

HOSPITAL LOCAL AREA PLAN 2012 – 2018

Chief Executive's report submitted to Elected Members in accordance with Section 19 (1)(d) and 19(1)(e) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Amended) in relation to the deferral of making a new Local Area Plan

7th April 2017

Forward / Strategic Planning Section



Part 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

The Hospital Local Area Plan (LAP) 2012 – 2018 is the main public statement of planning policies and objectives for the town of Hospital. The Plan was adopted by Limerick County Council on the 28th May 2012 and is due to expire in May 2018.

Section 19 (1) (c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Amended) requires that the process of reviewing an existing LAP should commence not later than 6 years after the adoption of the previous plan. However, the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2010 introduced a new provision whereby a Planning Authority may, as they consider appropriate, by resolution extend the life of an existing local area plan for a further period not exceeding 5 years.

1.2 Statutory Procedure

The Planning Authority may, as they consider appropriate, by resolution, defer the sending of notices to commence the review of a Local Area Plan. No resolution shall be passed until such time as the members of the Planning Authority notify the Manager of the decision of the Authority to defer the sending or publishing of the notices, giving reasons, and having sought and obtained from the Manager:

- An opinion that the LAP remains consistent with the objectives and the core strategy of the relevant Development Plan,
- An opinion that the objectives of the LAP have not been substantially secured, and confirmation that the sending and publishing of the notices be deferred and the period for which they may be deferred.

If the elected members accept the Chief Executive's recommendation that the current Hospital LAP is consistent with the objectives of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (Extended) and its core strategy, and are in agreement that during the lifetime of the LAP that the objectives of the plan have not been substantially secured, they may determine by resolution that it would be appropriate to defer the process for making a new plan, for an agreed time period.

Following the making of any such decision, a public notice to this effect is required to be published in a newspaper circulating in the area of the local area plan not later than 2 weeks after the resolution is passed by members.

1.3 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to set out the opinion of the Chief Executive that:

- a) The Hospital Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 remains consistent with the objectives and the core strategy of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (Extended);
- b) The objectives of the LAP have not been substantially secured to date;
- c) The sending and publishing of notices to make or review the plan may be deferred and the period for which they may be deferred.

Part 2 - Compliance with the Core Strategy of Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (Extended)

2.1 Introduction

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act (Amended), a Core Strategy is required to demonstrate how the Development Plan is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines, Government Policies and Ministerial guidelines / directives. Local Area Plans, in turn, must be consistent with the Development Plan.

The Core Strategy of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 (Extended) outlines population targets and housing land requirements for County Limerick, which were allocated by the DoECLG at national level and distributed at regional level by the Mid West Regional Authority. The Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) 2010-2022 have allocated a population target of an additional 32,800 people for County Limerick up to the year 2022. Based on this population target the core strategy has allocated a specific population target for each settlement.

The population target for Hospital in the Core Strategy was for an additional 314 people by 2022. This equates to a requirement for 169 additional housing units by 2022, which with the densities proposed, including medium low densities and very low densities for serviced sites, would require at least 14.29 hectares in total by 2022. On a pro-rata basis, 127 houses are required by 2018 the end year of the Local Area Plan, requiring 10.74 hectares of land.

2.2 Settlement Strategy

Hospital is designated to Tier 4 in the Settlement Strategy in the County Development Plan 2010-2016 (Extended). It is the policy of the Council to support the sustainable development of settlements in Tier 2-6, and Objectives SS 01 – 08 apply; including Objective SS07 Monitoring growth which requires the Council to monitor growth patterns and pace of growth in settlements and apply appropriate management measures.

At the time of the adoption of the Hospital LAP in 2012, the 2011 census population figure for Hospital was unavailable. Similarly, the detailed population figures from the most recent census in April 2016 are unavailable for Hospital town at this time. The 2011 total population census figure for the town is 630, which is an increase of only 2 people during 2006 – 2011. Refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1: Population change Hospital Town

Census Year	Population
2002	621
2006	628
2011	630

Source: CSO Census 2006 – 2011

The Table below is an extract from the Hospital Local Area Plan 2012, indicating the additional population, number of units, and zoned land required up to 2022, and pro-rata within the Plan period, to comply with the Core Strategy.

Table 2 – Population targets and Housing requirements as per the Hospital Local Area Plan 2012 -2018

Year	2006	2018	2022
Total population	628	864	942
Additional Population	-	236	314
Additional housing units required	-	127	169
Total land required in hectares to accommodate additional housing units	-	10.74	14.29

2.4 Capacity of existing zoned land

There are currently 29.8 hectares of undeveloped land zoned for residential development, which is 108% in excess of the requirement of 14.29 hectares. The Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines state that more land should be zoned for residential development than is required to meet the population targets (MWRPG page 74). In this regard the excess should normally lie between 50% and 150% of the land required though the excess in Phase 1 should not normally be greater than 50%. In Hospital, 7.8 hectares of these are Phase 1, and an additional 7.6 hectares are zoned for serviced sites. Therefore remains sufficient land available to accommodate the housing needs arising from population growth envisaged in the area.

