



Forbairt Gheilleagrach agus Pleanáil,
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh,
7-8 Sráid Phádraig,
Luimneach

Economic Development and Planning,
Limerick City and County Council,
7-8 Patrick Street,
Limerick

t: +353 (0) 61 407 210
f: +353 (0) 61 410 401
e: planning@limerick.ie

13th March 2015

To: The Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

Limerick City & County Council Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property

The Limerick City & County Council Business & Retail Incentive Scheme offers incentives for the encouragement of business and retail uses in order to address vacancy in designated areas. The Scheme was introduced in Limerick City Centre in 2011, in Abbeyfeale, Kilmallock, Newcastle West and Rathkeale in 2013 and was further extended to incorporate the Business Parks in the aforementioned towns in January 2014.

The grant relief provided under the Scheme is as follows:-

- **Year 1** - Grant relief is based on certified fit out costs subject to a maximum of 50% of the annual rates liability for the first year
- **Year 2** – Grant relief is based on original certified fit out costs (as submitted at year 1) subject to a maximum of 25% of the annual rates liability for the second year.

The Scheme provides a positive framework in addressing the issue of vacancy and improving the overall retail offer in the designated areas. It is anticipated that the continued operation of the Scheme will positively enhance the overall economic vitality and viability of the designated areas for both existing and new businesses.

To date Limerick City & County Council has received significant interest in the Scheme and a high number of requests for application forms. The Economic Development & Planning Directorate has to-date granted 20 applications under the Scheme with a further 20 applications pending. Of the total applications approved/pending 28 are in the city and 12 are in the county. In this regard it should be noted that the Scheme is operational for a significantly greater length of time in Limerick city.

The Council acknowledges that the Scheme is not going to be the sole reason a new business opens however it is intended to act as an incentive for a new business to locate in a Limerick town or City centre as opposed to another jurisdiction or an out-of City or Town centre location.

To-date it is estimated that close to 400 jobs have been created through new retail and business openings that have been supported by the Business & Retail Incentive Scheme with a projected investment of over €4m in Limerick.

In the past month the proposal to extend the time period for the Scheme was noted at the Metropolitan and respective Municipal District meetings. Overall, while elected members requested that the Scheme be reviewed on a six monthly basis there was broad support for its worth. The Elected Members also requested that during the review period the Scheme be extended to cover other areas of Limerick City and County. The Scheme was discussed at the Council's Economic Development and Planning SPC where it was requested that there would be a rural/urban distinction to the Scheme and that a report as to how this may be addressed would be brought to the SPC before the end of the year. Further to the Members' concerns/requests it is agreed that 1) bi-annual progress reports will be prepared to review progress on the Scheme and 2) that requests to extend the Scheme to other areas will be reviewed on a case by case basis subject to finances available.

For the following reasons I recommend that the Scheme remain focussed on the City and large town core areas:

- 1) to address the vacancy rate that remains in the core retail areas of Limerick City Centre and the County towns of Kilmallock, Rathkeale, Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale,
- 2) to expand the Scheme to a wider area would dilute the impact of the Scheme thus negating the intended aim of the Scheme to locate business in our town centres and City centre,
- 3) to fit with the 2015 budgetary provision.

I hereby recommend that the Council:-

- i) Approve the extension of the operational period of the existing Limerick City & County Council Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property from 01/01/15 until 31/12/2016 subject to the finances available,
- ii) Approve proposed mapping amendment to Scheme to provide grant relief for retail occupancy at Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre (this was omitted from the previous Scheme) and to include the Tourist Office at Arthur's Quay (see attached application form Appendix 3.1(a)),
and
- iii) consider extension of Scheme to further areas on a case by case basis subject to finances available, in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.



Pat Daly
Director of Service
Economic Development & Planning

**LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL
BUSINESS & RETAIL INCENTIVE SCHEME
for VACANT PROPERTY
in
LIMERICK CITY CENTRE, ABBEYFEALE, KILMALLOCK,
NEWCASTLE WEST and RATHKEALE**



**APPLICATION FORM & GUIDELINES FOR
BUSINESS & RETAIL INCENTIVE SCHEME
FOR VACANT PROPERTIES GRANT**



**Limerick City & County Council
Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property
in
Limerick City Centre, Abbeyfeale, Kilmallock,
Newcastle West and Rathkeale
Application Form**

SECTION A – Applicant details	
Name of applicant (Company Name if applicable):	
Name of Contact Person:	
Address of applicant	
Address of vacant property to be occupied:	
Area of property to be occupied (basement, ground floor, first floor etc.)	
State if you are the owner of vacant property or if property is leased (If leased, provide name and address of the property owner):	
If property leased state duration of lease being entered into:	
Date of commencement of lease:	
Email address of applicant:	
Phone number of applicant:	
VAT registration number:	
PPS No (if individual):	
Tax Clearance Certificate Number and Expiry Date (please enclose copy):	
Date of last annual return filed in the Company Registration Office (if applicable) :	
Details of water supply: Meter number: Current meter read:	

**SECTION B – Applicant Type
(Please Tick)**

Company/Sole Trader /
Individual/Partnership:

Community Group:

Cooperative:

If applicant is a Limited Company please complete section below

Company Registration Number:

Date of Incorporation:

SECTION C – Details of proposed business/retail use for vacant property which is the subject of this application- please provide the following summary information

Business Name:

Stage of Business i.e. Pre-Start-Up/Start-Up(<18mths)/Growth (> 18 mths):

Business Website:

Date trading expected to commence:

List location(s)/address where currently trading (if applicable):

Proposed start-up/investment date for vacant property which is the subject of this application:

Specify business/retail use type:

Provide explanatory note outlining in detail the key features of the proposed business/retail use:

Economic value of proposed business/retail use e.g. no. of jobs created etc.:

Please provide the relevant Planning Permission Reference (if planning permission is necessary for works):

Does the property in question have planning permission for the proposed use? (or is the proposed use compatible with the exempted development classes of use set out in the Planning & Development Regulations):

Is the building a protected structure?

SECTION E – Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property – Annual Rates liability for applicant property to be occupied (to be completed by Limerick City & County Council)

Annual Rates liability (€) for applicant property to be occupied:

SECTION F – Funding Package

The purpose of this section is to establish how the proposed business/retail use will be funded.

