement

It is estimated that Ballyneety has approximately 128 inhabited dwellings. Its services include shops, pubs, a funeral home, credit union, community hall and commercial garage. Ballyneety does not have a public sewerage system, and at present there is no assimilative capacity in the local watercourse for the discharge of effluent from a treatment plant.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.6 Broadford – Tier 5 Settlement

Broadford had a population of 313 according to the 2006 Census. Its range of services includes a post office, shops, pubs, commercial garage, church, health centre, sports complex, and wildlife arboretum. It is served by public water mains and public sewer. There is little capacity for Broadford to grow beyond its existing population, unless adequately treated effluent is discharged approximately 2.5km downstream where there is a confluence of several streams.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.7 Carrigkerry - Tier 5 Settlement

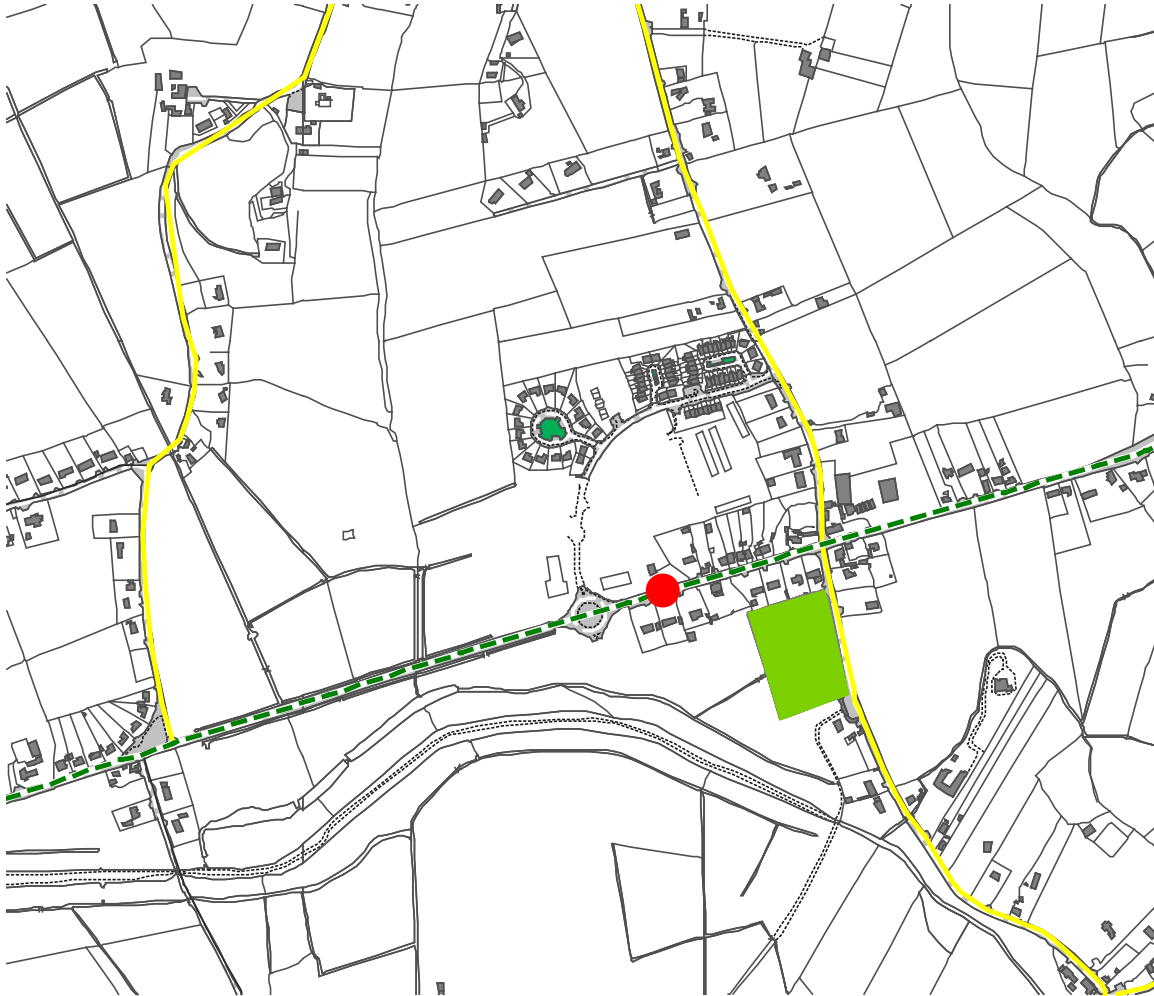
Carrigkerry had a population of 166 according to the Census in 2006. Its services include a petrol station, primary school, and community centre. Carrigkerry does have a sewer but the assimilative capacity of the receiving water course is poor, and is unable to facilitate an increase in sewerage load. There is also poor capacity in the water mains at present.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.8 Clarina – Tier 5 Settlement

According to the Census in 2006 Clarina had a population of 216. Its range of services includes a petrol station, vacant retail units, riding school, pharmacy, and playing pitch. There is capacity to provide water and sewerage treatment within the timescale of the Plan. Any development shall be located north of the settlement core.



### 8.9 Galbally – Tier 5 Settlement

Galbally had a population of 257 according to the 2006 Census. It is a well serviced settlement with shops, a childcare facility, primary school, church, pubs, library, post office, sports ground and health clinic. There is no capacity in the public treatment plant to cater for additional sewerage, however, there is assimilative capacity in the watercourse to dilute an increased sewerage load. The capacity to provide water is a constraint for future development as the public well is presently operating at capacity.



### 8.10 Herbertstown – Tier 5 Settlement

Herbertstown is estimated to have approximately 67 inhabited dwellings. It offers a range of services that include a primary school, post office, pubs, co-op store, community hall and sports grounds. There is considerable vacancy and dereliction noted within the village. While there is no public sewer treatment system there is a small sewerage plant serving one development at present. There is reasonable assimilative capacity in the receiving water. Public water supply is very limited.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.11 New Kildimo – Tier 5 Settlement

New Kildimo is estimated to have approximately 42 inhabited houses. It has experienced growth in recent times with the construction of a housing estate at Ballyvareen. It has a wide range of services that include a petrol station, shops, post office, credit union, doctor's surgery, church, primary school, sport grounds and pubs. It does not have a public effluent treatment system. There is a private treatment plant that services a number of houses. Provision of water by public mains is severely limited at present until such time as New Kildimo is connected to the Shannon Estuary Scheme.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 8.12 Killeely – Tier 5 Settlement

According to the Census 2006 Killeely had a population of 198 people. It has a wide range of services including shops, a petrol station, church, and community hall. The GAA pitch is approximately 500m east of the settlement core. There is limited capacity in the public treatment plant and there is a lack of assimilative capacity in the receiving water.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.13 Knocklong – Tier 5 Settlement

Knocklong had a population of 239 people according to the 2006 Census. It has a wide range of services including professional services, a post office, petrol station, shops, credit union, playing pitch and childcare facilities. There is a combined public sewer system in Knocklong which has poor capacity and there is limited assimilative capacity in the receiving water.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

#### 8.14 Mountcollins – Tier 5 Settlement

Mountcollins had a population of 221 in 2006 according to the Census. It has a church, community hall and a pub. The primary school is approximately 2km east of the core and the GAA grounds are located approximately 500m south of the core. There is some capacity in the public water mains to accommodate future development. The public sewerage system has limited capacity. However, there is good assimilative capacity in the receiving water and there is potential for the settlement to grow if the treatment plant is upgraded.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 8.15 Pallas Grean – Tier 5 Settlement

Pallas Grean had a population of 359 in 2006 according to the Census. It provides a wide range of community and business services including shops, petrol station, insurance services, doctor's surgery, community hall, playing pitches, undertaker and other miscellaneous services. In recent times permission has been granted for a residential development including 20 residential units and a crèche. Both the sewerage treatment plant and the public water systems are currently operating at capacity. There is reasonable assimilative capacity in the receiving water.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

## 9.0 Tier 6 Settlements

### 9.1 Anglesborough - Tier 6 Settlement

Anglesborough has approximately 25 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a primary school, church, pub, shop and community centre. There are no public water mains or sewers in the village.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

## 9.2 Ardpatrik – Tier 6 Settlement

Ardpatrick has approximately 14 inhabited dwellings. It offers a school, church, shop, petrol station, commercial garage and pub as services to the community. There is no sewer provision.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.3 Ashford – Tier 6 Settlement

Ashford has approximately 18 inhabited dwellings. It has a community centre, primary school, pre-school, a pub which is closed and a playing pitch. There is no sewerage system in Ashford. There is a group water scheme and new connections to the scheme are at the discretion of the relevant community group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



#### 9.4 Athlacca – Tier 6 Settlement

Athlacca has approximately 38 inhabited dwellings. It has a number of services including community childcare facilities, pubs, a shop, post office, community centre, primary school, church and sports grounds. It has a private communal treatment system for a number of dwellings however, there is no public sewerage treatment plant. Water is provided by a group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 9.5 Ballyorgan - Tier 6 Settlement

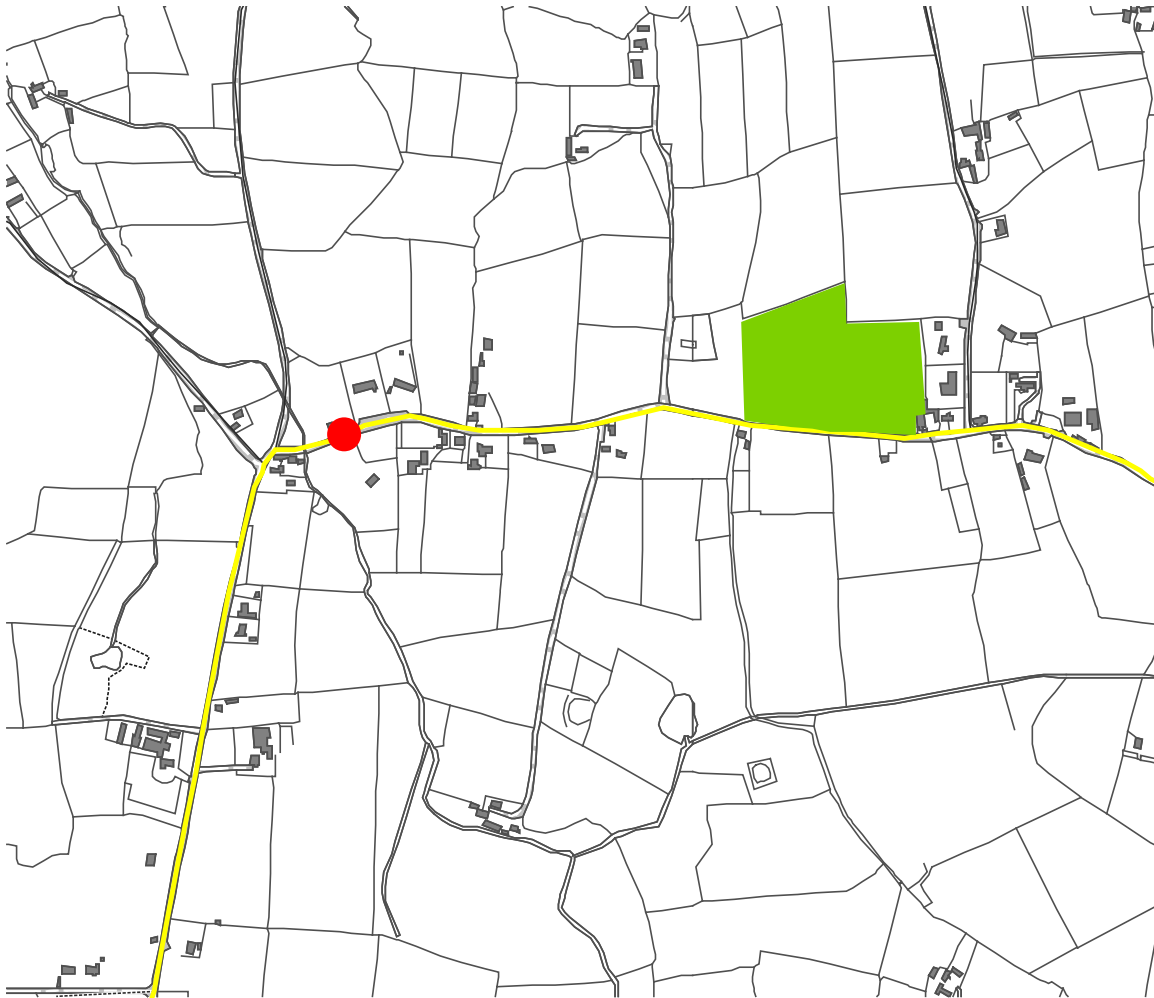
It is estimated that Ballyorgan has approximately 24 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a primary school, church, shop, pub and community centre. There is no public sewerage system in the village. There is a group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.6 Ballysteen - Tier 6 Settlement

