

A person is running on a concrete bridge over a river. The bridge has a metal railing. In the background, there are lush green trees and foliage. A large blue circle is overlaid on the image, containing the number 9 and the title text.

9

Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure

9.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on social infrastructure and how it fits into the overall land use planning framework for Limerick to foster healthy, sustainable, inclusive and attractive communities in a manner that both enhances people's quality of life and connection to place, while minimising their carbon footprint. Social infrastructure ranges across the spheres of health, security, education, community assembly and governance, worship, sports, recreation, play, arts and culture.

Planning policies for all types of social infrastructure should be integrated with a corporate policy framework and informed by certain cross-cutting goals or values including:

- Social inclusiveness and community empowerment through supporting communities to become resilient, cohesive, vibrant and inclusive;
- Compact growth and walkable neighbourhoods;
- Healthy place-making; and
- Creativity.

Policy SCSi P1

Sustainable Communities

It is a policy of the Council to seek to improve the provision of community infrastructure and recreational opportunities for the wider community, in co-operation with relevant bodies, in a sustainable manner in accordance with the settlement strategy of the Draft Plan. This is conducive to ethical principles of healthy communities, inclusivity and accessibility to facilities for all abilities and sustainability to ensure that Limerick is a greener, cleaner, more welcoming place to live, work and attract investment.

Policy SCSi P2

Location of Community Facilities

It is a policy of the Council to ensure that adequate provision is made in land use zoning, in the layout of developments and residential densities to ensure optimum accessibility to local community facilities and amenities, particularly by sustainable modes of transport and insofar as opportunities allow, that barriers to pedestrian access to such social infrastructure should be removed.

Policy SCSi P3

Social Infrastructure

It is a policy of the Council to promote and support targeted policies and measures where these are warranted to assist in renewal, regeneration and retrospective interventions and ensure that local needs for social infrastructure are properly considered and that suitable measures to facilitate or provide social infrastructure are identified and incorporated within those interventions.

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9.2 National, Regional and Local Policy

Context

The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) both focus on healthy place-making and the creation of attractive, 'inclusive communities and places', 'healthy communities' and accessible neighbourhoods that have good access to appropriate 'enabling' social infrastructure.

A core principle of the NPF is to 'ensure a high standard quality of life to future residents as well as environmentally and socially sustainable housing and place-making through integrated planning and consistently excellent design'.

The position of the RSES for the Southern Region concerning social infrastructure and sustainable communities includes a focus on improving regional quality of life through infrastructure-led planning. The RSES also includes an objective on the '10 minute' city and town concepts, to attain sustainable compact settlements whereby, a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes, or accessible by high quality public transport services connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services.

Furthermore, the RSES 'supports the role of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), the Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and other community partnerships to ensure regional responses are meaningful and flexible to cater for the needs of local communities'.

The above is further reinforced in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Strategic Area Plan (MASP). Limerick-Shannon MASP supports a number of key infrastructure and transformative projects within Limerick City of relevance to this chapter. These include the following:

- Public realm improvements in the City Centre including the development of a City-wide interconnected set of public parks, urban renewal within the Georgian Quarter;
- Additional child friendly amenities within the City Centre including playgrounds that will help drive footfall;
- The further development and promotion of cultural, heritage and sporting offerings (such as EVA International/The Red Mile) to further develop the desirability of the City Centre;
- The growth and development of health care facilities as proposed by the University Hospital Limerick in their Strategic Plan;
- The continued expansion of the City's third level institutions and integration with the wider City and region, including the provision of specific facilities to address educational and social deprivation;
- The RSES also lists key infrastructural projects for the key town of Newcastle West. These include a proposed Regional Athletics Hub and the Limerick Greenway.

The Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 provides a strategy for the promotion of local economic and community development. The Local Government Reform Act 2014, required every Local Authority to make a 'Local Economic and Community Plan' for the promotion of economic and community development in its functional area. In Limerick, the current LECP is the *Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021*. The LECP and the Development Plans for Limerick play a complementary role to each other.

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9.3 Community Facilities and Amenities

The provision of good quality community facilities in existing and developing areas is a key element in the development of sustainable, healthy communities across Limerick. Facilities such as community centres or halls, churches and places of worship, national schools, parish centres, sports centres, libraries and playgrounds, can serve in their different ways as focal points for communities living around them. The Council recognises the need to provide for an all-purpose facility to support the various Suicide Prevention groups and Emergency Services in the City and County.

The Council is committed to both protection of existing community infrastructure and provision for new and upgraded community infrastructure. Provision for new social infrastructure entails ensuring adequate land is set aside, either as part of new development proposals where appropriate, or in zoned lands for this purpose as part of this Draft Plan or Local Area Plans. Also, as part of the Council's commitment to sustainability and to ensure the provision of social infrastructure in tandem with developments, a Sustainability Statement and Social Infrastructure Assessment will be required for any residential developments of 5 or more dwelling units (refer to Chapter 11 Development Management).