NOTES: The total of this section should match that of the costs specified in Section D

Source	Amount €
Own Funds (Specify)	
Borrowing (Loan sanction evidence if available)	
Grant Sought	
Total Project cost (to agree with total project cost Section D)	

If the project is availing of other grant schemes or other favourable advantages please provide details:

SECTION G – De Minimis State Aid

Please note that the Business & Retail Incentive Scheme grants for vacant properties should fulfill the conditions of Commission Regulation EC800/2008 which is called the general Block Exemption Regulation, outlining any de minimis state aid received in the last 3 years.

Has the group received any de minimis state aid in the last 3 years or used de minimis state aid as match funding for this application: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

If yes please provide the following details:

Date of Offer	Name of Body Providing Aid	Purpose of Aid	Amount of Aid Received €

SECTION H – Additional Information

- (i) This application or part of this application may have to be referred to and/or queried with other State bodies (e.g. Revenue Commissioners) and Departments of Limerick City & County Council (e.g. Planning Department, Rates Department) (on a confidential basis) as part of Limerick City & County Council's processing procedure. Do you consent to this? *(please tick)*

YES

NO

- (ii) Are you (or the company) registered for VAT (please tick) (Tax clearance certificates are required for all grants in excess of €10,000 if approved. For grants in excess of €6,350 a tax declaration will be required). *(please tick)*

YES

NO

Checklist of documents to be attached to your application	
✓	Copy of business plan including cash flow projections – not required where application is for €5,000 or less
✓	Copy of Tax Clearance Certificate
✓	Copy of lease agreement (if not owner of vacant property subject to this claim) <u>OR</u> If you are owner of vacant property – need to provide evidence of property ownership (e.g. Land Registry Certificate).
✓	Copies of any relevant market research undertaken
✓	Copies of signed audited accounts for last two years (if relevant) – not applicable for new businesses
✓	Submit confirmation of borrowing approval (loan sanction evidence/evidence of other finance resources (to fund total project)

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION – FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Limerick City & County Council wishes to advise applicants that, under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997/2003 the information supplied in the application form may be made available on request, subject to Limerick City & County Council's obligations under law.

You are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by you in this application should not be disclosed because of sensitivity. If this is the case you should, when providing the information, identify same and specify the reasons for its sensitivity. Limerick City & County Council will consult with you about sensitive information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.

However, if you consider that none of the information supplied by you is sensitive, please complete the statement below to that effect. Such information may be released in response to a Freedom of Information request.

Name of Applicant (in block capitals): _____ hereby agrees that none of the information supplied is sensitive, and any, or all, of the information supplied, may be released in response to a Freedom of Information request.

Signed: _____

Company/Organisation's name (if applicable): _____

Position: _____ Date: _____

DISCLAIMER - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

It will be a condition of any application for funding under the terms and conditions of the Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for vacant property that the applicant has read, understood and accepted the following:

1. Limerick City & County Council shall not be liable to the applicant or any other party, in respect of any loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from:
 - a) the application or the subject matter of the application,
 - b) the rejection for any reason of any application.
2. Limerick City & County Council shall not be held responsible or liable, at any time in any circumstances, in relation to any matter whatsoever arising in connection with the administration of activities.

Declaration by Applicant(s)

We apply for a grant of €_____ towards the total cost of the fit-out/shop front improvement costs of vacant property at _____

On behalf of _____

I/We have read and understood the **guidelines and criteria** as set out in Appendix 1 applicable to the Limerick City & County Council Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property and agree to comply in full therewith. I/We certify that all information provided in this application, and all information given in any documentation submitted in support of the application is truthful and accurate.

Name: (in block capitals): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

On behalf of: (company/ organisation's name): _____

Completed Application Forms should be submitted to the Economic Development Department, 3rd Floor, Limerick City & County Council, 7/8 Patrick Street, Limerick or alternatively the completed form can be e-mailed to economicdev@limerick.ie. See Limerick City & County Council's website www.limerick.ie for further details on this scheme. Further enquiries may be made by contacting Mary Hayes or John Cregan @ (061) 407210.

Appendix 1

1. General description of Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property

Limerick City & County Council is offering incentives for the encouragement of Business & Retail uses in Limerick City Centre, Abbeyfeale, Kilmallock, Newcastle West and Rathkeale in order to address vacancy. The grant is being offered as a contribution towards fit out costs. Maps showing the prescribed areas for the scheme in Limerick City and County are included in Appendix 3.

2. Specification of Eligible/Non Eligible Retail & Business Use Types

(a) It is intended to ensure that any incoming retail use will respect and enhance the multifaceted character of the area and will allow and encourage a diversity of uses to increase its overall attractiveness for shopping, leisure and business purposes. There will be a strong presumption in favour of grant-aid for higher order comparison retail outlets including fashion outlets – both multiple and independent stores, 'lifestyle stores', flagship stores, niche and specialist retailers such as home furnishings, beauty products, jewellery and books. A clustering of these uses in particular at basement, ground and 1st floor level will help to develop a vibrant retail quarter.

"Higher order retail" is defined thus;

Goods are classed on a relative scale from lower order to higher order goods. Lower order goods are those goods, which consumers need frequently and therefore are willing to travel only short distances for them. Higher order goods are needed less frequently so consumers are willing to travel further for them. These longer trips are usually undertaken for not only purchasing purposes but other activities as well. (Brian J.L.Berry 1966)

It is important to ensure that the character of prime retail streets is protected and enhanced. An over concentration of non-retail uses within the area can fragment the continuity of retail frontages, and lead to an erosion and dilution of retail character and ultimately a reduction in the attractiveness of the area as a shopping destination.

It is policy not to grant-aid for the following uses, as they would detract from the character of the streets (please note that this list is for illustrative purposes only and is not exhaustive): -

- Amusement Arcade
- Bookmakers / Betting shop
- Catalogue shop
- Discount Shop / End of lines / Closing down / Euro Store
- Estate Agent
- Fast food outlet
- Launderette or dry cleaners
- Mobile Phone Shop
- Mortgage Store / Financial institution
- Newsagents / Convenience store
- Off-licence

- Outlet selling hot food for consumption off the premises
- Phone call centre / Internet café
- Head Shop / Grow Shop
- Adult shop
- Supermarket
- Calendar Shop
- Travel Agents
- Storage / Warehouse
- Manufacturing / Industrial
- Garage Repairs

To promote an appropriate balance of higher order retail uses on the streets and prevent an over-concentration of non-fashion or fashion related uses, applications for the following retail uses will be considered on their individual merits (please note that this list is for illustrative purposes only and is not exhaustive);

- Cosmetics / beauty products
- Specialist Health Food shops
- Pharmacies
- Souvenir shops
- Stationery / card shops
- Shoe Shops
- Toy Shops
- Hi-tech / High-end Electronics
- Music Shops
- Specialist (Hobby) Stores
- Artisan / Craft Shops

In addition the following factors will be taken into account in the consideration of Grant Aid: -

- The number and proximity of similar outlets already operating in the area.
- The scale of the proposed outlet
- The physical impact of the proposed use on the internal structure of the building in which it will be located
- The quality of the shop front design and associated signage, which should be of high quality and be in accordance with the guidelines set out in Limerick City Development Plan, Limerick County Development Plan and Local Areas Plans

(b) Any non-retail business which applies for grant aid under this scheme will be judged on the anticipated economic impact they may have in the area e.g. number of jobs being created, attracting improved footfall to the area.

