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10/6/2016

**TO: THE MAYOR AND EACH MEMBER OF THE  
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK**

**Adoption of a Statement of Consistency on the draft Local Economic and Community Plan  
(LECP) 2016-2021**

Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, requires local authorities to prepare a six year Local Economic and Community Plan for their functional area for the purposes of promotion of economic development and the promotion of local and community development.

A statutory Advisory Steering Group was set up in 2015 consisting of members of the LCDC, and the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC and representatives of the Social Development and Economic Development Directorates. The draft socio-economic statement and high level goals were considered by the municipal district members before public consultation. Following this process, the revised socio-economic statement and high level goals were presented and agreed at the municipal meetings. This led to the development of the full draft Local Economic and Community Plan (attached).

The adoption of the LECP is a reserved function of the Council. The members at District level need to be satisfied that the draft LECP is consistent with the Limerick City Development Plan 2010, the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 and the relevant Local Area Plans. There must also be consistency between the economic and the community elements of the LECP.

**If the members are satisfied that there is consistency the following statement should be adopted by the members in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended:**

*"The members of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, having considered the draft Limerick Local Economic Community Plan, find it is consistent with the Limerick City Development Plan 2010, the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 and the relevant Local Area Plans and that there is consistency between the economic and the community elements of the LECP."*

Mr Seamus O'Connor  
Chief Officer  
Limerick Local Community Development Committee

10/6/2016

**TO: THE MAYOR AND EACH MEMBER OF THE  
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK**

**Statement of Consistency on the draft Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021**

I refer to the draft Local Economic and Community Plan. Having reviewed the draft plan I am satisfied that it is consistent with the Local City Development Plan 2010, the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 and the relevant Local Area Plans.

Furthermore both the economic and the community elements of the plan are also consistent.

I note that the draft Local Economic and Community Plan was presented to the Economic, Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2016.

Mr Pat Daly  
Director of Economic Development

DRAFT

LIMERICK LOCAL ECONOMIC AND  
COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP) 2016-2021

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COMHAIRLE  
CATHRACH & CONTAE  
**Luimnigh**  
**Limerick**  
CITY & COUNTY  
COUNCIL

18<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016

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## GLOSSARY

CEDRA	Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSE	Children and Young Person's Services Committee
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DECLG	Department of Environment Community and Local Government
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EI	Enterprise Ireland
EARDF	European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HSE	Health Services Executive
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
LCCC	Limerick City and County Council
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCEA	Limerick Clare Energy Agency
LCETB	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LIT	Limerick Institute of Technology
MD	Municipal Districts
MIC	Mary Immaculate College University of Limerick
NEETs	Young people not in employment education or training
NRA	National Roads Authority
NSS	National Spatial Strategy
PPN	Public Participation Network
R&DI	Research & Development and Innovation
RA	Regional Assembly
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zones
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SOLAS	Further Education and Training Authority
SPC	Strategic Policy Committees
TFI	Transport for Ireland
TUSLA	The Child and Family Agency
UL	University of Limerick
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative

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## 1. Introduction and Background

*“Putting People First”* (2012) sets out the rationale and proposals of government for a major reform of local government in Ireland. An important objective of the reform is to bring local government closer to the citizen, to improve the delivery of services to citizens and achieve greater efficiency. The reforms expand and strengthen the role of local government in economic and enterprise development and community development.

### 1.1 Key Structures at Local Level and their Role

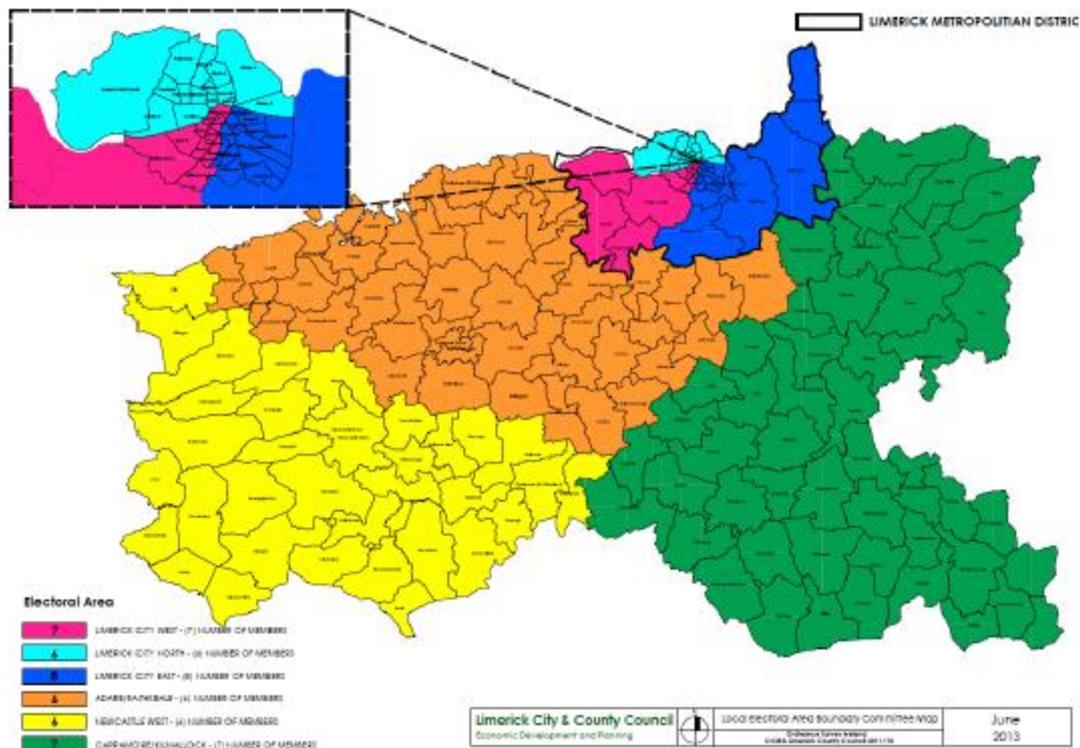
The Local Government Reform Act (2014) gives legislative effect to the proposals in *“Putting People First”*. This includes setting up new structures and processes to work with local communities. The purpose is to deliver economic development, social inclusion, environmental and community participation and development objectives. The key processes and structures and their role in making the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) are as follows:

- The Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC) for Limerick City and County. This is a partnership-based structure of public, private and community and voluntary sector interests with the majority of its members drawn from outside public agencies. It is an independent statutory sub-committee of Limerick City and County Council. It has planning, coordination, oversight / monitoring and decision-making functions in relation to local economic and community development.
- The preparation of a six-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), to be led by the LCDC in relation to the community elements, and by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise, Limerick City and County Council in relation to the economic elements. An Advisory Steering Group, comprising members of the LCDC and the SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise, was set up to guide the preparation of the content of the LECP.
- The setting up and roll out of the Public Participation Network (PPN) throughout Limerick City and County, led by the local authority. The purpose of the PPN is to engage communities and citizens in local decision-making and planning.
- Limerick City and County Council. The adoption of the LECP is a reserved function of the local authority – i.e., the full council is required to adopt the LECP.

### 1.2 Progress with Implementation of New Arrangements in Limerick

The amalgamation of Limerick City and County Council came into effect following local elections in June 2014. The local authority area is divided into sub-units known as Municipal Districts (4), which were defined in the Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report 2013. These are: the Metropolitan District, which covers the city urban area and extends outwards towards Patrickswell to the south west and Castleconnell to the north east and three Municipal Districts in the County: Adare-Rathkeale in the north west of the county, Newcastlewest, in the south west of the county, and Cappamore-Kilmallock, covering the east of the county. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Limerick Metropolitan (Limerick City West, Limerick City North, Limerick City East) and Municipal Districts**



### 1.3 The Local Economic and Community Development Plan (LECP)

The purpose of the LECP, as stated in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions to promote and support economic development and local and community development of the local authority area. The overarching aim of the LECP is “to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities”.

#### 1.3.1 The LECP: An integrated plan

The LECP involves two elements:

- i. Economic elements, to be developed by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise;
- ii. Community elements, to be developed by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

The LECP as a whole is prepared as an integrated plan. This means that the various elements work together to create mutually reinforcing strategies and actions and, in the process, maximise the benefits to the local area and local communities. In order to achieve integration of strategies and actions, the key stakeholders must work in partnership and collaboration. The LECP presents an opportunity for this to happen, working under the new structures of local government.

### 1.3.2 The LECP: A framework for action and opportunity to strengthen collaboration

The LECP is a framework plan for the economic development and local/community development of Limerick City and County. It will be the primary mechanism at local level to bring forward relevant actions under the various strategies, policies and programmes including those outlined above.

The LECP identifies high level **Goals** for the integrated Plan, supported by specific **Objectives** for the economic and community elements. The objectives will be achieved through the implementation of **Actions**. Types of action in the LECP are identified by theme. These are developed in a way which is consistent with existing plans of Limerick City and County Council – all of which adopt an integrated approach: in particular, *Limerick City and County Council's Corporate Plan*, *Limerick 2030 Spatial and Economic Plan* and the *Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan*.

The LECP is not a detailed operational plan. Delivery of the strategy and actions “on the ground” will be the role of the relevant public bodies and agencies including the local authority itself, the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), organisations such as the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), TUSLA the Child and Family Agency, the HSE, the Intreo Offices of the Department of Social Protection (DSP), the higher education institutions (HEIs), Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) as well as non-public agencies including the Local Development Companies, voluntary organisations and community-based organisations across the city and county. The Public Participation Network (PPN), mobilising and organising the voluntary and community organisations across the local authority area, will be a key structure to involve local communities in decision-making processes.

As well as providing a high level strategy to reflect current plans and implementation programmes at local level across the city and county, the LECP provides an opportunity to add value in the following ways:

1. To promote improved coordination across economic, social and environmental / physical strategies and other policy areas that affect quality of life (e.g., policing and community safety) and within each of these pillars, to benefit local communities.
2. To provide opportunities for collaborative planning of interventions, implemented under existing policies and programmes and in order to take advantage of new opportunities that arise in national and EU-funding programmes.
3. To promote learning from local experiences, mainstreaming and sustainability of types of interventions where there is evidence of success.

The economic elements of the LECP support economic development in the local authority area and also contribute to the economic development of the region, into neighbouring local authority areas, where appropriate, supporting actions of strategic regional importance. The community elements, potentially, include the widest range of issues and policies that affect local communities across economic, social and environment / physical development. The purpose of the community element is to promote local and community development across the local authority area, ensure coordination of publicly-funded local and community development actions such that resources can be targeted where they are needed most, resources can be shared where appropriate and duplication and inefficiencies can be avoided. All of the effort across economic and community

elements is directed to improve quality of life. This includes enhancing economic opportunities and social inclusion, to benefit all local communities across city and county.

### 1.3.3 Guiding Principles

The preparation of the LECP and the work and operation of the LCDC are underpinned by a number of guiding principles, which are consistent with the European approach, as articulated in the *Europe 2020* strategy and with key national and local policies and plans. These guiding principles are shown in the box below.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- A developmental “bottom-up” approach;
- Respect for the democratic mandate and a strengthened role for elected members;
- A strong focus on social inclusion including providing opportunities for participation; by marginalised communities and social groups at risk of exclusion;
- Consistency with the Limerick City and County Development Plans, their Core Strategies, National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines for the Mid-West Region and Sub-regional Plans – including the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary;
- Promotion of enterprise, employment, training and education;
- Integration of sustainable development considerations including processes into the Plan and its implementation;
- Working in partnership and collaboration, harnessing existing local and community development infrastructure to make best use of resources as well as optimising available public and private resources and funds;
- Promotion of voluntary activity and active citizenship;
- Working with integrated evidence-based approaches to local service planning and delivery.

### 1.3.4 Process and Stages in the Preparing, Adoption and Monitoring of the LECP

Drawing on the legislative provisions and Guidelines issued by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government (DECLG), the process followed in the preparation of the plan is outlined in the Box below.

The Advisory Steering Group was set up to prepare the LECP. A detailed socio-economic analysis of Limerick City and County has been prepared, to inform the development of the LECP. The draft socio-economic statement, identifying the high level goals, specific objectives and structure of the programme was prepared. The development of the draft socio-economic statement included targeted consultations. The draft socio-economic statement was sent out to a public consultation process, and referred to the Regional Assembly and the Municipal Districts. Revisions were made to the draft as a result of this process, which was completed in September 2015. A draft of the LECP has now been prepared and is presented in this document (Stage 3).

## **Stages in the Preparation of the LECP**

### **Stage 1: Preparation**

- a) Establish & analyse the socio-economic evidence base
- b) Review of relevant high level strategies and plans
- c) Develop a socio-economic statement & high level goals for the integrated LECP
- d) Advisory Steering Group to prepare and the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC & LCDC to adopt the statement for public consultation

### **Stage 2: Public Consultation**

- a) Undertake a public consultation on the socio-economic statement & high-level goals
- b) Revise the statement and refer to the Municipal Districts (MD) & Regional Assembly (RA)

### **Stage 3: Develop the Objectives & Actions**

- a) Develop detailed objectives for the plan underpinned by clear, measurable actions
- b) Advisory Steering Group to prepare, and the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC & LCDC to agree the objectives & actions
- c) Advisory Steering Group to submit a final draft incorporating the statement & goals, objectives & actions for consideration by MDs and RAs.

### **Stage 4: Finalise Plan**

- a) Economic Development & Enterprise SPC & LCDC to consider & adopt the final draft (revised as necessary following consideration by the MDs and RAs).
- b) Local Authority (Council) to adopt the final draft of the LECP
- c) Final Plan submitted to the Minister & published by LA

### **Stage 5: Monitoring & Review**

Advisory Steering Group to monitor progress on actions & against measurable targets for the objectives.

## **1.4 The Spatial Planning and Policy Context**

The preparation and implementation of the LECP and the work of the LCDC are being undertaken in a complex planning and policy context. The LECP is also being prepared at a time of public sector reform. The LCDC, in itself, is taking on a reform agenda.

### **1.4.1 The Spatial Planning Context**

The LECP must be consistent with the system of planning in Ireland's spatial planning hierarchy. This, in itself, is entering a new phase of planning at regional and national levels. Spatial plans with which the LECP must be consistent include: the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs), to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies, and a new National Planning Framework, to replace the current National Spatial Strategy (NSS). There is also a link to the City and County Development Plans in that the LECP must be consistent with the statutory City and County Development Plans. There are already Local Area Plans developed for some settlements. Outside of the statutory planning processes, the Local Development Companies have a long history of working with communities on local area planning using participative methods.

There are varying levels of capacity to engage with local area planning across local communities in the local authority area.

#### 1.4.2 Relevant public policies: EU and National Level

The LECP must fit with and contribute to implementation of a range of public policies, from EU through national, through regional and to local level. These include the *EU 2020 Strategy* which sets out the approach and targets for the EU to achieve *smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*; Ireland's *National Reform Programme, 2015* which sets out the broad macro-economic context and provides updates on Ireland's progress under the EU 2020 Strategy; Government's *Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020*, which sets out the policy framework to rebuild the Irish economy, achieve sustainable economic growth, strong public finances and sustainable jobs.

#### The Europe 2020 strategy

The Europe 2020 strategy sets out five high level goals to achieve *smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* for the European Union. For each of the five goals, specific targets have been set, to be met at the level of the EU as a whole and for each member state by 2020. The targets for Ireland are set out in the *National Reform Programme for Ireland* and in the *Partnership Agreement for Ireland 2014-2020*. The *Partnership Agreement* sets out the policy context, identifies the key development needs, and defines the priorities for support under the *European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020* with EU funding complemented with national investment. The *Partnership Agreement* is the strategic framework to achieve the national targets set under the Europe 2020 strategy, with implementation arrangements set out in the Operational Programmes including the *Southern and Eastern Operational Programme 2014-2020* (European Regional Development Fund), the *Programme for Employability Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020* (European Social Fund) and the *Rural Development Programme 2014-2020* (EARDF).

Targets to be achieved for Ireland under the Europe 2020 strategy relate to:

- (i) **Employment:** increase in the employment rate for men and women 20-64 years to between 69-71%;
- (ii) **Public and private investment in R&D and Innovation:** Increase to 2% of GDP;
- (iii) **Climate change / reduced carbon / energy efficiency:** Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 20%; increased percentage of energy from renewable sources, to 16% and increase in energy efficiency by 20%;
- (iv) **Education:** reduction in early school leaving amongst young people, to be reduced to 8%; and increased rates with third level education to 60% of 30-34 year olds with third level qualifications; and
- (v) **Poverty / social exclusion:** a reduction by 200,000 in the numbers in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

In relation to economic development and enterprise, key recent policy statements including goals and targets are contained in: *National Policy Statement on Enterprise 2014; Driving Enterprise, Delivering Jobs: Strategy to 2016*, presenting the strategy of Enterprise Ireland and targets for job

creation; and the enterprise strategy, set out in *Making it Happen – Growing Enterprise for Ireland*. There are also policy frameworks that focus on sectoral areas of importance to the national economy including: *Construction 2020: A Strategy for a renewed construction sector*, *Food Harvest 2020: A Vision for Irish Agri-food and Fisheries*; *Delivering Green Potential: Government Policy Statement on Growth and Employment in the Green Economy*; and *People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025*. There are six key areas identified in the national tourism strategy including: focus on overseas visitor revenues; targeted marketing to specific countries and markets; continued support for festivals and events (especially those attracting overseas visitors); training and career development in tourism; and the vital role of local communities and local authorities in developing and delivery of quality tourism experiences. The new *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2018* presents the vision and implementation plan to create a high quality fully-integrated system of further education and training to support economic development (including future skills needs) and social inclusion. National policy initiatives and programmes particularly relevant to the LECF are: the *Action Plan for Jobs* (2015) and, most recently, the *Mid-West Regional Action Plan for Jobs* (2015-2017) and *Pathways to Work*, which is government's flagship programme to address unemployment, long-term unemployment and youth unemployment.