For the purposes of this Plan the settlement is demarcated by the school and the post office. Within this area there is a small number of inhabited dwellings. Its services include a primary school, church, and post office. Public water mains are provided in Ballysteen. However, sewers are not provided.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.7 Banogue – Tier 6 Settlement

Banogue is estimated to have approximately 26 inhabited dwellings. It has a primary school, crèche and church. There is a lack of capacity in the existing mains and sewer system. There is reasonable assimilative capacity in the receiving water and there is some potential for Banogue to grow subject to an upgrade to the effluent treatment plant. However, a higher level of effluent treatment would be required than is currently achieved.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.8 Caherline - Tier 6 Settlement

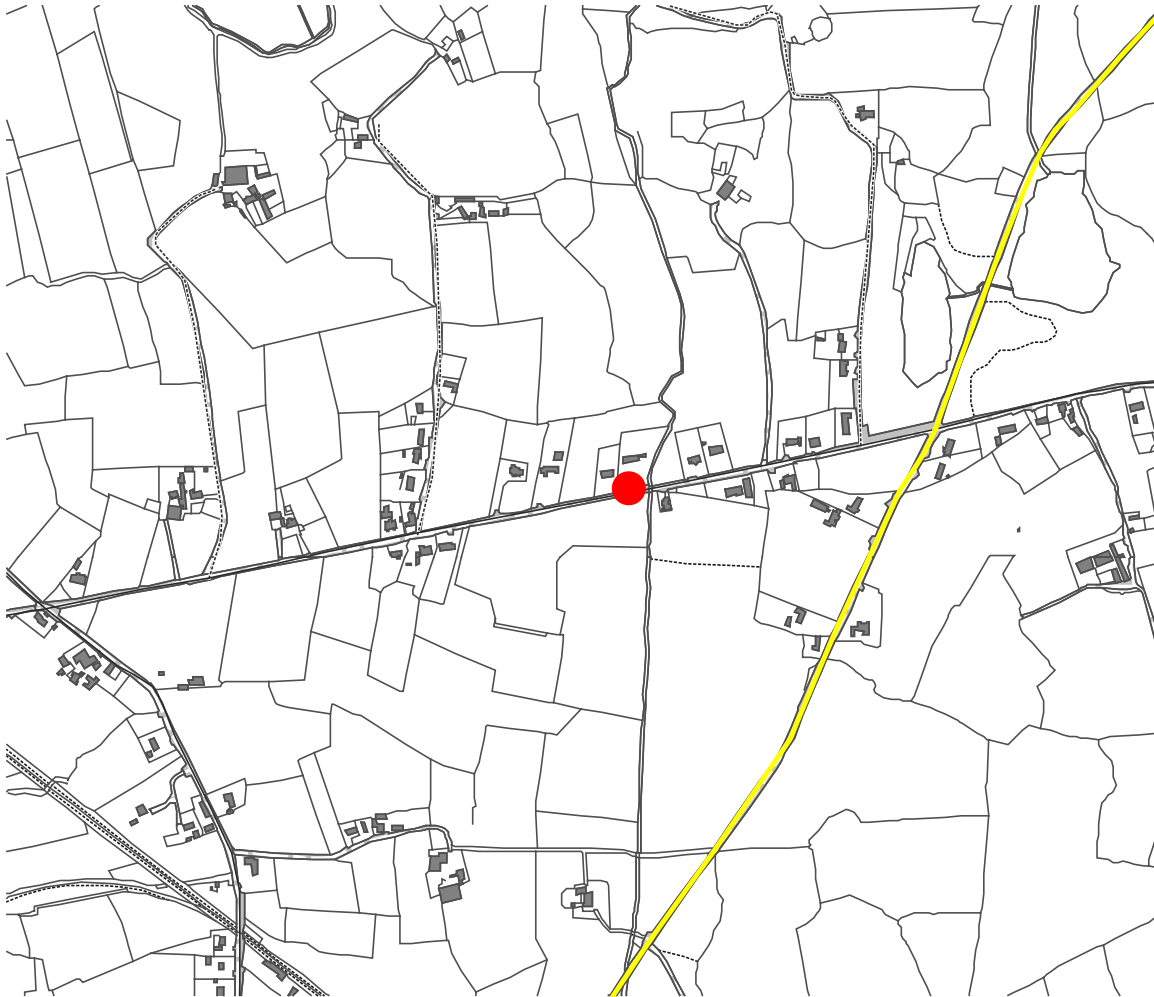
Caherline is estimated to have approximately 17 inhabited dwellings. It provides a school, community hall and a church. There is no sewer provision in Caherline. There is a group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.9 Cappagh - Tier 6 Settlement

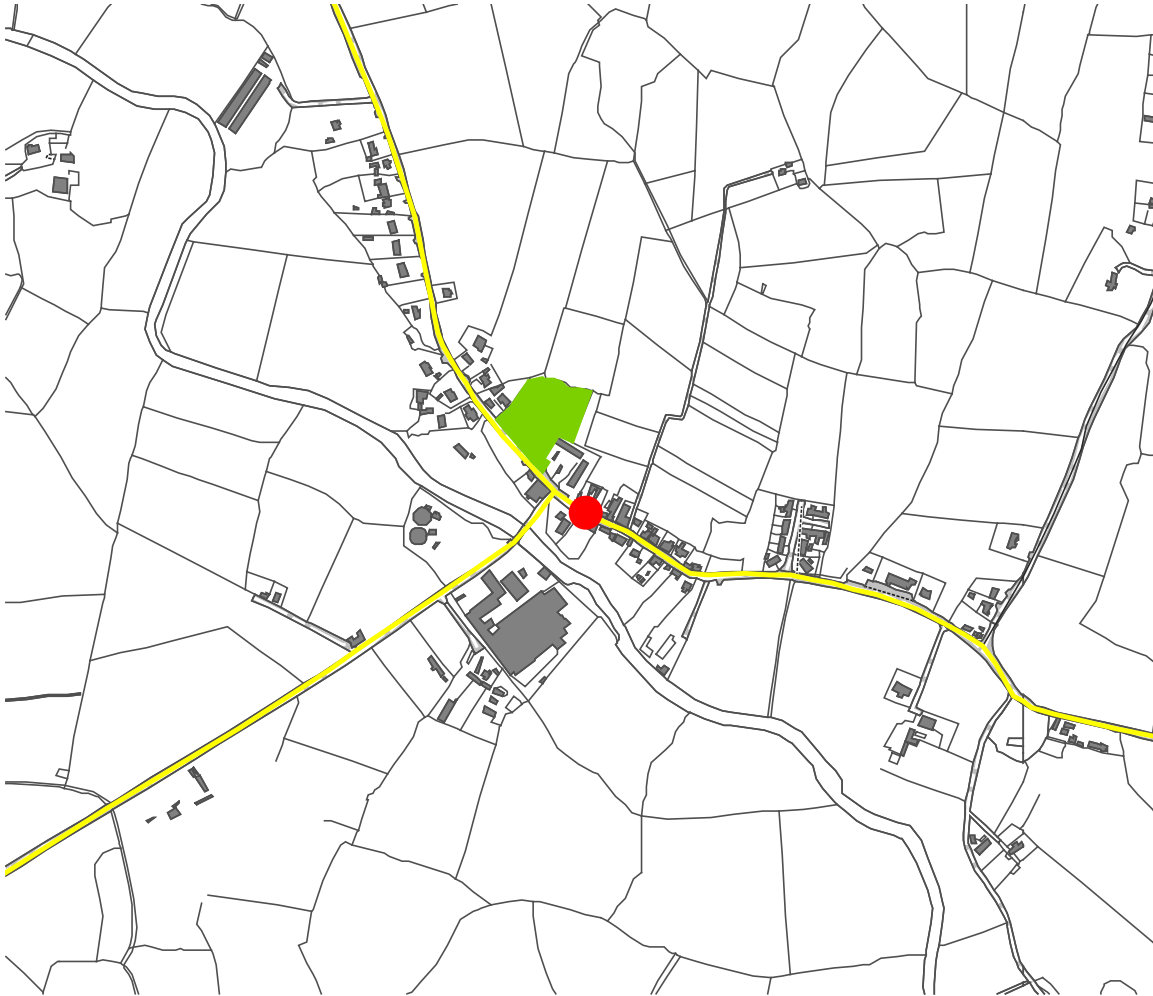
The settlement core in Cappagh is demarcated on the road from the community centre to the primary school for the purposes of this Plan. In this area there are approximately 7 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a primary school, church, and community centre. There is no public sewer in the village.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.10 Castlemahon - Tier 6 Settlement

Castlemahon is estimated to have approximately 52 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a shop, primary school, commercial garage, church and pubs. Castlemahon has no capacity in its effluent treatment plant at present.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.11 Castletown –Tier 6 Settlement

Castletown has approximately 11 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a pub, commercial garage and health centre. Castletown has water mains but does not have sewerage facilities.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.12 Crecora - Tier 6 Settlement

Crecora has approximately 21 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a primary school, church, shop, post office and sports pitch. There is no public sewer or water mains in the village.

