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Mayoral Programme

More for Limerick

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Introduction

Limerick is on the move and leading the way in local government reform. The whole of Ireland is watching us with many already eager to follow our path.

For the first time in the history of the state, Limerick alone has chosen the route of an executive mayor, directly elected by the people of Limerick. We now have a clear distinction between the roles of the elected executive arm of local government (our mayor) and our legislative chamber (the elected councillors). Our future will be brightest by working together while recognising the differences in our responsibilities and roles.

Honoured to be the first to serve in the role of elected executive mayor, I know I now need to set the vision of what Limerick can be. With our elected councillors, I need to show leadership in defining new ways for our local government to work both locally and with national government and agencies so that we all work together for Limerick. I believe strongly in the vision set out in this document. It is the Limerick where I want to live as I grow old. I am therefore fully committed to its realisation, and I now need to work hard myself and collaborate with others to drive the change needed to achieve that vision and live up to the mandate for change I received from the people of Limerick.

The Limerick I believe we can, and should, have is a Limerick which might not be easily achieved. There is much work to be done. Each of us brings to that task different skills and experiences. One of my major responsibilities will be to identify and empower those best suited to each task and create and coordinate teams to drive on different parts of this Programme. It will require the help and commitment of everyone here in Limerick. Many have already volunteered to help. In return for those generous offers, I promise to work in as inclusive and transparent a manner as possible.

I believe strongly in the concept of “meritocracy democracy” - a society governed by people chosen according to merit. I believe too that the vote by the people of Limerick in the plebiscite of 2019 and in the mayoral election in 2024 showed they too want that. So, I am committed to harnessing the power of all who want to build a better Limerick based on their ability, talent and effort alone. This may represent a change from the past for some, and I realise change can seem difficult at times, but that does not make it wrong. I believe this approach is key to creating a fairer and more inclusive society in Limerick and one which is more equal to all. I want to help everyone with skill and imagination and willing to work hard to aspire to reach the highest level.

Delivering the Limerick described in the following pages will also require us to get our fair share from the organs of national government, and from the national agencies who also have a responsibility to help us succeed. We will all need to work together to pull the various levers to achieve this.

I strongly believe over the next five years we can do much to set solid foundations so that others who follow in my footsteps can complete the work we are now beginning and indeed add further to the work we will have completed.

In the pages which follow, I set out what I believe to be the best path to creating a new Limerick. The ideas and actions set out hereafter will guide my hands for the next five years of my term. In so doing, they will also help guide how we select the priorities to work on, and how we allocate scarce resources.

They will provide clarity to the residents of Limerick, and those who might still want to call Limerick home, about our approach. And they will guide the actions too of national government and help inspire others who we hope will now chose to invest in our shared future.

This programme reflects the views of all of the communities and people with whom I have consulted. As best it can, it reflects too the priorities and hopes of those of our elected councillors and officials who have contributed to this process and for whose wisdom and suggestions I am most grateful.

**John Moran, Mayor of Limerick,
Limerick, September 2024**

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Vision

In setting out this programme, I see an inclusive Limerick which presents a bright future of a thriving more resilient EU city region living more sustainably in a fast-changing world.

A more liveable Limerick with more affordable housing and a better quality of life for everyone.

A more prosperous Limerick where improved prosperity can be achieved by continuing to diversify our economy and ensure our investment in the future is shared in a fairer way. This we must do from the outset by ensuring that there is more equal opportunity for everyone, and all communities travel with us on that journey.

A more healthy Limerick where finally the right to a more healthy and long life is no longer compromised by the quality of our local healthcare so long as we ourselves do our part to embrace and live in a more healthy way of living.

It is a Limerick where finally our young talented adults can grow up imagining a future where they stay in Limerick and that Limerick provides them a future on a par with their counterparts growing up in other parts of our island. And a Limerick where growing old can be done with the respect and supports well deserved for all of the years of service our older residents have contributed to Limerick in days gone by

I see a Limerick where our historic past and its traditions are respected and meet and blend with an ambitious future. I see new expansive sites in our city's core neighbourhoods and key county towns, which by 2029 will be well on the way to becoming thriving hubs of affordable rental homes, mixed-tenure residences, and bustling activity. Our goal by 2040 is to comfortably accommodate over 50,000 new residents sustainably which can only be done by ensuring compact growth and community vitality. This will require a massive step up in ambition and delivery from that of the last decade.