Table 3 – Residential Land availability as per Hospital Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018

	2018 zoned land required (ha.)	2022 zoned land required (ha.)	Zoned land (in hectares)			Developed or committed since 2012	
			Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Land in hectares	Balance
New Residential	6.93	9.22	7.8	7.0	7.4	0.0	9.22
Residential Serviced Sites	3.81	5.07	7.6	0	0	0.0	5.07
Total	10.74	14.29	15.4	7.0	7.4	0.0	14.29

2.5 Economic Development

The total area zoned for Enterprise and Employment was 9.19 hectares, a 25% increase over the 2006 Local Area Plan, and consisting of two large blocks of land, one at Emly road to the south-east of the town centre and the other off the Regional Road (R513) on the Limerick side of Hospital. The former area is largely developed with small businesses; and these

include an Enterprise Centre owned by Shannon Commercial Properties (formerly Shannon Development) and a plant owned by Munster Packaging. The main change was the addition of an undeveloped area of 0.91 hectares formerly zoned as green space north of the Emly road; this is adjacent to the Munster Packaging plant and is now in part covered by a recent extension to that plant.

There was no extension over the 2006 Local Area Plan of lands zoned to accommodate retail in the Local Area Plan, which is the area of established business along the main street in the town centre. The governing objective for retail business in the Local Area Plan is to 'enhance the vitality and viability of Hospital as a retail service centre' (Objective ED3) and this is consistent with the key objective of the Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region 2010, incorporated into the County Development plan 2010, to support the town centre first approach. The 2012 Local Area Plan introduced a Tourism Objective, to recognise the potential for tourism in this town given its context and its distinctive setting and character.

There have been no significant developments since 2012 that would have undermined either the Retail or Tourism objectives; the objective remains to be secured in the positive manner in which it was framed (see also Urban Design and renewal). The context since 2012 has either remained similar or has deteriorated.

- There are a substantial proportion of business vacancies in the town centre (see Section 2.10, Urban Design and renewal); the town's only commercial bank, a branch of the AIB, closed since 2012; this is now a café; a post office.
- A car park in connection with the community playground to the immediate south of the community hall has been developed.
- There has been partial development of one of the four identifies Opportunity Sites (See section 2.10).

2.6 Infrastructure and Transport

Waste Water Treatment

The most recent assessment, carried out on behalf of Irish Water, indicates that there is a need for a new wastewater treatment plant, to meet its present and future emission limit values, which comes into effect in 2019. The current plant is overloaded, it only has a treatment capacity for 500 Persons Equivalent and discharges into a small stream with poor dilution capacity. However, Hospital Wastewater Treatment Plant is not on Irish Water's Investment Programme. Accordingly the following objective remains to be secured - Wastewater treatment plant: new treatment plant (Objective IN2).

Water Supply

With regard to water supply, there are issues with both yield and treatment. Irish Water is currently investigating options for an alternative supply. Storage also remains an issue. Accordingly the following objective remain to be secured - Water supply: 24 hour storage capacity (Objective IN1)

Transport

Plans are afoot to relocate the pedestrian crossing in the north of the town centre to opposite the primary school. Funding is being sought for a new layout to the junction

between the Emly road, Bruff road and the main street to the south of the town centre. The following objectives remain to be secured from the Local Area Plan:

- Distributor road (Objective T1)
- The network of footpaths and cycle facilities to the east and west of the town associated with areas zoned for new development (Objective T2)
- Off street car parks (Objective T4)

Flood Risk management

The Local Authority is committed to managing flood risk in accordance with the principles set out in ministerial guidelines "The Planning system and Flood Risk Management, Nov 2009", and OPW data and advice as stated in the County Development Plan 2010-2016 (Extended). The only areas that have an identified flood risk are around the Mahore River that flows through to the town to the north of the town centre, these are identified through the JBA preliminary flood risk assessment undertaken for the County in 2009. The more recent OPW CFRAM's study did not cover Hospital. The areas of risk are zoned 'Open Space and Recreational' and no development has occurred since the adoption of the Local Area Plan to impair this objective. Therefore the current zoning is in line with the most up to date flood maps and guidelines.

2.7 Community and amenity

The town hosts the extensive and recently established Community School of St John the Baptist (An Pobalscoil Eoin Baiste), which now accommodates about 1,100 pupils. There is also a modern primary school to the north of the town. Other community facilities include the community hall, a vocational educational centre, a family resource centre and a primary health care centre.

The objectives in respect of community and amenity are grouped as follows:

- Protect existing community facilities by appropriate zoning
- Provide for a community playground
- Encourage the development of amenity cycleways and pathways, indicative routes for which were identified

A site was identified for the community playground in one of the Opportunity sites (close to the junction between the Main Street and Emly road), and this has now been constructed, along with an associated car park.