The location of new community facilities should generally meet the following criteria:

- In line with the '10 minute town and city concept' they should be generally located, 800 m. walking distance of the community it serves;
- Located centrally with respect to the community it serves, taking into account limitations of topography and the road and footpath network;
- By transport infrastructure nodes and on roads or points either serviced or serviceable by public transport;
- Clustered with complementary community facilities, local retail services etc. and integrated with housing; and

- Located in an area in which a substantial proportion of members of the community reside, in particular older members of the community.

Exceptions might be made where the site has attributes that render it suitable for a specific local community use, for instance for a park or playing fields and to which a community use could be attached.

In designing new facilities, it is essential to ensure that they are adaptable over time to meet the changing needs of the population and to provide potential for maximising their dual usage, during evenings/ weekends/school holidays. Where new social and community facilities are being retrofitted into established neighbourhoods, the issue of potential adverse impacts on residential amenity and increased pressures on limited on-street car parking spaces will be considered.

Objective SCSI 01 Community Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to ensure new residential developments incorporate appropriate provision for community and recreational facilities, for the benefit of local residents, or are located within easy access to such facilities.

Objective SCSI 02 Accessibility for All

It is an objective of the Council to:

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

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Objective SCSI 03**Community Hubs**

It is an objective of the Council to promote community hubs i.e. community facilities of a general nature that can benefit from shared services and be adopted for a wide variety of purposes, including local enterprise, health and education services.

Objective SCSI 04**10 - Minute Neighbourhood**

It is an objective of the Council to implement a strategy based on the sustainable compact settlements concept '*10-minute city and town*', whereby, a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes, or are accessible by high quality public transport services by connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services.

Objective SCSI 05**Multi-Use of Facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to develop, in partnership with other agencies, opportunities for multi and co-use active and passive recreational amenities including sports and recreational facilities, playgrounds and outdoor gym equipment within existing areas of open space. The Council will expect proposals to facilitate multi-purpose uses through their design and layout and to be accessible by multiple users.

9.3.1 Community Facilities Audit

In 2020, Limerick City and County Council carried out an audit of community facilities across Limerick with cooperation from Local Development Companies such as Paul Partnership, West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development. The purpose of the audit was to inform a proposed Strategy on Community Facilities for Limerick, identifying current gaps, demand, capacity and identify areas where use could be broadened and where investment is required. The audit findings reported a wide distribution of facilities and some geographic 'gaps' within Limerick. Additional findings included the need for some major and minor improvements across the City and County, opportunities for funding, staffing/volunteer shortages, the impact of Covid-19 and the opportunities for multi-purpose usage.

Objective SCSI 06**Strategy on Community Facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to develop a strategy based on the community facilities audit and identify where new and/or improved community infrastructure should be provided throughout Limerick.

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9.3.2 Rural Communities

The recently published Department of Rural and Community Development's *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* sets out the Government's blueprint for a post Covid-19 recovery and development of rural Ireland over the next four years. Its ambition includes ensuring that people living in rural areas have access to good quality public services that enable them to continue to live sustainably in rural communities and help them to maintain a good quality of life. Policy includes investments in improvements in public transport services, health care within communities, housing provision, early learning and childcare facilities and community safety. Limerick City and County Council will support the Government's commitment to rural and community development in improving health and wellbeing and access to services.

Policy SCSi P4

Rural Community Development

It is a policy of the Council to support the objectives contained in *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* in enhancing public services for rural communities.

9.3.2.1 Smart Towns and Villages

Smart Towns and Villages is a concept included in the Department of Rural and Community Development's *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025*. It is a concept based on people in rural areas building on and enhancing, their existing strengths and assets, to find practical solutions to deal with both the challenges and opportunities facing their communities. It involves taking stock of all local assets and exploring how local services, such as health, education, social services, retail, renewable energy and transport can be enhanced and sustained through community-led actions and projects. It can also be used to develop responses to creating disability friendly communities and environments.

Objective SCSi O7

Smart Towns and Villages

It is an objective of the Council to support the development of Smart Towns and Villages which use innovative solutions to improve resilience, build on local strengths and maximise opportunities to create desirable places for people to live and work.

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9.4 Healthy Place-Making and Communities

The concept of healthy place-making links the way in which spaces become places and how quality places themselves are so important for quality of life, through their facilitation of healthy lifestyles and through generating a sense of belonging and wellbeing. Place-making is a cross cutting theme of the Draft Plan, for example Chapter 10: Compact Growth and Revitalisation deals with place-making through consideration of urban design principles, universal design and public realm, while Chapter 5: Environment, Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure promotes a quality environment, including clean water and air. Chapter 5 also recognises the importance of blue green infrastructure and our heritage as social and cultural assets and thus providing a contribution to healthy place-making.

This section is divided into consideration of the policy framework in respect of healthy environments firstly and then the principles of place-making secondly.

Limerick is part of the Healthy Cities and Counties Network and is actively implementing the *Healthy Ireland Strategy*. The *Healthy Limerick* initiative, which is jointly-funded by Limerick City and County Council and the HSE and accredited to the National Healthy Cities and Counties Network, supports and links actions in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The objective is to improve health, positive wellbeing and quality of life by ensuring that all sectors are aware of and collaborate to achieve a Healthy Limerick, working with the social determinants approach to health.