An important part of the solution is right before our eyes in our rural towns and villages too. They too need investment. Imagine rural towns becoming accessible to all, even those not owning their own car and becoming places of growth with new homes, smart energy solutions, and thriving enterprises.

There is a world in which O'Connell Street and Georgian Limerick can be a globally recognised tourist destination boasting sports, shopping, museums and dining. Limerick can once more be full of life—homes, restaurants, jazz clubs, galleries and attractive shopping. Picture safe spaces where children play freely, shop windows shine brightly, and the arts thrive openly, from cinemas to open air performances and international cultural celebrations. Picture a public realm where everyone enjoys quality and safe spaces and communities flourish. Picture commuter train lines linking Limerick city centre to Adare, Ballysimon, Moyross, Shannon, Nenagh, and beyond.

Imagine Limerick leading in education and employment, where opportunity knows few bounds. Picture a thriving SME sector, innovative agricultural industry, and region at the forefront of sustainable urban planning. Picture a Limerick where creativity flourishes—music, fashion, film—on streets that inspire and festivals that attract international visitors. When I visit our local companies and universities, I now see a future with advanced manufacturing and engineering driving our economy, attracting global companies and enabling local entrepreneurs to create thousands of jobs for generations to come.

But for that all to work, we will need safer streets and greater respect for each other. We will also need top-tier healthcare, shorter waiting times, and community services providing healthy well-being for everyone. We must become a place leading in mental health awareness, with inclusive activities and support readily available.

This is the ambitious Limerick I aspire to build. It will not happen without much work.

It will not be complete by the end of my five-year term because there is no silver bullet.

But I believe that with an ambitious well-designed plan we can ask for and will deserve a greater slice of the national funding to get a lot done.

And above all I believe that Limerick, if given a fair opportunity, can come together united as one to build on the resilience that has brought Limerick through adversity over and over again, build on our innovativeness and our sense of hard work and build on our welcoming embrace to old and new communities to finally deliver the Limerick our children deserve.

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Process

The priorities for this Mayoral programme were developed through a process of engagement with the people of Limerick.

This journey began well before the election, with public engagement to understand the needs and aspirations of communities right across the city and county. Public sessions involving presentations and panel discussions explained the main pillars to the electorate which gave them a resounding mandate. There were also public workshops to brainstorm ideas. Like all candidates for political office canvassing brought me face-to-face with the people of Limerick, providing further valuable insights into their concerns and hopes for our shared future.

Attending Municipal District and Area meetings since my election was another important component of this process. These meetings offered a platform to listen to, and engage directly with, our newly elected councillors, to ask them to share their perspectives to augment my understanding of local issues and priorities. During these meetings, I explained my belief of the need for a more ambitious vision for Limerick, advocating for the type of transformative change that this would bring across the city and county. Without that, our region will continue to fall behind other parts of the country which are thriving.

The output of these efforts identified many common issues but also highlighted important differences which mean that a “one size fits all” programme for all electoral areas would not be right. There is a clear need to ensure focus in the county districts as well as the city. The guidance from elected representatives and the officials of Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) has been invaluable and much appreciated to align their priorities with my own. We now have a set of priorities that I believe reflect the collective voice of Limerick's residents and its stakeholders and which by reason of my election I have been mandated to deliver working with other elected councillors and officials.

The work of the new Mayoral Office, engaging with state agencies, collaborating with councillors, and listening to communities have all been central to shaping an ambitious, inclusive, and actionable agenda for Limerick's future. The overall process highlights a new commitment I want to see to transparency, accountability, and delivering more for Limerick, in alignment with the aspirations and demands of its people.

Alignment with National, Regional and Local Policies

This Mayoral Programme and approach is guided firstly by key national policies, including the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030, which prioritises balanced regional development and infrastructure investment. The Climate Action Plan 2021 too gives important indicators of how we should proceed, as it highlights a commitment to sustainability requiring alignment with Ireland's target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Regionally, the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provides a framework for cohesive and resilient development.