Specifically, in relation to the environment, *Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland*, outlines the challenges and principles for sustainable development, working to a timeframe up to 2020. The aspiration is to create a sustainable and resource efficient economy founded on a fair and just society respecting the three core pillars of sustainability: environment, economic and social. Key challenges identified include: sustainable consumption and production, conservation and management of natural resources, climate change and clean energy, sustainable agriculture and sustainable transport.

In relation to social policy, the strategy of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DYCA), *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*, presents government's vision and sets out an action framework for achieving best outcomes for children and families structured around six transformational goals (physical and mental health, education and learning, safety from harm, economically secure, connected, respected and contributing to their world). *Healthy Ireland: A framework for Improved Health and Well-being 2013-2025* presents a comprehensive framework to promote good health and well-being across the whole population. It emphasises positive health strategies and preventive measures (healthy lifestyles and behaviours) and the need to address health inequalities in the population. There is a strong focus on working in partnership with stakeholders across government departments and agencies, local authorities and voluntary sector and on community-based actions to promote health and well-being. Government's *National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013)* is prepared against the background of conditions of demographic ageing in Ireland but highlights that this strategy is not only about older people. Ageing is a lifelong process that starts at birth. The challenge is to plan now for an ageing Ireland and put in place arrangements to create an age-friendly society. Ageing is not only a health issue but encompasses a wide range of issues including housing, income /economic resources, recreation, health, education, safety, transport and community. Creating an age-friendly society requires action and collaboration at many levels including local, regional and national organisations in the statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors. In terms of specific groups in society at high risk of social exclusion, there is a *National Disability Strategy (2013-2015)* and a

*National Strategy for Traveller and Roma Integration*, addressed to accommodation, health, education and employment.

Programmes directly relevant to the LECP at local level in terms of oversight/ decision-making and requiring local strategies and implementation arrangements are: the *Rural Development Programme (2014-2020)* co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which includes the *LEADER* programme, and the *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)*. The SICAP programme is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). In relation to the latter, SICAP supports the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan in Ireland which has a specific focus on targeting young people “not in employment education or training” (NEETs). In the rural context, the recent report and recommendations of the *Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA)*, to address economic decline of rural areas and promote economic activity particularly in towns/villages with potential benefit to rural hinterlands is relevant, identifying specific needs for the economic development and social sustainability of rural areas and a menu of actions to respond to those needs. All of these programmes work up to achievement of the EU 2020 strategy and targets.

### **1.4.3 Local authority-led strategies and local plans**

The LECP must be consistent with local-authority led strategies and plans. The key plans here are: *Limerick City and County Council’s Corporate Plan 2015-2019*, *Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan*, the strategy to promote the economic development of the city working in partnership with key stakeholders including the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the private sector; and *the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan*, targeting the most disadvantaged estates of Limerick City.

The strategy in the *Corporate Plan for Limerick City and County Council* is also structured on the three pillars of social, economic and physical development underpinned by a new model of local governance and service delivery based on excellence in council leadership. As well as promoting Limerick as a location for investment, business, education and as a place to live, the Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on “*inclusive participation of all citizens in the development of their community*” and community empowerment. It states the commitment of the local authority to promote diversity, equality and partnership.

*Limerick 2030 Spatial and Economic Plan* aims to promote the economic development of Limerick working in partnership with key stakeholders including public agencies, the private sector and third level educational institutions. It aims to position Limerick to take advantage of new economic opportunities, build a strong local economy with significant job creation and marketing of Limerick effectively for investment, business location, tourism, retail and as a place to live. It includes a spatial plan for the city centre, focusing on renewal of the urban fabric and including transformative civic and economic projects. Sixteen specific projects for the city have been identified. Limerick 2030 identified specific sectors with growth potential including sectors in the knowledge economy and cultural and creative industries. There is potential to extend the strategic interventions, including sector-specific projects identified for development under *Limerick 2030* into the county towns. This is already happening. *Limerick 2030* has a target to create some 12,000 jobs. Significant achievements have already been made in replacing the large number of jobs lost over the economic recession. This LECP provides an opportunity to realise the economic development objectives

contained within *Limerick 2030*. It also provides a framework for connecting economic objectives of *Limerick 2030* into the agenda to build vibrant communities across urban and rural Limerick and social inclusion.

The *Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan* is a comprehensive plan working with an integrated approach across physical, economic and social pillars of action, targeting the communities in the city that are most disadvantaged. From 2012/2013, it involves additional investment of some €28 million per annum (up to 2016) by government, under DECLG as the lead department. The physical programme involved demolition of housing and relocations of residents. With this phase completed, the physical programme now centres on energy retrofitting and upgrading the existing housing stock, a small number of new build housing schemes, public realm improvements and social and economic infrastructures. The social programme is structured on a number of themes – also included in the LECP – providing additional support to address the structural problems in the communities (e.g., low education, long-term unemployment, health inequalities), to prevent poor outcomes especially for children and young people living in the regeneration areas (e.g., educational under-achievement, poorer health) and to build community participation and empowerment. For instance, Employability and Work is a theme of the social regeneration plan, where additional services are funded to support unemployed and economically inactive people in regeneration areas, including vulnerable groups (early school leavers, ex-prisoners / people with a history offending), into education, training and work. There are also a number of targeted economic actions, to improve the infrastructures and services to support enterprise and employment development in those areas.

Strategies and programmes delivered under the auspices of the LCDC, in particular, the *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)*, targets individuals at high risk of exclusion from employment and living in spatially disadvantaged communities including the regeneration areas in the city. Experiences in the city may be useful in informing the strategies of the LCDC. There may be potential to transfer experience and learning into small areas in the county (the towns) with a profile of social disadvantage and to build networks of cooperation across city and county to facilitate knowledge transfer, to work together and upscale successful approaches.

Under the LCDC, the Local Action Group for LEADER, the *Local Development Strategy (LDS)*, *Rural Development Programme 2014-2020* for Limerick County has been prepared and agreed. The Implementing Partners are the local development companies, Ballyhoura Development and West Limerick Resources and the Financial Partner is Limerick City and County Council (LCCC). Drawing on the analysis underpinning the LDS, including statistical analysis and consultation processes, the strategic priorities and key actions under the three main themes of LEADER were identified as follows:

*Theme 1: Economic Development Enterprise and Job Creation:*

- (1) rural tourism to support and build capacity to develop the tourism product including heritage and culture, recreation, amenity and visitor facilities and services and marketing;
- (2) enterprise, supporting community (social) and individual micro and small enterprises focused on innovation, production, distribution and knowledge networks;

- (3) rural towns incorporating support for community socio-economic action planning and promoting the regeneration of rural towns and villages across the county as centre for living, leisure, services, business and employment;
- (4) broadband in rural areas, focused on support to improve access to broadband and ICT skills.

*Theme 2: Social Inclusion:*

- (5) basic services targeted at “hard to reach communities”, focused on support to communities to manage and maintain existing facilities / services, develop plans and support investment in new or improved services and capacity building in weakest communities to support planning for services to meet basic needs;
- (6) rural youth focused on infrastructure for youth (facilities and services).

*Theme 3: Rural environment*

- (7) awareness raising and support for local action to address water conservation, water quality improvements through technical assistance, capacity building and small-scale capital investment;
- (8) protection and improvement of local biodiversity;
- (9) to build community and business capacity to promote and adopt action in renewal energy use including reduced energy consumption, low energy / low carbon community initiatives, waste reduction and reuse and supporting the establishment of renewable energy consumer coops and developing initiatives to create local energy supply with low environmental impact.

The cross-cutting objectives of the rural development strategy / LEADER are: innovation, environment and sustainable development and action on climate change. All of these themes and cross-cutting objectives are reflected in the LECP.

The LECP builds on the considerable experience and achievements of the local development companies, the PAUL Partnership in the city, and Ballyhoura Development and West Limerick Resources in the county. These organisations already have strong networks of cooperation with stakeholders and partners in the LCDC including Department of Social Protection (DSP), Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), the Health Services Executive (HSE), TUSLA the Child and Family Agency and LCCC as well as working with voluntary and community organisations in the city and county. They are the Programme Implementers involved in the delivery of SICAP across the city (PAUL) and county (Ballyhoura Development, east Limerick and West Limerick Resources, west Limerick) and the Implementing Partners of the Rural Development Programme, as outlined above.

## 1.5 High Level Goals & Characteristics of the Limerick LECP

The goals and the key characteristics of the Limerick LECP are outlined in this section.

### 1.5.1 High level goals

The overall goal of the LECP is to promote improved quality of life and well-being of people and communities in Limerick City and County. This means striving to create safe and sustainable communities, where there is access to quality services including housing, transport, health, education, recreation and promoting an agenda of diversity, equality and partnership.

#### High-level Goals of the LECP

**Goal 1:** To promote equally **vibrant and safe communities** with high quality of life, access to quality services in urban and rural Limerick, engaged in civic life and local decision-making.

**Goal 2:** To increase the **population and incomes** by creating conditions for, and promoting, new sources of **jobs and enterprises** in the local economy, retaining the young population and attracting in new talent and investment.

**Goal 3:** To increase **the employment rate and reduce unemployment**, particularly in the city where the employment rate is low and unemployment highest, and in areas of the county with high unemployment, under-employment and economic inactivity.

**Goal 4:** To reduce the number of people living in **deprivation**, promote **social and economic inclusion** and a **reduction of social inequalities** particularly addressed to local communities and groups in Limerick with a profile of social disadvantage and / or at risk of exclusion.

**Goal 5:** To create a **strong urban core, thriving towns, attractive and socially sustainable villages and countryside**, protecting and enhancing the environment for the current and future generations.

**Goal 6:** To promote **urban-rural linkages** across city and county, increasing social cohesion and extending economic opportunities to benefit the whole population.

**Goal 7:** To build **networks of cooperation** including local partnerships and regional, national and European and other international networks, to develop new economic, social and cultural opportunities and enhance the reputation of Limerick city and county.

**Goal 8:** To ensure the **protection of the receiving environment** in implementing the LECP.

**Goal 9:** Promote the transition of Limerick City and County towards a **low carbon future** by 2030.

### 1.5.2 LECP: A framework to bring coherence and improve coordination

As stated above, the LECP is not a detailed operational plan. The purpose of the LECP is to bring together into a coherent high level framework the various strategies and operational plans already developed for Limerick / or in development for implementation up to 2020. The LECP can add value by improving the scope for coordination, inter-agency collaboration in planning, working together to pursue new opportunities and promoting mainstreaming into statutory agencies of successful types of interventions and practices. Operating within this framework is expected to empower the partnership-based LCDC as a structure and model of governance. The LCDC can give strategic direction in public policies that impact on quality for life for citizens and communities in Limerick. In

areas that require or can benefit from an inter-agency approach, the LCDC can “make things happen”. This is in addition to its specific remit in relation to local community, economic development and social inclusion programmes in the local authority area (SICAP and LEADER). The LCDC is Local Action Group, responsible for the local strategy and overseeing implementation of *the Rural Development Programme LEADER 2014-2020* and the *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)* in Limerick City and County. In addition to this, operating to the priorities identified in the LECP, the LCDC pro-actively will seek to take advantage of new opportunities for economic, social and community development as they arise.

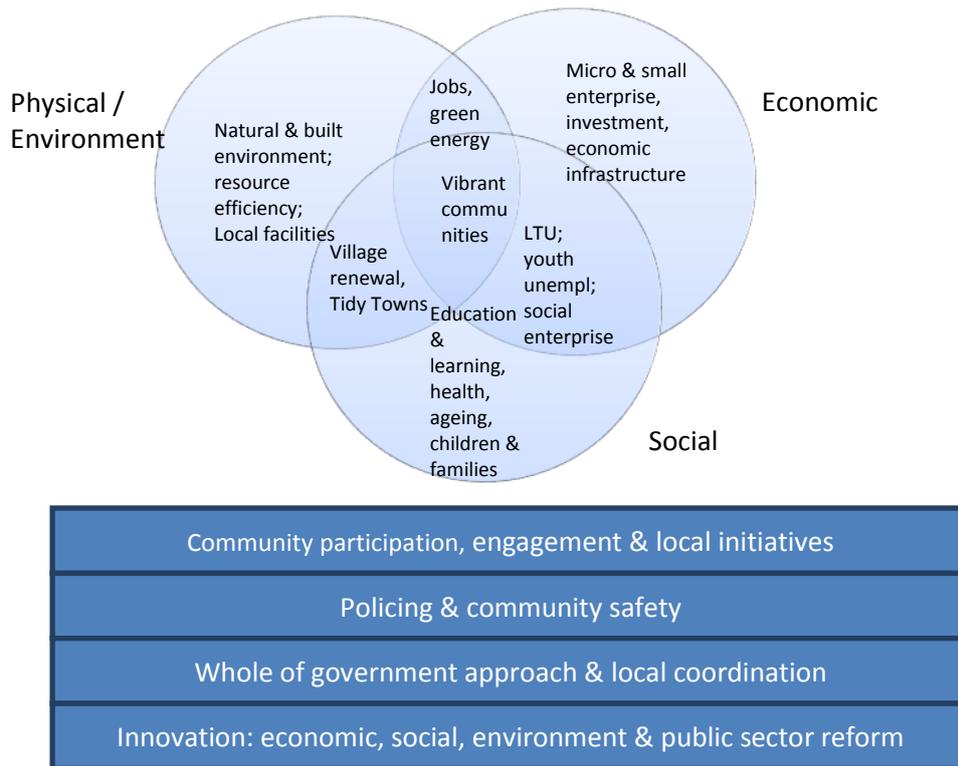
### **1.5.3 The LECP: An integrated approach**

The LECP is developed based on an integrated territorial approach structured around three sectoral pillars – economic, social and physical / environment. Working with an integrated approach means taking steps to address “silos”, improve the connections between different sectoral actions and, in the process, enhance the benefits resulting from the actions. It also means working with a “joined up” approach in developing strategy and planning and delivery of actions. In recent years in Limerick, there have been strong efforts to reduce fragmentation. Both formal and informal structures have been set up to improve collaboration between statutory agencies, the private sector and voluntary and community sector. Reducing fragmentation and improving cohesion are important priorities of the amalgamated local authority.

The analysis of conditions shows that there are already strong links and inter-dependencies across urban and rural areas of Limerick and connections into the broader region, based on economic activity, strategic infrastructure, labour market and commuting to work, school and college. However, there are areas of activity where awareness of needs and experiences are less developed. There are many local variations and there is considered to be different cultures and community experiences between urban and rural Limerick. Traditionally, within the more rural county, there has been a division between east and west Limerick. There are strong connections into the adjacent countries – with parts of the city and suburbs, having strong links with their hinterlands in Clare and north Tipperary, west Limerick into north Kerry (Tralee) and east Limerick into north Cork (Charleville, Mallow). Overall, there is scope for greater cooperation in strategy, service planning and delivery across city and county and within these areas, including transfer of experience and good practice. There is also scope for greater cooperation within the sub-region. The LECP intends to build on and strengthen links and cohesion across urban and rural areas in the local authority area and pursue opportunities for cooperation beyond the administrative boundaries of the local authority where appropriate.

The integrated approach in the LECP is illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: The Integrated Strategy of the LECP - Sectoral Pillars and Foundational Elements**



At the centre – the intersection of the three pillars - is the creation of vibrant communities across Limerick City and County. Developments in relation to the built or physical environment have economic impact including job creation. New or improved physical infrastructure can offer potential for business development and job creation, for instance, in the green energy sector as well as improved energy efficiency. Economic development from successes in attracting investment, new business start-up and development and job creation can help address long-term unemployment (LTU) and youth unemployment as well as create opportunities for social enterprise. Town and village renewal can provide opportunities for developing skills and facilities and services in local communities, for instance, for community-based education, social and health services and cultural activities.