A number of policy documents have been issued to further the aims of the Healthy Ireland national policy framework, including *Get Ireland Active: National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland* published in 2018. This document includes recommendations that are specific with reference to the contribution the physical environment can make towards active lifestyles.

These include the following four actions under Action Area 4 'The Environment':

1. Ensure that the planning, development and design of towns and cities promotes the development of local and regional parks and recreational spaces that encourage physical activity;
2. Prioritise the planning and development of walking and cycling and general recreational/physical activity infrastructure;
3. Ensure that the planning, development and design of towns, cities and schools promotes cycling and walking with the aim of creating a network of cycle routes and footpaths; and
4. Explore opportunities to maximise physical activity and recreational amenities in the natural environment.

Objective SCS1 O8

Place-making for the Community

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Develop and protect an open space network and hierarchy of quality public and community spaces, to extend close to where people live and which can accommodate a variety of recreational amenities and facilities for the community at large.
- b) Incorporate specific facilities and amenities that would promote exercise and movement as well as rest and relaxation in a natural way and in a variety of settings.
- c) Protect areas which are considered to be quiet or which offer a sense of tranquillity, through a process of identification and validation followed by formal designation of 'Quiet Areas'.

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9.5 Education Facilities

The Council recognises the need for education facilities for all ages, that are accessible to the communities they serve, designed to appropriate standards and insofar as possible have capacity for expansion in situ and capacity to accommodate a variety of extra-curricular activities of benefit to the public. The DoEHLG and the Department of Education and Science's *Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System* (2008) provides guidelines for the forecasting of future planning for schools nationally. It is essential that Planning Authorities protect existing schools and college facilities and ensure sufficient provision is made for future schools and expansion of existing schools and colleges, commensurate with existing and anticipated need and in line with national guidelines. These facilities should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable development, where the opportunities to walk or cycle to school/college are maximised. Developments within the City Centre will result in an increase in educational demand in the City Centre. Provision should be made to ensure that there are sufficient educational places to meet this demand.

Currently there are 172 primary and post primary schools in Limerick, see Table 9.1 below.

Since the adoption of the 2010 Limerick City Development Plan and Limerick County Development Plan, there have been a number of significant developments in respect of educational provision:

- 7 large scale projects for post primary schools and 13 projects for primary schools have been completed. These include the building of three new community colleges at post primary level, one each in Doon, Dromcolliher and Abbeyfeale;
- The Gaelcholaiste in Limerick, an Irish language post primary school, which is currently located in the City at Sir Harrys Mall, has planning permission for a new school building nearby in the former Dawn Dairies site on Clare Street;
- A community college has been established in temporary premises in Mungret in Limerick, pending full approval for a permanent building in the area. A site has been earmarked as part of the Mungret Masterplan;
- Planning permission is in place for a new post primary school in the Castletroy area.

In terms of third level education, Limerick has three third level institutes - University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT). In addition to these, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, which is the state education and training authority for the Limerick and Clare region, deliver further education and training to over 25,000 learners.

Table 9.1:
Primary and post primary schools in Limerick and enrolment for 2019 - 2020

	Primary	Primary special	Post primary*	Totals
Number of schools	134	9	28	171
Enrolment	22,859	574	15,917	23,433

Source: Department of Education Statistics on Individual Schools.

* This list is only of schools aided by the Department of Education and therefore omits Glenstal boarding school, which is a fee paying boarding school for boys and has 228 pupils.

Objective SCSI O9 Educational Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Reserve lands to facilitate the delivery of new educational facilities, including extensions of existing schools in cooperation with the Department of Education.
- b) Ensure that there are sufficient educational places to meet the needs generated by proposed residential developments, by requiring the completion of a Sustainability Statement and Social Infrastructure Assessment for residential development of 5 or more dwellings.
- c) Support the provision of new City Centre schools, with a general presumption against the relocation of City schools away from the City Centre.

Objective SCSI O10 Location of Schools

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the educational authorities in expanding schools in tandem with residential development. Educational facilities shall be located where possible, in close proximity to other community services, at accessible locations which maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and have regard to the principles of social integration.

Objective SCSI O11 Multi-Use of School Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to encourage multi-use of school facilities, for other community programmes and initiatives other than mainstream education, in order to maximise resources and support sustainable communities.

Objective SCSI O12 Further and Higher Education Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to support:

- a) The continued expansion of the City's third level institutions and integration with the wider City.
- b) The development of the University of Limerick's City Centre campus in the heart of the City.
- c) The development of third level outreach, vocational and lifelong learning and digital capacity for lifelong learning, including fourth level education, lifelong learning and up skilling generally.



9.6 Childcare facilities

Childcare facilities are a valuable service in meeting the overall development needs of children, whilst supporting parents/guardians. High-quality childcare keeps children safe and healthy and children develop skills they will need for success in school and in their lives outside of school.

There continues to be a growth in demand for childcare services and the provision of good quality services close to local communities is important. A supply of childcare places is necessary in order to promote participation in the labour force, and increase and sustain economic productivity. The availability of childcare is a significant determinant in enabling citizens to access training and self-development opportunities.