The Government recently began a public consultation to review the National Planning Framework (NPF), and their suggestions have been taken into consideration while preparing this Programme. To the extent the Programme contains new ideas or greater ambition for Limerick, I shall be advocating for changes to the NPF to reflect those.

Importantly, Limerick City and County Council already has a number of important policy documents which align well with this Programme. These include:-

- The Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028
- Limerick 2030: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick
- Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plans
- The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023 - 2028
- Limerick City and County Council Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019 – 2024
- Limerick Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LMATS)
- River Basin Management Plan
- Limerick Tourism Development Strategy
- Limerick Age Friendly Strategy
- Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 - 2026
- Limerick Public Realm Strategy
- Limerick Cultural Strategy
- Global Limerick, A Diaspora Engagement Strategy
- Limerick's Heritage Plan 2017 –2030
- Limerick Retail Strategy
- Limerick City and County Council Corporate Plans

Over the initial months to come, we will be assessing each of those policies to ensure consistency with the direction set out in this Programme.

My Main Aspirations for my Mayoralty

There are so many things one would like to see happen for Limerick. But despite wanting to do it all today, it remains my firm view that a plan with too many key priorities is not a plan likely to deliver any truly successfully.

Others of course will follow me in this role and will choose to present other priorities in their own election which will guide their work.

I now need to be faithful to the priorities I myself presented to the people of Limerick and which received such a generous and strong mandate.

I realise too that many things not even within the contemplation of this document will likely come along and have to be achieved as we move through the next five years. The world changes fast and it is important that we are prepared to adjust as we react to those changes.

That said, I believe, it is important nonetheless from the outset of the Mayoral term to set out my main priorities as these will inform the recommendations I will make to the council for budgetary allocations and focus.

If there is full buy into these priorities, we will see Limerick move forward together. Everyone must then feel agency to contribute meaningfully to the tasks in hand based on their own interests and skills and we must ensure that power and influence is not concentrated in a privileged few and that no one feels left behind or left out.

I believe that achieving the following five key outcomes will allow me to do my bit to build for a better Limerick and best set up Limerick for even greater success. These five outcomes will require delivery of a range of actions set out under the three pillars of More for Limerick – A More Liveable Limerick, a More Prosperous Limerick and a More Healthy Limerick. Those pillars cover a broader range of outcomes which are also important too for Limerick or of particular and deserved concern to parts thereof and/or sectors of our population and so will be part of my delivery focus.

But now, as I begin my five year mandate, the five main outcomes which will guide my work are:-

1. An Ambitious Plan showing a path for Limerick to grow to 2050
2. Improved Quality of Life and Placemaking
3. Social Inclusion and More Equal Opportunities for All
4. More Affordable and Sustainable Housing
5. Reimaging Our City Centre and Key County Towns

1 An Ambitious Plan showing a path for Limerick to grow to 2050

I would like to change the way we approach planning for Limerick's growth. It is not that we do not have plans already. But their time horizons are not long enough. They are perhaps not ambitious enough and often they do not knit together as they should. Better planning led development is needed for the exciting but yet challenging growth I see for Limerick's future.

Guiding growth with evidence and holistic overriding principles will better allow us to put the interests of the public and our environment first and foremost. It will help inform our decisions about how to spend scarce resources, secure external financing for our projects and where and how to plan growth to take advantage of our growing population, thousands of graduating students, offshore clean energy and the fair wind I expect behind our sails as Limerick becomes known for innovation, sustainability, better quality of life and opportunity for all.

Certainty of direction brings other advantages. Our planning system will then have better tools to respond to developer led suggestions for growth. More importantly the private sector will have greater certainty about the direction and the opportunities for growth in Limerick over coming years and I believe will have greater confidence to invest in a new shared potential for Limerick.