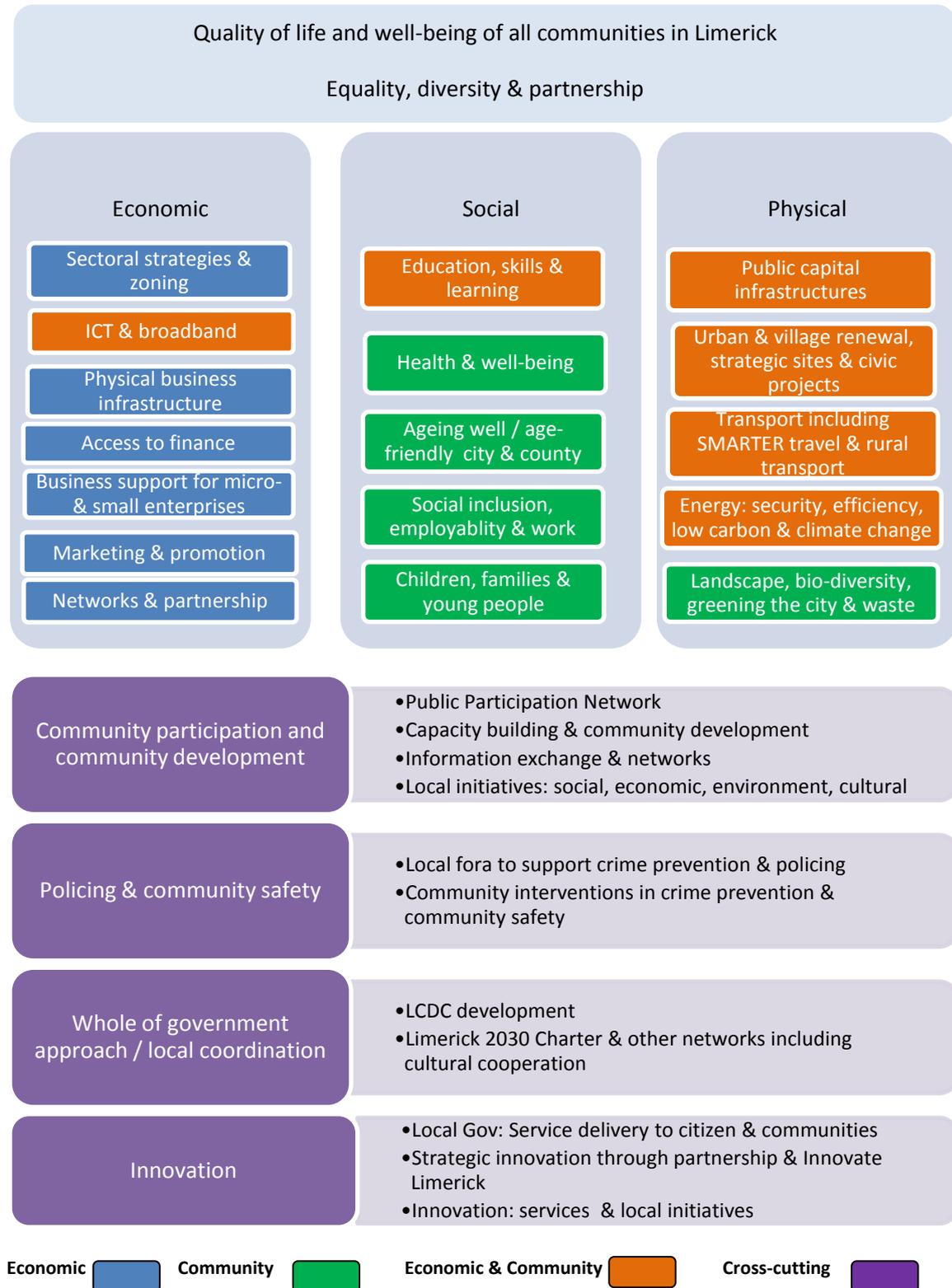
The three sectoral pillars are underpinned by the following cross-cutting priorities:

- *Community participation, engagement and local initiatives:* to support community participation in decision-making, community-based planning and developing and implementing local initiatives.
- *Policing and community safety:* where low crime, trust in policing and safe communities are fundamental to creating the conditions for economic and social interventions to be successful and for good quality of life.
- *A whole of government approach* and improving local coordination across public policies is a core purpose of the LCDC.
- *Promoting innovation across all sectoral pillars, economic, social, environment and furthering the public sector reform agenda in Limerick.*

### 1.5.4 Structure of the LECP

The structure of the LECP, showing the action areas, by pillar is shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Thematic structure & action areas of the LECP**



## 2. The Economic Plan

The Economic Plan has been prepared with reference to the baseline analysis (2015); a review of relevant strategies and plans; consultation exercises involving the key stakeholders and a public consultation process. This process led to the identification of the priority objectives and expected outcomes of the economic plan, economic sectors that could be targeted for business development and a number of specific areas for action.

### 2.1 Economic SWOT analysis: Commentary

A summary of the economic SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), drawing on the findings relevant to economic development, is presented in the Table below. The SWOT analysis is the rationale for the strategy, objectives and actions identified for the LECP.

The analysis indicates the availability of excellent accessibility infrastructure including roads, rail, air, and seaport. It has third level institutions producing large numbers of graduates and post-graduates, including ICT and engineering as well as cultural industries especially fashion and design and music and dance. The education sector offers continuing education and training, including upskilling, international links and is engaged in R&D and Innovation. There are significant physical assets in both city and county that could be re-developed to take on new economic uses. However, there has been some deterioration in the physical and economic fabric of the city centre and especially the core of towns and villages. It will be challenging to develop some of these for new economic uses. There are also key infrastructure gaps including the Limerick-Cork motorway development (not agreed in government's capital programme) and poor broadband connectivity in some rural areas.

Limerick City and County has a reasonably diversified economic base including significant employment in services in the more rural areas of the county. There is potential for further growth in economic activity and employment in sectors including tourism, creative and cultural industries, agriculture and related industries, food and drink, medi-tech, ICT and advanced manufacturing. However, there is intense competition from other areas for mobile Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and not only from other parts of the state. Other areas of the state, especially the large urban centres with concentrations of economic activity (large firms in advanced sectors) and supporting infrastructures, may be better placed to attract higher value added sectors in the knowledge economy. Aspects of high quality of life in Limerick including its cultural resources and activities (literature, art, performing arts, music, film and festivals) could be better developed and marketed as a feature of attractiveness. Promoting high quality of life has strong cross-over with the community elements of the plan.

The city and county experienced major job losses during the economic recession. While the situation is improving with the economic recovery, there is still much to be done in order to increase the number of jobs (and higher quality sustainable jobs), increase the employment rate (which is particularly low in the city) and reduce unemployment (especially high in the city). There is a legacy of high unemployment, deeply embedded structural unemployment and economic inactivity in parts of the city (i.e., unemployment "blackspots"). There is also structural unemployment (e.g., linked to the decline in construction) as well as under-employment and economic inactivity in the County. Economic disadvantage including unemployment, under-employment and economic inactivity is more dispersed in the rural areas and because it is "hidden" it is challenging to reach the groups / individuals affected and to address the problems.

ECONOMIC STRENGTHS	ECONOMIC WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrated labour market, diversified economic structure &amp; high employment in services</li> <li>- Lower unemployment rate in County Limerick than national average</li> <li>- Strong FDI in manufacturing &amp; established high-tech sectors in ICT, Medi-Tech, Advanced Manufacturing &amp; Engineering, Food &amp; Drink</li> <li>- Performs well in medium technology manufacturing jobs</li> <li>- Strong agriculture sector &amp; system of farming</li> <li>- Education infrastructure (UL/LIT/MIC) &amp; research capacity (SFI centres)</li> <li>- Key transport infrastructures (Shannon Airport, Foynes Port)</li> <li>- Motorway accessibility to other urban centres especially Dublin</li> <li>- Short commuting times to work / school</li> <li>- Distinctive City Centre environment including Georgian character</li> <li>- “Gateway city”: of strategic importance in the national &amp; regional context</li> <li>- Availability of renewable energy resources &amp; technologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limerick is one of the poorest performing cities in the state</li> <li>- Insufficient numbers of jobs in the city (compared with suburbs)</li> <li>- Loss of over 11,000 jobs between 2007 &amp; 2012</li> <li>- Decline in jobs in micro- &amp; small enterprises between 2007 &amp; 2012</li> <li>- Poor performance in high tech manufacturing</li> <li>- Low rate of FDI jobs to Limerick since 2010</li> <li>- % with 3<sup>rd</sup> level qualifications in the city well below national average</li> <li>- Labour Force Participation Rate in the city (55%) and employment rate in the city (47%) well below national average</li> <li>- Extremely high unemployment in metropolitan Limerick (28.9%)</li> <li>- Commercial, retail &amp; residential vacancy rates high in city centre &amp; towns</li> <li>- Poor broadband connectivity in some rural areas &amp; low PC ownership in parts of the city (disadvantaged areas with low education) and county</li> <li>- Energy infrastructure to harness renewable energy not at optimal levels</li> </ul>
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	ECONOMIC THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amalgamation of Limerick City and County Councils offers scope for efficiencies, cohesion &amp; reduced disparities across urban &amp; rural areas</li> <li>- Economic impact from new City Centre third level education campus</li> <li>- Potential to increase tourism (urban and rural)</li> <li>- Potential for start-ups &amp; development of micro- &amp; small enterprises</li> <li>- <i>Limerick 2030</i> strategic sites, to spearhead city regeneration with links to economic development opportunities in the county</li> <li>- Potential for cultural and creative industries; Candidate City for European Capital of Culture 2020</li> <li>- Under-used historic &amp; physical assets in City Centre &amp; important heritage, cultural sites, natural landscapes &amp; recreational potential in rural Limerick</li> <li>- Unrealised potential from 3<sup>rd</sup> level education (pool of graduates &amp; post-graduates, R&amp;DI)</li> <li>- Potential of rural economic development zones (focused on enterprise centres, sectoral clusters of enterprises and plans for local initiatives)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trend in population decline in the city</li> <li>- Commercial, service and social fabric (living / residential potential) of city centre &amp; core of towns &amp; villages deteriorated &amp; challenging to rejuvenate</li> <li>- Key gaps in motorway network (Limerick-Cork)</li> <li>- Poor broadband connectivity &amp; lack of ICT infrastructure limiting access to new economic opportunities (products, services, markets, jobs)</li> <li>- Legacy of negative image of the city</li> <li>- Strong competition from other areas for investment</li> <li>- R&amp;D &amp; Innovation is more established in other centres</li> <li>- Dependence on imported fossil fuels, sheltered by low oil prices and other factors (€ exchange rate &amp; low interest rates) that could change</li> <li>- Low awareness &amp; / or acceptance of environmental challenges in general population / low motivation to take preventive action</li> <li>- Partnerships more developed but fragmentation in decision-making is still an issue</li> </ul>

There is advanced R&DI capacity, technologies and natural resources to develop in green / renewable energy but this potential has not been harnessed. Drawing on consultations, there is low awareness in the general population and poor motivation towards the major environmental challenges - to reduce carbon, reduce dependency on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency and take action to address climate change. There are mismatches and some contradictions in terms of strengths and weaknesses in local economic conditions. This is evidenced in that significant assets / strengths are not being fully utilised (physical, heritage, cultural, creative, environmental, natural resources, educational infrastructures). There have been weaknesses in effectiveness of policy interventions to promote access to economic opportunities and benefits for all. For instance, there is excellent educational infrastructure and services in terms of schools and third level colleges in the city and county but the adult population of the city has low education profile.

## **2.2 Objectives and focus of the economic plan**

The overall objective of the economic element of the LECP is to promote a more integrated, inclusive and sustainable approach to economic development in the local authority area. The LECP focuses on areas where local level action can either influence strategies and actions taken by other agencies - such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, SOLAS, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), third level educational institutions - or involve direct action at local level by the local authority and partners in communities to support economic development and sustainable job creation. The stronger functions of the local authority in relation to economic development and the role of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), now operating within the local authority, improve the scope for direct action in this area.

The approach involves building on the strengths and opportunities including unlocking under-utilised resources. For instance, some significant assets that can be used for economic (and community) benefit are now in public ownership or control in Limerick (LCCC). The LECP prioritises working to ensure a spread of the benefits of economic development across the whole area. There is a specific focus on the city centre, which has seen a “hollowing out” of economic activity, as businesses, public sector offices and residential populations have moved out from the core. There is also a lack of activity in the city centre including cultural activities, in the evenings. However, some of the same processes are observed across the towns and villages in County Limerick. The principle underpinning the economic strategy of the LECP is that access to economic opportunities should be possible for all. In this respect, there is strong integration between the economic and social pillars and the economic and community elements of the LECP.

The Economic Plan focuses on creating more jobs (i.e., increasing employment) in the local authority area by attracting investment and generating economic growth. Sectoral strategies aim to create a more diversified economic base (where more diversified economies are more resilient to external shocks compared with specialised economies, with a more restricted economic base). This involves capitalising on areas where Limerick has a profile of strengths and is pursuing opportunities to develop in new sectors, by planning for specific development opportunities, public investment, developing partnerships and networks of collaboration. While the approach includes “moving up the value chain”, into higher value-added and knowledge sectors and developing in cultural and creative industries, it also involves pursuing economic opportunities at different levels of skills. This is important in order to provide a mix of jobs that can absorb the numbers already in, and coming onto, the labour market. This approach should create a local labour market providing entry level

employment as well as opportunities for career progression (and up-skilling) and improve capacity to attract new (mobile) talent. This will be pursued by working collaboratively across enterprise support services and education and skills as well as marketing Limerick as good place for business, a good place to live, to visit and a destination for quality higher and continuing education.

### 2.3 Economic Plan: Types of action

Local action will promote survival and expansion of existing businesses to improve competitiveness, productivity and access to wider markets; support for entrepreneurship including self-employment and new business start-ups and creating conditions to attract and influence investment / business location to Limerick including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This agenda will be pursued through a range of “hard” (physical infrastructure, business space, access to financing) and “soft” measures (promotional and marketing activities, information, advice, training, business networks) which are already developed by existing agencies. At local level, these include the LEO, the local authority and the Local Development Companies and representative organisations of private business. Actions to ensure a supply of human capital with the skills, qualifications and competencies to meet current needs of employers and future skills needs are of crucial importance to improving the attractiveness of Limerick as a place to invest and to work. The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), third level colleges, further education colleges and other education and training providers are key partners here. So too are the public employment services including Department of Social Protection (DSP) and Intreo Offices as well as the local community-based organisations that support unemployed people on pathways into work. The latter include: the Local Development Companies, the Local Employment Service in the city, Jobs Clubs, voluntary organisations including youth services, and private providers of employment services. Action Areas in the Economic Plan across the three vertical Pillars and the cross-cutting themes are developed below.

1. Economic Pillar	2. Social Pillar	3. Physical / environmental Pillar
1.1 Sectoral strategies & zoning	2.1 Education, skills & learning	3.1 Public capital infrastructure
1.2 ICT and broadband		3.2 Urban & village renewal, strategic sites & civic projects
1.3 Physical business Infrastructure		3.3 Transport incl SMARTER travel & rural transport
1.4 Access to finance		3.4 Energy efficiency, low carbon & climate change
1.5 Business support for micro & small enterprises		
1.6 Marketing & promotion		
1.7 Networks & partnership		
6. Whole of government approach / coordination	6.2 Limerick 2030 Charter & Other Networks	
7. Innovation	7.2 Strategic innovation through partnership & Innovate Limerick	

Economic ■ Community ■ Economic & Community ■ Cross-cutting ■

Each of these Action Areas is developed in detail below.

<b>1. Economic Pillar</b>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.1 Sectoral strategies and zoning</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Support diversification, improved competitiveness and increase the number of jobs in the local economy. In the process, promote balanced economic development which is sustainable and inclusive.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Enterprise Ireland, IDA, LCCC, Innovate Limerick, LEO
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase jobs Diversified sectoral profile of employment Reduce unemployment
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.1.01</b>	Implement the <i>'Mid West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017'</i>
<b>1.1.02</b>	Implement <i>'Limerick 2030: An Economic and Social Plan for Limerick'</i>
<b>1.1.03</b>	Promote development in target sectors with growth potential: agri-food, green energy, niche engineering, ICT, financial and back office services, medical services, tourism, hospitality and catering, retail, city and rural tourism, cultural and creative industries and heritage, green economy, speciality food, marine including renewable energy from marine.
<b>1.1.04</b>	Facilitate the development of ISAX (Irish Smart Ageing Exchange) to capitalise on market opportunities arising with the demographic shift towards an ageing population. Establish and develop a National Smart Ageing Centre in Limerick. This is being developed in cooperation with Innovate Limerick.
<b>1.1.05</b>	Implement the <i>'Food Strategy for Limerick 2016-2018'</i> , prepared on behalf of LCCC via the LEO. The strategy is based on an integrated approach and involves food stakeholder groups. It includes short-term actions (to develop a united food community, enhance business skills) and long term actions (marketing, setting up a food zone) to develop the local food sector.
<b>1.1.06</b>	Drawing on the experience of <i>National City of Culture 2014</i> and the development process for the <i>European Capital of Culture 2020</i> bid to prepare an inclusive cultural strategy for Limerick.
<b>1.1.07</b>	Review the economic development pillar in the <i>Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan</i> in the light of the changing context of economic and employment development in the city, current policy priorities (e.g., strong focus on activation of unemployed, long-term unemployed and economically inactive), initiatives in local economic development in regeneration areas (e.g., in the community enterprise centres, enterprise and training facilities in the Roxboro) and local authority-led initiatives to promote revitalisation of the city centre. The purpose of this review is to develop a strategic role for the regeneration programme in shaping a view of how the economic development of the city can connect to the regeneration communities and how regeneration communities can benefit in terms of training and jobs from the new opportunities being created in, and adjacent to, the regeneration areas and in the city centre. Funding from LRFIP for economic projects could fund such a review and strategy development.

<b>1.1.08</b>	Prepare and implement a renewable energy strategy for Limerick.
<b>1.1.09</b>	Facilitate the development of the Shannon Estuary as a key driver of economic development in the region by implementing the ' <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary</i> ' (SIFP) and support the work of the SIFP implementation group in achieving the objectives of the SIFP.
<b>1.1.10</b>	Support social enterprise as a source of job creation in both urban and rural areas. Programmes implemented by the LEO and the Local Development Companies (LEADER, SICAP) will support this.
<b>1.1.11</b>	Commence the process of compiling more comprehensive economic data at local level in order to establish benchmarks for employment growth, investment and skills needs in the local economy. This can include a focus on sectors targeted for development in the local economy (e.g., cultural and creative industries). Monitor and evaluate progress on the LECP Framework Priority targets and actions over time.

The next Action Area, ICT and Broadband, is equally relevant to the Economic and Community elements of the LECP.

<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.2 ICT and Broadband (Economic and Community)</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote and facilitate ICT and broadband connectivity.
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; LEO; Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase broadband availability in rural areas. Increase broadband speed. Increase number of on line businesses / markets.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.2.01</b>	Promote and facilitate broadband connectivity and high speed broadband development especially in rural areas with deficiencies. This can be supported under the <i>Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2015-2020</i> while some local pilots can be supported under <i>LEADER</i> in rural areas.
<b>1.2.02</b>	Promote and support enterprise start-up and development in local and wider markets in ICT.
<b>1.2.03</b>	Support SMEs to develop in new markets by going "on line" (LEO).
<b>1.2.04</b>	Prepare and implement a Digital Strategy for Limerick, led by LCCC.
<b>1.2.05</b>	Create a Digital Hub in Limerick City Centre, led by Innovate Limerick.
<b>1.2.06</b>	Provide digital and social media training to small businesses, supported by the LEO and other partners including the Local Development Companies and third level colleges.