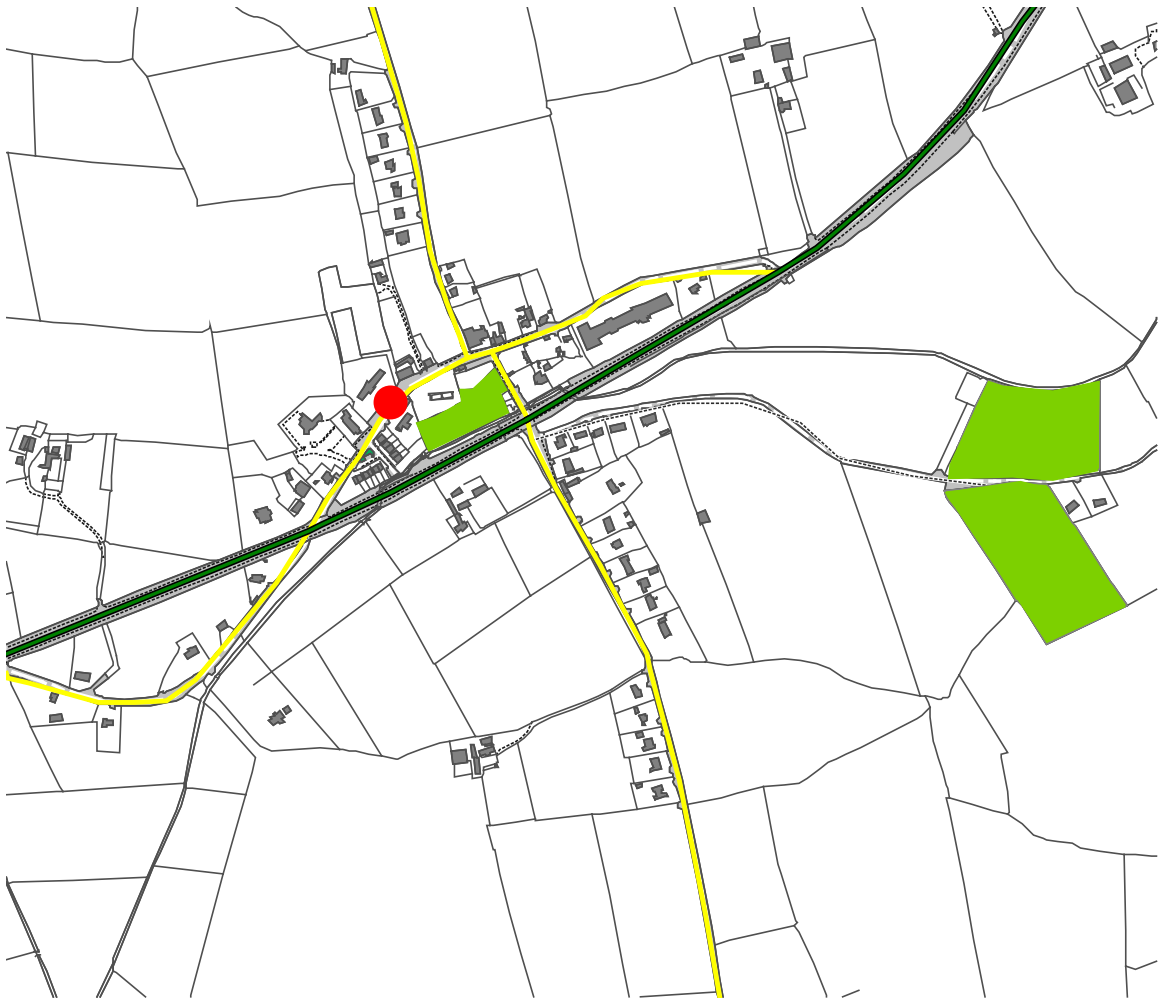


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 9.13 Croagh – Tier 6 Settlement

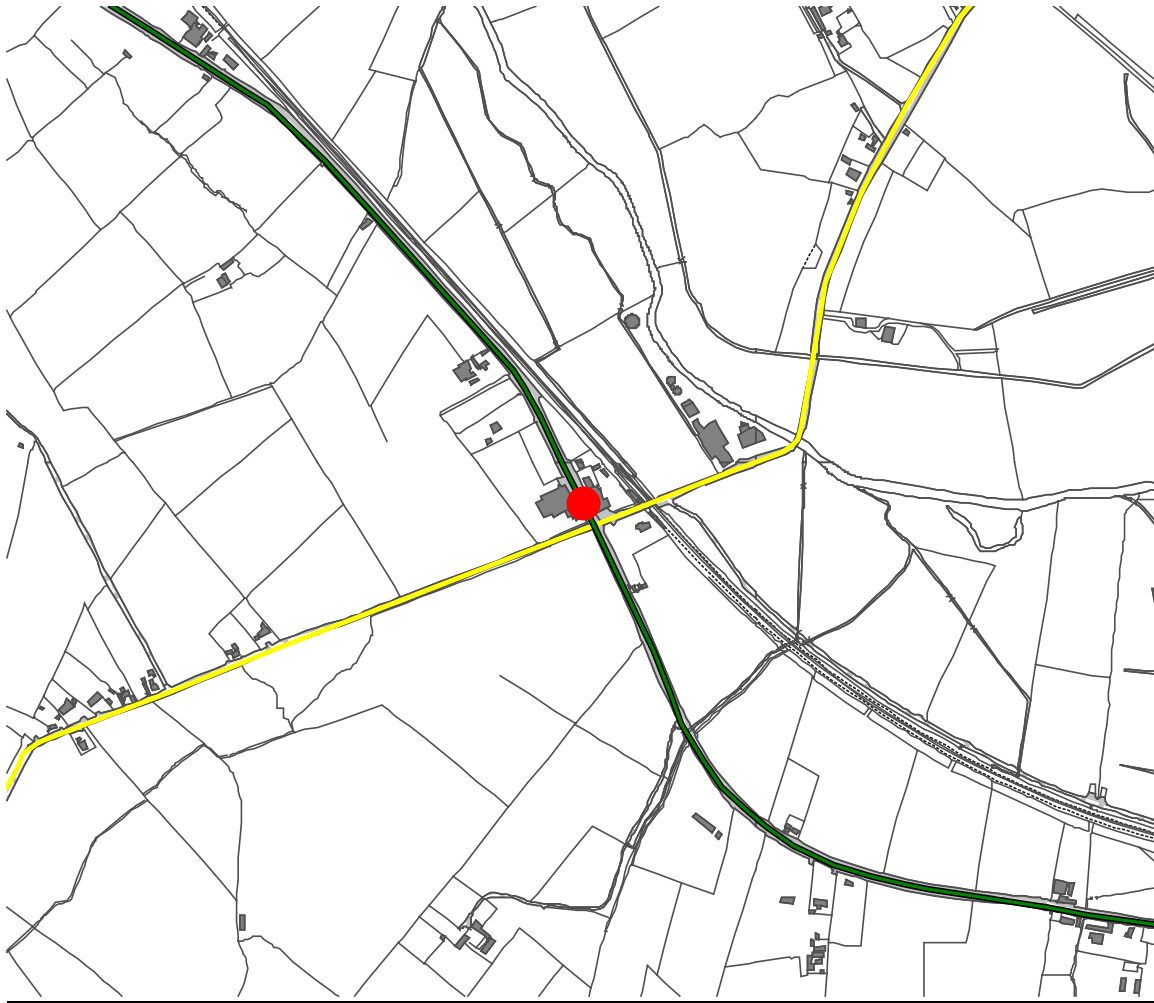
Croagh has approximately 31 inhabited dwellings. Its services include a primary school, church, shop, restaurant, sports pitch, doctor's surgery and a number of other facilities. The public effluent treatment system is currently operating at practically full capacity. The receiving watercourse has poor assimilative capacity and cannot cater for increased effluent. Croagh is served by a Group Water Supply at present. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.14 Dromkeen - Tier 6 Settlement

The settlement of Dromkeen is unusual as community facilities are dispersed over a distance of 2km. For the purposes of this Plan the population of Dromkeen is estimated to be 36 people between the County road L1153 and the junction with the N24. In this area there are 14 inhabited dwellings. Development shall be limited to infill development only with no access permitted onto the N24 National Road.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.15 Elton – Tier 6 Settlement

Elton has approximately 26 inhabited dwellings. It offers a shop and bar as services to the community. There is a GAA pitch outside the settlement. The public sewerage system is operating close to capacity. However, there is reasonably good assimilative capacity in the receiving water and the village could grow in accordance with Objective SSO1 of this Plan if a higher standard of treatment was provided.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

**9.16 Feenagh – Tier 6 Settlement**

Feenagh has approximately 44 inhabited dwellings. Its community infrastructure includes a primary school, church, a shop, pubs and post office. A sewerage plant is currently being upgraded in the village.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.17 Feohanagh– Tier 6 Settlement

Feohanagh has approximately 19 inhabited dwellings. Its community infrastructure includes a shop, church and day care centre. There are no sewage facilities. There is a group water scheme supply. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

**9.18 Glenbrohane – Tier 6 Settlement**

There are 5 inhabited dwellings in this area. There are two pubs in addition to the community hall and the primary school. There is no public sewer system and there is some capacity to provide public water.



### 9.19 Glenosheen– Tier 6 Settlement

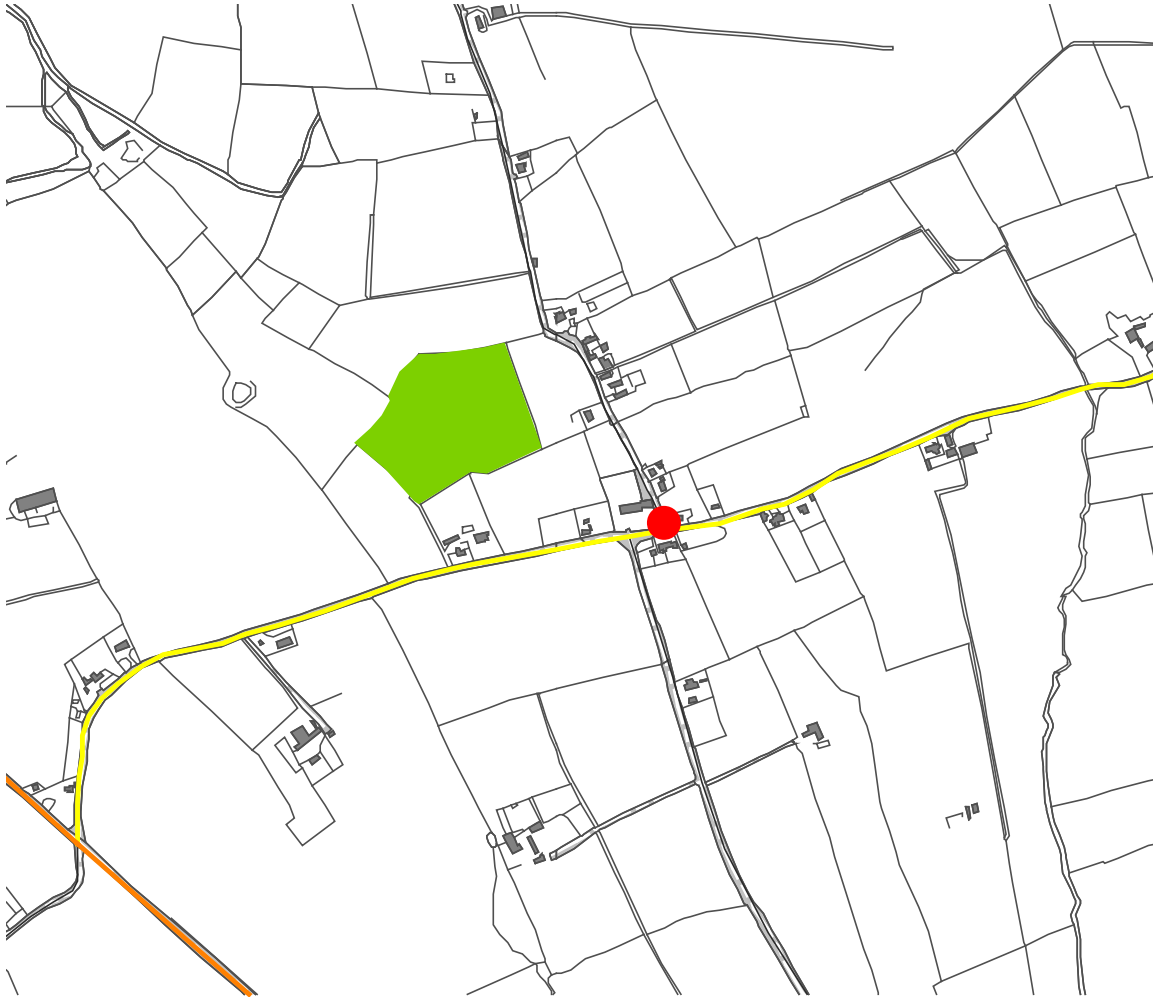
Glenosheen does not strictly conform to the definition of a settlement due to the absence of services. However, it does have a unique built conglomeration of dwellings associated with Castleoliver and the presence of a dwelling restored by the Council used for the artist in residence programme. There are 12 inhabited houses in Glenosheen. There is no public sewer system and there is some capacity to provide public water. Any proposals shall be sensitively designed to reflect the traditional design of existing structures.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.20 Glenroe – Tier 6 Settlement

Glenroe is estimated to have approximately 11 inhabited dwellings. There is a church and community hall in the village. The sports ground is outside the settlement. There is a group water scheme in Glenroe. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the relevant group.