It is exciting, yet intimidating, that Limerick now needs to plan for unparalleled growth in the next development plan. I would like us to move into the preparation of the next development plan (2028-2038) with clarity on the growth options for Limerick city and county. We need to know how best to deliver new homes for over 110,000 persons and have that objective influence the next development plan from 2028-2038. But that is not all, this next development plan, to be agreed by the Council, needs to step up the ambition for Limerick in terms of the future for our county towns, to prepare Limerick for the opportunities of offshore wind, to reduce our carbon footprint in a fair way, how we diversify our industrial offerings, identify new large-scale sites for housing and workspaces, and to see the transformation of our historical city neighbourhoods and public transport.

Sample Transformational Projects

- **Strategic Sites with the Land Development Agency (LDA)** - I will lead work with the LDA and local council staff to update analysis in line with higher targets to identify large scale key sites for new work-live communities in Limerick city and suburbs, and key growth towns and lobby the government for resources to secure such lands for the council/state
- **Health Needs** - I will complete an independent review of Limerick's health needs to design a clear path of Limerick's needs and to inform lobbying so that Limerick gets its fair share of health resources
- **Moyross Rail** - As was done in Colbert Quarter, I will prioritise the development of design reviews with the local authority for key growth areas like Moyross to ensure that growth plans for those areas in light of the higher ambition in More for Limerick work with and for the existing communities too.

- **Policy on Community Facilities** - With the recent audit of community facilities now complete, I will prioritise the delivery of a strategy based on its findings and identify where new and/or improved community infrastructure should be provided throughout Limerick. For example, I will push to complete the proposed new community centres in Murroe and Kings Island.

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2 Improved Quality of Life and Placemaking

I want to focus interventions over my term to prioritise quality of life in Limerick. This is not just an issue for urban Limerick. I want to address key issues right across our city and county.

Some of this will just involve cleaning up areas which have been neglected. We often introduce quality infrastructure, amenities and public realm but do not have the budget to maintain it or continue to run the services.

But above and beyond this, I need to deal with considerable deficits in day-to-day amenities and facilities. Many of our villages, towns and neighbourhoods in our city centre simply do not have that which their residents deserve. We need to add more where they are most needed. These amenities and facilities even where they do exist are often not as accessible without improvements in public transport for residents of neighbouring areas and this needs focus too.

I would like a new focus on the importance of public parks and the role they play in quality of life. Limerick is lucky to have many public parks and heritage sites. I believe with greater focus and investment, our parks and heritage sites can become much more important and valuable parts of the daily life of Limerick residents. We need to find ways to identify gaps in our existing network, to connect them up better, especially within the city, and above all use them to in new ways for recreation, community gatherings and to introduce new eco-parkland concepts like allotments, edible planting, particularly for those without their own gardens at home.

I also want to focus on measures to improve people's sense of personal safety. There have been asks right along the election campaign for better road safety. I shall push to enhance safety with increased Gardaí and community wardens, tackling anti-social behaviour on the streets of our urban centres, towns, and villages. I will look to our plan for growth to confirm if there is a compelling case for Garda stations in Castletroy and Newcastle West.

We need to improve our health indicators and outcomes. So additionally, I want to push harder so we can all understand the impact quality of life has on our health, physical and mental. The impact of the built environment in which we live and adjust our approach to learning from any mistakes of the past as well as seeking investments to improve, not just our amenities, but also our health infrastructure.

Sample Transformational Projects

- **Arthur's Quay Framework:** We need to consult with the public and bring certainty to plans for Arthur's Quay park and the surrounding areas, recognising the dual objectives of quality public realm for residents and visitors and the need to attract investment to neglected buildings in the area.
- **Heritage and Tourist Assets in East Limerick:** In recent years, we have seen the success of the Limerick Greenway. I believe that now with similar focus we can transform the way we enjoy

and see the heritage assets we have in the Lough Gur-Kilmallock-Ballyhoura area making this entire region a destination and amenity for all of the residents of Limerick

- **Shannon Estuary Way:** We know that Foynes Port and offshore wind presents one of the major growth opportunities for Limerick. There is a real opportunity, and I would like to prioritise during these five years the development and profiling of the Shannon Estuary coastline and tourist amenities including Glin Castle and village and Askeaton town and Foynes itself to prepare it in advance for the future growth it will enjoy in a decade or so.