<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.3 Physical business infrastructure</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Develop physical business infrastructure in key locations in Limerick city and county, compliant with zoning, to support business development.
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC, Innovate Limerick, LEO
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase available office space in Limerick City Centre for both large-scale operations and start ups. Increase footfall in city centre and town centre retail and commercial areas.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.3.01</b>	Implement <i>Limerick 2030</i> strategic sites, seeking out investment and partnerships in development projects, prioritising the development of the following sites: the Opera Site, the Hanging Gardens, the Cleeves' site, the redevelopment of Arthur's Quay and Colbert Station renewal.
<b>1.3.02</b>	Develop workspace for micro and small enterprises including space for start-ups (low cost; easy in-easy out-terms) and expanding private and social/ community enterprise in urban and rural areas.
<b>1.3.03</b>	Create or improve sites for retail in urban and rural areas including local markets and new approaches to developing sales ("buy local" campaigns, sales of boxes into households, distribution and delivery services) and support enterprises to work together to develop, manage and access them.
<b>1.3.04</b>	Promote and further develop the Retail and Business Incentive Scheme.
<b>1.3.05</b>	Promote and facilitate excellence in design and integration of environmental priorities (energy efficiency, low carbon) into physical business infrastructure development / improvements in the re-development of "brownfield" sites, public buildings, and town and village renewal in urban and rural areas.
<b>1.3.06</b>	Promote the " <i>Living Cities Initiative</i> " (Limerick City Centre) and local schemes to develop residential living in towns and villages across the county.
<b>1.3.07</b>	Carry out a review of casual trading by-laws in Limerick City and County.
<b>1.3.08</b>	Review the current retail strategy applicable to Limerick and further develop / revise it as appropriate to take into account challenges presented by changing retail trends (more online), the retail offer, retail sites and other developments linked to <i>Limerick 2030</i> and urban and town and village renewal.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.4 Access to finance / unlocking resources for investment</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote and facilitate access to finance for enterprises including more diversified sources of finance for business start-up and expansion
<b>Responsibility</b>	LEO; Innovate Limerick; LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase availability of finance for enterprise and development (€ obtained)

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.4.01</b>	Support access to Microfinance Ireland as well as existing sources of finance for start-ups (LEO programmes), Section 66 financing in the form of grants and loans and the Business and Retail Incentive Scheme.
<b>1.4.02</b>	Promote and facilitate low interest loans for rural businesses; peer-to-peer lending initiatives and financing for community and social enterprise linking into existing programmes including the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ), progressing projects identified / planned from REDZ pilots (e.g., engineering cluster in Charleville / Kilmallock), LEADER, the Limerick Regeneration Programme, economic pillar and programmes at EU level such as <i>CoSME</i> and <i>Employment and Social Innovation, EaSI</i> .
<b>1.4.03</b>	Facilitate partnerships between the local authority, private sector and other partners to invest in new sources of economic activity in Limerick City and County including <i>Limerick 2030</i> transformative projects.
<b>1.4.04</b>	Facilitate and encourage wide application of the Prompt Payments Schemes across public sector organisations.
<b>1.4.05</b>	Investigate opportunities for EU support for micro finance for micro and SMEs and social enterprise – e.g., the <i>EU CoSME programme</i> , to improve competitiveness of enterprises.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.5 Business support for micro-enterprise and SMEs</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Support business start-up, consolidation and expansion of micro- and small enterprises throughout city and county
<b>Responsibility</b>	LEO; Local Development Companies; LCCC; Enterprise Ireland (EI) and Higher Education Institutions (campus spin-outs)
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase number of start-ups and SMEs Expansion of existing micro and SMEs
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.5.01</b>	Training, advice and mentoring drawing on the role of the LEO and other support structures including the Local Development Companies (LEADER and SICAP).
<b>1.5.02</b>	Where possible, reduce and advocate for reduction of administrative burdens and others barriers to start-up and expansion of micro- and small enterprise and support micro- and small enterprises in meeting regulatory and other requirements.
<b>1.5.03</b>	Support specific target groups into self-employment, enterprise start-up and development – women, unemployed people, young people – drawing on support from existing incentives provided by DSP (BTWEA) and programmes implemented locally (e.g., SICAP, YEI, LEADER).
<b>1.5.04</b>	Promote research and development and knowledge transfer to improve competitiveness of small businesses, drawing on research and other services of third level colleges. UL and LIT have Centres of Excellence / Research Centres in sectors such as food science / agri-food industry in dairying, ICT, nanotechnologies, engineering, retail / franchising. The HEIs have been

	supporting the establishment spin-off companies from research with business incubators established on campus at both LIT and UL (and some off-campus activities).
<b>1.5.05</b>	Implement the LEADER Local Development Strategy (i.e., the specific objectives under the Main theme: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation).
<b>1.5.06</b>	Implement the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Strategic Action and Implementation Plan.
<b>1.5.07</b>	Support the consolidation and further development of the Local Community Enterprise Centres in Limerick City and County (including social enterprise), supported by LCCC, LEO, Innovative Limerick and other stakeholders including the local development companies.
<b>1.5.09</b>	Facilitate networking opportunities for businesses, drawing on the work of existing organisations including Limerick Chamber as well as new networks in emerging sectoral areas (e.g., artisan food in implementation of the food strategy, rural tourism operators).
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.6 Promotion and Marketing</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote Limerick city and county as a location for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as a place to do business and to visit. Promote Limerick as a destination for festivals and large-scale events including cultural activities (music, literature, film, art).
<b>Responsibility</b>	IDA; LCCC; HEIs (Higher Education Institutes); Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase the number of businesses in Limerick Increase the number of visitors to Limerick Increase the number of residents living in Limerick in accordance with the settlement hierarchy Increase the number of festivals and events in Limerick City and County
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.6.01</b>	Establish and support a dedicated Communications/Marketing Unit in LCCC to market Limerick as a business and visitor destination and develop and implement a Marketing Strategy for the Limerick Region.
<b>1.6.02</b>	Build a connection with the Limerick Diaspora, and market Limerick to its Diaspora (i.e., roll out the Global Limerick Network initiative).
<b>1.6.03</b>	Establish Limerick as a location for events including cultural activities, building on the legacy of <i>National City of Culture 2014</i> and as part of its candidacy for <i>European Capital of Culture 2020</i> , sporting, historic and heritage activities addressed to local resident population as well as visitors.
<b>1.6.04</b>	Support the preparation of <i>Limerick European Capital of Culture Bid 2020</i> (phase two for shortlisted cities).

<b>1.6.05</b>	Develop Limerick as a destination for third level education nationally and internationally, promoting it to potential students / with educational institutions, and its Alumni (UL, MIC, LIT).
<b>1.6.06</b>	Coordinate the marketing of Limerick undertaken by LCCC with similar activities of regional organisations (Shannon Airport / Shannon Group, Shannon Foynes Port Company).
<b>1.6.07</b>	Support the marketing strategies / actions of local cultural institutions and tourism in city and county (museums, natural and heritage attractions, recreation and leisure). Link into specific tourism initiatives in a coordinated way to increase the overall tourism offer / mix – including, for instance, the Great Southern Trail, Ireland’s Ancient East, connections to the Wild Atlantic Way. Tourism marketing is one of specific action areas under LEADER while city-based tourism can also be further promoted.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>1.7 Networks and partnership</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote local and regional business networks which can help pursue common interests, access wider markets and build strategic partnerships to support economic and employment development.
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; Higher Education Institutions; Innovate Limerick; Limerick Chamber; Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase the number of, and partners participating in, business clusters and networks
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>1.7.01</b>	Draw on the Limerick Charter (local authority, higher education and private sector) under <i>Limerick 2030</i> to progress strategic projects.
<b>1.7.02</b>	Develop Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, working with partners (e.g., Chamber of Commerce) to achieve a coordinated approach.
<b>1.7.03</b>	Develop public agency links with local and regional employer networks to match education and training provision to skills and competency needs of employers, open up access to work experience and placements, apprenticeships and sustainable jobs particularly for unemployed people, linking into the work of the Shannon Regional Skills Forum.
<b>1.7.04</b>	Build strategic education / industry partnerships in R&D and Innovation and knowledge transfer to support economic and employment development in sectors with high value added. This will create capacity to pursue opportunities for funding from the EU research programme, Horizon 2020 (e.g., Societal Challenges), led by third level education institutions.
<b>1.7.05</b>	Build strategic partnerships in the local, regional and national context to progress regional strategic initiatives, cross-local authority cooperation, EU transnational cooperation opportunities and city-to-city cooperation including URBACT III and Interreg.
<b>1.7.06</b>	Establish and support the development of clusters in the following sectors in Limerick: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limerick for IT – already established</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limerick for Engineering - already established</li> <li>- Limerick for Hospitality</li> <li>- Limerick for Film</li> <li>- National Sports Cluster</li> </ul>
<b>1.7.07</b>	LCCC to host meetings of the Economic Forum (bringing together individuals from a variety of sectors including business interests as well as the local authority) and providing advice on economic issues.

This next sub-section presents action under the Social Pillar, most relevant to the Economic elements of the LECF.

2. Social Pillar	
Action Area	2.1 Education, skills and learning (Economic)
<b>Objectives</b>	Ensure the supply in the local labour market of the qualifications and skills in the workforce to match current and future skills needs. Improve labour market intelligence to inform education and training provision and employment services (careers services, services to support unemployed access training and work).
<b>Responsibility</b>	Limerick & Clare ETB, Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Colleges, Skillsnet, DSP
<b>Outcomes</b>	Job vacancies filled (reduced skills mismatches) Increased level of qualification in the workforce, especially amongst those formerly unemployed and / or with redundant skills. Increase in graduates (i.e., with third level qualifications) employed in the local economy linked to the objective to attract and retain talent in the local economy.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>2.1.01</b>	Review FET provision – e.g., location, accessibility, equipment, technology, courses and levels of skills / qualification - in order to identify gaps, barriers to access (e.g., in rural locations) and action to address deficiencies (LCETB).
<b>2.1.02</b>	Utilise the structure of the Shannon Regional Skills Forum to promote cooperation between the key stakeholders – employers, education and training providers and employment services - to deliver on current and future skills needs in the local economy and reduce skills mismatches. Ensure skills needs of micro and small enterprises including local employers in services such as hospitality, tourism and retail as well as those of large companies are addressed.
<b>2.1.03</b>	Promote local collaboration and networks (across rural areas; urban-rural links) to build up scale (numbers to allow scheduling of courses) and to support access to FET. Tap into programmes such as Springboard, Momentum, New Apprenticeship Programme, Skills Training for Unemployed, Local Training Initiative and promote access to work experience, placements and jobs.
<b>2.1.04</b>	Continue with and build on Limerick for IT (education, training and industry links) to identify skills needs in ICT, followed by delivery of up-skilling / conversion courses to increase the pipeline of graduates in ICT, and reduce skills shortages in the sector. <i>This is also connected to 1.7.06 above.</i>

<b>2.1.05</b>	Develop the same model in other sectors with a profile of graduate-level employment – i.e., Limerick for Engineering; Limerick Food Sector and emerging / new sectors in creative industries, especially Film (linked to establishment of Troy Studios in Limerick) as well as Sports – extending the geographic scope including delivery into the county. <i>See also 1.7.06 above.</i>
<b>2.1.06</b>	Continue and extend the same model for hospitality skills education and training especially targeting young people and unemployed including long-term unemployed, working with LCETB, DSP, representative organisations of employers and training providers. This can build on the successful experiences of the Hospitality Education and Training Centre, Roxboro Limerick City (a partnership-based initiative) supported by the Limerick Regeneration programme and mainstream funding from LCETB and DSP. <i>See also 1.7.06 above.</i>
<b>2.1.07</b>	Support the roll-out of initiatives to create awareness of career choices amongst young people and educational, training and work opportunities (in third level institutions, further education colleges, apprenticeship programmes, work experience for transition year students). This can focus on sectors / skills offering new opportunities in the local economy (ICT, Science, Technology, Mathematics, Creative sectors) and entrepreneurship. Activities include: promotional events, summer camps as well as mainstream career guidance services in colleges and in the public employment services.

The next two Action Areas relate to Cross-Cutting themes that focus mainly on economic objectives.

<b>6. Whole of Government Approach &amp; Local Coordination</b>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>6.2 Limerick 2030 Charter and other networks</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To maximise the potential economic benefits to Limerick City and County, drawing on the commitment to strategic partnership in the Limerick 2030 Charter and advisory inputs from other networks
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; Higher Education Institutes; Representatives of private enterprise
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase number of strategic projects based on public-public and public-private partnership & increased investment
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>6.2.01</b>	Progress new forms of cooperation based on the commitment in the Limerick Charter (Limerick City and County Council, Higher Educational Institutes and the private sector).
<b>6.2.02</b>	Actively pursue participation in wider networks, especially EU networks, to develop new opportunities, enhance the reputation of Limerick and its internationalisation.

<b>7. Innovation</b>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>7.2 Strategic innovation through partnership and Innovate Limerick</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To accelerate innovation by providing a supportive environment for it including opportunities for various stakeholders and sectors to collaborate in Limerick, led by Innovate Limerick based on public-private and community partnership.

<b>Responsibility</b>	Innovate Limerick; LCCC; IDA; Enterprise Ireland; Higher Education Institutions
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase investment in R&D and Innovation to contribute to meeting EU 2020 targets for Ireland
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>7.2.01</b>	Progress proposals in <i>Limerick 2030</i> related to sectoral strategies in key areas, incubation space for high potential start-ups, promoting FDI in knowledge sectors and a business / sectoral clustering initiative. Such actions are also identified as priorities for the Mid-West Region with the <i>Mid-West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017</i> including actions to develop and grow business clusters in IT, Manufacturing, Film, Food and Sports. <i>See also 1.7.06 above.</i>
<b>7.2.02</b>	Establish Limerick Innovation Hub. Setting up a National Innovation Hub is identified as an action under the Economic Pillar in the <i>Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan</i> while promoting social innovation is incorporated into the Social Pillar. <i>See 7.3 below in the Community Plan in relation to social innovation and local initiatives.</i>
<b>7.2.03</b>	Ensure a vibrant venture capital fund operating in the Mid-West Region.
<b>7.2.04</b>	Work with industry and training bodies to address skills shortages and coordinate skills need of industry to be addressed by innovative training solutions. <i>See also 2.1.04-2.1.06 above.</i>

### **3. The Community Plan**

The Community Plan, similar to the process for the Economic Plan, has been prepared with reference to the baseline analysis (2015); review of relevant strategies and existing plans and stakeholder and public consultation. The preparation of the LECP overlapped with the preparation of the *Local Development Strategy Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (LEADER)* which involved consultations with stakeholders and participative planning processes in local rural communities. It also coincided with the roll-out of the Limerick *Public Participation Network (PPN)*. This involved information sessions for voluntary and community groups in the city and county, as well as setting up the PPN structures and representations of voluntary and community interests on local decision-making committees from the PPN.

#### **3.1 Community: SWOT Analysis: Commentary and rationale**

A summary SWOT, drawing on the findings relevant to community development, is presented in the Table below.

The community SWOT and the community element of the plan emphasise social issues, especially social inclusion of disadvantaged populations (area-based and groups in society) and social integration. These are essential factors in building cohesive communities. Physical development (economic and social infrastructure) and the environment are completely integrated into the community SWOT and the community element of the plan. Safety, security and tolerance (crime, fear of crime and working with diversity) are important cross-cutting issues, essential to quality of life. Safe communities, welcoming of diversity, attract investment, business, visitors, workers (talent) and residents.

The analysis shows many strengths and opportunities. The city and county has a strong presence of third level educational institutions and a wide geographic distribution of schools at primary and secondary level, to service its young population. Commuting distances to schools and colleges, on average, are short, reflecting good accessibility. However, in terms of weakness and threats, with shifting demographics and the trend in populations leaving the city to live in the suburbs and hinterlands, the schools infrastructure is reshaping. For instance, some schools in the city, especially those with more socially-disadvantaged populations, have experienced significant decline in enrolments resulting in school amalgamations and closures. There have also been school amalgamations in recent years in the county. At the same time, there is pressure for places and new schools planned for the suburbs and parts of the county.

