



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Forbairt Gheilleagrach,
Ceanncheathrú Chorpáraideach,
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03rd February 2020

To the Cathaoirleach and each Member of the Municipal District of Adare – Rathkeale

Re: Proposal to extend the life of the Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

I enclose herewith a copy of the Chief Executive's Report on the proposal to extend the life of the Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 for your consideration.

The Elected Members, of the Municipal District of Adare – Rathkeale at their February meeting shall consider the Chief Executive's Report and decide by resolution whether to defer the sending of a notice under Section 20 (3)(a)(i) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Amended) to make a new Local Area Plan and instead extend the life of the Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 by a further 5 years.

If you have any queries on the report please contact Karen Burke, A/Senior Executive Planner, on 061-557480.

Mise, le Meas,

Vincent Murray

A/Director of Services Economic Development Directorate

Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021

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

03rd February 2020

Forward/Strategic Planning Section,
Economic Development Directorate,
Limerick City and County Council,
Merchants Quay,
Limerick



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Part 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

The Askeaton Local Area Plan (LAP) 2015 – 2021 is the main public statement of planning policies and objectives for the town of Askeaton. The Plan was adopted by Limerick City and County Council at the Municipal District meeting of Adare – Rathkeale on the 10th February, 2015, came into effect on March 14th 2015 and is due to expire in March 2021. There have been no amendments to the plan since its adoption.

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, if considered 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, if considered 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 Authority notify the Chief Executive of the decision of the Authority to defer the sending or publishing of the notices, giving reasons, and having sought and obtained from the Chief Executive:

- An opinion that the LAP remains consistent with the objectives and the core strategy of the relevant Development Plan, and/or
- 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 of the Municipal District of Adare – Rathkeale accept the Chief Executive’s recommendation, that the current Askeaton LAP is consistent with the objectives of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended) and its core strategy, and are in agreement that the objectives of the plan have not been substantially secured within the life time of the plan, 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 the Elected Members of the Municipal District of Adare – Rathkeale.

1.3 Purpose of this report

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

- a) The Askeaton Local Area Plan (LAP) 2015 – 2021, remains consistent with the objectives and the core strategy of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended);
- b) The objectives of the LAP have not been substantially secured to date; and
- 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 (As Extended)

2.1 Introduction

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Amended) a Core Strategy is required to demonstrate how the Development Plan is consistent with the National and Regional Planning policies, Government Policies and Ministerial guidelines / Directives. Local Area Plans, in turn, must be consistent with the Development Plan.

The Core Strategy as set out in the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended) outlines population targets and housing land requirements for County Limerick, which were allocated by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government at national level, and distributed at regional level by the Mid - West Regional Authority. Based on the population target the core strategy allocated a specific population target for each settlement including Askeaton.

2.2 Settlement Strategy, Population and Zoned Land Requirements

Askeaton is designated as a Tier 3 settlement (a centre on a transport corridor – the N69) in the settlement hierarchy of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended). Tier 3 settlements provides a wide range of services for its inhabitants and its hinterland. Policy SSP 8 of the County Development Plan states:

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

Objectives SS 01 – 08 of the CDP apply; including Objective SS07 which requires the Council to monitor growth patterns and pace of growth in settlements and apply appropriate management measures.

The vision statement for Askeaton is stated in the 2015 – 2021 Askeaton Local Area Plan as;

It is the long term vision of the Council that Askeaton functions efficiently as a place where people can and want to live, work, and visit, and which fosters an authentic sense of place.

To achieve this vision, the Local Area Plan seeks that the town develops in a manner that protects its rich cultural and natural heritage, accommodates a vibrant and balanced community, and provides good employment opportunities and quality local services and amenities. Building on the existing strengths of the settlement, it is imperative that all stakeholders maximise any development opportunities in the town to secure progression and improved quality of life.