3. Use of property

The property that the application relates to must have planning permission for the proposed use or be compatible with the exempted development classes of use set out in the Planning & Development Regulations.

4. Eligible Areas for Business & Retail Incentive Scheme

The attached maps at Appendix 3 identify the areas where Grants are available in Limerick City and County.

5. Status of property to qualify for Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for vacant property

In order to qualify for this scheme the property must be vacant for at least one month on the day the application form is submitted.

6. Businesses relocating to a similar sized premises within the eligible areas will not qualify for grant relief under the scheme

The operation of the Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for vacant properties shall not result in the displacement of a business from one property to another and/or from the same property **however** should a proposed business or retail use type be able to adequately demonstrate that they require a larger premises that will have a positive economic impact, consideration will be given to the inclusion of such a proposal under the terms of this scheme.

7. Grant Relief to be Provided

- a) Year 1 - Grant relief is based on certified fit out costs/shop improvement costs subject to a maximum of 50% of the annual rates liability for the first year
- b) Year 2 - Grant relief is based on original certified fit out costs/shop improvement costs (as submitted at year 1) subject to a maximum of 25% of the annual rates liability for the second year

8. Qualifying Costs for Grant Relief

The eligible qualifying costs applicable for grant relief under the Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for vacant properties are fit-out/shop front improvement costs.

Any reasonable costs associated with either of the above will qualify for grant relief subject to receipt of valid invoices and verification/approval that costs were incurred.

9. Payment date for grant purposes

- a) Grant relief for Year 1 - for purposes of payment of grant, payment will commence one month following first rates moiety being demanded and paid in full. The grant will be based on 50% of the rates demanded and is conditional on full payment of the rates as demanded.
- b) Grant relief for Year 2 - as above at year 1. The grant will be based on 25% of the rates demanded and is conditional on full payment of the rates as demanded.

10. No charges owing on vacant property for which relief is sought i.e. rates, water, development levies, derelict sites levies etc.

A prerequisite condition of qualifying for the scheme is that there are no rates, water charges or any other Local Authority charges owing on the building for which the relief is sought over the period of the grant aid (2 years).

Contact the Rates & Water Section of Limerick City & County Council if you have any queries in relation to any outstanding charges and to confirm the rateable valuation of the property.

11. Appeal mechanism

The Economic Development Department of Limerick City & County Council is responsible for the approval or not of the grant subject to the guidelines and criteria for the Limerick City & County Council Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property. Should any body/individual wish to appeal this decision they may do so by stating in writing the basis for the appeal; this appeal should be addressed to the Chief Executive, Limerick City & County Council, City Hall, Merchants Quay, Limerick. The decision of the Chief Executive in respect of the appeal will be final.

12. It shall be a condition of the scheme that the applicant signs up for Direct Debit payment of commercial rates & commercial water charges.

Appropriate form is attached in Appendix 2.

13. Effective period for operation of Limerick City & County Council Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for vacant property

The scheme will be effective until the 31st December 2016. Only complete applications received by this end date will be considered.

14. Assessment of Applications

All Applications will be assessed under the above Guidelines & Criteria and any Grant awarded will be further subject to the availability of the necessary funds being available to this Scheme.

Appendix 2

RATES PAYMENT BUDGET PLAN

- BUDGET PLAN:** You can now arrange to pay your rates bill in monthly instalments from January to December.
- ADVANTAGES:** You can plan your cash flow, there is no extra charge for this service.
- JOINING:** Simply enter your Bank details overleaf, **then sign & return to this office.**
- PAYING:** The payments will be automatically deducted from your bank account on the **last week of each month.**
- ARREARS:** Any arrears outstanding should also be cleared.
- QUESTIONS:** Please contact your Revenue Collector,
Ring: 061- 496360 or call into the office at County Hall, Dooradoyle,
Limerick.

The Direct Debit Guarantee:

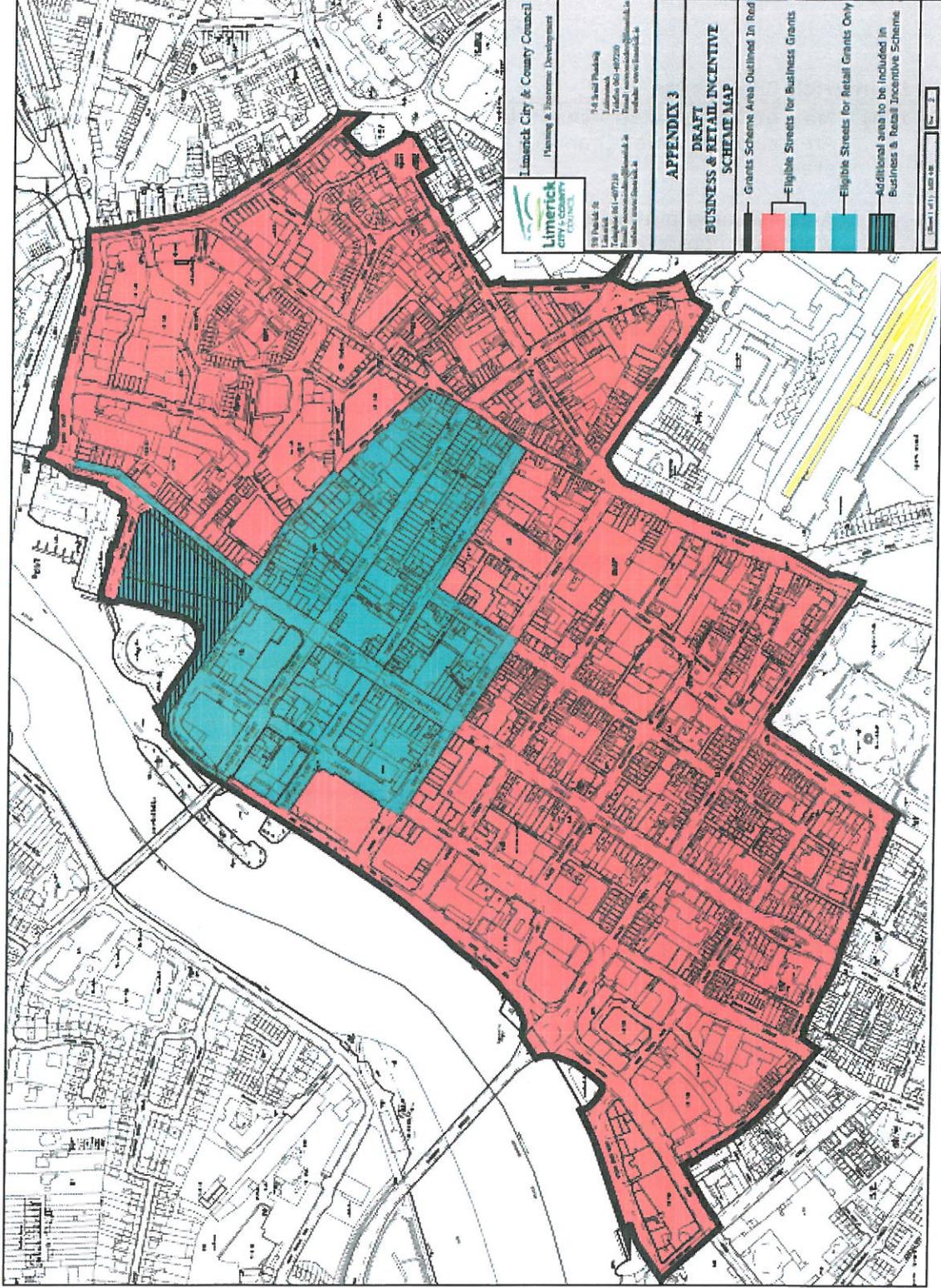
- This is a guarantee provided by your own Bank as a member of the Direct Debit Scheme, in which all Banks and Originators of Direct Debits participate
- If you authorise payment by Direct Debit, then:
 - Limerick City & County Council will notify you in advance of the amounts to be debited to your account
 - Your Bank will accept and pay such debits, provided that your account has sufficient available funds
- If it is established that an unauthorised Direct Debit was charged to your account, you are guaranteed a prompt refund by your Bank of the amount so charged
- You can cancel the Direct Debit in good time by writing to your Bank

Appendix 3

1.Limerick City Centre	
1(a) Map of Designated Area in Limerick City Centre	Area coloured blue: Grant aid for Retail Use is ONLY available in this designated area. Area coloured pink & blue: Grant aid is available for office based business uses which are non-retail
2. Abbeyfeale	
2(a) Map of Designated Area in Abbeyfeale Town	Area coloured blue: Grant aid is available for office based business use and retail use ONLY in the designated area.
2(b) Map of Designated Area in Abbeyfeale – Mountmahon Industrial Estate	Area coloured pink: Grant aid is available for commercial / industrial business uses which are non-retail
3. Kilmallock	
3(a) Map of Designated Area in Kilmallock Town	Area coloured blue: Grant aid is available for office based business use and retail use ONLY in the designated area.
3(b) Map of Designated Area in Kilmallock – Kilmallock Business Park	Area coloured pink: Grant aid is available for commercial / industrial business uses which are non-retail
4. Newcastle West	
4(a) Map of Designated Area in Newcastle West Town	Area coloured blue: Grant aid is available for office based business use and retail use ONLY in the designated area
4(b) Map of Designated Area in Newcastle West – 1)Newcastle West Business Park & 2)Newcastle West Enterprise Centre	Area coloured pink: Grant aid is available for commercial / industrial business uses which are non-retail
5. Rathkeale	
5(a) Map of Designated Area in Rathkeale Town	Area coloured blue: Grant aid is available for office based business use and retail use ONLY in the designated area
5(b) Map of Designated Area in Rathkeale – Rathkeale Industrial Estate	Area coloured pink: Grant aid is available for commercial / industrial business uses which are non-retail