Census data (2011) indicate a profile of good population health. However, there is a pattern of health inequalities, with a higher proportion of those in lower social classes, spatially disadvantaged and other communities (e.g., Travellers, disabled people) in fair or poor health compared with more affluent groups. There are long-standing structural problems of high unemployment, economic inactivity, low education, welfare dependence and household and child poverty, concentrated in neighbourhoods in the city. With population dispersal of disadvantaged households (moving out from the city), migration of new populations to the city centre, and dispersed living patterns in rural areas, some people in or at highest risk of exclusion are difficult to target, to bring them into support services to meet their needs and into activation measures (focused on work)

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS	COMMUNITY WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong education infrastructure at 3<sup>rd</sup> level (UL/LIT/MIC) &amp; primary &amp; secondary schools &amp; childcare services in city &amp; county</li> <li>- Generally short commuting times to work / school / college</li> <li>- High percentage of people in good or very good health</li> <li>- Natural resources &amp; landscapes (rivers, mountains), historic, heritage, recreational &amp; cultural assets in the city &amp; county (quality of life)</li> <li>- Strong sporting culture (Munster Rugby, GAA and soccer), sports' science and education and sporting facilities</li> <li>- Well-developed community organisations, strong community spirit and sense of pride and attachment to local areas</li> <li>- Good infrastructure of clubs, activities and facilities for children and young people with a profile of disadvantage in the city</li> <li>- Government commitment to &amp; funding for the regeneration process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extremely high unemployment in metropolitan Limerick (28.9%) including long term unemployed &amp; youth unemployment (2011)</li> <li>- Deeply embedded social deprivation linked to unemployment, low education, poor health, social housing, families with complex needs, child poverty &amp; low work intensity (welfare-dependent) households</li> <li>- 19% of city population live in Small Areas classified as extremely or very disadvantaged &amp; extremes of social inequality in the city</li> <li>- Pockets of deprivation in the county including parts of Rathkeale, Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West, Askeaton, Croom &amp; other towns &amp; dispersed deprivation in rural areas</li> <li>- Loss of economic activity, services, residential populations from City Centre, towns &amp; villages</li> <li>- Significant numbers in housing need (on social housing waiting list)</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES	COMMUNITY THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential to increase tourism including rural and urban-based tourism &amp; to connect to Irelands Ancient East initiative</li> <li>- Significant reduction in most categories of recorded offences, especially serious crime between 2007-2013</li> <li>- High levels of voluntary participation especially in sport and charitable activity which could be mobilised to greater effect</li> <li>- Potential to improve multi-agency coordination using structures (e.g., Children and Young People's Services Committee now covering city and county), history of partnership including networks in city &amp; county</li> <li>- Potential to build on positive experience and legacy of City of Culture 2014 &amp; Limerick as candidate city for European Capital of Culture 2020</li> <li>- Unrealised potential for cooperation across city &amp; county &amp; into the region in national and international networks &amp; funding opportunities</li> <li>- Social innovation agenda being pursued</li> <li>- Planned capital investment programme including social infrastructure (housing) &amp; new models of housing provision</li> <li>- Increased diversity &amp; potential to build on positive experiences of migration &amp; Limerick as an Inter-Cultural City (and County)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population decline in the city (-13% over last 30 years) compared with significant growth in the county (+40%) &amp; demographic shifts (ageing)</li> <li>- Disadvantaged populations moving from the city &amp; services not well-developed in host communities (city, suburbs &amp; county); schools' infrastructure changing &amp; facing challenges</li> <li>- Emerging social problems in the towns, "hidden" deprivation &amp; difficult to reach groups (e.g., NEETs, older people, disabled, lone parent)</li> <li>- Legacy of negative image of the city</li> <li>- Fear of crime &amp; issues in community safety (anti-social behaviour)</li> <li>- Challenges in social integration - new communities as part of global migration as well as long-standing issues (Travellers)</li> <li>- Health inequalities limiting potential;</li> <li>- Poor mental health, para-suicide and high suicide rates is a key concern</li> <li>- Absence of a rural tourism destination management support scheme</li> <li>- Energy: high dependence on imported fossil fuels, currently sheltered by low oil prices &amp; other factors (€ exchange rate) that could change</li> <li>- Low awareness &amp; / or acceptance of environmental challenges in the general population / low motivation to take preventive action</li> </ul>

Social deprivation and exclusion are also problems in the county. In some towns, there have been long-standing problems of deprivation and social exclusion – often concentrated in local authority housing estates / small areas of towns and in areas with concentrations of Travellers. In some towns, there has been a history of divided communities. In other cases, problems have emerged where traditionally there was not a profile of social problems linked to deprivation. Generally, with social and economic change, there is more evidence of the social problems typically associated with large urban areas in some of the towns, villages and in the suburbs. Often, there is a lack of community infrastructure and community-based services and experience to deal with them in these areas,. A key challenge is to plan for improved accessibility to services, to develop facilities and to support community organisation and engagement in planning to meet the changing needs of local communities and of specific groups. Innovation in the design of services and to improve models for service delivery into communities, especially more rural areas, is needed.

Over the years of economic recession and fiscal crisis, there was a lack of investment in capital projects including essential social infrastructure (social housing, schools, health centres, community facilities) as well as economic infrastructure. The deterioration of the physical fabric of parts of the city (the city centre) and towns and villages is a problem for community as well as an economic issue. However, the renewal of the fabric of the city, towns and villages may offer opportunities to change use to develop social and community facilities, local services, cultural activities and housing. The recently announced capital infrastructure programme, new schemes to increase supply and improve the management of housing provision for those in housing need, housing developments (new build and upgrading) and public realm improvements funded under the regeneration programme in the city provide opportunities to address needs and bring other benefits to communities (e.g., training, skills and employment).

The quality of the natural and physical environment and cultural and heritage resources – the “built” environment and “soft” cultural resources including local histories, music, literature etc. - are all significant assets, linked to good quality of life. There is potential for further development there based on local initiatives to benefit communities and residents, providing opportunities to participate in community life, leisure, recreation and learning and to support tourism development. The absence of a tourism destination management support scheme has been identified as an issue for attention in communities with potential to develop rural tourism.

Limerick city and county has a vibrant civic and community life including a high proportion of people engaged in volunteering. Levels of volunteering are higher in the county (and in more affluent populations) compared with the city. Limerick City and County has a strong profile in sport including GAA clubs throughout city and county, rugby and soccer as well as international quality facilities for training and events (UL Arena, Thomond Park) and strong expertise in sports science. Limerick city has a developed infrastructure of voluntary and community organisations delivering services into disadvantaged communities including youth services, out-of-school services as well as services for general community and specific groups such as elderly people and vulnerable populations. The social regeneration programme has been an important source of support for such services in the regeneration areas of the city. Community development, community-based planning, local services provision in communities (health, recreation, education and training), rural tourism and social enterprise have been important types of activities developed by the Local Development Companies in rural county Limerick, serving communities in the towns, villages and open countryside. The lack

of a national programme supporting community development as a strand of action in its own right is considered a threat to sustaining the level of engagement with, and support to, communities that was available in the past in both city and county.

While diversity in the population due to new cultural communities in both the city and parts of the county is enriching, this presents new challenges. For instance, schools and other services (health and local government services including housing) are required to meet different types of needs. This may require new support interventions (e.g., linked to language competence, different cultural norms and accommodating re-settlement of migrating populations seeking asylum).

### **3.2 Objectives and focus of the Community Plan**

The overall objectives of the community elements of the plan are to promote quality of life for local communities across Limerick City and County, promote social equality, embrace diversity and improve social integration and community cohesion.

Quality of life has various dimensions and this is reflected in the specific objectives and action areas of the Community Plan. It includes:

- Provision of, and access to, essential social infrastructure of high quality including housing, water, amenities, environmental maintenance and public services (education, health, social care, transport, policing), cultural activities and recreation. Many of these aspects of quality of life are within the core function of the local authority or the local authority has a key role in planning for, or influencing, such provision.
- Access to economic opportunities and economic security (jobs and income).
- Social inclusion and social integration within and across communities.
- Population health and well-being.
- Creating an environment and positive attitudes towards ageing to improve conditions for “ageing well in place”.
- Creating conditions including quality services to promote the well-being and positive outcomes for children, families and young people.

There are local multi-agency structures in place to identify priorities in these areas and to inform the delivery of public policy interventions in ways that are responsive to local needs.

The Community plan concerns the well-being of all citizens and communities. It aims to promote development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable in urban and rural areas – the “Living City” and “Living Countryside” agendas.

The Community Plan has a strong focus on social inclusion and reducing deprivation. There are already many policy interventions in place to address social exclusion. The policy context is complex and so too are the needs of many groups, families and individuals at highest risk of exclusion. The scope for local level intervention in this area under the LECP is two-fold:

1. Bringing a stronger coordination role at strategic level and an integrated or “joined up” approach, and
2. Improving responsiveness to specific local conditions and the needs of people on the ground in the delivery of interventions.

In terms of strategy, a key objective is to improve collaboration and partnership across and within public, private and community sector. The LCDC is an important new structure and governance model in this regard. With the amalgamated local authority, it can promote stronger urban-rural linkages and well as better links within types of areas (e.g., across rural towns). The role of the LCDC in overseeing delivery of the local development programmes, *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017* and the *Rural Development Programme LEADER 2014-2020*, facilitate coordination and stronger links. At the more localised level, working with Local Development Companies and other networks and organisations, “the reach” into communities, possibilities to work with “hard to reach” groups and individuals can be improved. The objective is to support them into services (for instance, overcoming barriers to access to training, education and work), to improve the responsiveness of services to the needs and conditions prevailing in local communities (e.g., involving user groups in planning provision, delivery of interventions in local community settings). The latter includes promoting innovative solutions to address the challenges and develop new opportunities in local communities.

There is also scope to work with agencies and communities on preventive interventions – e.g., to plan for and support services development, small-scale infrastructures and other initiatives which can prevent the on-set of problems at a later stage (when they are more costly and difficult to address). Examples here are: interventions to enable people to age well in their own communities (services to reduce isolation, promote social networks, healthy lifestyles), develop facilities and services for children and families including out-of-school services, summer camps, parenting programmes, improve access to services that keep people well or promote well-being (mental health, education, cultural activities, volunteering) and improve the sense and attractiveness of local communities (environmental clean-ups, improved community meetings places / facilities, festivals).

The Community elements of the Plan include a focus on the big environmental challenges facing all communities, related to improved energy efficiency, transitioning to renewable sources of energy, low carbon and challenges of climate change. Other specific themes include maintaining biodiversity, conservation and reduced use of scarce resources, waste reduction and recycling and developing the “circular” economy. The scope for community-level action is strong here in that meeting our national targets requires attitudinal and behavioural change in the population. This can be supported by awareness-raising, education, networking with others and developing local leadership to champion these agendas. There is scope for innovation at local level, in developing responses to these challenges, “making it easier” for local communities to change behaviour as well as economic opportunities in the “green” and circular economy.

Creating a vibrant civic life and civic engagement are important objectives of the LECP. Connecting with the citizen and community involvement in local decision-making to strengthen local democracy are priorities in local government reform, as reflected in “*Putting People First*”. The *Public Participation Network* is an important new structure, now being rolled out to further this objective. A long history of voluntary activity and community development creates supportive conditions for the Limerick PPN. The Local Development Companies as well as LCCC have collaborated in awareness-raising activities and delivery of information sessions to communities in city and county on the PPN. Election of volunteers onto the PPN structures (secretariat, nominations onto SPCs), set up of structures and systems for communication / information dissemination across the PPN are in process in Limerick.

Generally, there is great diversity within the voluntary and community sector including groups based on purely voluntary effort, groups with professional workers and large charities; communities of place and communities of interest; groups that act on specific issues in the interest of their members and groups that play a key role in delivering services on behalf of the state. As well as traditional community and voluntary organisations throughout city and county, there are new communities that are not well-organised into representative or action-oriented structures. Working with those communities to build capacity for organisation and engagement will be supported.

Promotion of civic engagement in the LECP includes but is broader than participation in civic affairs and voluntary organisations. It is an agenda pursued by public agencies including local government as well as private organisations, to get involved in action in communities, contributing in different ways, and to involve citizens and voluntary and community groups in local decision-making. Meaningful participation by the various interests requires relationship-building and capacity building including new skills and competences (which can apply to all parties not just community).

### **3.3 Community Plan: Types of Action**

Actions under the Community element address different themes, mainly under the Social and Physical / Environmental Pillars but also the Economic Pillar. Community elements are included in all of the cross-cutting or foundational themes: Community participation and local initiatives, Policing, Justice and Community Safety, Whole of Government Approach / Local Coordination and Innovation.

Some of the action areas relate to strategies or plans that are already in place - for instance, the Age Friendly Strategy under the Age-Friendly County Programme, the Children and Young Person's Services Committee (CYPSE), in both cases, involving a multi-agency approach. Other action areas relate to actions now being implemented under *SICAP* or to be rolled out under *LEADER*. Other action areas come under the core functions of the local authority or relate to local authority-led initiatives or initiatives led by other statutory agencies, such as the HSE in relation to health.

Action Areas in the Community Plan across the three vertical Pillars and the cross-cutting themes are developed below.

1. Economic Pillar	2. Social Pillar	3. Physical / Environmental Pillar
	2.1 Education, skills & learning	3.1 Public capital infrastructure
1.2 ICT and broadband	2.2 Health & well-being	3.2 Urban & village renewal, strategic sites & civic projects
	2.3 Ageing well / age-friendly county	3.3 Transport including SMARTER travel & rural transport
	2.4 Social inclusion, employability & work	3.4 Energy efficiency, low carbon & climate change
	2.5 Children, families & young people	3.5 Landscape, bio-diversity, greening the city & waste
2. Community participation & community development	2.1 Public Participation Network 2.2 Capacity building & community development 2.3 Information exchange & networks 2.4 Local initiatives	
3. Policing & community safety	3.1 Local fora to support crime prevention & policing 3.2 Crime prevention & community safety	
4. Whole of government approach & local coordination	4.1 LCDC development (governance & capacity building)	
5. Innovation	5.1 Local Government service delivery to the citizen & communities 7.3 Innovation: services & local initiatives	

Economic  Community  Economic & Community  Cross-cutting 

1. Actions under the Social Pillar are mostly contained in the Community Plan. However, specific actions under “Education, Skills and Learning” are also identified for the Economic Plan.
2. Actions under Community Participation and Community Development are all presented under the Community Plan. However, these are cross-cutting actions as community also underpins local economic development elements.
3. Policing and Community Safety is an essential element of quality of life in local communities, and underpins the Economic, Social and Physical / Environmental Pillars.
4. The Whole of Government Approach and Local Coordination, focuses on the role of the LCDC as a new governance model. As well as acting at the structure to promote local coordination of public policies, it brings the integrated approach and “joined up” thinking in planning services and into delivery of services.
5. Innovation under the Community elements of the LECP focus on promoting innovation in delivering services to the citizen and improving quality of service provision and enabling local communities to experiment in designing new solutions to problems / challenges and opportunities.
6. Action Area ICT and Broadband was presented above under the Economic Plan.

7. Actions under the Physical / Environmental Pillar are presented in the final section of the LECP. All of the Action Areas under this Pillar are relevant to both the Economic and Community elements of the Plan.

2. Social Pillar	
Action Area	2.1 Education & learning: Community (social inclusion focus)
<b>Objectives</b>	Increase participation in education and training amongst adults with low education, young people who have left school early, migrants, individuals with poor literacy or numeracy and other groups at risk of social exclusion. Contribute to reduction in Early School Leaving and under-achievement in education amongst children and young people at risk of poor outcomes. <i>These objectives are reflected in Goal 2, SICAP, but also extend beyond this.</i>
<b>Responsibility</b>	DES (local office), LCETB, DSP, Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased participation in further education and training by those with lowest education. Improved retention in education for young people at risk of early school leaving.
<b>Actions</b>	<i>Continued from 2.1 Education and Learning (economic) above</i>
<b>2.1.08</b>	Implement the Learning Limerick Initiative, an inter-agency initiative involving the key stakeholders, LCETB, LCCC, the Higher Education Institutions, further education providers, Local Development Companies, community education providers, Early Years and youth services. It aims to coordinate the provision of, and promote access to, lifelong learning by developing Limerick as a “Learning Region” (supported by SICAP). Specific actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop / extend participation of providers and other relevant services across city and county in Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival and market this to the public and to group under-represented in lifelong learning.</li> <li>- Collaborate in providing opportunities for lifelong learning accessible throughout city and county including outreach facilities in local communities, e-learning platforms and on-going support with learning (e.g., mentoring).</li> </ul>
<b>2.1.09</b>	Develop opportunities and access to “second chance” education – in collaboration with the LCETB, local networks and community-based providers – in accredited and unaccredited learning, prioritising those with low education (Leaving Cert, Lower Secondary and below) and groups at risk of exclusion such as lone parents, Travellers, people with mental health problems (supported by SICAP) and ex-offenders. Integrate elements including literacy and numeracy, basic ICT skills, personal and social development and English language competence where relevant.
<b>2.1.10</b>	Collaboration across services to support progression pathways in education, learning and qualification for those with lowest education (supported by SICAP).
<b>2.1.11</b>	Initiatives to improve retention in school for those at risk of early school leaving and early interventions for those at risk of poor attainment and with a record of poor school attendance. Actions here include out-of-school services such as homework clubs, additional tuition, “camps” and other activities during school holidays. Such activities can be developed in cooperation with schools, early years services and community-based organisations. They are well-developed in the city, supported by the DEIS school support programme, social regeneration,

	the PAUL Partnership and other organisations (e.g. Family Resource Centres, Barnardos). They are also developed in some parts of the county (e.g., the towns with Family Resource Centres and established community organisations) and are developing in others (supported by SICAP).
<b>2.1.12</b>	Collaboration between early years services, schools, Family Resource Centres, primary care to put in place preventive interventions in child development and learning. Examples include: Incredible Years (positive parenting), speech and language development, services to address emotional and behavioural problems, literacy and numeracy programmes in schools / out-of-school.
<b>2.1.13</b>	Collaboration between schools, Local Development Companies, youth services and other providers in the voluntary and community sector (e.g., running after-schools, homework clubs) with Higher Education Institutions to improve access to third level education for groups under-represented in higher education.
<b>2.1.14</b>	Mentoring and access to financial support / grants to support retention of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in third level education.
<b>2.1.15</b>	Actions to address the “digital” divide affecting specific communities in the city and county - communities with low education, no access to ICT infrastructure - and groups such as lone parents, Travellers and older people. Such activities could be developed in collaboration with existing services including the library services (in library settings and through outreach), schools and community centres.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>2.2 Health &amp; Well-being</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote population health and well-being and conditions in local communities to support positive mental and physical health. Promote collaboration across statutory and community sector to improve access to health and social care services. Contribute to reducing health inequalities.
<b>Responsibility</b>	HSE, LCCC, Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased inter-agency collaboration and community participation in health and well-being initiatives in local communities. Increased adoption of positive health behaviours. Improved access to primary care and other relevant services.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>2.2.01</b>	Collaboration between statutory agencies, led by HSE Health Promotion, and voluntary and community sector to implement population health and well-being campaigns in city and county – e.g., city-wide promotion (e.g., Healthy Limerick initiative) and in local communities. These should draw on the <i>Healthy Ireland</i> strategy and the social determinants of health approach. Promotion will address factors including involvement in social activities (family and friendship networks), lifestyle practices and behaviours (smoking, drinking, substance misuse, risk behaviours, healthy eating) and promoting uptake of health screening and immunisations.
<b>2.2.02</b>	Events and initiatives in local communities to support positive physical and mental health including support to set up or expand groups to reduce social