There has been no development of any of the amenity cycle-ways and pathways, the execution of which were in any case largely reliant on development.

2.8 Environment and Heritage

The town has a distinctive architectural character including terraced buildings and traditional shopfronts; the country house of Kenmare Castle; and the ruins of the Norman abbey church that gave the town its name (the abbey church of the Knights Hospitallers). The cluster of archaeological monuments around the bridging point of the Mahore River, including the aforementioned church, is testament to the town's importance in medieval times. The town has a pleasant natural setting by the Mahore River that crosses it to its north, and there are many mature trees worthy of protection. There are no nature

conservation designations in the town; however the Mahore stream ultimately flows into the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation via the Maigne.

The town's environmental objectives address the following:

- Protection of its architectural heritage: Objectives EH1 (list of protected structures) and Objective EH2 (designation of the town centre as an Architectural Conservation Area)
- Protection of its Archaeological heritage: Objective EH3
- Tree Protection and protection of designated habitats: Objectives EH4 and EH5

Since the adoption of the Plan, the former creamery building on Emly road has been added to the Record of Protected Structures (Record of Protected Structure number 1707). There are 26 other structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures located in Bruff.

Since the adoption of the Hospital LAP, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has been established on a statutory basis under the provision of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999, and is administered by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Its purpose is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. The NIAH provides the basis for the recommendations of the Minister to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS). There are 37 structures listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in Hospital.

2.10 Urban Design and town renewal

The Hospital LAP provides guidance to assist prospective applicants to address aspects of planning and design that the planning authority will be taking into account when assessing applications for future development. Four sites were identified in the town as opportunity sites (Southern side of Emly Road from VEC Building to Old Creamery, Land Behind Allied Irish Bank/Moores Supermarket, Land to the East of Lower Min Street and Land incorporating Knights Hospitallers Abbey, the car park and picnic area by the Mahore River) and preliminary design briefs were outlined in the LAP. Since the adoption of the plan there has been little progression in developing these lands, with the exception of the development of the playground and associated car park.

There are no current derelict site notices; the only such notice that was issued was on a site on Emly road (reference DS-001-92) which has been removed from the register. An assessment carried out in March 2017, found 11 units of total ground floor units (residential and commercial use) are vacant.

2.10 Environmental considerations

The Hospital 2012 LAP was subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The LAP incorporated appropriate land use zoning, polices and objectives to ensure the implementation of the LAP will not result in significant effects on the environment in accordance with the SEA Directive and Regulations and in compliance with the associated objectives of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 (Extended).

Part 3 - General overview of planning applications and Part 8s for development in the area since the adoption of the LAP

Due to the economic downturn there has been very little development in the area since the adoption of the LAP. The following is a brief summary of significant permissions granted in the area under the various land uses of the LAP since 2012.

Residential

There have been no significant permissions granted for residential development since the adoption of the Local Area Plan in July 2012. The most significant scheme would have been a mixed use scheme in the north of the town by Irish and European Properties which included offices and 66 residential units, however this was never commenced and the planning permission expired in December 2012, 6 months after the adoption of the Local Area Plan. In the south-east of the town, only the first 8 unit phase of a 36 house scheme off the Emly road was completed and the planning permission has now expired (06/1235).

Retail and Tourism

There have been no significant permissions granted for retail development since the adoption of the Local Area Plan in July 2012. The extended planning permission for an 80 bedroom hotel in the north of the town expired in February 2016.

Education and community

The large community school St John the Baptist has had a number of extensions built.

A community playground has been established by the Hospital Community Playground Committee in Bank Place, in accordance with planning permission (Planning reference 12/223).

Industrial

A 904sq m extension has been built to the Munster packaging plant on foot of planning permission reference 13/133, in the Hospital Enterprise Centre north of the Emly road.

The old creamery south of the Emly road is in current use by James O'Neill for the servicing of large vehicles for his haulage business. Notification of grant of planning permission has been issued on 27th March 2017 for an extension to this building for this use under planning reference 16/414.

Part 4 - Conclusion and recommendation

Having regard to the lack of development in the area since 2012 there are a considerable number of policies and objectives that have not been secured.

In summary, it is the opinion of the Chief Executive that:

- The Hospital Local Area Plan 2012-2018 is consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 as extended.
- The objectives of the Hospital Local Area Plan have not been substantially secured.
- The sending and publishing of notices to review the existing LAP may be deferred for a period of 5 years. Therefore the lifespan of the Hospital LAP 2012-2018 should be extended for a further five years.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the following resolution be approved by the Council:

'Having considered the Chief Executive's report, the Planning Authority resolves to extend the life of the Hospital Local Area Plan 2012, by a further 5 years, from today's date, in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 (1) (d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, which provides for the extension of the valid life of a Local Area Plan'.



Pat Daly,
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