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3 Social Inclusion and More Equal Opportunities for All

Limerick has long suffered and continues to suffer from the effects of social exclusion. Many communities especially in and around our city centre and some key county towns feel excluded within their own county. Key indicators like health, education levels, employment, income show unacceptable outcome variances depending on Eircodes. This will not be solved overnight but I want to see continued progress on the work already begun and see an even more significant step in the right direction. The Limerick Regeneration Programme and particularly its Economic and Social Intervention Fund plays a key role in supporting agencies and communities working within the most disadvantage areas of Limerick City. It has supported innovative projects that address gaps in mainstream provision and is an example of collaborative working between state agencies and the communities they serve.

I will take a leadership role in giving these issues political visibility. The Limerick Regeneration Project plays a critical role in transforming our most vulnerable areas. While commendable progress has been made, more work needs to be done as problems are still widespread. To create more opportunities and improve social inclusion, it is essential that the Regeneration project continues its vital work and receives the necessary funding from the Department of Housing Heritage and Local Government. The efforts of this project must be supported and sustained, as they are critical for driving progress and integration in the affected communities. I will continue to support and encourage other leaders in Limerick to back impacted communities and those communities' own leaders. Only with ongoing commitment and investment can we ensure that these areas flourish and become fully integrated into the broader Limerick community. The approval of funding support from the Department will ensure that a focus on the development of these areas is maintained and we can move closer to the day where we no longer refer to them as regeneration areas. But we also need to ensure we keep similar focus and support for other vulnerable communities, including in some county towns, outside of the traditionally demarcated regeneration areas in our city.

I want to use top-down planning and investment to deliver pathways for regeneration and other vulnerable areas to integrate better into their surrounding areas. Amenities must be scaled to serve a broader hinterland and encourage participation and from the widest community but where possible be situated in “regeneration” areas to break down existing barriers, real or perceived.

I will particularly focus on investment in life-long education as a lever. This might be formal education or training in softer skills like the importance of wellbeing and healthy living. It might be the support of projects to use sport or activities to change behaviour, overcome unconscious bias and encourage wider participation in society.

We need to leverage relationships more. I will also prioritise the cultivation of partnerships and mentoring with industry and third level educations. Either or both of these present opportunities to develop new bespoke solutions to Limerick’s issues and open up opportunities which were not thought possible before.

Finally, I will be awake to the risk that other barriers may cause. Issues like health especially mental health, poverty, unconscious bias and differences in ability may exist. We need to see what can be done to ensure all our programmes and actions are tested to reduce such barriers.

Sample transformational projects:

- **Kings Island Plan:** Plans for the development of King's Island walled town (like THRIVE) will be expanded to include not just a focus on medieval heritage buildings but much more. I will work to have a broader more holistic development plan to incorporate all of the surrounding areas, improve amenities and public realm across the island and encourage the development of new creative hubs and workshops in this most historic part of our city. I will prioritise investment which works to break down barriers and urban designs which encourage greater interconnectivity between communities new and old.
- **Supporting Deis schools:** Expanding the support for Deis schools in Limerick will be a particular focus of mine and for example securing funding and expanding the Advanced Engineering Pilot already serving Sexton Street's two secondary schools will be a priority.
- **Connectivity to Moyross:** I shall push to make University Way (or Avenue) in Moyross/Caherdavin a reality and finish the Northern Distributor Road access to Moyross from the Coonagh Roundabout.
- **Public Transport:** Better public transport provides easier access to education, work or services for people who live without private cars in their driveway. It can also act as a catalyst for new investment in communities. The train station in Moyross and the introduction of Bus Connects and completed active transport networks city wide will be a priority for me as will better walking and other active travel in larger county towns and public transport connecting rural towns and villages to the city and to each other.

4 More Affordable and Sustainable Housing

We need to have a credible plan well underway by 2029 to see a real step up in delivery of long-term affordable housing options. That plan needs to be at such a scale that there is clear sight finally on enough homes in Limerick to meet demand and see a reduction in real rents and house prices from the current unaffordable levels.