	isolation, develop new services (e.g., Men’s Sheds, women’s groups, parent and toddler groups), health information and health screening services, sport and recreational events, demonstration projects to promote good health (e.g., nutrition, healthy eating, physical exercise).
<b>2.2.03</b>	Collaboration with LCCC services to enhance local environmental conditions (recreational facilities, walkways, cycle paths) and other key infrastructures that impact on health (neighbourhood planning, community facilities and housing including housing conditions and housing adaptations).
<b>2.2.04</b>	Collaboration between the key statutory agencies (HSE, TUSLA), other services (such as transport) and voluntary and community groups to promote access to primary care services across city and county, access to specialist services (e.g., hospital-based services, respite, disability services) for those who need them and support from health professionals in managing chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, pain management).
<b>2.2.05</b>	Collaboration between health care professionals, community organisations and other relevant bodies including the local authority, early years services, education services in the delivery of primary care initiatives for populations most at risk of poorest health, for instance, Travellers and very disadvantaged spatial communities. Promote the participation of user groups in decision-making on primary care services and on how to deliver them.
<b>2.2.06</b>	Collaboration between statutory agencies and voluntary and community organisations to improve access to services for treatment of problems particularly affecting socially disadvantaged populations. These include problems of addiction, domestic violence, mental health, suicide risk and prevention and physical health problems. Actions can include: local information on services, awareness-raising on services as part of general outreach, setting up referral protocols between local groups and specific services, setting up an outreach facility to access a service locally such as addiction services, setting up support groups for those directly experiencing such problem and families affected by the problems.
<b>2.2.07</b>	Set up a Youth Mental Health initiative widely accessible to young people in community settings and staffed by professionals in mental health, primary care as well as counselling and other supports. The planning process for such an initiative – Jigsaw - was completed with support from the regeneration programme (2007-2011) but did not progress into implementation. This plan is now being considered in the development of a Youth Mental Health initiative, to be led by HSE, accessible to young people in the city (one location) and the county (two locations).
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>2.3 Ageing Well / Age-Friendly City and County</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To create age-friendly services and conditions in the physical and social environments across the city and county to meet current needs of older people and prepare for the challenges of demographic ageing. To create structures of inter-agency cooperation with opportunities for older people to participate in planning and decision-making in areas of policy, that impact on the well-being of older people.

	To create opportunities for inclusion of older people in society and all aspects of community life.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Limerick Age-Friendly Alliance, led by LCCC and involving other statutory agencies (HSE, An Garda Síochána, TUSLA the Child and Family Agency, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board), the University of Limerick, Limerick Chamber of Commerce, the GAA and a number of community and voluntary agencies.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Older people engaged in decision-making on matters that affect them. Increased accessibility and participation of older people in services / activities. Increased inter-agency and local community cooperation in relation to ageing and services for older people. Improved sense of security and safety.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>2.3.01</b>	Implement the <i>Limerick Age-Friendly Strategy 2015-2020</i> , which adopts an outcomes-based planning model, inter-agency cooperation and community and user involvement. This incorporates eight outcomes for older people: valuing their life experience and opportunities to shape and enhance their communities; providing opportunities for participation in civic, social and economic activities and lifelong learning; supported to stay living in their own homes and connected to communities; leading healthier and active lives for longer; able to get where they want to go; live in places where social and physical environments are designed to be age-friendly; feel safe and secure in their own homes and communities; and have the information and communication to support them in achieving these outcomes. Some specific actions include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Combating isolation of older people in both urban and rural areas through social and recreational initiatives and provision of everyday services including meals, health and social care and inter-generational initiatives (young people and older people engaging with each other), for instance, engaging with transition year students in schools and youth and community services.</li> <li>- Work with statutory agencies and community and voluntary organisations and older people themselves to create age-friendly environments in urban and rural areas including paths / walkways, seating, adaptations to improve access to buildings), services (transport) accessible to older people, and improved community-based services in primary care and social care.</li> <li>- Initiatives such as housing adaptations and new housing developments for older people (with shared services, security), access to support for families caring for older people, technology-based responses and monitoring to support independent living of older people. Some such initiatives can be led by the local authority and will also involve others such as third level institutions (e.g., in applied research), health services and policing.</li> <li>- Volunteering initiatives to recruit and support older people as volunteers in local communities, to develop peer support and create a pool of volunteers to support independent living of older people.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>2.4 Employability and work: Social inclusion and activation</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To promote access to education, training and lifelong learning for individuals who are long-term unemployed or economically inactive, targeting those living

	<p>in small areas designated as disadvantaged, groups distant from the labour market and from households with low incomes.</p> <p>To promote access to employment including self-employment and enterprise for the same target groups.</p> <p>To promote strategic inter-agency collaboration in FET and in employment and enterprise, including engagement with employers to improve the match of service provision to the needs of target groups.</p> <p><i>(The above objectives correspond to Goals 2 and 3 of SICAP).</i></p> <p>To promote social inclusion of target groups at highest risk of exclusion (lone parents, NEETs, Travellers, Roma, under-employed people, people with mental health problems, ex-offenders).</p>
<b>Responsibility</b>	DSP, LCETB, LCDC and Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>Reduced numbers in long-term unemployment (on the Live Register) facing additional barriers to work (lowest education, lone parents, very long-term unemployed).</p> <p>Increased participation in education and training of individuals formerly unemployed or economically inactive and, linked to other characteristics, at high risk of exclusion with a specific focus on NEETs.</p> <p>Progression of those groups to achieve higher level of educational qualification.</p>
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>2.4.01</b>	Implementation of SICAP, Goal 2 (access to educational support and progression along an educational continuum) and Goal 3 (access to employment, self-employment and enterprise supports and progression into work / self-employment, enterprise start-up).
<b>2.4.02</b>	Identify through research / mapping / needs analysis the barriers to participation in economic activity and education and learning (e.g., caring, transport, psychological barriers, social skills, mental health, basic literacy) of disadvantaged target groups in both urban and rural areas (generic and locally-specific needs). Collaborate with partners to use the evidence base of needs in multi-agency planning of provision, to develop services accessible to local communities.
<b>2.4.03</b>	Develop strategic partnerships (with DSP, Local Employment Services and Jobs Clubs in the city) to improve referral services (on-going). Extend networks into local communities – with organisations including schools, pre-schools /crèches, voluntary organisations in areas including sport, youth services – in order to reach “hidden” disadvantaged groups and support them through pre-development work where needed. This is especially important in rural areas where economic and social disadvantage is more dispersed.
<b>2.4.04</b>	Collaborate with LCETB and adult education and training providers in developing and delivery of quality FET and guidance services accessible to, and appropriate to the needs of, target groups and local communities.
<b>2.4.05</b>	Develop employability and access to employment interventions taking into account jobs developing in the local economy, including community / social enterprise, micro- and small enterprises in local areas, jobs in construction and in new / developing sectors in the local economy (energy, tourism, agri-food, hospitality, retail, social care). Develop and expand networks of the key

	partners, including representatives of employers / employer organisations, to improve the match between employability services (information, guidance, education and training) and local economic opportunities.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>2.5 Children, young people and families</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To support positive outcomes for children and families in Limerick, in line with national policy, <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014-2020</i> (Department of Children and Youth Affairs). To improve outcomes for children and families at risk of social exclusion. To improve coordination in planning and delivery of services to children and families, to create quality services accessible throughout city and county.
<b>Responsibility</b>	The Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) – a multi-agency structure involving mainly statutory agencies led by TUSLA the Child and Family Agency and also including: the HSE, Irish Youth Justice Service / Young Person's Probation, An Garda Síochána, the Department of Education and Skills, National Education and Welfare Board (now transferred to TUSLA), Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Limerick City and County Council, the PAUL Partnership and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals. Other relevant partners are Limerick Childcare Committee (now with a city and county remit), West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Progress in implementation of the CYPSE 2015-2017 plan (output- and outcome-based planning model) Increased links across city and county in planning provision for children and families, especially addressed to children and young people at risk.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>2.5.01</b>	Implementation of the CYPSC Plan (2015-2018). The CYPSC Plan is structured around the following priority areas: (1) Early Childhood intervention and Prevention; (2) Parenting and Family Support; (3) Youth Mental Health and Well-being; (4) Educational Participation, Engagement and Retention; (5) Restorative Practices; (6) High Needs Young People; (7) Young People aged 18-25, focused on vulnerable young people to support them into further education and training and jobs; (8) Limerick as a Child-Friendly City; (9) Local Area Pathways. It is an outcomes-focused plan, working into the outcome areas for children identified in the DCYA's strategy, <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> . The CYPSC is a coordination structure of the key agencies (mainly statutory) with a role in the delivery of services to children and young people and not a delivery agency with funding for frontline services in its own right. Mostly the actions identified in the CYPSE plan are implemented by the relevant agencies and involve multi-agency cooperation. <i>Some specific actions below are included in the CYPSC Plan.</i>
<b>2.5.02</b>	Implement actions addressed to children and young people at risk of early school leaving / poor attainment at school, delivered under SICAP (Goal 2, education). These include: preventive actions such as non-formal learning opportunities, personal and social development, health and well-being including speech and language therapy and access to other services (family support, child psychology services), homework clubs, out-of-school activities (e.g., summer camps) and positive parenting programmes (e.g., Incredible Years). These types

	of activities are all included in the CYPSC plan. In local communities “on the ground”, planning and delivery involves working with organisations including schools, crèches / pre-schools, Family Resource Centres in the city (northside and southside disadvantaged areas) and in Hospital and Croom, youth services and community centres /organisations. <i>They are also referenced above, under Education and Learning (section 2.1, Community Plan).</i>
<b>2.5.03</b>	Establish a positive youth mental health service (Jigsaw) in Limerick, accessible to young people in the city and county (two locations). The planning for Jigsaw (open access, based in an accessible location in Limerick City and designed with involvement of young people) was completed with support from the Limerick Regeneration Programme (2007-2011) but did not progress into implementation at that time. <i>This action is also referenced above under Health and Well-being (2.2, Community Plan).</i>
<b>2.5.04</b>	Support the delivery of community-based interventions, based on a multi-agency approach, to address the needs of youth in city and county at highest risk of poor outcomes. These include children from families with complex needs, families where tenancies in local authority / social housing is at risk, Traveller children, young people at risk or with a history of offending behaviour.
<b>2.5.05</b>	Implement the Limerick ABC (Area-Based Childhood) StartRight programme (2015-2017), funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies. ABC is addressed to reducing child poverty. It is an innovative programme focused on prevention and early intervention. It is managed by the PAUL Partnership but implemented based on an inter-agency approach. The Limerick ABC StartRight programme builds on an earlier programme, StartRight which targeted the southside disadvantaged communities in the city. This was also funded under a national programme (National Early Years Access Initiative) and Atlantic Philanthropies. It involves an inter-agency approach in planning, management and delivery.
<b>2.5.06</b>	Identify good practice and learning from ABC that could be applied more widely in other parts of the city and into the county, prioritising towns with a profile of social disadvantage.
<b>2.5.07</b>	Under the auspices of CYPSC, working with the DES and agencies including Young Person’s Probation, An Garda Síochána and the Local Development Companies, promote restorative practices in organisations working with young people including schools, youth services and community organisations. Interventions in restorative practices are developed in Limerick City with funding support from Atlantic Philanthropies and the regeneration programme. This initiative involved training and support in application of restorative practices in DEIS schools, mainly at second level, and in some community settings.
<b>2.5.08</b>	Implementation of a new Garda Youth Diversion Project in Rathkeale, announced in 2015. This is in addition to existing Garda Youth Diversion Projects in Limerick (five in the city and one in the county).
<b>2.5.09</b>	Research / mapping to update the evidence base and fill information gaps in assessment of needs of children and young people in the city and county. A

	comprehensive study of needs of children and families, focused on the most disadvantaged areas of the city, was undertaken in 2010/2011 but such data are not available for the county. There is also a gap in needs assessment of young people aged 18-25 years. This is important to inform design of interventions in education, training, employment and housing. This will link into SICAP actions focused on young people who are unemployed, NEETs and young people at risk.
<b>2.5.10</b>	Collaborate with stakeholders including the local authority, public services / amenities including libraries, museums, sports facilities, third level colleges and other services (representatives of restaurants, cinemas etc.) to promote Limerick as a child-friendly city. Elements of such a campaign could be extended to county towns and the countryside, working with local stakeholders / partners delivering amenities and services in those areas.
<b>2.5.11</b>	Collaboration with services such as youth services and schools, to support participation of young people in their communities and in society. This could include promoting youth-led local civic projects as well as long-standing activities such as Comhlaire na nÓg.
<b>2.5.12</b>	Build strategic collaboration and engage in other activities (consultations, participatory planning) to promote the successful expansion of the geographical remit of the Limerick CYPSC which is well-established in the city, into Limerick County.

The next section presents actions under the cross-cutting theme of Community Participation and Community Development.

4. Community Participation and Community Development	
Action Area	4.1 Public Participation Network & Civic Engagement
<b>Objectives</b>	To facilitate better communication and representation between local communities and local government. To facilitate local groups and organisations to network with each other, exchange information and experience and to contribute to their communities.
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased community engagement in local decision-making
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>4.1.01</b>	Support the setting up, and facilitate the roll-out and operation, of the PPN process in Limerick, at Municipal and Metropolitan District, and city and county levels. This includes making provision for resources to support the work of the PPN and capacity building (information, training, advice). Implemented by LCCC.
<b>4.1.02</b>	Support the structure of the PPN in acting as the conduit to provide ideas, suggestions and experiences of local communities and specific interests (environment, social inclusion, community and voluntary sector) into the preparation of plans, policies and services of LCCC.
<b>4.1.03</b>	Support PPN members to participate in Committees of the local authority (including the five current Strategic Policy Committees, the LCDC and the Joint Policing Committee) and to provide information and feedback to and from the

	communities they represent.
<b>4.1.04</b>	Undertake information and awareness-raising activities with local authority staff (and staff from other statutory agencies) on the role of the PPN. Identify how agencies can collaborate with the PPN in the best interest of working effectively with local communities.
<b>4.1.05</b>	Review operation, experiences and lessons from the PPN process in Limerick with a view to improving effectiveness in participation, information flows, bringing local communities into decision-making processes of local government and supporting civic engagement.
<b>4.1.06</b>	Implementation of a programme of civic engagement in Limerick City, addressed to regeneration communities, delivered by PAUL Partnership and LCCC and funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and government (DECLG/LCCC). This involves local research to map needs and capacity building activities including training and mentoring of community activists, local authority and other agency staff and other actions to map civic engagement and contribution of community to decision-making and local plans.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>4.2 Capacity building and community development</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To build capacity of local communities to form organisational structures with good governance. To build capacity of local community and voluntary groups / interests to participate meaningfully in local and regional decision-making structures. To build capacity of local communities and groups to develop local plans (area-based and project-specific) and implement local initiatives.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Local Development Companies, LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase in local groups developing plans and initiatives Improved organisation and governance of local community groups and networks
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>4.2.01</b>	Outreach, animation, information, training and on-going technical support to build capacity in local communities of place and communities of interest including new immigrant communities and Travellers: e.g., (1) to support the development and operation of new groups in communities where they are lacking; (2) to strengthen participation, enhance structures, competencies and skills in existing groups which haven't developed to their potential. This will be implemented through training, advice and mentoring; (3) to support existing groups that have already demonstrated good capacity and have a track record of achievement to move to a more advanced level of operation (professionalise, develop in new areas of services, tender to deliver local services, set up social enterprise etc.) also through training, advice, mentoring and supporting development of new partnerships and networks. <i>These types of actions will be implemented under Goal 1 of SICAP, with an emphasis on social inclusion, equality and working with diversity and in LEADER under Local Objective 5, Basic Services for Hard to Reach Communities, Community animation, capacity building and training.</i>

<b>4.2.02</b>	Implementation of participative socio-economic planning in local communities involving preparation of integrated area-based plans, for instance, for the renewal of towns and village in rural areas and including statutory, community and businesses / employer partners. <i>This is supported under Local Objective 3, Rural Towns, under LEADER.</i> Such activities can also result from neighbourhood-based planning in the city, linked to the civic engagement initiative supported by Atlantic Philanthropies and LCCC and other initiatives supported under the social and economic pillars of the <i>Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan.</i>
<b>4.2.03</b>	Implementation of actions to support equality, diversity and social integration, the latter involving different sections of communities in dialogue and working together on issues of common concern.
<b>4.2.04</b>	Capacity building and other activities (business plans, feasibility studies) to assist local communities and groups to implement local initiatives in a variety of areas. These could include: actions to re-develop physical assets (buildings) and improve the environment of local neighbourhoods, towns and villages (e.g., facilities for rural youth, basic community facilities / meeting places), estate management as well as planning “soft actions” including festivals and events, promotion, development of community information services / websites for building local awareness of services and activities in the local community.
<b>Action area</b>	<b>4.3 Information exchange and networks</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To promote exchange of information and transfer of knowledge / learning across community and voluntary groups. To promote access to networks in the region and beyond (including EU), opening up access to wider opportunities for local communities.
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCDC, Local Development Companies, LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase in networks of community and voluntary organisations within and across city and county. Increased participation of Limerick-based groups / organisations in regional and wider networks.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>4.3.01</b>	Provide opportunities (local events, directories etc.) for information and knowledge exchange amongst community groups involved in local initiatives across city and county and to explore opportunities for cooperation (e.g., joint projects), sharing resources, transfer of successful approaches and scaling up promising initiatives.
<b>4.3.02</b>	Support participation of community and voluntary organisations in wider information and knowledge networks (regional, inter-county, national and European) to build up learning and develop new opportunities for local initiatives.
<b>Action area</b>	<b>4.4 Local initiatives</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To support community and voluntary organisations in implementation of local development plans and initiatives to benefit local communities

<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC, Local Development Companies, LEO
<b>Outcomes</b>	Number of local initiatives (projects) implemented from community-led local plans / community socio-economic planning
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>4.4.01</b>	<p>Support (technical, financial) for delivery of local initiatives which may be funded under various public programmes (grants from LEOs, DSP employment supports, LEADER, LCCC, DYCA, Department of Agriculture and Food, HSE), private or philanthropic funds and / or based on purely voluntary activity. Local initiatives can be in different action areas under all pillars and cross-cutting themes of the LECP. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic activities including: social enterprise, rural tourism, local food and other sectoral initiatives, under Pillar 1 (Economic).</li> <li>- Physical and environmental improvements including Tidy Towns, local housing projects, basic community infrastructure, new areas such as local communities developing initiatives in low carbon / energy efficiency, waste and biodiversity, under Pillar 3 (Physical / environment)</li> <li>- Local services in education for adults, children and young people, community projects in social care and health and youth facilities under Pillar 2 (Social).</li> <li>- Local initiatives in cultural or creative activities under Pillars 1 (Economic), 2 (Social) or 3 (Physical / Environmental).</li> </ul> <p><i>See also links to Innovation, 7.3 below.</i></p>

The next section identifies actions under Policing, Justice and Community Safety.