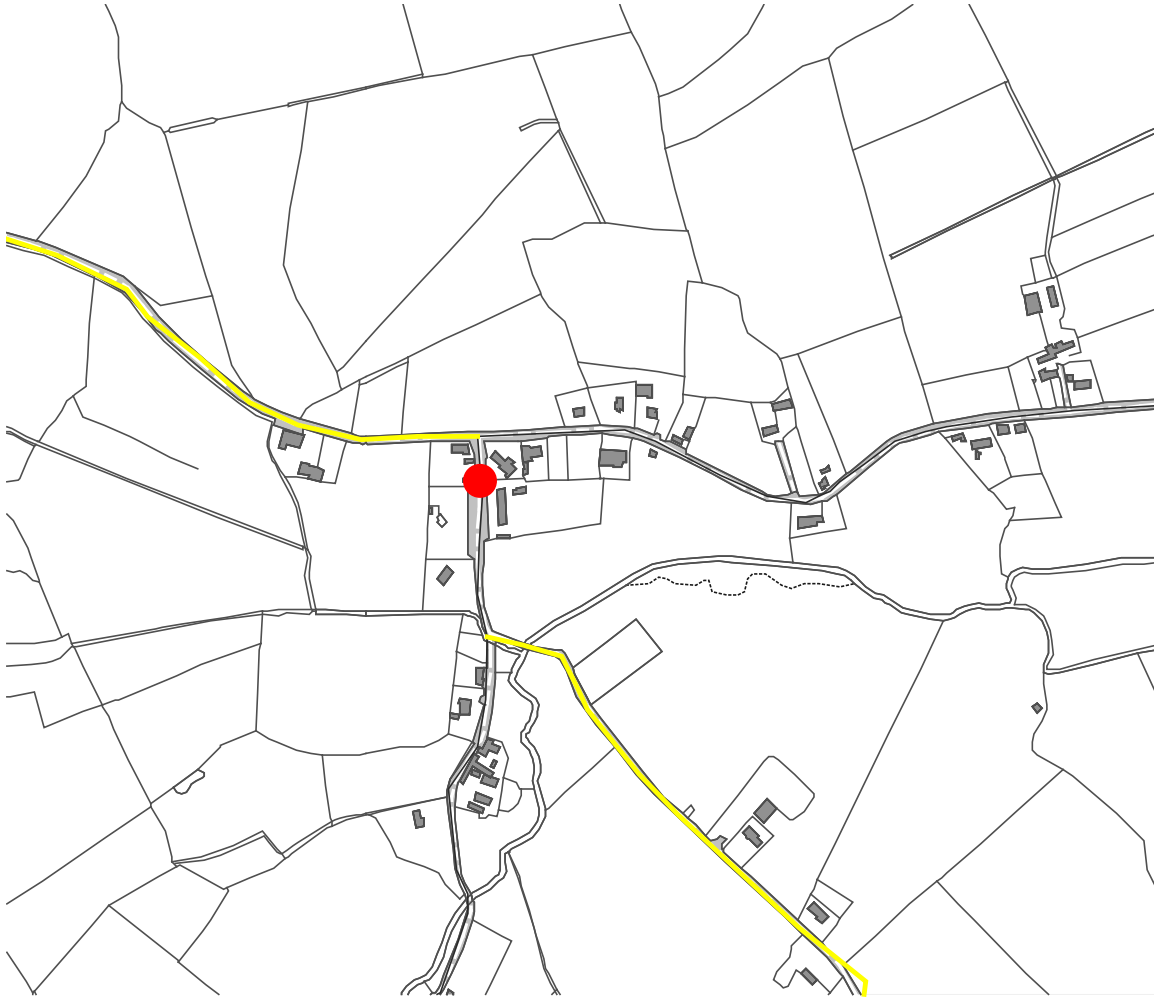


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 9.21 Granagh – Tier 6 Settlement

Granagh has approximately 8 inhabited dwellings. It provides a primary school, church, community hall, and co-op store. There is no public sewerage treatment system. There is a group water scheme in the village. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the relevant group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.22 Kilbeheny – Tier 6 Settlement

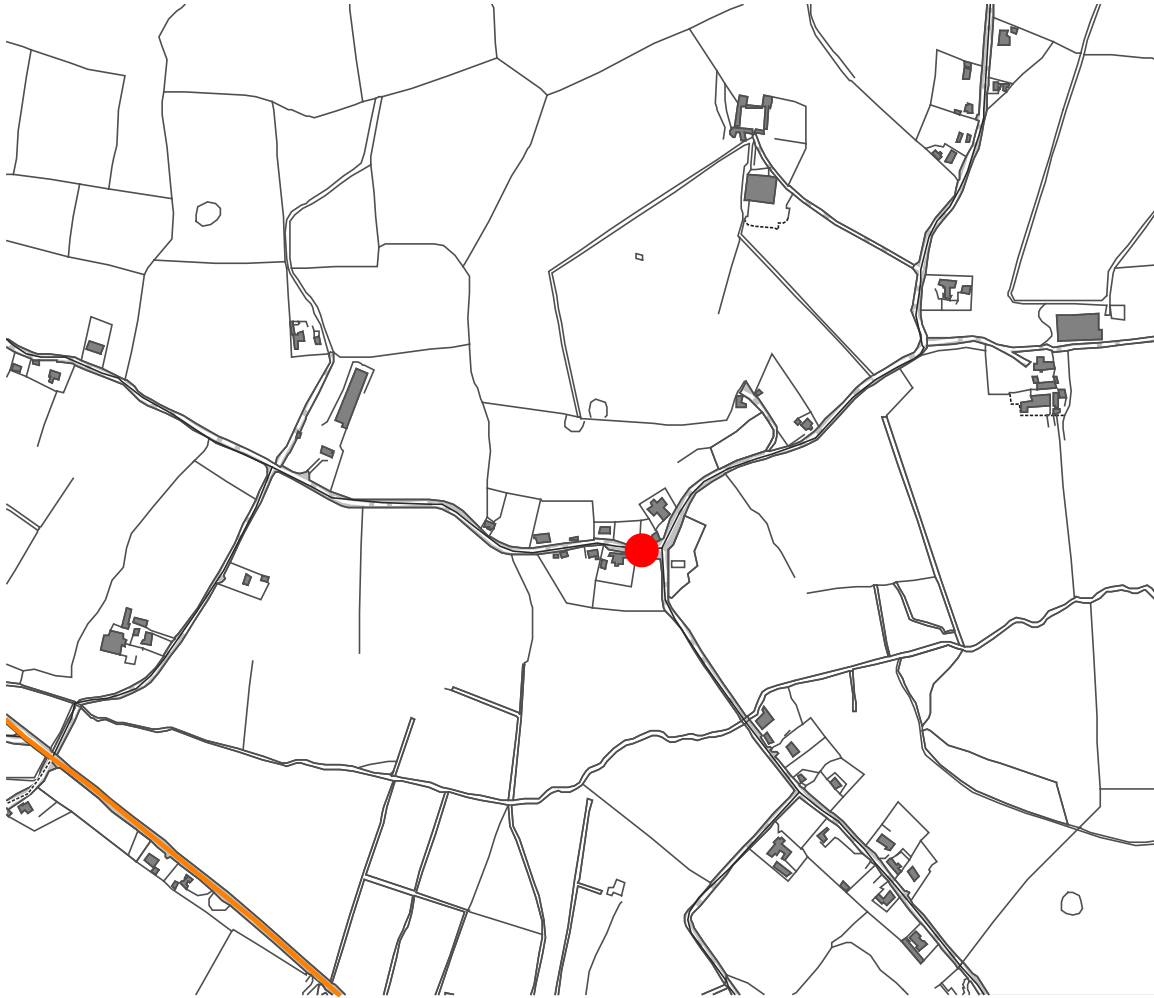
Part of the settlement of Kilbeheny is not in the jurisdiction of Limerick County Council as Kilbeheny is located on the Limerick – Cork border. Within County Limerick Kilbeheny has approximately 17 inhabited dwellings. It provides a church, shop, community hall, hairdressers, funeral home and pubs. The primary school is approximately 1km north-west of the settlement core. The water supply is supplied from County Cork.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.23 Kilcolman – Tier 6 Settlement

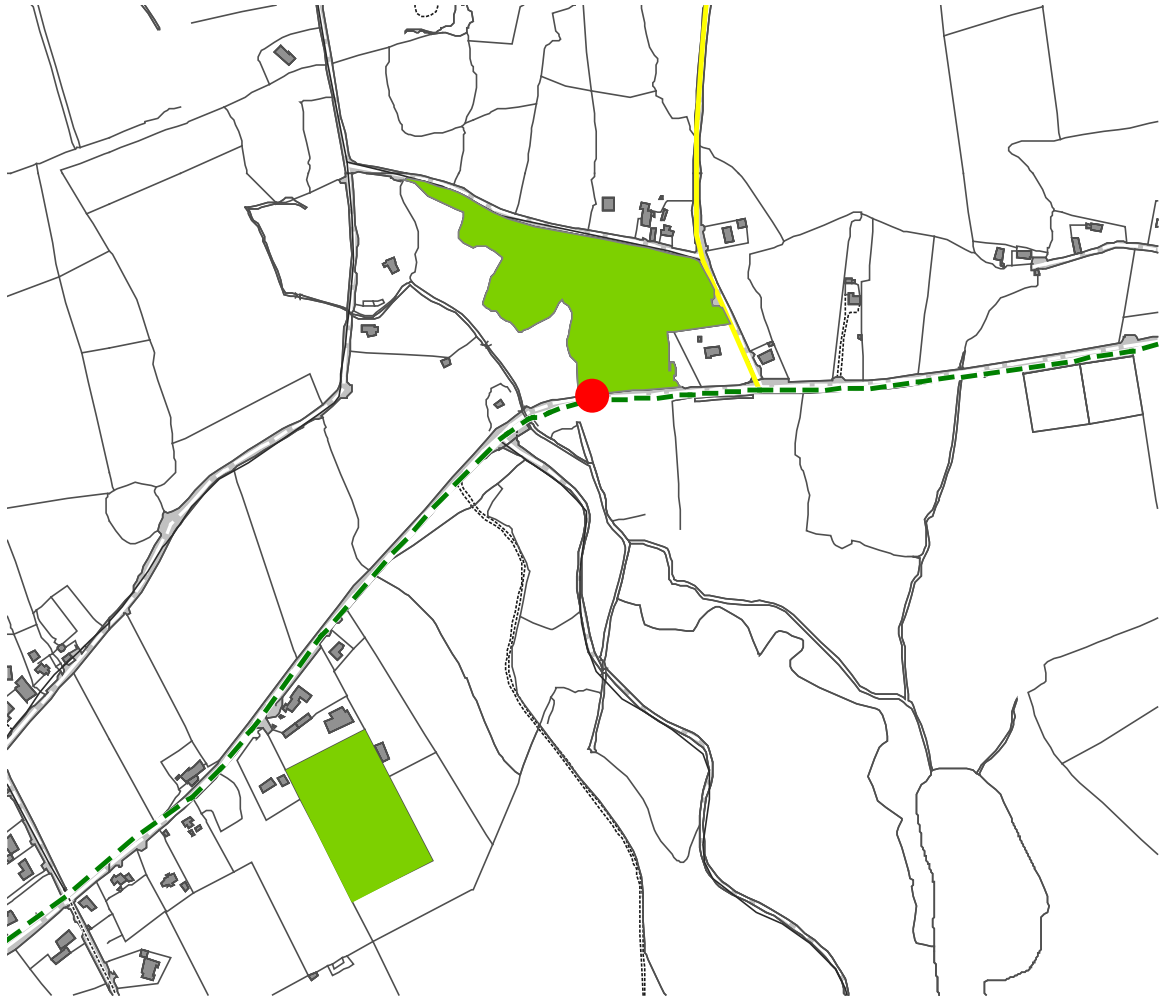
Kilcolman is included as a settlement in the Plan as it provides a range of services that include a post office, primary school, church and graveyard, crèche and shop. In the settlement core it has approximately 5 inhabited dwellings. Kilcolman does not have a public mains or sewer system. Lands at the junction are considered most suitable for potential infill development, subject to traffic safety.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.24 Kilcornan – Tier 6 Settlement