The primary policy basis for the provision of childcare facilities is the 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2001). In the interest of promoting sustainability the suitable locations for childcare facilities are as follows:

- Town and local/neighbourhood centres;
- Areas of concentrated employment;
- Large scale retail developments;
- In or within close proximity of schools and educational facilities including catchment areas of rural schools;
- In or adjacent to community centres; and
- Adjacent to public transport nodes.

Detailed requirements and standards in respect to childcare provision associated with development projects are set out in the Development Management Chapter of the Draft Plan (see Section 11.5.1).

Objective SCSI 013 Childcare Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Encourage the provision of appropriate childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments and to improve/expand existing childcare facilities.
- b) Encourage the provision of childcare facilities in a sustainable manner to encourage local economic development and to assist in addressing disadvantage.

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9.7 Health and Respite Care

Provision of public health care services for Limerick is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). University Hospital Limerick group is made up of six hospital sites in the Mid-West and all function as a single hospital system. Hospitals within Limerick are:

- University Hospital Limerick, Dooradoyle Campus;
- University Maternity Hospital Limerick, Ennis Road;
- Croom Orthopaedic Hospital;
- St. John's Hospital;
- St. Ita's Community Hospital, Newcastle West;
- St. Camillus Hospital.

In addition, the Bon Secours Hospital at Barringtons and a number of nursing homes and residential and day care facilities are distributed throughout Limerick.

The primary care 'model' promoted by the HSE has a stronger emphasis on working with communities and individuals to improve health and well-being, aimed at ensuring everyone has ready access to a broad spectrum of care services through a local Primary Care Team. The 'Sláintecare' strategy published in 2018 promotes a healthcare system with the majority of services being delivered in the community.

The provision of both public and private healthcare facilities, together with community support services, will be encouraged on suitably zoned lands that are accessible to new and existing residential areas and that benefit communities by providing multi-disciplinary health care, mental health and wellbeing services in easily accessible locations.

Objective SCSi 014 Health Care Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Support and facilitate development and expansion of health service infrastructure by the Health Service Executive, other statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers in the provision of healthcare facilities at appropriate locations - including the system of hospital care and the provision of community-based primary care facilities, mental health and wellbeing facilities.
- b) Encourage the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.

Objective SCSi 015 Emergency Services

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

9.8 Age Friendly Strategy

The Council adopted its first Age Friendly Strategy in 2016. The *Age Friendly Strategy 2016-2020* is committed to improving key areas of infrastructure, services, information and overall social response to older persons issues.

Objective SCSi 016 Age Friendly Strategy

It is an objective of the Council to support and facilitate the implementation of *Age Friendly Limerick Strategy 2016-2020* or any update thereto.

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9.9 Active Cities

The *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030* (GAPPA) is an action plan and a framework of effective and feasible policy actions to increase physical activity at all levels. The focus of GAPPA is on the need for a whole of society response to achieve a paradigm shift in both supporting and valuing all people being regularly active, according to ability and across the life course. Transposed from this framework is the Active Cities Framework and a targeted initiative across 8 locations in Ireland including Limerick. Coordinated by Sports Ireland and Limerick Sports Partnership, the Active City Initiative is a partnership between GoGreen Routes Research with UL, URBACT, Healthy Limerick and all Local Authority Departments with a remit for Play, Recreation and Physical Activity. The initiative is currently being developed with an Active City Steering Committee underway.

Objective SCSI O17 **Active City Initiative**

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030* in the development of the 'Active City' Initiative, in partnership with the relevant authorities and stakeholders.

9.10 Sports and Recreation

Public open spaces and sports and recreational facilities are key elements in ensuring a good quality of life is achieved for all members of the community. They also enhance the overall attractiveness of a place and provide places for active and passive open space. The network of Green and Blue infrastructure (the rivers, canals, parks and connecting neighbourhoods) provide an ecological and leisure function that can be both protected and enjoyed.

The benefits from participation in sport and recreational activities are also well documented. Sports facilities and grounds in Limerick City and County include a variety of both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, which provide for the active recreational needs of the community.

There are a number of exceptional recreational facilities within Limerick, including the open spaces and walkways along the Shannon River (Limerick City/ Environs, Castleconnell and Foynes), Curragh Chase forest park, Ballyhoura forest, Lough Gur, Limerick Greenway, Clare Glens and also town parks, such as those found in Abbeyfeale, Adare, Croom, Kilmallock and Newcastle West.

The Council will continue to promote the provision and management of high quality sporting and recreational infrastructure throughout Limerick, in accordance with the *National Sports Policy 2018-2027*, *Limerick Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, the *National Physical Activity Plan* (under preparation) and the *Limerick Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy* (under preparation).

Objective SCSI O18 **Protection of lands zoned for public open space**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- Protect existing open space, by not permitting development which encroaches on open space and would result in reducing the recreational value to the public.

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- b) Protect semi-natural open space areas from inappropriate development in the interest of recreational enjoyment, community health and well-being, flood protection and biodiversity.

Objective SCSI O19

Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that adequate playing fields for formal active recreation are provided for in new development areas.
- b) Protect, retain and enhance existing sports facilities and grounds.