During the 2011 – 2016 Census period, Askeaton experienced a negligible decline in population. The 2016 Census recorded the population of the town as 1,137 persons, which is a reduction of 8 persons on the 2011 Census, which recorded a population of 1,149 persons. Refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1 Population Growth in Askeaton and Percentage Change per Census Period 1986 - 2016

Year	Population	Population change %
1986	951	-
1991	893	-6.09
1996	851	-4.7
2002	921	+8.23
2006	979	+6.29
2011	1,149	+17.36
2016	1,137	-0.69

Source: Central Statistics Office

The population target for Askeaton in the Core Strategy, as set out in the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (as extended) was for an additional 419 people between 2006 and 2022. This equates to 225 additional housing units by 2022. The Askeaton 2015 – 2021 Local Area Plan considered the population growth in the town between the 2006 – 2011 Census period (an additional 170 people) and the number of new housing units built in the town during this time, when calculating the number of housing units required, and the amount of lands to be zoned as New Residential and Serviced Sites to accommodate the envisaged population growth. At the recommended densities of 22 units per hectare for new residential developments and 10 units per hectare for serviced sites, 10.7 hectares of land is required to accommodate the 127 residential units required to provide for the projected population growth in the town to 2021.

The table below indicates 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 Core Strategy (County Development Plan As Extended) and Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021

Census population				Core Strategy growth according to Core Strategy of CDP and Askeaton LAP 2015 - 2021	
	2006 Census	2011 Census	2016 Census	Expected population 2022 according to Core Strategy of the CDP	Expected population 2015 – 2021 according to LAP
Total population	979	1,149	1,137	1,398	1,375
Additional housing units required					127
Zoned land required to accommodate additional housing units					10.7ha

2.3 Capacity of Existing Zoned Lands

There are 12.4 hectares zoned as new residential development and serviced sites, in Phase 1, in the current LAP, with a further 11.14 hectares zoned as Phase 2. 7.72 hectares of new residential development and 4.68 hectares serviced sites are zoned as Phase 1 and 4.7 hectares of new residential and 6.44 hectares serviced sites, zoned as Phase 2.

The above is based on the policy of 80% of units comprising of a density of 22 units to the hectare for residential housing, and 20% of units required allocated for low density serviced sites (10 units to the hectare). Guided by national policy the purpose of the allocation is to provide an element of choice for unit choice.

There have been no new housing development proposed or permitted on lands zoned for new residential development or serviced sites, since the adoption of the LAP. Deel Manor has been completed since the adoption of the Plan and was taken in charge by the Council in 2018. Deel Manor was zoned existing residential in the 2015 – 2021 LAP, as the estate was partly constructed when the LAP was adopted.

Table 4 – Residential Zoned lands required, lands zoned accordingly, and lands committed since the adoption of the 2015 – 2021 LAP

Land Use	Required 2021 (Ha)	Zoned Lands (Ha)		Lands developed or committed since 2014	
		Phase 1	Phase 2	Committed (Ha)	Balance 2021
New Residential	6.9	7.72	4.7	0	12.42
Serviced Sites	3.8	4.68	6.44	0	11.1
Total	10.7	12.4	11.14	0	23.54

Having regard to the limited development in the town and the quantum of residentially zoned lands available, it is considered that there is sufficient land zoned in the Askeaton Local Area Plan for residential use (residential development and serviced sites) to cater for the development of the town. The current zoning allocations satisfies the core strategy requirements of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended).

Part 3 – Update on infrastructure and the objectives of the 2015 – 2021 Local Area Plan

3.1 Enterprise and Employment

In relation to the lands zoned for Enterprise and Employment, 5.79 hectares are zoned for this purpose within the Askeaton Local Area Plan boundary. These lands are located to the north of the town at the Askeaton Enterprise Centre and Kerry Agribusiness, and lands to the south at Aghlacka, by the old quarry partly occupied by Kingspan Aeroboard. The four units in the Enterprise Centre are currently occupied. Since the adoption of 2015 - 2021 Local Area Plan, no permissions have been granted on land zoned enterprise and employment in the town. Given the limited scale of development that has taken place since 2015, the objectives of the 2015 – 2021 Local Area Plan in relation to enterprise and employment remain relevant to the sustainable development of Askeaton.