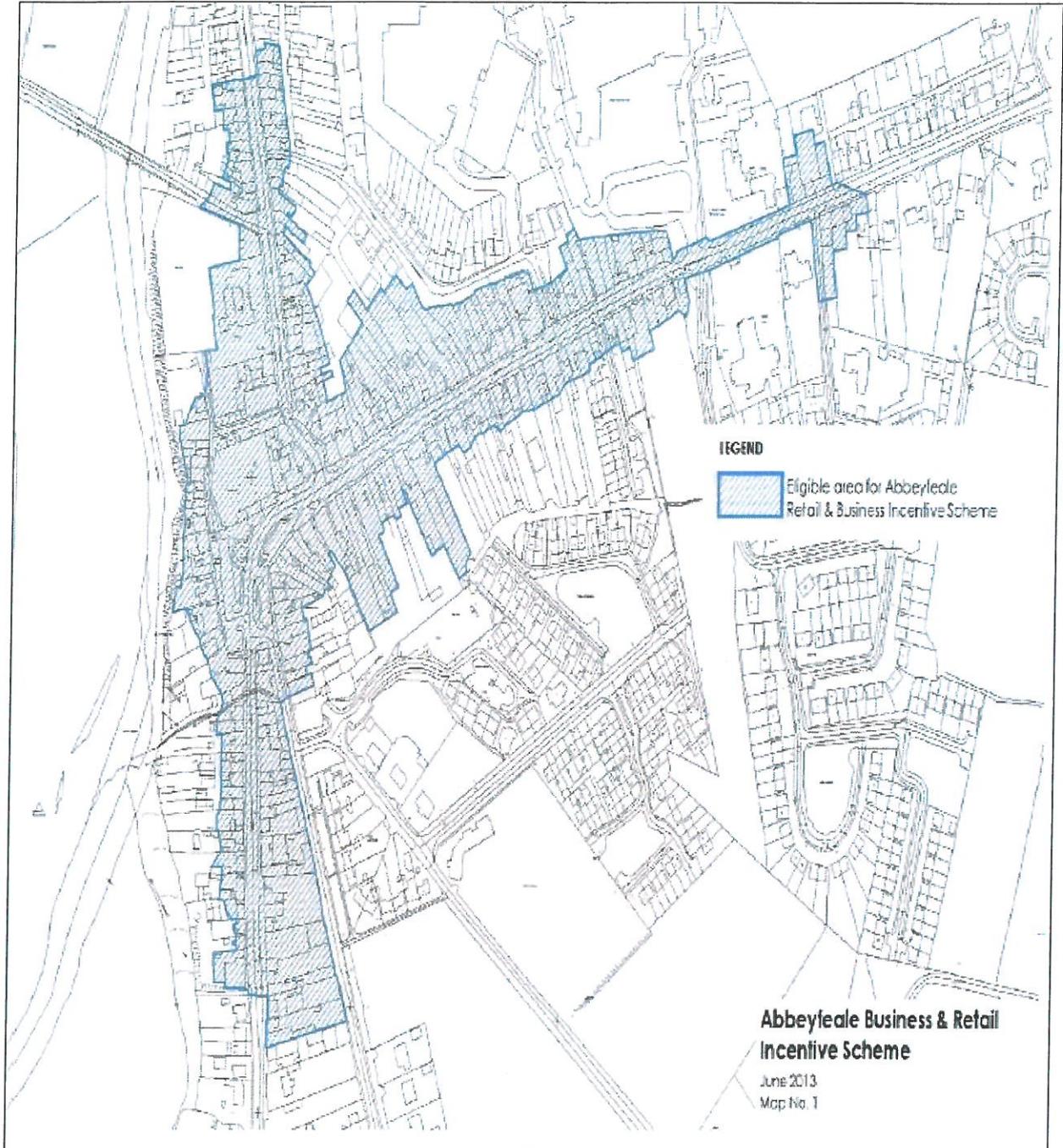
Appendix 3

1(a) Map of Designated Area in Limerick City Centre

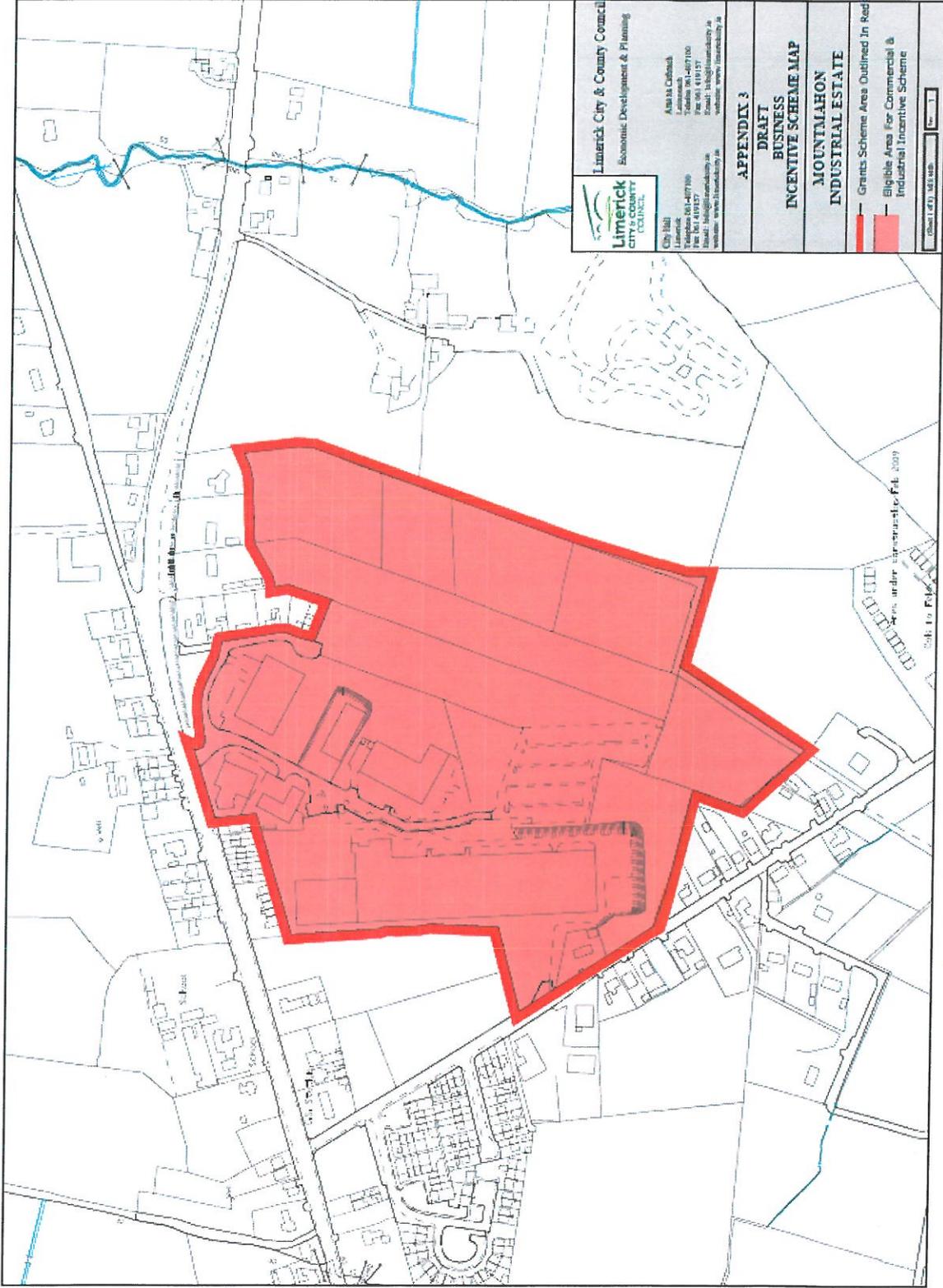


Appendix 3