5. Policing and Community Safety	
Action Area	5.1 Fora / structures to support crime prevention and policing in local areas
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>To enhance conditions for social and economic development and quality of life through effective policing strategies in both urban and rural areas, working with a partnership approach.</p> <p>To build trust and confidence in policing and the wider criminal justice system in communities where there is a history of low trust (i.e., spatial communities such as regeneration areas of the city and amongst specific groups).</p>
<b>Responsibility</b>	An Garda Síochána, LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>Reduction in crime rates across all categories of offences</p> <p>Reduction in fear of crime</p>
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>5.1.01</b>	<p>Work with existing structures / fora for consultations and input to policing and crime prevention including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Joint Policing Committee involving senior Garda, public agencies, elected members and community representatives to develop strategy, plans, discuss, review and make recommendations for policing and community safety strategies and plans in local areas across city and county</li> <li>- the Limerick Children's and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)</li> <li>- the Alliance of partners associated with the Age-Friendly County</li> </ul>

	Programme, Local Regeneration Committees, Traveller Inter-Agency Committee and other structures and specific projects (e.g., Garda Youth Diversion Projects in city and county, Restorative Practices development structures, etc.).
<b>5.1.02</b>	Develop local dataset to inform the work of the Joint Policing Committee and other coordination structures with a role in community safety.
<b>5.1.03</b>	Expand the membership / representation on structures and / or create new ad hoc structures to address specific issues or the needs of groups that may have low trust in policing (e.g., Travellers).
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>5.2 Community-based interventions in crime prevention and community safety</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To support the implementation of community-based crime prevention and community safety initiatives
<b>Responsibility</b>	An Garda Síochána, LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased sense of community safety Reduced fear of crime
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>5.2.01</b>	Promote multi-agency collaboration to support local communities to develop new or strengthen existing initiatives to promote community safety in urban and rural areas including monitoring systems (e.g., CCTV in urban areas including schemes in regeneration areas, initiatives in collaboration with business interests in town centres / retail areas), community alert initiatives (e.g., text alerts).
<b>5.2.02</b>	Implement the Age-Friendly Community Safety Plan (An Garda Síochána)
<b>5.2.03</b>	Awareness-raising in communities on crime prevention and everyday safety measures, and specific action to promote community safety in interventions across the LECP including physical design aspects of communities / estates to “design out crime”.
<b>5.2.04</b>	Support and test innovative measures in local communities to respond to key issues of concern such as anti-social behaviour - a problem on city estates and in county towns - again working with multi-agency approaches and residents of local communities or specific groups (e.g., young people).

The next section relates to promotion of a whole of government approach and local coordination focused specifically on the role of the LCDC.

<b>6. Whole of government approach and local policy coordination</b>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>6.1 LCDC</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To develop the role of the LCDC as a key structure to drive the agenda of local policy coordination and joined up action, to benefit citizens and communities in Limerick City and County.

<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; LCDC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Improved multi-agency cooperation at a strategic level. Improved coordination in planning and implementation of policy & actions. Increase funding to local economic and community development.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>6.1.01</b>	Pursue opportunities to bring additional funding from public programmes (in addition to SICAP and LEADER) and private investment in local economic and community development in Limerick. This can involve the LCDC itself or groups of partners in the LCDC collaborating in the preparation of funding proposals and planning and delivery of projects / programmes based on multi-agency collaboration.
<b>6.1.02</b>	Provide strategic direction, oversee and monitor implementation of local development programmes that are the responsibility of the LCDC, working with Implementation Partners (of SICAP and LEADER). Advocate for changes if necessary and bring issues from the local perspective to the attention of national policy makers / government departments.
<b>6.1.03</b>	Capacity building activities to strengthen the partnership in the LCDC and develop any specific competences required for effective operation (including implementation of programmes for which it is responsible).
<b>6.1.04</b>	Review of implementation of the LECP. In this review, support and engage with the structures for representation of local communities (PPN).
<b>6.1.05</b>	Support stronger links across urban and rural Limerick, stronger cohesion across the amalgamated local authority and collaboration with other local authority areas in areas of common interests or to drive strategic sub-regional / regional projects.
<b>6.1.06</b>	Advocate for and support mainstreaming of successful projects / initiatives and / or practices in local development in Limerick.

The next section focuses on Innovation, with the Community elements related to innovation in local government services delivery to the citizen and local communities and innovation in local development initiatives.

<b>7. Innovation: Economic, Social and Public Sector Reform</b>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>7.1 Local government service delivery to the citizen and communities</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To introduce innovation in local government services to achieve quality, improve efficiency and enhance the experience of service delivery to citizens and communities in Limerick
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased satisfaction with local authority service delivery
<b>Actions</b>	

<b>7.1.01</b>	Implement a targeted operational model and dedicated customer relationship management system.
<b>7.1.02</b>	Plan and pilot SMARTER cities initiatives as part of the roll-out of LCCC's digital strategy. This will relate to reviewing data availability, data analysis and using data to inform decision-making.
<b>Action Area</b>	
<b>7.3 Innovation in service delivery into local communities &amp; local initiatives</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	To support social innovation in service delivery into local communities, based on cooperation between public agencies and communities and user participation in design To support local communities to innovate in collective action to meet key challenges – to create enterprises and jobs, enhance and protect the environment, promote the transition to low carbon, improved energy efficiency, waste reduction and management, bio-diversity and climate change.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Innovate Limerick, LCCC, Local Development Companies, Third Level / Higher Education Institutions
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase in spaces and events for local communities to explore possibilities for innovation Increase in innovative ideas and proposals Number of innovative proposals funded
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>7.3.01</b>	Develop social innovation hubs across Limerick City (city centre) and County.
<b>7.3.02</b>	As part of community-based planning, support local communities to find innovative solutions to local problems / needs. Implement awareness-raising, promotion, local research and education programmes to improve the capacity for innovation in local communities. Specific activities include: the Fab Lab in the City and “Living Labs” in towns / rural areas.
<b>7.3.03</b>	Support participation in international projects and networks that progress social innovation: EU-funded transnational programmes including URBACT III, Interreg, Urban Innovative Actions, Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), Horizon 2020, Societal Challenges strands and LIFE+.
<b>7.3.04</b>	Support implementation of the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ). Progress actions with identified potential on the basis of feasibility studies conducted under the pilot REDZ in initiatives in Limerick towns.

The next section presents actions under the Physical / Environmental Pillar. Actions listed here are relevant to the Economic and / or the Community elements of the plan and underpin achievement of the high level goal to improve quality of life. Some actions within the Physical Pillar have a stronger focus on Economic (e.g., actions within Urban and Town and Village Renewal) while other Action Areas focus more on Community objectives (e.g., Natural environment, bio-diversity, “green” city, waste management initiatives and rural transport initiatives).

<b>3. Physical/Environmental Pillar</b>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>3.1 Public capital / infrastructure programme</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Support the development of strategic public infrastructures to meet the current and future needs of the population
<b>Responsibility</b>	Government Departments; LCCC
<b>Outcomes</b>	Number of public capital infrastructure projects including improvement schemes Value / investment in public capital infrastructure
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>3.1.01</b>	Under government's capital infrastructure plan, <i>Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021</i> , implement new and / or improved strategic public infrastructures in housing, education (schools, third level colleges), health (primary care health centres), tourism facilities, for instance, linked to the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East strategic projects, sport which will allow for further rounds of Sports Capital Programme, environmental works linked to adverse weather conditions / climate change, such as the flood mitigation plan, environmental conservation and management and other infrastructure (e.g., for children, young people). In some areas (housing, schools, health, third level education facilities), new models of public financing are proposed including Public Private Partnership and loans using Ireland's Strategic Investment Fund and the European Fund for Strategic Investment (including EIB loans). Under this plan, some specific projects have been identified for Limerick including: roads, education, housing and primary health care centres.
<b>3.1.02</b>	Implementation of <i>Limerick 2030: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick</i> , strategic sites based on public and private investment which can include loan financing under <i>Ireland's Strategic Investment Fund</i> and or the <i>European Fund for Strategic Investment</i> . See 1.3 <i>Physical business infrastructure</i> and 1.4 <i>Access to finance / unlocking resources for investment</i> under the Economic Pillar above.
<b>3.1.03</b>	In the implementation of capital infrastructure projects, collaboration between public agencies to link construction with skills development (apprenticeship and skills training programmes), jobs and business development in the local economy. This can include the application of the social contract in public procurement to support access to training, work experience and sustainable jobs for unemployed people.
<b>3.1.04</b>	In implementation the capital infrastructure programme, promote improved energy efficiency and excellence in design.
<b>3.1.05</b>	Implementation of the <i>Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan</i> including upgrading and energy retrofitting of existing housing, some new build schemes including sheltered housing for older people, the Lord Edward Street Sheltered Housing Scheme due for completion in 2017, upgrading economic and social infrastructures and public realm improvements.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>3.2 Urban and Town and Village renewal</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote and facilitate urban and town and village renewal and appropriate rural development

<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; Local Development Companies; Shannon Heritage
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased funding for urban and town and village renewal. Increased number of urban and town and village renewal projects undertaken.
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>3.2.01</b>	Facilitate urban and town and village renewal utilising in particular EU Structural Funds: Sustainable Urban Development (ERDF) under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020, the rural development programmes including LEADER – Town and Village Renewal Objective - and the national initiative / fund announced in September 2015 (OECLG) to support town and village renewal.
<b>3.2.02</b>	Promote links to skills, employment and business development in the local economy, new or improved services in local communities and community-based planning and participation. This can include: facilities for social enterprise, community services, and facilities for youth and cultural activities / projects and housing. Clusters of local initiatives can promote “Living Towns” agenda with links to services including schools, health and social care.
<b>3.2.03</b>	Develop and implement transformative civic infrastructure projects including those identified in <i>Limerick 2030</i> linked to “The Living City” and increase footfall into the city centre and key attractions in city and county.
<b>3.2.04</b>	Prepare and implement a heritage plan for Limerick city and county.
<b>3.2.05</b>	Develop strategic recreation / leisure facilities building on the natural and historic / heritage and cultural resources in parts of the city and county, to improve quality of life and well-being for the population, making areas more attractive to visitors and encourage tourism based enterprise.
<b>3.2.06</b>	Develop smaller-scale public realm and community facilities’ projects engaging local communities, linked to improved access to services and quality of life. Such initiatives can build on the successful model of Tidy Towns and “Limerick Going for Gold”, to promote wide community engagement. It could be linked to local promotion and community campaigns such as “Love your streets / “great streets”.
<b>3.2.07</b>	Promote and facilitate Limerick as a key visitor destination on “Ireland’s Ancient East” tourist route and links into the “Wild Atlantic Way”. <i>This is also referenced above under the Economic Pillar (promotion and marketing).</i>
<b>3.2.08</b>	Develop a <i>Blueway</i> Trail in conjunction with Waterways Ireland on the Park Canal.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>3.3 Transport including SMARTER travel and rural transport</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Facilitate investment in roads, rail, walking, cycling and public transport
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; SMARTER Travel; Transport for Ireland (TFI); NRA
<b>Outcomes</b>	Improve transport infrastructure Increase the number of passengers using public transport

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>3.3.01</b>	Facilitate public investment to fill gaps in the strategic road infrastructures, improving connectivity within the local authority area, to other urban centres and international access transport infrastructures and services (including Shannon Airport and ports). This includes the following specific projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote / lobby for investment to improve road connectivity between Limerick and Cork</li> <li>- Progress the Foynes to Limerick road improvement scheme</li> <li>- Facilitate the provision of a bypass for Adare</li> <li>- Facilitate a rail link between the port of Foynes and Limerick</li> <li>- Facilitate a road link to the north of Limerick City</li> <li>- Develop a (10 minute) transport link between the University of Limerick and Limerick City Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>3.3.02</b>	Progress proposals relating to rail links and Colbert Station redevelopment / renewal, identified in <i>Limerick 2030</i> in line with the investment programmes of the relevant agencies.
<b>3.3.03</b>	As a means of improving accessibility for all residents, workers and visitors to Limerick, further develop walking, cycling and public transport, particularly in urban areas, through the development of infrastructure in cooperation with other agencies and through behavioural change programmes such as SMARTER Travel Workplaces and Campuses, and Green Schools Travel.
<b>3.3.04</b>	Support the National Transport Authority's Rural Transport Programme in order to improve access for the rural population to key services (health, education), employment and day-to-day activities (shopping), especially targeting those without own transport and vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly people on low incomes).
<b>3.3.05</b>	Facilitate investment in public transport that is universally accessible.
<b>3.3.06</b>	Implement the Westflows Freight Strategy.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>3.4 Energy: Security &amp; supply, improved energy efficiency, low carbon and local responses to climate change</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Promote the development of indigenous energy sources and technologies, in order to secure Limerick's low carbon transition. Promote energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy. Reduce the carbon footprint associated with socio-economic activity within Limerick City & County. In partnership with statutory, voluntary and community organisations, promote the low carbon agenda, improved energy efficiency, careful use of water resources and local action to mitigate effects of climate change through efficient resource management and reduced CO <sup>2</sup> emissions.
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC, LCEA, Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase in renewable energy operations Contribute to meeting EU 2020 targets in relation to climate change and energy

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>3.4.01</b>	Prepare and implement a renewable energy strategy to meet national climate change targets and provide guidance in relation to renewable technologies. <i>This is also referenced above under the Economic Pillar (sectoral strategies.)</i>
<b>3.4.02</b>	Implement the actions set out for Limerick City and County in the Climate Change Strategy for the Mid-West Region.
<b>3.4.03</b>	Promote the development of energy and water infrastructure to support city, county and community-based low carbon projects.
<b>3.4.04</b>	Promote and support local development of indigenous energy resources and technologies, particularly community-based initiatives. Local initiatives in rural Limerick could be supported by LEADER.
<b>3.4.05</b>	Support access to wider networks of local initiatives to bring new knowledge, exchange of experience and joint action in these fields including international experience. An example here is the EU LIFE+ programme.
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>3.5 Natural environment, bio-diversity, green city and waste</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	In partnership with statutory, voluntary and community organisations, promote high environmental quality of the natural environment
<b>Responsibility</b>	LCCC; LCEA; Local Development Companies
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increased number of community-led local initiatives in these areas
<b>Actions</b>	
<b>3.5.01</b>	Prepare and implement a biodiversity strategy for Limerick.
<b>3.5.02</b>	Promote and support local clean-ups and Tidy Towns, protection and enhancement of fragile sites (e.g., Lough Gur).
<b>3.5.03</b>	Awareness-raising and local education programme on potential for individual and community action to address key environmental challenges: bio-diversity, address problems of invasive species, climate change, reduced carbon, improved air quality, improved energy efficiency, waste reduction and recycling.
<b>3.5.04</b>	Capacity building activities to promote and support local employment and community initiatives in these areas including initiatives to protect and manage natural resources, to prepare for challenges of climate change, to mitigate problems of flooding, etc. working with relevant statutory bodies including LCCC.
<b>3.5.05</b>	Form a Pilot Rivers Trust Project to cover the catchment area of the Loobagh River for the conservation, protection and recreational enjoyment of the Loobagh River. The Trust would be an umbrella body for local groups such as Angling Groups, wildlife groups, school groups etc. and would work with the land owners covering the catchment area of the Loobagh River, Community Groups, EPA, Environment Section of LCCC, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and Farm Organisations. This pilot project could be used as a model for other rivers in Limerick and beyond.

<b>3.5.06</b>	Similar to 3.4 above, support access to wider networks of local initiatives to bring new knowledge, exchange of experience and joint action in these fields (e.g., LIFE+).

## **4. Implementation and Monitoring**

The duration of the Local Economic and Community Plan is from 2016–2021.