Objective SCSI O20

Improve Open Space Provision

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Co-operate with sports clubs, schools, cultural groups and community organisations to provide quality sports and recreational facilities to the community. The Council encourages a multi-use and co-use of facilities of a complementary nature to support more diverse range of sport and recreational opportunities. Proposed development shall demonstrate quality pedestrian and cyclist linkage.
- b) Ensure residential development incorporates appropriate provision of quality public open space and play lots in accordance with the Development Management Standards set out in Chapter 11. Open space provision will be proportional to the number of residential units proposed, consider access to existing open space and have regard to the principles of national guidance including accessibility, personal and child safety, linkage, place-making and permeability and the hierarchy of open space.
- c) Ensure that proposals for largescale development on land zoned Enterprise and Employment incorporate active and passive recreational opportunities for employees.

Objective SCSI O21

New City Amenity Areas

It is an objective of the Council to identify suitable sites for the provision of new parks/playgrounds in the vicinity of Caherdavin, Corbally and the Groody Valley.

Objective SCSI O22

Limerick Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the preparation and implementation of a Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy on completion.

Objective SCSI O23

Limerick Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2018-2021

It is an objective of the Council to support the implementation of *Limerick Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2018-2021* and any subsequent updates.

Objective SCSI O24

Limerick City Centre Leisure Strategy

It is an objective of the Council to prepare a Leisure Strategy for Limerick City Centre, within the lifetime of the Draft Plan and seek to deliver the strategy on completion, subject to resources.

9.10.1 Local Sports Plan

The *National Sports Policy 2018-2027* includes an action to support Local Authorities in developing Local Sports Plans, to review needs and set out actions to increase participation at a local level. This will require working in partnership with Sport Ireland, Limerick Sports Partnership and National Governing Bodies of Sport, as well as with partners on the Local Community Development Committees (LCDC), the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), whilst also consulting and engaging with clubs, schools, leisure facility providers, community groups and other stakeholders locally.

Objective SCSI O24

Local Sports Plan

It is an objective of the Council to support and assist the *National Sports Policy 2018-2027* in coordinating all essential bodies and facilitating the drive towards greater sports participation at a local level, with the development of a Local Sports Plan.

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9.11 Play Areas

Play areas for children and teenagers in both urban and suburban areas greatly enhance quality of life and sense of community. Limerick City and County Council have an adopted Play Policy, reflecting the importance that the Council places on the value of play in childhood and the importance of children in our society. Play is not just about the provision of facilities. It is creating the conditions to facilitate play not just in playgrounds, but in the wider environment and in both indoor and outdoor public spaces. Ensuring the retention of the natural environment, such as green spaces and woodlands, including features such as trees and mounds, equally play an important role in the provision of play.

Neighbourhood spaces, estates, parks, streets, community centres, libraries, museums, galleries, gardens and cultural venues, events and artefacts are as important as dedicated playgrounds and allow for the social interaction between different generations. In this regard, play areas should cater for all ages with consideration given for parent/grandparent provision such as seating, enabling intergenerational social interaction.

Policy SCSi P5 Play

It is a policy of the Council to facilitate opportunities for play and support the implementation of the Limerick City and County Council Play Policy and its objectives.

Objective SCSi O26 Playgrounds

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Support play policies to address the play and recreation needs of children and young people, with specific consideration given to the needs of children and young adults with Disabilities.
- b) Support local communities in the provision of a range of play facilities in appropriate locations across Limerick, including urban and rural locations.
- c) Encourage the use of nature based play with respect to the provision of play opportunities.

9.12 Trails and Green Routes

Limerick has a range of hiking and biking trails and the Council is committed to further develop and promote this activity. The Council will co-operate with relevant agencies and groups and landowners as appropriate, with a view to increasing such routes. This will include consultation with adjoining Local Authorities with a view to promoting routes extending beyond the County administrative boundary. Steps to promote such routes may include public transport connectivity, safe cycling routes, secure parking, publication of maps/apps and the provision of other appropriate facilities for users of such routes.

Objective SCSi O27 New amenity walkways

It is an objective of the Council to continue to promote and facilitate the development of walkways subject to an appropriate level of environmental and ecological assessment. Any proposed development adjacent to such walkways must incorporate connecting pathways into the designated walkway in their design. Developments shall be designed to ensure that properties overlook proposed walkways.

Objective SCSi O28 Trails, Hiking and Walking Routes

It is an objective of the Council to promote the development of regional and local networks of mountain biking, hiking and walking routes/trails. These should be waymarked/signposted and listed, where feasible and appropriate.

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9.13 Water Based Sports

Limerick contains numerous rivers and watercourses, many of which may be suitable for water based sports.

Objective SCSi O29

Water-Based Sports

It is an objective of the Council to support and encourage water based sports and leisure activities at appropriate locations throughout Limerick, subject to Council Bye-Laws and the Habitats and Birds Directives.

9.14 Arts and Culture

The existing arts and cultural infrastructure, includes theatres, performance spaces, galleries and production spaces. The Council recognises the value of the arts to the social, cultural and economic development and their impact, direct and indirect, on communities.