Kilcornan is a dispersed settlement whereby the Church is located approximately 0.5km east of the settlement core on the N69 and the primary school is located approximately 0.5km southwest of the settlement core on the N69. For the purposes of this plan the number of inhabited houses is 17 as taken from within the settlement boundary of the 2005 County Development Plan. Services provided include a shop, petrol station, pub, playing pitch and clubhouse, and a go-karting facility. There are no sewers in Kilcornan. Access will not be permitted onto the N69.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.25 Kilfinny – Tier 6 Settlement

Within the settlement core there are approximately 5 inhabited dwellings. There is a primary school, community hall and a church. There is no public sewer system. There is a group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the relevant group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.26 Kilmeedy – Tier 6 Settlement

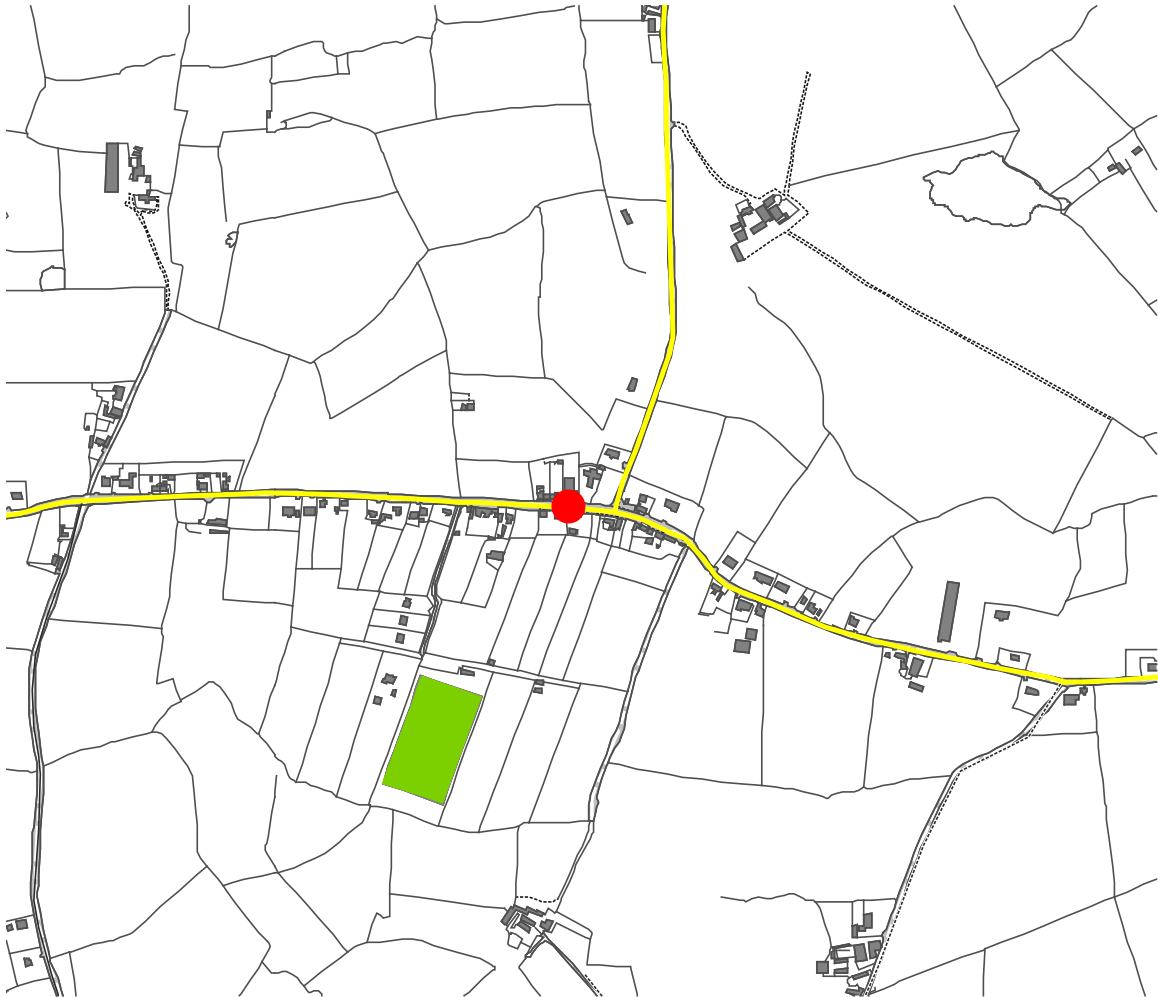
Kilmeedy has approximately 31 inhabited dwellings. Within the settlement core services include a primary school, Garda station, community hall, health clinic, church, grocery, tractor sales and pubs. There is a public sewerage treatment plant, however, there is little or no assimilative capacity in the stream to where the treatment plant discharges.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.27 Knockaderry – Tier 6 Settlement

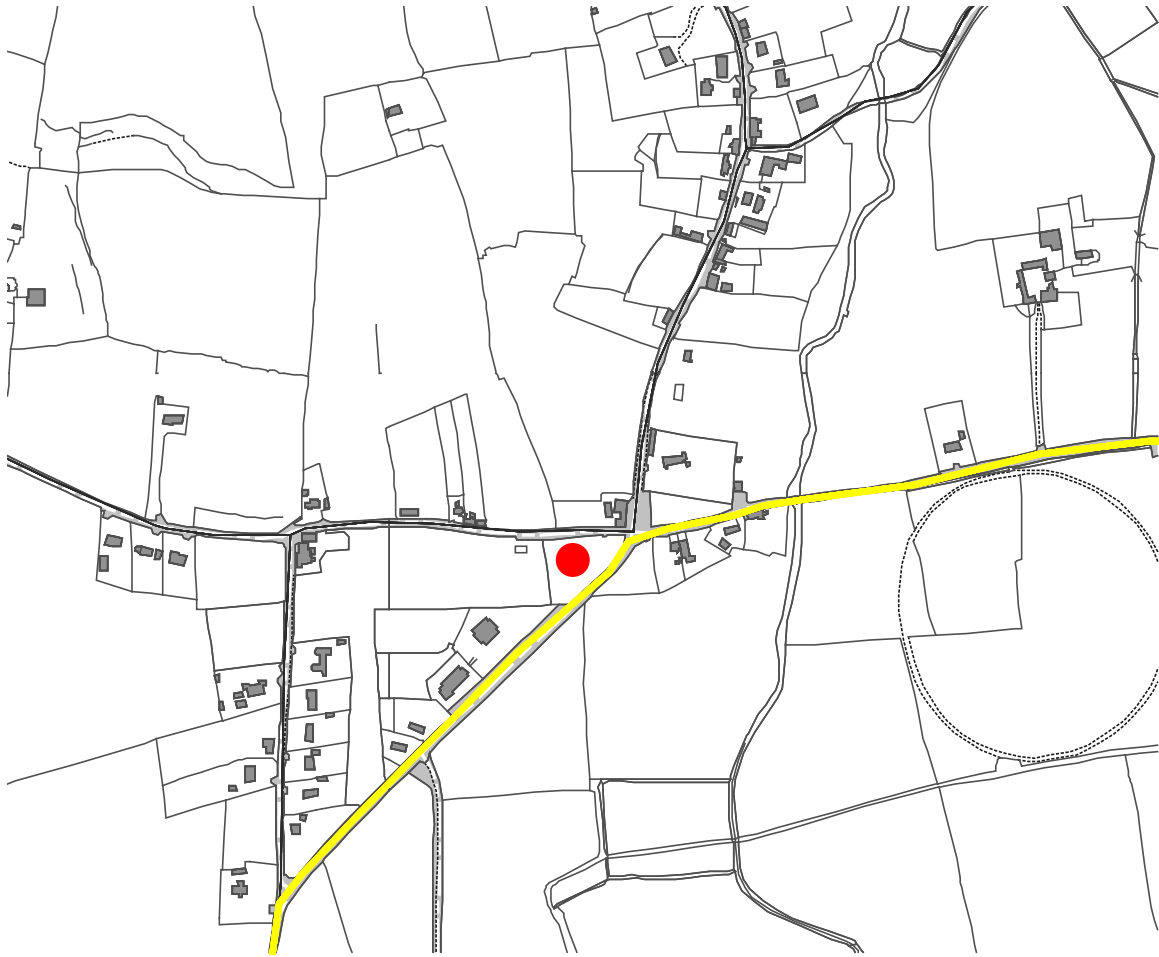
It is estimated that there are approximately 23 inhabited dwellings in Knockaderry. Services include a church and pub. The GAA pitch is located approximately 300 metres south of the settlement core. There is no sewage treatment plant in the village.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.28 Knockainy – Tier 6 Settlement

Knockainey is estimated to have approximately 23 inhabited dwellings. It has a primary school, 2 churches, community hall and pubs. The settlement is an archaeologically sensitive location. There is no public sewerage treatment system in this settlement. There is a group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.