### **4.1 Implementation**

Agencies responsible for leading implementation of the Action Areas in the Plan are identified above, in the elaboration of the LECP. These are generally the main statutory agencies responsible for delivery of the types of interventions covered (economic, social including education and health, physical and environment, policing) and the Local Development Companies in planning and delivering local economic and community development into local communities / areas.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the LECP – all action areas. This identifies the lead local agencies responsible for delivery of actions under the LECP; it summarises the scope for action at local level. It also identifies regional and national priorities in the action areas and the lead government departments and key statutory agencies responsible.

In implementation of all aspects of the LECP, attention will be given to gender proofing and equality proofing. In relation to gender, processes related to representation in decision-making structures – from LCDL level into community-level strategic organisations – will aim to achieve and / or promote gender balance. In the monitoring of local programmes funded by EU Structural Funds (SICAP under the European Social Fund (ESF) and LEADER under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)), breakdown of participants by gender will be monitored and, if necessary, action taken to address any gender biases / inequalities. With the strong emphasis in the LECP on promoting social inclusion, implementation arrangements will be mindful of the need to equality proof actions – this is to ensure that actions taken do not discriminate against participation of specific groups; and to enhance them if possible to strengthen their contribution to promoting equality.

The LECP is not an operational plan but rather a high level plan to bring various strategies and plans together into a local strategic framework, to be implemented over the six-year period up to 2020. To facilitate planning and monitoring progress in implementation, an Annual Action Plan of the key actions to be progressed in the forthcoming 12-month period can be developed and agreed by the LCDL.

Important functions of the LECP are to promote improved multi-agency cooperation and policy coordination (improving links between complementary actions, reducing duplication etc.) at local level, to create the framework for partners to work together to pursue new opportunities and to promote greater local involvement in decision-making. These functions are linked to the enhanced competence of local government in economic development and the stronger emphasis on empowering citizens and communities in local democracy. The LCDL itself is an important structure to promote the multi-agency approach and to empower the local level.

### **4.2 Monitoring and review**

The Guidelines related to preparation of the LECP identified the requirement to monitor progress with implementation. Indicators / targets have been identified for each Action Area. The actual delivery “on the ground” will be the responsibility of the lead agencies. Reporting progress with implementation of the LECP will require linking into monitoring activities of implementing agencies

including the local authority (e.g., progress with delivery of *Limerick 2030*) and the Implementation Partners of local development programmes, SICAP and LEADER. Systems are in place for monitoring and reporting to the national level (DECLG and Pobal) on SICAP and LEADER, based on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and target values set for these programmes at national level. A process has also been established by the LCDC to engage in review of achievements with reference to KPIs and forward annual plans with the Implementing Partners of SICAP (the three local development companies). This allows for discussion within the structure of the LCDC of strategy, achievements, issues that present difficulties and need for changes to improve effectiveness in line with objectives. This is part of the process of agreeing progress reports and implementation plans.

Overall monitoring the Economic element of the LECP is the responsibility of the Economic Development and Planning Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) within LCCC. Monitoring the Community element of the LECP will be the responsibility of the Local Community and Development Committee (LCDC).

The LECP Advisory Steering Group, which comprises representatives from the Local Community Development Committee and the SPC, is charged with monitoring implementation and progress of both aspects of the LECP – the Community Plan and the Economic Plan.

An annual cycle of progress reporting is envisaged, starting in 2017. This is a report on progress in terms of action taken with reference to those identified under the Action Areas of the LECP and achievements with reference to indicators / targets (where data are available). This information will be collected from the key agencies with responsibility for the action area including the local authority, the LCDC itself and partner agencies / stakeholders in the LCDC.

A mid-term review of the LECP was envisaged in the Guidelines from DECLG. However, this may change linked to the timetable for preparing the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. A key issue to be considered in the review is the extent to which the LCDC structure has brought improved coordination and furthered the multi-agency approach in the local area; and the effectiveness or otherwise of this model of governance.

Periodic updating the data analysis in the baseline study, as new data become available, will provide an evidence base of changes in economic, social and community conditions in the local authority area relevant to the LECP. Key high level indicators include: number of jobs in the local economy, sectoral profile of employment, numbers unemployed, education profile (low and higher education), relative deprivation and affluence at small area level, numbers living in deprivation, jobs in micro and small businesses and vacancy rates of commercial premises and other buildings in urban areas including county towns. The indicators derived from Census variables (spatial deprivation, overall education profile of the population, local unemployment rates) will only be available at five year intervals. Data from other sources including CSO and administrative datasets (DSP, DES, LCCC, AGS) will be utilised to provide evidence of changes here where relevant.

**APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND LEAD AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

<b>ACTION AREA</b>	<b>SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES</b>	<b>REGIONAL &amp; NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT &amp; KEY AGENCIES</b>
<b>1 ECONOMIC PLAN: ECONOMIC PILLAR</b>				
<b>1.1</b> Sectoral strategies & zoning	Sectoral areas targeted & plans (Limerick 2030)	LCCC Economic Development & Planning; LEO; Innovate Limerick	Sectors targeted for development (knowledge economy, agri-food, natural resources, creative / cultural industries etc.); National Action Plan for Jobs & Mid-West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-17	Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation; IDA and Enterprise Ireland
<b>1.2</b> ICT & Broadband (Economic & Community)	Lobbying national government; Pilot schemes in rural areas (Rural Development Programme); Support for going on-line & LCCC Digital Strategy	LCCC; Local Development Companies (Rural Areas); LEO	Strategic investment in broadband	Department of Communications Energy & Natural Resources; Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly (S&E Regional Operational Programme 2015-2020)
<b>1.3</b> Physical business infrastructure	Planning, strategic sites, workspace	LCCC, LEO, Innovate Limerick	Strategic inward investment	Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation; IDA and Enterprise Ireland
<b>1.4</b> Access to finance for start-ups, micro-enterprises & SMEs	Outreach / information & support application for funding	LEO, Innovate Limerick	Microfinance Ireland & other sources including EU	Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, Enterprise Ireland
<b>1.5</b> Business support for micro-enterprise & SMEs	Information, advice, training & other support services	LEO, Local Development Companies	R&D & knowledge transfer; spin-offs from third level: Higher Education Institutions & Enterprise Ireland	Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, Enterprise Ireland
<b>1.6</b> Promotion and Marketing	Marketing for FDI (business), education & tourism destination and cultural industries (Europe Capital of Culture 2020 bid)	LCCC, Higher Education Institutions, Local Development Companies	Coordinate with marketing by Shannon Group, regional tourism & IDA FDI strategy	IDA, Tourism Ireland

<b>ACTION AREA</b>	<b>SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES</b>	<b>REGIONAL &amp; NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT &amp; KEY AGENCIES</b>
<b>1.7</b> Networks and partnership	Local and regional business networks and clusters; strategic partnerships to support economic and employment development including links to EU networks	LCCC, Innovate Limerick, Higher Education Institutions, Local Development Companies, Limerick Chamber	Sub-regional & regional collaboration including adjacent local authorities, Shannon Group, Shannon Regional Skills Forum	Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation
<b>2 ECONOMIC PLAN: ACTIONS WITHIN SOCIAL PILLAR</b>				
<b>2.1</b> Education, skills & learning (Economic)	Training, up-skilling / re-skilling and educational qualification of the local workforce to meet current and future skills needs	Limerick & Clare ETB, Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Colleges, Local Development Companies	Shannon Regional Skills Forum, National and Mid West Regional Action Plan for Jobs 2015-17	Department of Education & Skills; SOLAS; Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation
<b>6 ECONOMIC PLAN: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH</b>				
<b>6.2</b> Limerick 2030 Charter and other networks	Inter-agency and public and private sector cooperation in driving, seeking investment / public funding from external sources and co-funding initiatives for economic and employment development in Limerick City and County	LCCC, Higher Education Institutions, representative bodies of the private sector including Limerick Chamber		Department of Education & Skills; SOLUS; Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation
<b>7 ECONOMIC PLAN: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: INNOVATION</b>				
<b>7.2</b> Strategic innovation through partnership and Innovate Limerick	Pursue innovative economic and social projects based on the strategy in Limerick 2030 and Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (e.g., National Innovation Hub, ISAX Smart Ageing)	Innovate Limerick, LCCC, Higher Education Institutions	Investment in R&D & I to meet EU 2020 target for Ireland. Priorities in Mid-West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-17	Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation. IDA (FDI with strong R&D profile), Enterprise Ireland

ACTION AREA	SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION	LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES	REGIONAL & NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES	LEAD DEPARTMENT & KEY AGENCIES
<b>2 COMMUNITY PLAN: SOCIAL PILLAR</b>				
<b>2.1</b> Education & learning: Community (social inclusion focus)	Lifelong learning (Learning Limerick), adult and community education for those with lowest education, initiatives to reduce early school leaving, preventive initiatives in early childhood care and education, initiatives to improve access to third level education for disadvantaged groups and in digital literacy for those not accessing digital / online services	Limerick and Clare ETB, Department of Education (local Limerick Office), DSP, Local Development Companies	Developing Limerick as a Learning Region; EU 2020 target to reduce Early School Leaving; National targets to increase participation in third level education by groups under-represented in third level education; targets to improve progression in learning and qualification for those with lowest education; better outcomes for children and families (reaching their potential & emotional well-being)	Department of Education and Skills; Department of Social Protection; Department of Children and Youth Affairs
<b>2.2</b> Health & well-being	Local health promotion to encourage health lifestyles, local recreational facilities; collaboration in planning and service delivery so that communities especially those at risk have access to primary care, specialist care (consultants & hospital) where needed, and support services for problems such as addiction, domestic violence, suicide risk and mental health; lobbying national government to improve services in key areas (e.g., mental health)	HSE, LCCC, Local Development Companies	Positive health promotion, Healthy Ireland; Community-based health and social care services to reduce pressures on hospital-based care; reduction in health inequalities	HSE, Department of Health

ACTION AREA	SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION	LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES	REGIONAL & NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES	LEAD DEPARTMENT & KEY AGENCIES
<b>2.3</b> Ageing Well / Age-Friendly City and County	Inter-agency collaboration to plan for, and create services and physical and social environments to meet current and future needs of older people; local initiatives in communities to progress age-friendly agenda; older people in volunteering	LCCC, leading Age-Friendly Alliance	Age-Friendly Counties programme	Cross-departmental
<b>2.4</b> Employability and work: Social inclusion and activation	Local implementation of SICAP 2015-2017, to support access to education and training and employment and enterprise / self-employment for groups furthest from the labour market & low paid workers; other interventions to support inclusion including community development	LCDC; Local Development Companies; LCETB; DSP	Activation of unemployed & economically inactive (Pathways to Work); youth unemployment (Youth Employment Initiative); inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups; up-skilling of low paid workers	Department of Environment Community and Local Government; Department of Social Protection (Intreo Offices); Department of Education and Skills

ACTION AREA	SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION	LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES	REGIONAL & NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES	LEAD DEPARTMENT & KEY AGENCIES
2.5 Children, young people and families	Implementation of the Limerick CYPSC plan 2015-2018. Coordination in planning, data analysis on needs and services. Local activities include: the Area-based Childhood Anti-Poverty Programme in Limerick City Centre; Garda Youth Diversion Projects (city and Rathkeale in the county); lobbying to set up a youth mental health service in Limerick; implementation of restorative practices; multi-agency approach in the delivery of interventions for children and families with complex needs	Limerick City and County Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) - a multi-agency structure including LCCC led by TUSLA	The work of CYPSCs across the state support implementation of the national strategy, <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> . TUSLA is the key agency	Department of Children and Youth Affairs, TUSLA
<b>4 COMMUNITY PLAN: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>				
4.1 Public Participation Network and Civic Engagement	Set-up, roll-out and operation of the PPN in Limerick; information and awareness-raising with local authority staff, businesses and others to support civic engagement, neighbourhood-based planning & community participation; capacity building to support community organisation & implementation of local initiatives	LCCC (including Office of Regeneration), Local Development Companies	Implemented as part of reform of local government (2014). Organisational structure to give communities and sectoral interests (environmental pillar, social inclusion, community) a voice in local decision making including representation on Strategic Policy Committees and the LCDC	Department of Environment Community and Local Government, Local Authorities

<b>ACTION AREA</b>	<b>SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES</b>	<b>REGIONAL &amp; NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT &amp; KEY AGENCIES</b>
<b>4.2</b> Capacity building and community development	Outreach, information, training & on-going support to build capacity in local communities of place and of interest (e.g., in setting up & running organisations, planning, local initiatives); promotion of equality, diversity and social integration. Lobby for strengthening of community development approach in mainstream programmes	Local Development Companies (LEADER, SICAP, Limerick Regeneration), LCCC	Supported under area-based programmes targeting disadvantaged communities	Department of Environment Community and Local Government
<b>4.3</b> Information exchange and networks	Actions to support building up networks of community and voluntary organisations across city and county (to share information, experience, resource) and links into wider networks (national and international)	LCDC, Local Development Companies, LCCC		
<b>4.4</b> Local initiatives	Support local groups with technical assistance and /or financial support to implement local initiatives /projects (economic include social enterprise, education, environmental, cultural)	Local Development Companies (LEADER, SICAP, Limerick Regeneration), LCCC, LEO	Support for local community development under mainstream programmes	Department of Environment Community and Local Government; Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

ACTION AREA	SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION	LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES	REGIONAL & NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES	LEAD DEPARTMENT & KEY AGENCIES
<b>5 COMMUNITY PLAN: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>				
5.1 Fora / structures to support crime prevention and policing in local areas	Local consultation processes, information & communication of data on crime and policing; opportunities to input to decision-making on crime prevention and policing through structures of the Joint Policing Committee and inter-agency structures involving AGS and Probation (Children and Young People's Services Committee, Age Friendly Alliance)	An Garda Síochána (AGS) Limerick Division, LCCC	National policy to support local communities in crime prevention strategies	Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána
5.2 Community-based interventions in crime prevention and community safety	Implementation of local crime prevention and community safety initiatives - e.g., text alert, local CCTV, awareness-raising measures and community safety plans	An Garda Síochána (AGS) Limerick Division, LCCC, Voluntary Organisations	National policy to support local communities in crime prevention strategies	Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána
<b>6 COMMUNITY PLAN: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH AND LOCAL POLICY COORDINATION</b>				
6.1 LCDC	Pursue opportunities for additional funding for local development, collaborative planning, advocate for policy changes in the interest of local communities and mainstreaming of successful approaches, training and capacity building for the LCDC	LCDC (and its member agencies and interests), LCCC	Implemented under local government reform & alignment of local government & local development (2014). Composition of partnership means it is an appropriate structure to pursue opportunities including funded EU programmes in local development	Department of Environment Community and Local Government

ACTION AREA	SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION	LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES	REGIONAL & NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES	LEAD DEPARTMENT & KEY AGENCIES
<b>7 COMMUNITY PLAN: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: INNOVATION</b>				
<b>7.1</b> Local government service delivery to the citizen and communities	Implement the targeted operational model and dedicated customer relationship management system; progress "Smart Cities" initiatives as part of the roll-out of LCCC's digital strategy	LCCC		Department of Environment Community and Local Government
<b>7.3</b> Innovation in service delivery into local communities & local initiatives	Develop social innovation hubs across city and county; support social innovation initiatives, participate in EU-level networks, implement REDZ in selected rural towns	LCCC, Local Development Companies	Connected to public sector reform; National and Mid-West Action Plan for Jobs 2015-17; revitalisation of rural areas & CEDRA report (2014)	Across Departments including Department of Environment Community and Local Government, Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation
<b>3 ECONOMIC &amp; COMMUNITY: PHYSICAL / ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR</b>				
<b>3.1</b> Public capital / infrastructure programme	Identify key local needs for investment and progress and / or lobby government to progress priority projects (housing, schools, tourism facilities); link construction / works in capital infrastructure projects to skills development (training) and jobs, especially for unemployed	LCCC, (LCETB, DSP - training & jobs)	Housing, especially social housing provision; schools & third level education facilities; health (primary care facilities); and roads and other transport and tourism infrastructures. See <i>Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021</i>	Across Departments and statutory agencies
<b>3.2</b> Urban (city) and town and village renewal	Prepare plans and submit proposals to relevant agencies to fund renewal and local tourism initiatives; link to enterprise, skills development and jobs in the local economy	LCCC, Local Development Companies	Sustainable Urban Development priority in the Southern & Regional OP 2014-2020; National policy priorities to support rural revitalisation (CEDRA 2104)	Department of Environment, Community & Local Government

ACTION AREA	SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION	LEAD LOCAL AGENCIES	REGIONAL & NATIONAL PRIORITIES / POLICIES	LEAD DEPARTMENT & KEY AGENCIES
<b>3.3</b> Transport including SMARTER Travel and rural transport	Lobby for public investment to fill gaps in transport infrastructure (road/rails) including strategic national networks and local access transport and services; continue to support and embed SMARTER Travel	LCCC	National access transport strategic priorities (motorways, rail, port, air); EU2020 national targets related to low carbon	Department for Transport; Transport for Ireland; National Roads Authority
<b>3.4</b> Energy: Security & supply, improved energy efficiency, low carbon & local responses to climate change	Promote local actions to reduce carbon, improve energy efficiency and local development of indigenous energy resources and technologies	LCCC, Local Development Companies	National & Mid-West Climate Change Strategy; EU2020 national targets to improve energy efficiency, increase energy from renewable, & reduce carbon	Department of Environment, Community & Local Government
<b>3.5</b> Natural environment, bio-diversity, green city and waste	Prepare local bio-diversity strategy; local initiatives to map and preserve bio-diversity; local education and awareness-raising; local environmental and waste reduction, reuse, recycling initiatives; emergency response & prevention measures	LCCC, Local Development Companies		Department of Environment, Community & Local Government; Environmental Protection Agency