3.2 Retail, Commercial and Tourism Development

The Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 was prepared in accordance with 2010 ‘Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region’ which was incorporated into Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As extended). The strategy provides guidance on the need for new retail floor space and location of floor space, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The key objective arising from the Retail Strategy is to support the town centre, utilising the sequential approach in the context of the retail hierarchy, and to promote the vitality and viability of existing centres. In line with national planning guidance, the objectives of the LAP relating to the town centre, retail and commercial development, remain relevant to Askeaton.

There have been no planning applications granted for retail, commercial or tourism development in the town, since the adoption of the LAP in 2015. The objectives of the LAP remain relevant to the sustainable development of the town.

3.3 Infrastructure and transport, waste water treatment and water supply

Irish Water is the national water utility responsible for water and wastewater service. The Council remains closely involved in local provision as an agent of Irish Water in the operation and maintenance of services in its administrative area. There is a planned upgrade by Irish Water of the existing waste-water treatment facilities serving Askeaton. Land has been acquired by Irish Water for this purpose and will be subject to planning permission. Any proposals for significant development remains subject to pre-connection

discussions/agreements with Irish Water. The objectives of the LAP in relation to infrastructure remain relevant to Askeaton.

Transport in Askeaton remains a key objective for the Council to support the town as a Tier 3 settlement of significance, with accessibility to the national road network on the N69 and the strategic location close to Foynes Port, Newcastle West and Limerick City. Transport connectivity is crucial for Askeaton for fulfil its role for enterprise and employment, and general quality of life as people commute to school, work, and the town centre. Since the adoption of the 2015 – 2021 Local Area Plan, Limerick City and County Council, have been progressing the Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme, including Adare By Pass and have lodged an application seeking permission for its development with An Bord Pleanála in December 2019.

In 2016, the Council secured funding under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme for works including the replacement of footpaths in the town. The Council remains guided by national policy in relation to the transport issues. It continues to be policy of the Council to improve accessibility in the town and the objectives of the LAP remain relevant to Askeaton.

3.4 Flooding

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. The Local Authority will continue to apply a precautionary approach in relation to flood risk. Planning applications in the area identified as being at risk of flooding, will require a comprehensive flood risk assessment to support any planning application.

Askeaton has been identified in the OPW CFRAM Flood Risk Management Plans, as requiring detailed assessment and possible implementation of flood alleviation works. The Council will continue to seek funding opportunities to progress the assessment and implementation of any recommendations of the flood risk assessment. The objectives regarding flood risk management remain relevant to the Askeaton LAP.

3.5 Community and Recreation

The community supported by the Local Authority works tirelessly to develop amenities in the town. Money under the Community Initiative Fund through the yearly General Municipal Allocation by Elected Members has been invested in the town on a number of occasions since the adoption of the Local Area Plan in 2015.

In 2018, the Council received funding to upgrade the Slí na Sláinte route under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme providing outdoor recreational infrastructure as part of the Government Action Plan for Rural Development.

There was a planning application granted on lands zoned Community and Recreation to Askeaton GAA for surfacing, perimeter fences and extension to dressing room facilities in

2018. The objectives of the 2015 – 2021 LAP in relation to community and recreation remain relevant to the town.

3.6 Environment, built and archaeological heritage

The Askeaton LAP 2015 – 2021 was subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The LAP incorporated appropriate land use zoning, policies 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 (As Extended). Given the limited amount of development, since the adoption of the LAP it is considered that the extension of duration of the LAP will not result in significant effects on the environment in accordance with the SEA Directive and Regulations and remains in compliance with the objectives of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended).

There are 41 Protected Structures within the LAP boundary. There have been no additions to the Record of Protected Structures in the town, since the adoption of the LAP. In addition to the Record of Protected Structures, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established under the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999 and 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 Minister¹ to the planning authorities for the inclusion of structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS). There are 29 structures in Askeaton town listed on the NIAH, 23 no. of these structures are also Protected Structures.