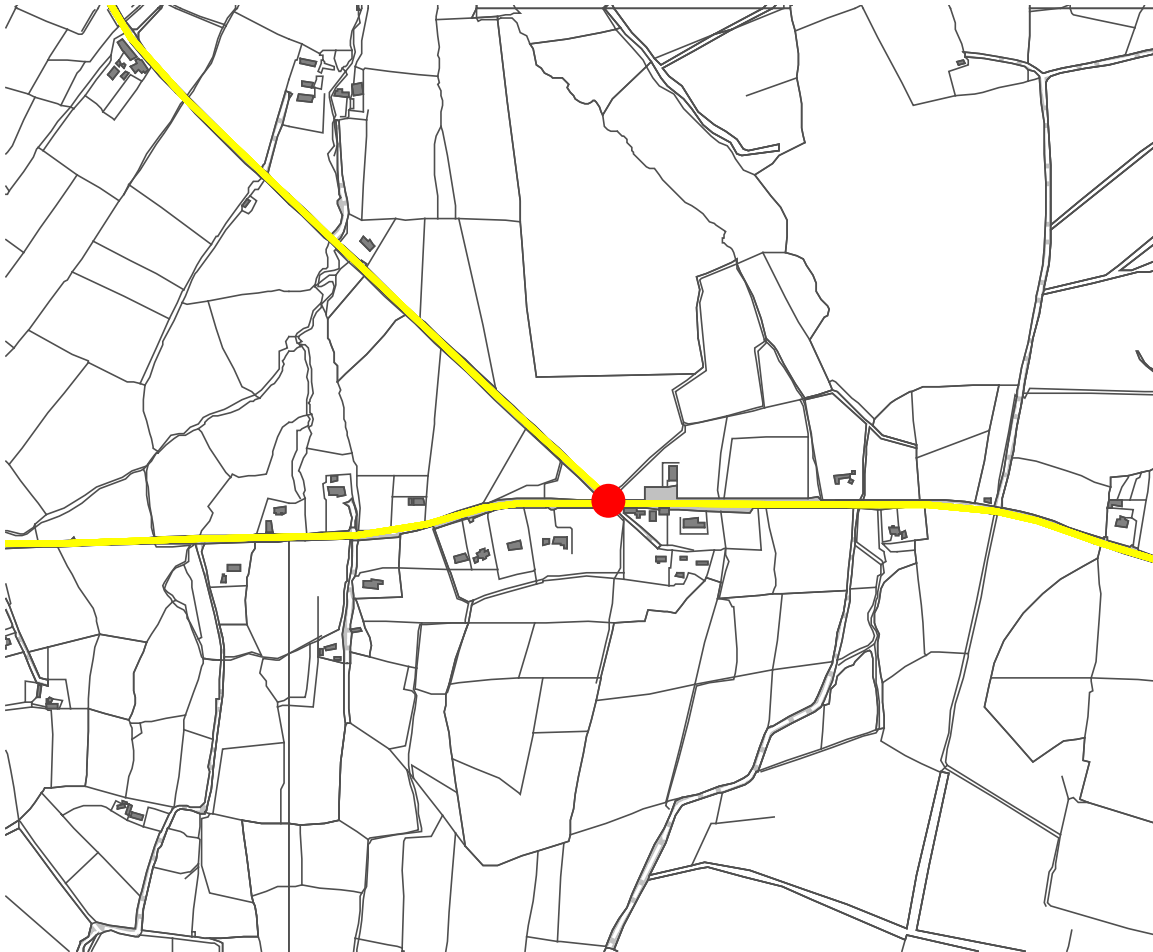


Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 9.29 Knockdown – Tier 6 Settlement

Knockdown is located approximately 9km east of Athea. The settlement has a population of approximately 39 people. Its services include a pub, shop and sports amenity. The area is served by public lighting and is within a 50 km speed limit. The settlement is located within the Stack's to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Special Protection Area. There is no effluent treatment system and no public water supply serving the settlement. Any potential development will be constrained by the above.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.30 Loghill – Tier 6 Settlement

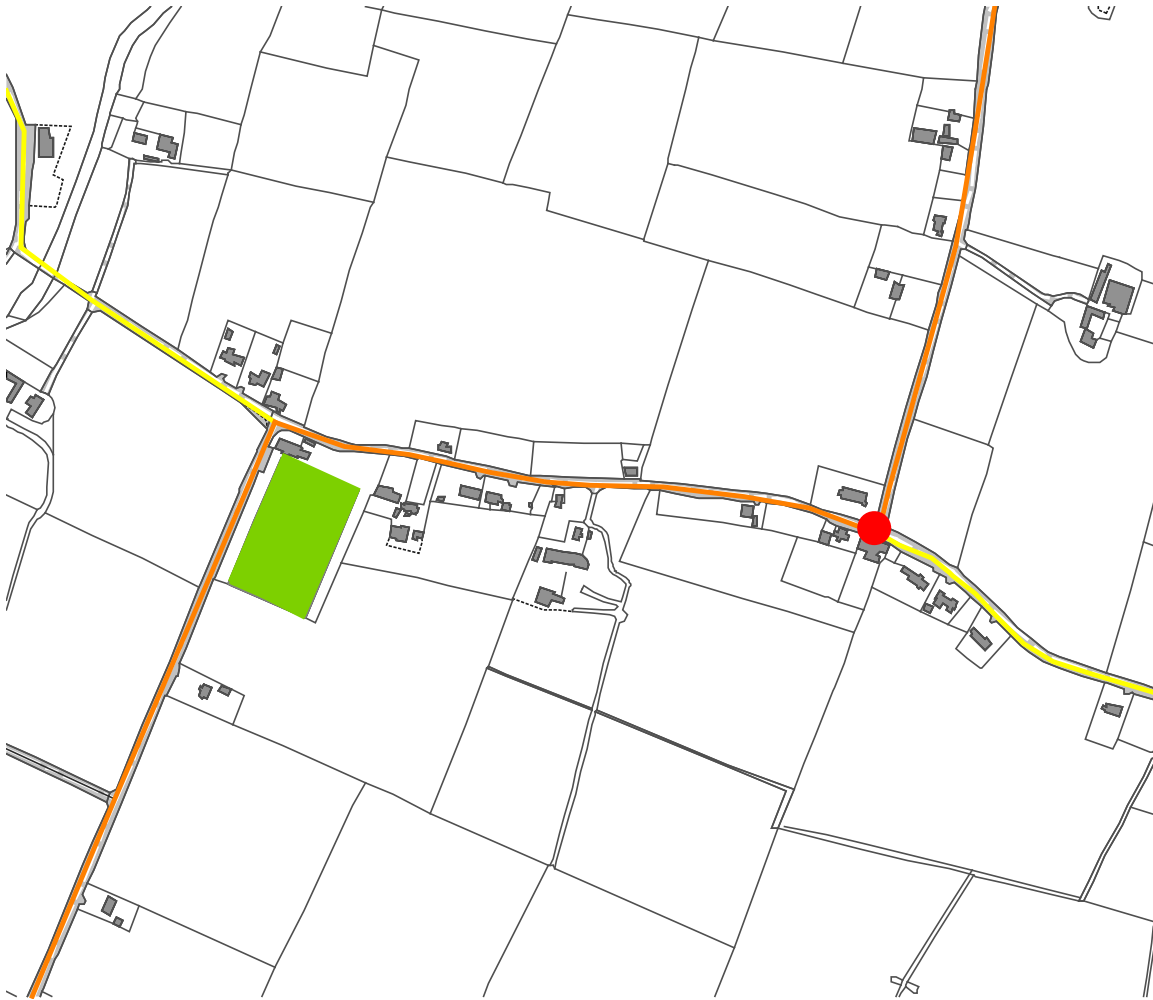
Loghill is located approximately 7km west of Foynes on the Shannon Estuary. There are approximately 67 inhabited dwellings in the village. Its services include a petrol station, shops, pub, church, primary school and community resource centre. Public sewage disposal is inadequate at present consisting of storage of effluent in a municipal tank. There is no effluent treatment system in this settlement. There is a public water supply. However, it is limited due to manganese issues with the supply. Any potential development will be constrained by the above. Access for any proposals will not be permitted on to the N69.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.31 Meanus – Tier 6 Settlement

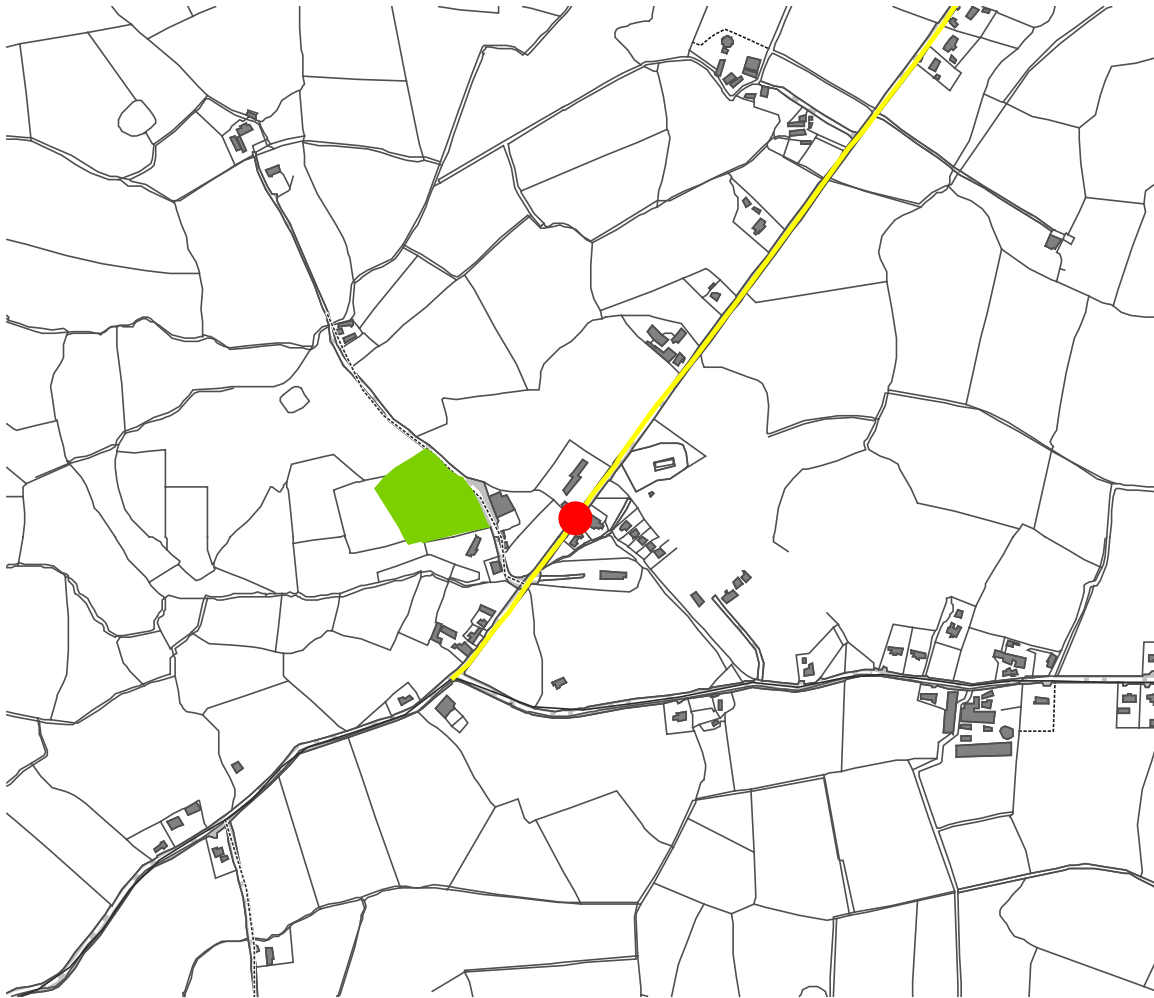
Meanus is estimated to have approximately 6 inhabited dwellings. It has a church, commercial garage and a pub. A sports ground is located approximately 500 metres west of the settlement core. Meanus does not have a sewerage system. There is a group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.32 Monagea – Tier 6 Settlement

Monagea is estimated to have approximately 40 inhabited dwellings. It has a pub, church, school and community centre. There is a sports ground approximately 100 metres west of the settlement core. At present Monagea does not have a public sewer system. The public water supply has capacity.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.33 Nicker – Tier 6 Settlement

Nicker is a dispersed settlement as the primary school is located approximately 800m east of the church. There are approximately 43 inhabited dwellings. Services include a church, school and pub. Public sewerage is connected to Pallas Green which is operating at capacity. There is limited water in the public supply.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.34 Old Pallas– Tier 6 Settlement