The *Limerick Cultural Strategy 2016-2030*, *Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021* and *Limerick City and County Heritage Plan 2030*, recognise the Council's pivotal role in the promotion and encouragement of the arts and culture, while prioritising direction for future development and investment.

The Council are currently preparing Limerick's *Festival and Events Strategy*. The Strategy will aim to find the most suitable methods for supporting, sustaining and growing the festival and events sector in Limerick.

Objective SCSi O30

Art and Culture

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Support the objectives of *Limerick Cultural Strategy 2016-2030*, *Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021* and *Limerick City and County Heritage Plan 2030*;
- b) Ensure the capacity to stage public events is a factor in the provision and design of public spaces;
- c) Promote appropriate public art installations including 'Per Cent for Arts Scheme' as part of all major infrastructural projects and also renewal;
- d) Ensure that the potential for the accommodation of creative hubs and clusters is a key consideration in renewal programmes such as within the City Centre Innovation District; the Colbert Station Quarter; the Docklands and in historic Town Centres.

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- e) Promote the provision of venues that are flexible spaces that are fit for purpose for theatre, music or dance performance and visual arts in locations that are accessible with respect to public transport, are inclusive in terms of accessibility and would contribute to creative clusters through their location, design and accessibility;
- f) Strengthen existing art and cultural infrastructure;
- g) Promote the provision of studios and specialised facilities for arts and music production, film and digital media, where they would help revitalise the City Centre, historic towns, areas earmarked for regeneration or renewal and as part of renewal programmes or projects;
- h) Consider the protection of spaces and facilities for the arts.

Objective SCSI 031 **Public Art Strategy**

It is an objective of the Council to develop a *Limerick Public Art Strategy* and Limerick Public Art Policy to facilitate the continued development of public arts within the public realm.

Objective SCSI 032 **Limerick City Gallery of Art Strategy**

It is an objective of the Council to support the actions set out in *Limerick City Gallery of Art, Statement of Strategy: 2020-2025*.

9.14.1 Museum Service

Limerick's museums are an integral part of Limerick's community, exhibiting our architectural and historical heritage for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. For Limerick residents and visiting tourists, facilitating the protection and preservation of this heritage and enabling future generations to enjoy the same privilege should be supported and recognised.

Objective SCSI 033 **Museum Service**

It is an objective of the Council to develop a Museum Development Strategy to facilitate the continued protection and preservation of Limerick's archaeological and historic heritage.

Objective SCSI 034 **Limerick Museum**

It is an objective of the Council to support and promote The Limerick Museum.



9.15 The Library Service

The Library Service plays an important role in communities in Limerick with an extensive network of Branch Libraries across the City and County. The adopted *People-Place-Platform: Limerick Libraries Development Plan 2021-2025* includes a key element for the completion of a new 21st Century Central Library for Limerick.

Objective SCSi O35 Library Service

It is an objective of the Council to promote the expansion of the Library Service across Limerick and support the actions set out in *People-Place-Platform: Limerick Libraries Development Plan 2021-2025*.

9.16 Burial grounds and Crematoria

While Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide for burial facilities, the Council also recognises the importance of the conservation of such facilities as having an important historical, cultural and ecological value.

Objective SCSi O36 Burial Grounds/Crematoria

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Support the implementation of the Burial Ground Strategy which is currently under preparation.
- b) Provide and facilitate the provision of burial grounds in Castletroy and other towns throughout Limerick identified in the Burial Grounds Strategy (under preparation).
- c) Support the development of crematoria in Limerick, subject to normal planning considerations.
- d) Support the future provision of new funeral homes, in appropriate locations, which are designed to sensitively meet the needs of the service.

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9.17 Community Gardens and Allotments

Community gardens and allotments make a valuable contribution to society on a number of levels. They contribute to neighbourhood improvement, sense of community, connection to the environment and the overall green infrastructure network in an area. While there are numerous benefits to community gardens and allotments, it is also important to ensure that they are developed and managed appropriately.

Objective SCSI O37

Community Gardens and Allotments

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the development of community gardens and allotments in Limerick, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.

9.18 Public Rights of Way

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires that Development Plans preserve public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility. The Act requires that such public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the Draft Plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the Draft Plan. The Public Rights of Ways in Limerick are identified on Map 9.1 and 9.2 below and include:

- Westfields, North Circular Road;
- Park Canal;
- Lucas Lough/Shannon Fields (Athlunkard);
- Monabraher/Longpavement;
- Kings Island (St Mary's Park);
- Corbally;
- Ballinacurra Creek -Vance Lands;
- Ballinacurra Creek - Baggot Estate; and
- Clare Glens
- Coonagh;
- Condell Road;
- Barrington's Pier.

