



To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

Chairperson's Report of the Special Meeting of the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee of Thursday, 28 March, 2024.

Item 1

To to review and sign-off on the Draft Final Framework Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028

Ms Eileen Humphreys did a presentation on the Draft Final Framework Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028. It is a 6-year framework plan, and will include 2-year implementation plans. The LECP Framework Plan is made up of 3no elements: An Economic Plan; A Community Plan; and an Integrated Plan. The plan contains 4 high level goals and 38 sustainable development objectives.

Ms Humphreys outlined the evidence base for the plan, and the consultation undertaken in developing the plan.

As part of the socio-economic analysis of Limerick the following was identified:

- An 8% increase in population since the 2016 census – population growth in urban areas was 12% and in rural areas was 5%.
- 1% of the population identified as Irish Traveller.
- There was an increase of 0.2% in the population living in areas identified as being disadvantaged since the 2016 census.
- There has been an increase of 3.1% in the population of areas identified as being affluent since the 2016 census.
- Unemployment in Limerick at 8.6% in 2022 is at approximately the national average
- While unemployment rates have reduced in the most disadvantaged areas of Limerick, unemployment blackspots remain where the rates of unemployment are twice the Limerick average.
- Residential vacancy in Limerick is below the national average.
- Commercial vacancy is above the national average, and highest in the city and some of the larger rural towns.

Ms Humphreys outlined the four high level goals:

1. People and Communities
2. Environment and Climate Action
3. Economic Development
4. Innovation, technology and digitisation

and went into detail on the objectives under each goal.

Implementation of the objectives will be carried out under a multi-agency model, reporting into the Local Community Development Committee on the Community Plan, the Economic SPC on the Economic Plan and to both structures on the Integrated Plan.

The process going forward is that the draft Plan will be reviewed by the Municipal Districts, and then go to the Regional Assembly in April. The Plan will be brought back to the SPC for final review at its next meeting. It will be presented to the full Council Meeting in May for adoption.

The Chair thanked Ms Humphreys and opened the discussion to the floor for questions.

Mr Thompson queried how does the increase in commercial vacancy impact on the city centre in the context of the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan to provide additional office space. Ms Woods advised that the Development Plan prioritises commercial development in the city centre. The longer term focus is to identify lands suitable for industrial development on the outskirts, but the focus is on providing office accommodation in the city centre. The Development Plan also prioritises retail in the city centre to increase footfall. The Chair noted that there are incentives to encourage businesses back into the city centre.

Mr Thompson sought clarification on the implementation plans proposed under the LECP. Ms Humphreys advised that some of the objectives of the LECP plan will be prioritised into the first 2-year plan for immediate progression. These objectives link into government priorities, and prioritising them will help attract funding for projects.

The Draft Final Framework Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028 was proposed by Cllr. J Egan and seconded by Cllr. M Ryan.

The meeting then concluded.

Cllr. B. Collins, Chairperson

15 May 2024