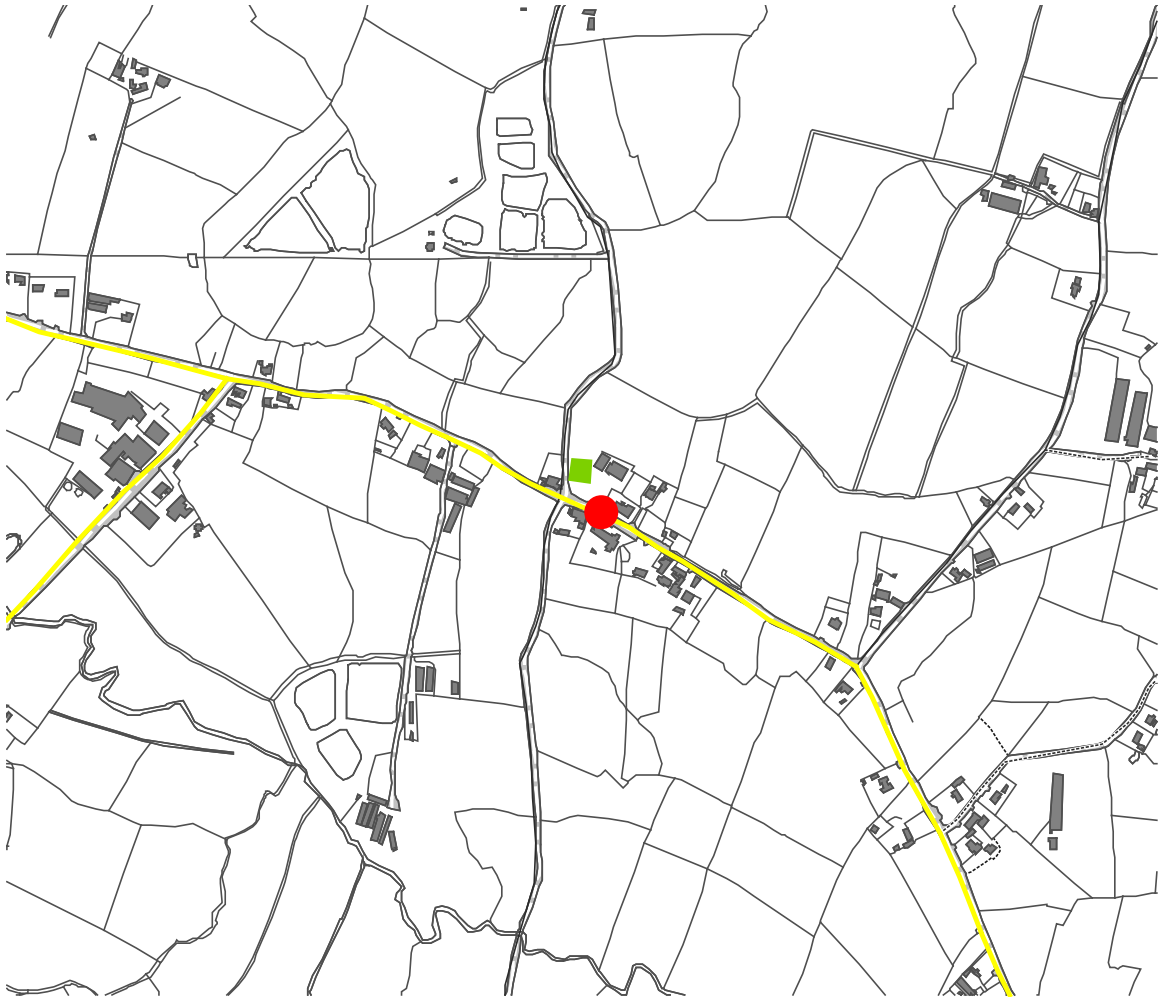
Services in Old Pallas include a post office, shop, petrol station, pub and other miscellaneous businesses. Old Pallas has a public water supply which is operating close to capacity. There is no public sewerage treatment system in the village.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.35 Raheenagh – Tier 6 Settlement

Raheenagh is estimated to have approximately 3 inhabited dwellings in the settlement core. It has a primary school, sports complex, church, shop and pub. It has no public sewer. There is a group water scheme serving the settlement.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.36 Strand – Tier 6 Settlement

Strand is estimated to have approximately 25 inhabited dwellings. It has two pubs. There is a communal effluent treatment system to accommodate a small number of dwellings constructed by the Council. There is no public sewerage scheme to accommodate future private development. There is a private group water scheme. New connections to group water schemes are at the discretion of the relevant group.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



### 9.37 Templeglantine – Tier 6 Settlement

Templeglantine is estimated to have approximately 42 inhabited dwellings. It has a primary school, church, community hall, shop, hotel and sports grounds. There is no public sewerage plant in the village however some dwellings are served by a communal sewage treatment system. Templeglantine is served by a public water main.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend

### 9.38 Tournafulla – Tier 6 Settlement

Community facilities serving Tournafulla are dispersed over a distance of approximately 1.5km on the L1324. Such services include a primary school, church, nursing home, community hall, Garda station, undertaker, shop, petrol station, hardware store, pubs and sports grounds. There are approximately 49 inhabited dwellings in this settlement. There are two public sewerage treatment systems in Tournafulla with possibilities to upgrade given the good assimilative capacity of the receiving water. There is capacity in the public water supply.



Note: See page APP1-2 for map legend



## **Appendix 2**

### **Glossary of Terms**

**Affordable Housing:**

Housing or lands made available by the planning authority to persons who need accommodation but whose income would not be adequate to meet the payments on a mortgage for the purchase of a house to meet his or her accommodation needs.

**Appropriate Assessment:**

An Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

**Architectural Conservation Area:**

A place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

**Backland Development:**

Development which takes place to the rear of existing structures fronting a street or roadway.

**Biodiversity:**

The variety of life (wildlife and plant life) on earth.

**Brownfield Sites:**

An urban development site that has been previously built on but is currently unused.

**Building Line:**

A development line along a street or roadway behind or in front of which development is discouraged.

**Building Regulations:**

The Building Control Act 1990 and the Regulations made under it constitutes a system for regulating building works and lays down the minimum standards for design, construction, workmanship, materials etc. Different standards apply depending on the use of the building.

**Carrying Capacity:**

This is the largest volume of traffic that a particular road or route can carry.

**Catchment Area:**

An area from which a place draws its population (i.e. a town, hospital or school) or the area served by a water/sewerage scheme.

**Comparison Goods:**

Those goods that are required on an infrequent basis by individuals and households such as clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings and household equipment (excluding non-durable household goods), medical and pharmaceutical products, therapeutic appliances and equipment, educational and recreation equipment and accessories, books, newspaper and magazines, goods for personal care and goods not elsewhere classified.

**Community Infrastructure:**

Community infrastructure refers to the complex system of facilities, programmes and social networks that improve quality of life. The term community infrastructure is more encompassing than community facilities as they contribute to capacity building in a community, thereby supporting a sustainable community.

**Convenience Goods:**

Those goods that are required on a daily or weekly basis by individuals and households (such as food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco and non-durable household goods).

**Demography (Demographics):**

Statistical study of human populations.

**Development Charges:**

Charges or levies placed on developers relating to the cost of services and utilities, which are provided by Limerick County Council.

**DEHLG:**

Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government.

**District Centre:**

Shopping or groups of shops, separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants serving suburban areas or smaller settlements.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):**

The process by which we measure anticipated effects on the environment of a proposed development or project. If the likely effects are unacceptable, design measures or other steps can be taken to reduce or repair those effects.

**Environmental Impact Statement: (EIS):**

The document produced in the EIA process is called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**Emissions:**

Carbon Dioxide, greenhouse gas or other noxious emissions.

**Greenfield Sites:**

A piece of open land that has not been built on and is therefore a vacant lot.

**Green Routes (Public Transport Corridors):**

These are high quality, high profile, public transport corridors where the emphasis is placed on efficient bus services and dedicated road space for pedestrians and cyclists. Priority traffic management systems are in place to favour the movement of large numbers of people rather than large volumes of traffic.

**Groundwater Protection:**

Protection of underground source of water (groundwater aquifer). Certain developments are subject to special controls within defined areas close to aquifers.

**Guesthouse:**

A building or part thereof where sleeping accommodation, meals and other refreshments are available to customers and which has a minimum of five rooms and not more than nineteen.

**Hedgerows:**

A natural or semi-natural row of bushes, shrubs and/or trees forming a boundary. Hedgerows help define places, act as shelterbelts, and add to biodiversity. They also offer significant wildlife habitat, including wildlife corridors which allow wild animals to move across open countryside, and provide food, nesting and roosting places.

**Household:**

One or more persons occupying a dwelling which has kitchen and bathroom facilities.

**Housing Stock:**

Houses that already exist.

**Infill Development:**

Refers to development taking place on a vacant or undeveloped site between other developments, i.e. an infill site.

**Infill Site:**

Small gap sites, unused or derelict land usually located in urban areas.

**Infrastructure:**

Drainage, water supplies, sewage treatment plants, sewerage networks, lighting, telecommunications networks, electricity and energy network, railways, roads, buildings, schools, community facilities and recreational facilities.

**Landscape Plans:**

A detailed plan prepared as part of a planning application, illustrating the steps the developer will take to provide hard and/or soft landscaping on the site.

**Landscape Conservation Areas:**

This is intended for the preservation of the landscape through control of development, this may also include exempted development, within a designated area.

**Local Agenda 21:**

Agenda 21 is a comprehensive worldwide programme for sustainable development in the twenty-first century with Local Agenda 21 being the programme at local level.

**Local Area Plan:**

A Plan prepared and adopted in accordance with Section 18 of the planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2010. These plans must be prepared for designated towns with a population in excess of 5,000 persons within the functional area of the Authority. They may also be prepared for areas which the Authority considers require economic, physical and social renewal and for areas likely to be subject to large scale development within the lifetime of the plan.

**Manager's Report:**

A document outlining the submissions made during the preparation of the Development Plan, the Manager's comments and recommendations on the submissions.

**Mobility Management Plan**

Mobility Management is a transport demand management mechanism that seeks to provide for the transportation needs of people and goods. It can be applied as a strategic demand management tool or as a site-specific (or area-specific) measure. The aim is to reduce demand for and use of cars by increasing the attractiveness and practicality of other modes of transport. - 'Mobility Plan – Advice Note', DTO, July 2002.

**Monument (Recorded Monument):**

An archaeological monument protected under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendments) Act, 1994.

**MWRPA**

Mid West Regional Planning Authority.

**MWRPGs**

Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines

**Natural Heritage Area (NHA):**

These are the basic areas for wildlife conservation in the country with over 800 in existence. These are chosen because they are considered by the Parks and Wildlife section of the DEHLG to be of importance in an Irish context.

***Note:** responsibility for the designation of these sites lies with the Parks and Wildlife Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.*



**National Spatial Strategy (NSS):**

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a coherent 20-year national planning framework for Ireland. It's about people, places and potential, making the most of our cities, towns and rural places to bring a better spread of opportunities, better quality of life and better places to live in. Key to the strategy is the concept of balanced regional development.

**Population Density:**

The number of people per unit area (hectare, square kilometre, acre, square mile) determined by dividing the number of people in an area by the size of the area.

**Protected Structure:**

A building, feature, site, or structure identified in the Development Plan as worthy of protection or preservation in accordance with Part IV of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010.

**Recycling Centre:**

A centre that facilitates the recycling of plastics, glass, corrugated cardboard, newspapers and/or other recyclable goods.