2(a) Map of Designated Area in Abbeyfeale

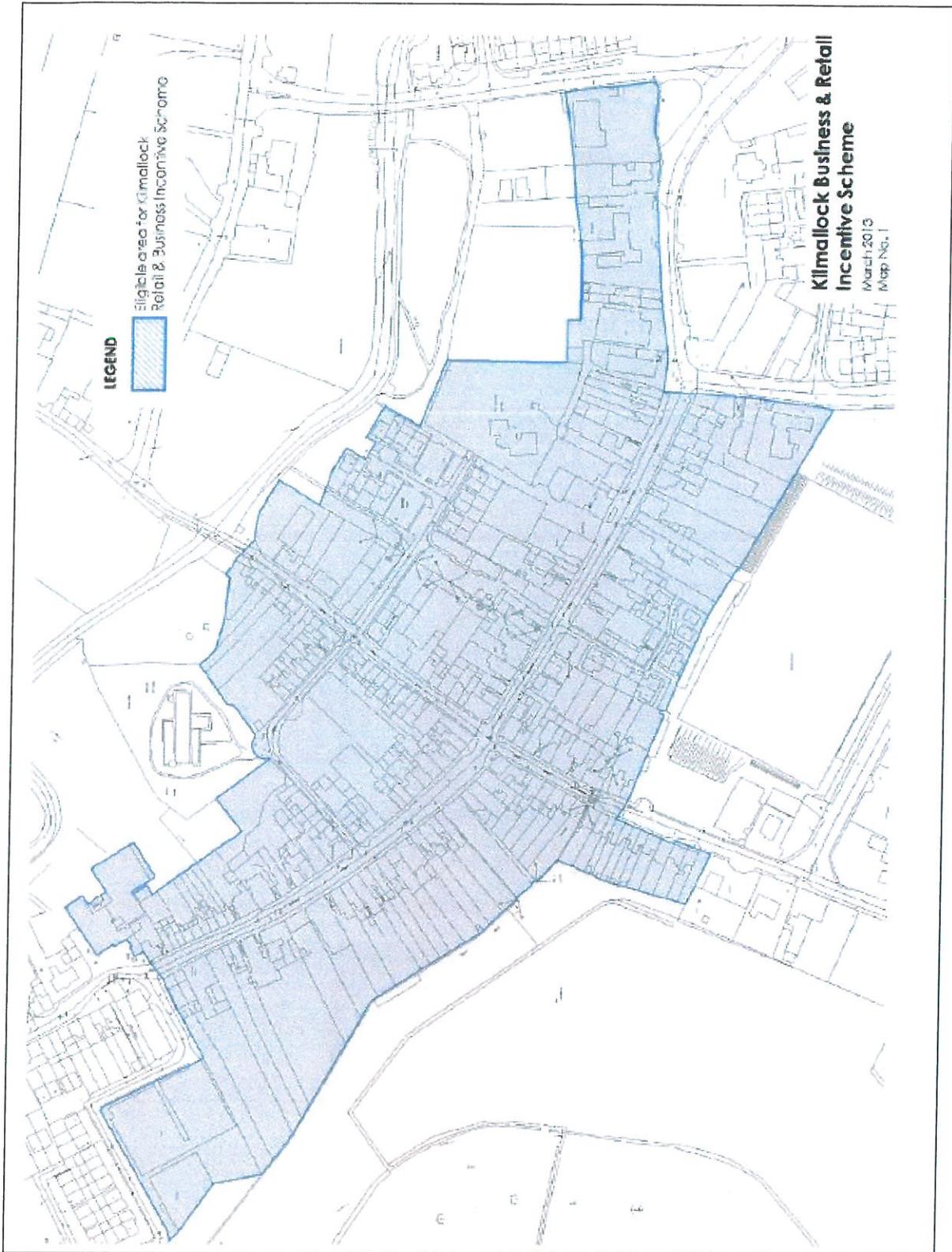


Appendix 3
2(b) Map of Designated Area in Abbeyfeale – Mountmahon Industrial Estate