I will prioritise all avenues available to see a serious step up in longer term supply. We need several thousand new homes per annum. I will focus especially on discussions with developers to trigger delivery of existing planning permissions, broader use of Limerick 2030 to deliver housing especially in county towns outside the scope of the LDA and to work with the LDA to achieve much greater ambition in terms of pipelines over the next ten years.

Overcoming infrastructure obstacles to greater supply will also be a priority. We know Limerick needs greater waste-water treatment facilities and additional capacity for new connections. We need more public land than we have available, and we need funding for infrastructure to make existing land ready for building. Also, public transport investment, especially in rail or bus connects has the potential to open up new lands or even allow towns like Kilmallock to grow at a faster rate. Towns like Adare, Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West need to see progress on bypasses which allow the centre of those towns to breathe and prosper again.

I wish to explore the creation of a Limerick specific Approved Housing Body (AHB), or similar structure of scale. That would be the first step in a move towards a Vienna model for housing in Limerick. This will enable the ownership and control by Limerick of much greater numbers of public housing. This will deliver a dividend once financings are paid off for future generations. It will also allow City Hall to alleviate pressures on tenants in the rental market both in terms of rent levels and security of tenure. It would also allow City Hall to intervene to ensure housing of the right type (student, age friendly, one bedroom, family friendly) is delivered when public funds are used or housing in the right locations – not just where a developer owns land and would like to build.

I will drive delivery of a short-term modular programme of scale as a transition measure. This will deliver short-term affordable public housing which can be rented as a way for new residents to move more quickly into new or existing neighbourhoods while they are waiting for their long-term housing to be built.

Sample transformational projects:

- **Transport & Mobility:** Making progress on active travel projects like securing funding for the Limerick Link or the completion of the active travel network will be a priority to open up new lands for development and ensure sustainable and accessible transport options across the city and county.
- **Dereliction:** I will push for funding and develop a plan to deal more quickly with dereliction especially to deliver more housing or community spaces for communities.

- **Short-term SMART Housing:** I shall lobby for funding and permission to seek an off-balance sheet structure to secure short-term modular affordable rental transition (“SMART”) housing options for a pilot phase 1 project to deliver up to 1,000 units of rental accommodation and to install infrastructure to activate state lands for same and prepare additional lands for further phases.

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5 Reimagining our City Centre and Key County Towns

In planning for Limerick's evolution, a key priority is to transform our city centre and key county towns. Our city centre is not doing well and that is evident to all. People prefer to live outside our city centre or town centres and villages. Even those not resident there are avoiding using the centres as before either for fear for personal safety or lack of retail offerings. Until these prosper, our region will not prosper so this must be a focus for the next five years. This will require a concentrated effort and investment to make these locations the places of choice for people choosing a home in Limerick.

I will want to see more progress on the Worldclass Waterfront Project. This will include the floodproofing of vulnerable riverside lands. It will mean investment in Arthur's Quay public realm and advancing on the redevelopment of adjacent lands. It will mean making progress on the Opera Centre and on the delivery of the library project specifically. I would also like to see greater certainty about the shape of the future of Cleeves and progress on the new bridge to connect it to the other side of the river.

I will prioritise the publication of standards/rules for historical buildings and public realm in the historic medieval and Georgian quarter. I would hope to secure funding to make street surface changes for and do further greening of a number of city centre streets so as to make the area more desirable for quality living and encourage private investment to follow. I would like to be able to also introduce clearer guidance on what would be desirable development and retail mix in these areas – both private and public – including clear guidelines for public realm shopfronts and Georgian facades/railings. Utility companies and others who want to dig up our streets will be required to commit to restore them fully in line with these guidelines.

Changing how we view living in Limerick's City Centre is a priority for me. We need to see better living options for apartment living and compact growth in Limerick. This includes prioritisation of amenities and outdoor spaces for people without private gardens. It means making sure public transport routes and vehicular routes crossing the city do not make public realm completely unattractive for residents and for neighbourhood retail.