**REPS:**

Rural Environment Protection Schemes.

**Residential Densities:**

The number of residential units per area unit (hectare, acre).

**Rural Generated Housing:** Housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by people working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas.

**Rural Area:** The rural area shall be defined as land located outside the development boundaries of the town and villages identified in the settlement structure in Table 3.1

**Serviced Land Initiative:**

A special fund, set up by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, to part finance local authority water and sewerage schemes providing services to open up development land.

**Service Sector:**

This is the employment sector, which involves the provision of services, frequently referred to as the tertiary sector.

**Set Backs:**

This relates to the distance a building line, or a portion of a building line, should be set back from a street, roadway or watercourse.

**Site Coverage:**

Site coverage is the portion of the site, which is built on and is a ratio determined by dividing the total site area by the ground floor area of the building.

**Social Housing:**

This is housing provided for persons who are registered with the Local Authority on the Social Housing Waiting List, and assessed as being eligible for social housing. The broad categories of households who are eligible for social housing are set out in Section 9(2) of the 1988 Housing Act and include the homeless, travellers, persons living in unfit or overcrowded accommodation, the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons who cannot reasonably afford to provide their own accommodation.

**Social Impact Assessment:**

This is a systematic documented analysis of the availability of social facilities in a community/settlement. The purpose of a SIA is:

- To give a broad overview of existing social infrastructure (services/facilities) currently provided within the vicinity of a proposed development site.
- To determine what measures could be proposed as part of a development scheme in order to provide for social infrastructure (services/facilities) which are considered by the Planning Authority to be deficient in the area.

**Social Inclusion:**

Combat Poverty define social inclusion as ‘ensuring the marginalised and those living in poverty have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives, allowing them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.’, Combat Poverty, [www.combatpoverty.ie/povertyinireland/glossary](http://www.combatpoverty.ie/povertyinireland/glossary). Social exclusion is defined by the same source as ‘the process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, low education or inadequate life skills. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and little chance of influencing decisions or policies that affect them, and little chance of bettering their standard of living.’

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process introduced under the Planning and Development Regulations (SEA), 2004 that runs in tandem with the policy formulation of the plan and assesses the potential effects of the implementation of the plan on the environment.

**Sustainable Development:**

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Sustainability Statement**

The sustainability check list is the proofing document used in the planning application process for residential developments (over 5 dwellings), or commercial/industrial

developments over 1000sqm to access compliance with the principles of sustainable development as defined by the Comhar document 'Principles for Sustainable Development'.

**Special Areas of Conservation (SAC):**

SAC's support habitats and plant and animal species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures to protect them. These sites considered of importance at both Irish and European level. The EU habitat directive, transposed into Irish law is the legal basis for the designation of these sites. Site types can vary from bogs to woodlands to river systems.

**Special Protection Areas (SPA):** these are primarily for the conservation of bird species, and the legal basis for their designation is the EU Birds directive. The designation is required for listed rare and vulnerable species, migratory species such as wildfowl, and for wetlands which attract large numbers of wildfowl every year.

**Special Amenity Area (SAA):** the objective of a Special Amenity Area Order is to protect outstanding landscapes, and their amenity value. This allows Local Authorities to strictly control development without the need for compensation and to control certain developments, which are normally exempt. These orders are proposed by the Local Authority, and approved by the minister.

**Settlement:**

A settlement can be defined as a compact community usually though not exclusively titled a village with a traditional core, which has a number of the following features or facilities: a church, school, pub/shop, community hall and other community/recreational facilities and some elements of public infrastructure and which function as a service centre for a wider community.

**Topography:**

Features of a place or district, the position of its rivers, mountains, roads, buildings etc.

**Town Centre/Village Centre:**

Town, village and district centres that provide a broad range of facilities and services and serve as a focus for the community and for public transport. It excludes retail parks, local centres and small parades of shops of purely local significance.

**Transport 21**

Transport 21 is a government initiative consisting of a capital investment framework under the National Development Plan through which the transport system in Ireland will be developed, over the period 2006 to 2015. It applies to Metro/Luas, heavy rail, roads, bus transport and the regional airports.

**Tree Preservation Orders:**

An order made by Limerick County Council for the preservation of any tree, trees, group of trees or woodlands. The order may prohibit the cutting down, topping, lopping or

wilful destruction of trees, except with the consent of Limerick County Council, which may be granted subject to conditions.

**Urban Fringe:**

The edge of a built up area where urban and rural environments interface.

**Urban Generated Housing:**

Housing in rural locations sought by people living and working in urban areas, including second homes.



## Appendix 3

### List of Significant Archaeological Sites and National Monuments

The list of significant archaeological sites is broken into the following sections:

- Major sites of archaeological importance in County Limerick in state ownership or guardianship;
- National Monuments, which are the subject of preservation orders in County Limerick; and
- Record of Monuments and Places.

MAJOR SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN COUNTY LIMERICK IN STATE OWNERSHIP (O) OR GUARDIANSHIP (G)			
Monument	Townland	Status	Group
Megalithic Tomb (Leaba na Muice) (F)	Ballynagallagh	G	Lough Gur
Crannog (Crock Isld)	Grange	G	Lough Gur
House Site ("Spectacles")	Grange	G	Lough Gur
House Sites (Knockadoon)	Grange	G	Lough Gur
Hut Sites (Carrigalla)	Grange	G	Lough Gur
Megalithic Tomb (E)	Grange	O	Lough Gur
Standing Stone (A)	Grange	G	Lough Gur
Stone Circle (C)	Grange	G	Lough Gur
Stone Circle (D)	Grange	G	Lough Gur
Site, Barrow	Knockfennel	O	Lough Gur
Stone Circle (T), Fort	Knockfennel	O	Lough Gur
Cairn (M)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Cairn (P)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Circle Enclosure and Standing Stone (J)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Circular Enclosure (K)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Circular Enclosure (L)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Megalithic Tomb (M)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Standing Stone (N)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Standing Stone (S)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Stone Circle (O)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
The Stone Forts (Carrigalla)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Two Standing Stones (I)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Two Stone Circles (G)	Lough Gur	O	Lough Gur
Desmond Castle	Adare	O	
Askeaton Castle	Aghalacka	G	
Ringfort & Fulachta Fiadha	Ballylanders	O	
Hospital Church	Barrysfarm	O	
Church (Mungret Group)	Baunacloka	O	
Church	Carrigeen	O	
Clonkeen Church	Clonkeen-Barrington	O	
Killeen Church	Cowpark	G	
Earthworks (part)	Cush	O	
Passage Grave etc. (Duntryleague Hill)	Deerpark	G	
Mungret Abbey Church	Dromdarrig	O	
Rathard Fort	Garryheakin	O	
Killulta Church	Glennamade	G	
Castle	Glenquin	O	
Collegiate Church of SS. Peter & Paul	Killmallock Town	G	
King's Castle, Blossom Gate	Killmallock	O	
Killmallock Abbey (Dom.)	Killmallock (Abbeyfarm)	O	
Ringfort	Kilmihill	O	
Kilrush Church	Kilrush (Limerick Urban)	G	
De Valera's Cottage	Knockmore	O	

Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 November 2010 (as varied May 2017)

Killaliathan Church	Lacka Lower	<b>O</b>	
Fanning's Castle (part of)	Limerick (Boro's)	<b>O</b>	
King John's Castle	Limerick (Boro's)	<b>G</b>	
Askeaton Abbey (Frans.)	Moig South	<b>G</b>	
Abbey (Cist.)	Monasteranenagh	<b>O</b>	
Desmond Banqueting Hall	Newcastle West	<b>O</b>	
Templars Castle Complex	Newcastlewest (Castle Demesne)	<b>O</b>	
Ardagh Fort	Reerasta South	<b>O</b>	

NATIONAL MONUMENTS WHICH ARE THE SUBJECT OF PRESERVATION ORDERS IN COUNTY LIMERICK				
No. of P.O.	Monument	Townland	O.S. Map	Effective Date of Order
30	Castle(Kilbeheny)	Castlequarter	58	16/10/34
34	Temair Erann (5 Ringforts)	Cush	48	23/01/35
50	Knockainy Castle	Knockainy West	32	16/02/37
191	Ardpatrick Round Tower	Ardpatrick	56	18/07/53
9/56	Ringfort	Tulligmac Thomas	45:10	14/03/56
21/56	Ringfort(Lissagutta)	Ballycullane Lower	17:7	04/07/56
22/56	Ringfort(Lisnagrew)	Ballycullane Lower	17:7	04/07/56
10/57	Castle	Shanid Upper	19:9	02/10/57
7/71	Platform Earthwork	Gormanstown (Grady)	40:10	07/10/71
5/72	Ringfort	Croom	30:7	07/03/72
1/73	Castle (Newcastlewest)	Castle Demesne	36	04/01/73
4/73	Ringfort	Ballynoe	39:13	15/02/73
3/74	Stone Circle	Grange	32:5	21/10/74
34/76	Black Castle	Lough Gur	32:5	19/08/76
4/77	Stone Fort	Milltown North	19:4	28/02/77
5/78	Ringfort	Ballyteigue Lower	38:16	25/10/78
2/88	Ringfort	Cappanafaraha	39:09	1988
4/94	Enclosures	Ballynamona	41:14	05/10/94

#### **Record Of Monuments & Places**

Previously, Sites and Monuments Record

All Monuments and Places deemed to be included

Copies of the Maps and Record of Monuments and Places are available to consult in the Council's principle libraries and the Planning Department





## Appendix 4

### **Statement of Implementation by Limerick County Development Plan of Ministerial Guidelines**

The following is a list of the ministerial guidelines issued to planning authorities regarding their functions in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2010. Planning authorities must have regard to these guidelines in the performance of their functions. The table overleaf illustrates how Limerick County Council has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the guidelines when considering their application to the County Development Plan in accordance with Section 28 (1A) and (1B). This matrix indicates in which specific chapters of the County Development Plan, policies relating to each of the ministerial guidelines have been included.

CDP Chapter	Intro	Core Strategy	Settlement Strategy	Housing	Economic Development	Community & Recreation	Environment & Heritage	Transport & Infrastructure	Shannon Estuary	Dev. Management	Implementation	SEA & AA
<i>Guideline</i>												
<i>Architectural Heritage Protection</i>							√			√		
<i>Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Worship</i>							√					
<i>Best Practice Urban Design Manual – Part 1 &amp; 2</i>			√	√		√				√		
<i>Childcare Facilities</i>						√				√		
<i>Design Standards for New Apartments</i>				√						√		
<i>Development Plan Guidelines</i>	√										√	
<i>Development Management Guidelines</i>										√		
<i>Draft Spatial Planning and National Roads</i>								√		√		
<i>Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines</i>		√	√									
<i>Landscape and Landscape Assessment</i>							√		√			√
<i>Provision of Schools and the Planning System</i>						√				√		
<i>Quarries and Ancillary Activities</i>							√			√		
<i>Retail Planning Guidelines</i>					√					√		
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>							√					√
<i>Sustainable Rural Housing</i>		√	√							√		
<i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas</i>		√	√	√		√				√		

CDP Chapter	Intro	Core Strategy	Settlement Strategy	Housing	Economic Development	Community & Recreation	Environment & Heritage	Transport & Infrastructure	Shannon Estuary	Dev. Management	Implementation	SEA & AA
Telecommunication Antennae & Support Structures								√		√		
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management								√		√		√
Tree Preservation							√					
Wind Energy Development							√			√		√
Appropriate Assessment of plans & projects in Ireland							√					√