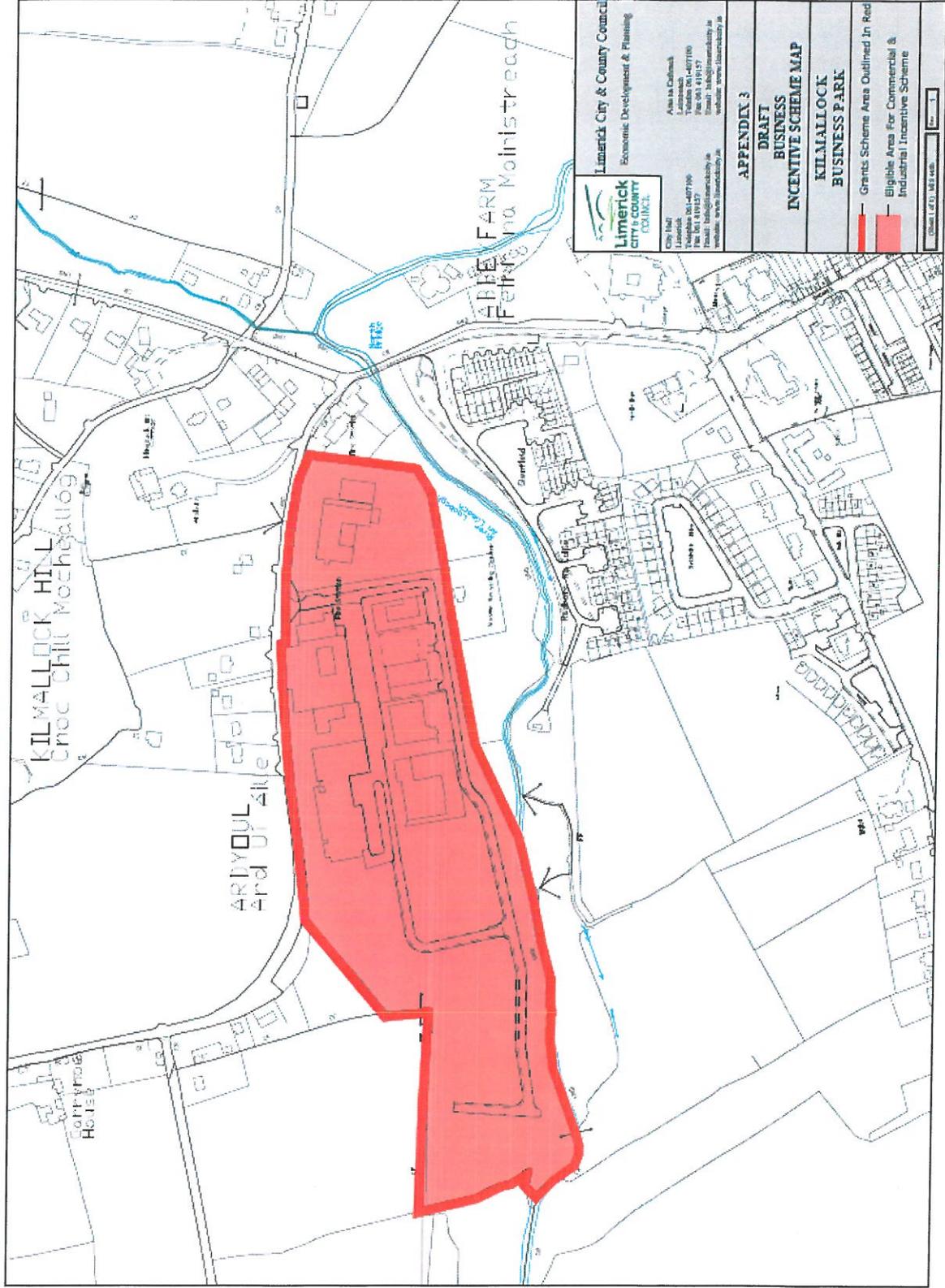
Appendix 3

3(a) Map of Designated Area in Kilmallock



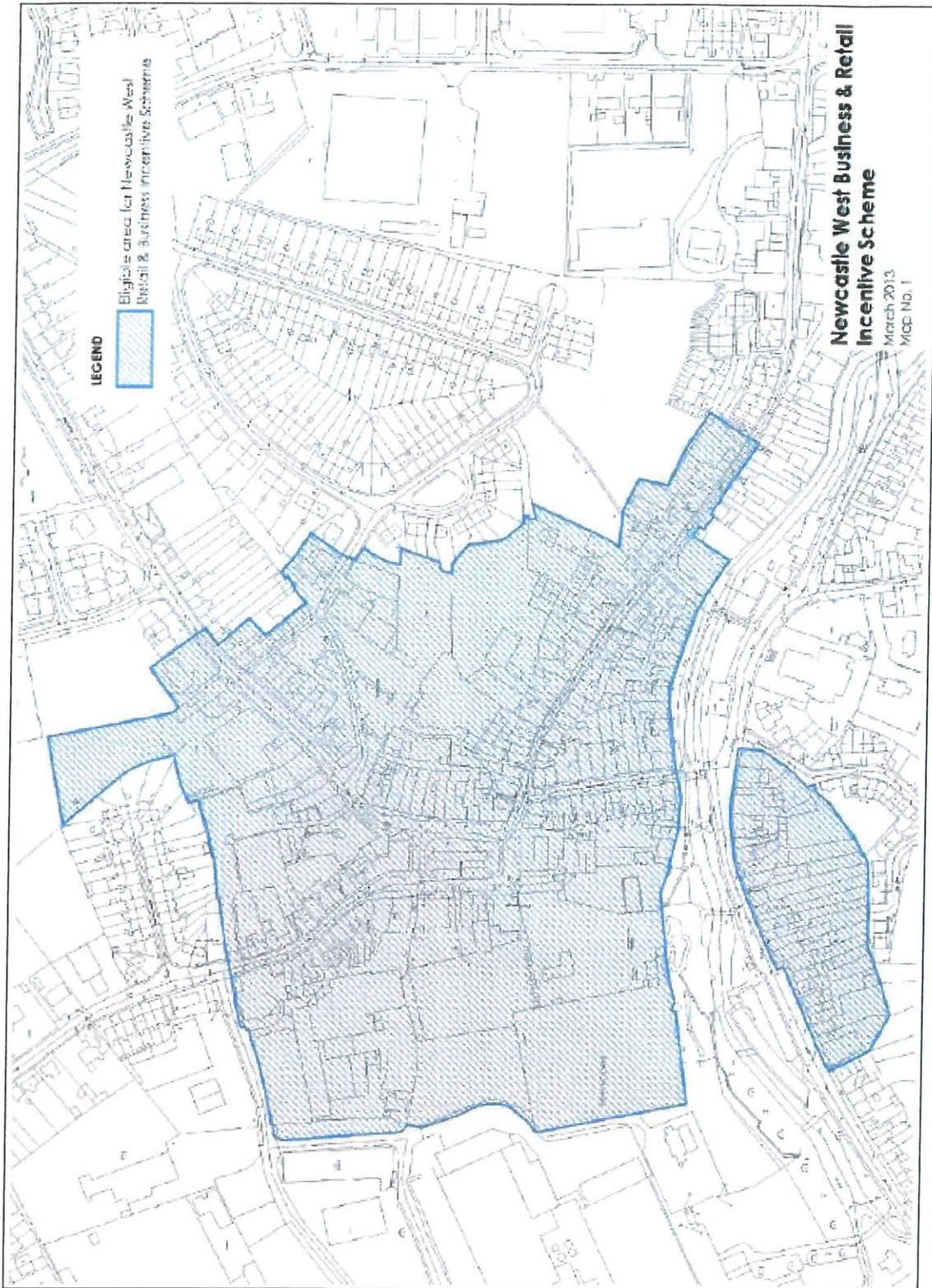
Appendix 3

3(b) Map of Designated Area in Kilmallock – Kilmallock Business Park



Appendix 3

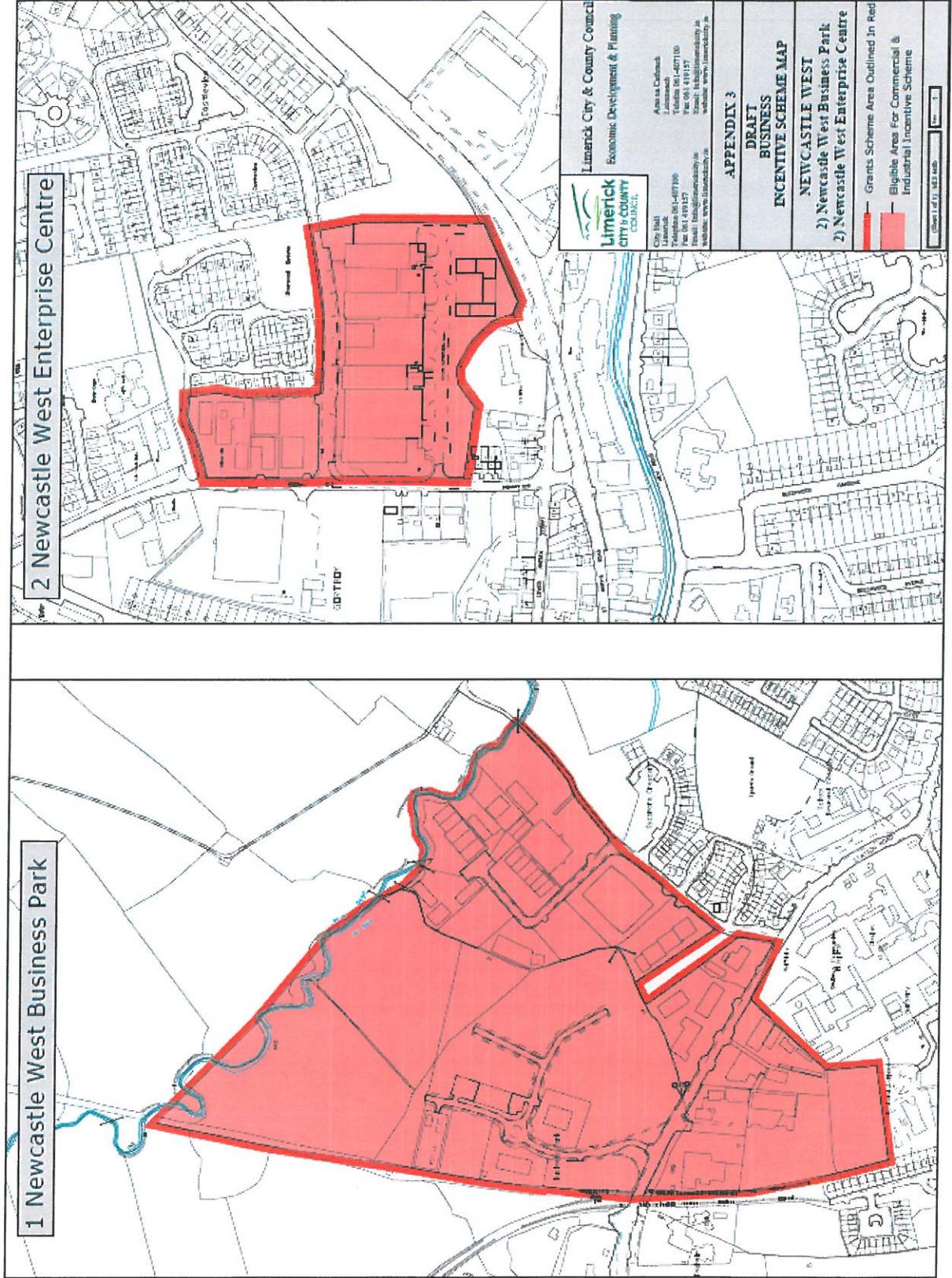
4(a) Map of Designated Area in Newcastle West