Askeaton is classified as a historic town (LI011 – 092001). At the time of the adoption of the LAP, there were 16 Recorded Monuments located in the within the Local Area Plan. These include Askeaton Castle, a National Monument in State ownership (Reg. No. 201), the Franciscan Friary, and a National Monument in State Guardianship (Reg. No. 185). The list of the Record of Monuments and Places is maintained and updated by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. There has been one new Recorded Monument (LI011-092017) added to the Record of Monuments and Places within the boundary, since the adoption of the 2015 – 2021 LAP. This monument is located in the grounds of the St. Mary's Church of Ireland. The objectives of the 2015 – 2021 LAP for natural, built and archaeological heritage remain applicable to Askeaton.

3.7 Urban design, Derelict and Vacant Sites

The Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 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. Six areas were identified in the town as opportunity sites and preliminary design briefs were outlined in the LAP. These sites included; Abbey Mills (former creamery/mill buildings), Abbeyview, lands opposite St. Mary's

¹ Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Terrace, The Quay, Castle Gate, and Brewery Lane. None of these sites have progressed, since the adoption of the Plan in 2015.

In 2019, Askeaton received €200,000 under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme, administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development, as matching funding for public realm works to support the rejuvenation of the town centre of Askeaton, namely the East and West Squares. The Council has committed to match this funding to progress this public realm initiative during 2020 – 2021.

The Council has entered 3 no. sites in Askeaton on the Derelict Sites Register under the Derelict Site Act 1990. There are 12 no. sites in the town currently being processed through the derelict site process. The Council has progressed two cases of compulsory acquisition under the Derelict Sites Act 1990, since the adoption of the 2015 – 2021 LAP.

Limerick City and County Council established a Vacant Sites Register in 2017, as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. The purpose of the register is to identify vacant lands, which have remained idle, for a period of time, which are suitable for residential development in accordance with the provisions of the Act and which may be subject to a vacant site levy, if they remain vacant. There are currently no vacant sites listed on the Vacant Site Register located in Askeaton.

Geo Directory analysis reports a commercial vacancy rate of 21% in Askeaton in Q 4 2019, when the national average commercial vacancy rate was 13.3%. Geo Directory residential vacancy in the town is 0% in Q4 2019. National average residential vacancy is 4.8% according to Geo Directory during the same period. Limerick City and County Council's Forward/Strategic Planning Section carried out a survey of vacancy in the town in December 2019 and recorded a commercial vacancy of 34% and a residential vacancy of 7%.

In 2017 the Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS) was introduced under Rebuilding Ireland to assist property owners in bringing vacant properties back into residential use. At a local level the RLS is administered by the Council. In 2018 one unit located in the town availed of the RLS Scheme. There are no units acquired in the town for the Buy & Renew Scheme, however the Council are considering acquiring 2 units in 2020, and will continue to consider this option for encouraging the re-use of existing vacant building stock to address social housing demand in the town.

The objectives of the 2015 – 2021 Local Area Plan in relation to public realm, urban design and re-use of brownfield lands, under-used buildings and sites remain relevant.

Part 4 - Conclusion and Recommendation:

In order to sustainably strengthen Askeaton's position as a settlement that functions efficiently, capitalising on infrastructure, and the town's inherent strengths, there are a number of policies and objectives in the 2015 – 2021 Local Area Plan that remain relevant and have not been secured.

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

- The Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021, is consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (As Extended).

- The objectives of the Askeaton 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 Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 should be extended for a further five years.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the following resolution be approved by the Elected members of the Municipal District of Adare – Rathkeale:

‘Having considered the Chief Executive’s report dated the 31st January 2020, the Planning Authority resolves to extend the life of the Askeaton Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021, by a further 5 years, from today’s date, in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Amended), which provides for the extension of the valid life of a Local Area Plan’.



Vincent Murray

A/Director of Services - Economic Development Directorate