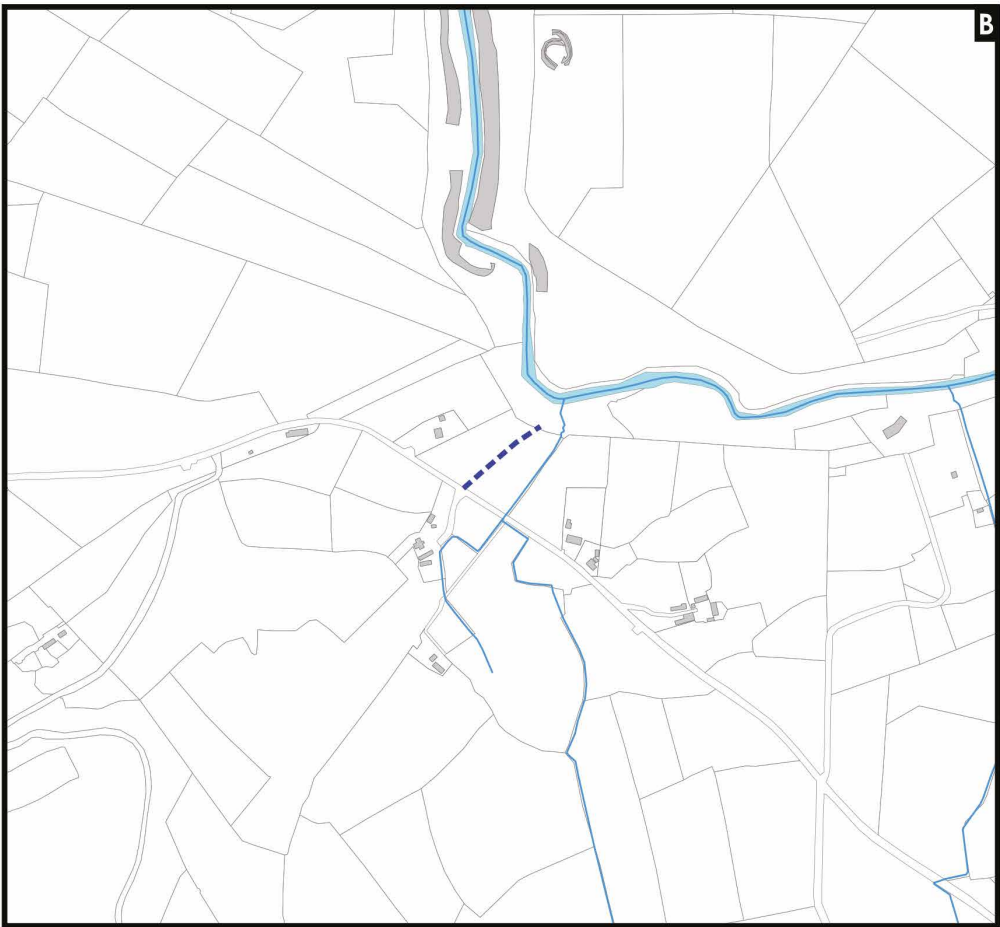
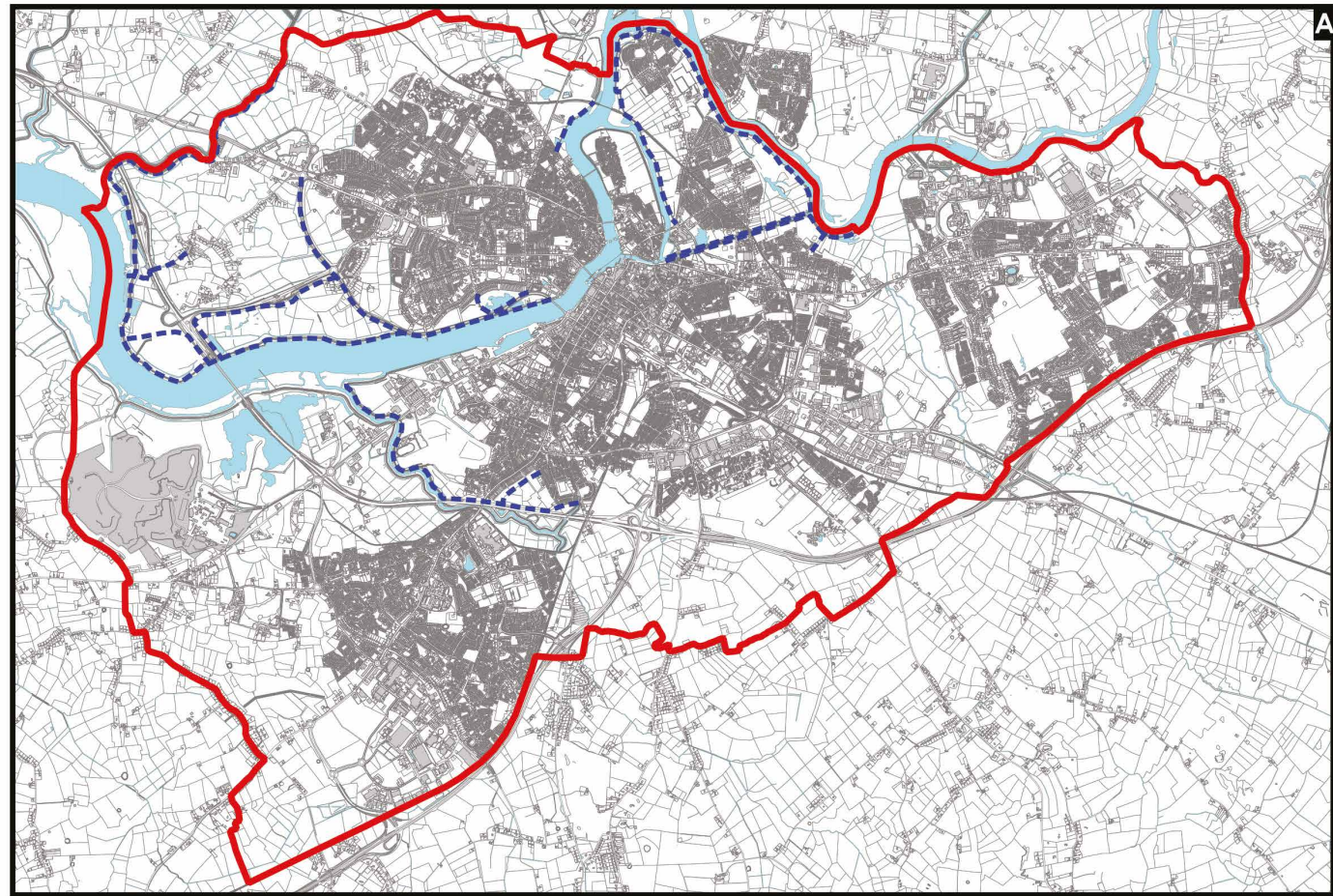
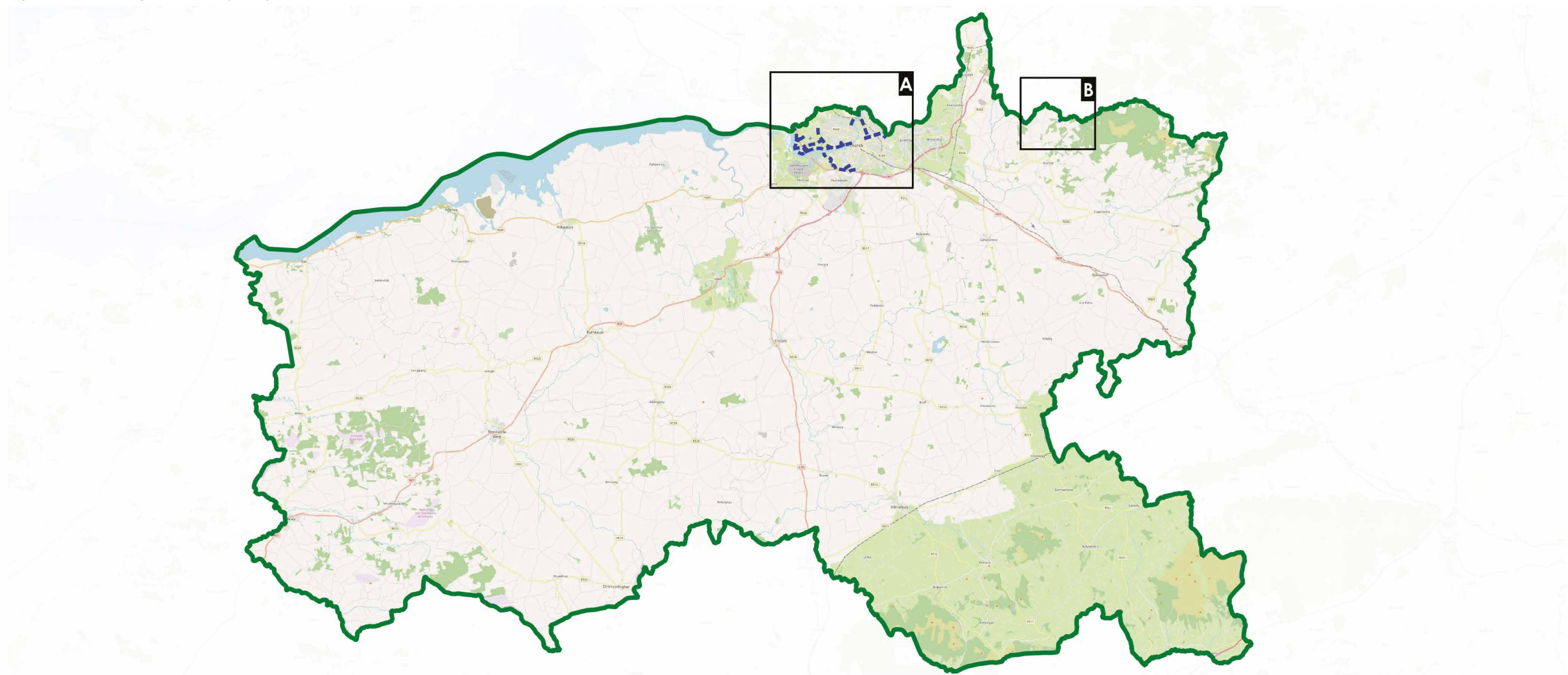
Objective SCSI O38

Public Rights of Way

It is an objective of the Council to encourage the preservation of existing public rights of way within the plan area.

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Map 9.1: Public Rights of Way Map



Draft Limerick
Development Plan
2022 -2028

Right of Way

- LEGEND**
- Right of way
 - City & Environs Boundary
 - Limerick County Boundary

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