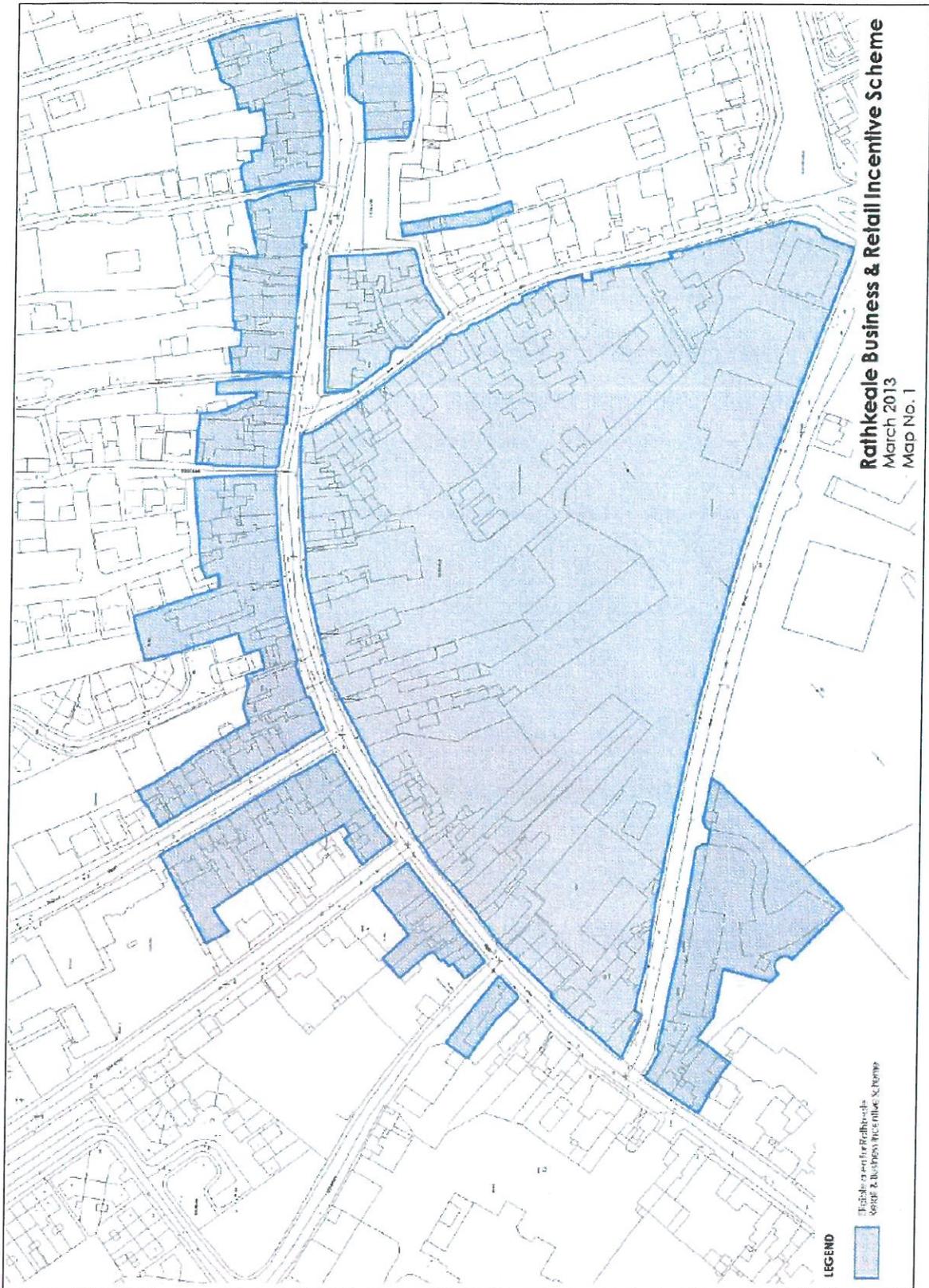
Appendix 3

4(b) Map of Designated Area in Newcastle West – 1. Newcastle West Business Park

2. Newcastle West Enterprise Centre



Appendix 3
5(a) Map of Designated Area in Rathkeale



Appendix 3

5(b) Map of Designated Area in Rathkeale – Rathkeale Industrial Estate