We need to do better to encourage jobs to locate in the City Centre or making them more accessible to people living there. Office developments like those in the Opera Centre and Ballantyne Mills need to be competed rapidly to provide landing spaces for new enterprises. Transport and traffic strategies, retail strategies and nighttime economy strategies along with public realm interventions all need to be aligned to help struggling retail offerings in the city recover and thrive. Public transport options need to be focused on supporting people living in the city centre without cars to allow them to get to and from work and other services in outer areas of our city until these services can be located in the city centre also.

There is an opportunity to focus parallel projects in one town to create a prototype for the Limerick Town of the Future. In the coming years, Abbeyfeale is set to see tens of millions of investment into its public realm and derelict buildings. These investments need to be combined with other investments into renewable energy, services, digital services and public parklands to design and deliver a prototype for a county down of the future using the Town First principles and funding.

Sample Transformational Projects:

- **Colbert Quarter:** Progress must happen on Colbert Quarter to deliver confidence in the future development of our city and provide much needed housing. Funding must be forthcoming to deliver on the changes needed to activate the lands, deliver amenities and allow other landowners to consider moving activities to other more suitable locations.
- **New Town Park:** I will prioritise a full plan for the redesign of the public realm and for traffic movements and retail and other services for Georgian Limerick to encourage greater private investment in underused or derelict Georgian buildings so that the area is on its way to becoming a thriving residential quarter and an attractive UNESCO recognised historic part of our city. This will inform the completion of the redesign of main streets like O'Connell Street, Henry Street, Parnell Street and Roches Street along Barcelona type Superblock principles.
- **Cruise Street and Adjacent Areas:** Investing in Arthur's Quay Park and the Waterfront, the revitalisation of Cruises Street and upgrading of the nearby Milk Market area will be priority projects for me.
- **Kilmallock Heritage Investment:** I would like to deliver much needed investment into the public realm, transport connectivity and much neglected heritage assets of Kilmallock so as to create solid foundations for the further development of this key town in Limerick.

Driving Delivery

Driving delivery for Limerick is a top priority for me. The people of Limerick have also expressed a clear desire for increased and speedier delivery to a new holistic plan with deadlines.

Setting up the the new Mayoral Office will be pivotal for engaging with government ministers, state agencies, collaborating with Councillors, and listening to the local communities, in order to shape our impact.

At its core, the Office of the Mayor empowers me to drive that delivery and better engage external actors to meet Limerick's needs and aspirations. The recent appointment of a new Programme Manager for this plan will be key to keeping delivery on track and recording and informing the public about progress on key milestones and the inevitable roadblocks.

Achieving more for Limerick requires ambitious, inclusive, and collaborative efforts. I will use existing fora and where helpful create new ones to form dynamic stakeholder groups at every level—community, civil society, business, and government—to lead delivery in each critical area. From time to time, this will require difficult decisions and changes to enhance transparency and accountability in local government. I will not shirk from leading in this respect to delivery what I have termed a meritocracy democracy.

Central government actors too must realise the necessity under these new local government structures for greater and earlier consultation with Limerick, delegating decision-making power to Limerick's elected representatives, and providing the needed funding to propel Limerick forward at the pace its residents demand aligned with devolved decision making about the spending of this funding in line with public spending codes.

Additionally, I will explore the formation of a Mayoral Youth Forum, composed of young people, youth-led organisations and organisations working directly with young people, to facilitate the space for structured dialogue between the Mayor and young people.

Some initiatives I would like to champion during my Mayoral term include:

(a) Reporting and delivery of Mayoral Programme Objectives

As I did already in July, I plan to continue to report publicly on progress achieved and what will be the new priorities for each upcoming quarter. All items for delivery will be vigorously tracked, reported and pushed through the work of the Programme Manager. LCCC management meetings, chaired by the Director General, now take place weekly (not bi-monthly) and review progress on the Mayoral Programme deliverables. Going forward, the assessment of progress will be done quarterly in a collaborative way with the main stakeholders. The outcome of this assessment will be presented to the public press for questioning and discussed with the full council.

(b) Greater Transparency

I believe it is possible to operate the office of Mayor in a way which leads in more transparent government. I shall continue to advocate for recording and transmission of local council meetings. I shall publish information about my diaries and expenses so that they are available without the public having to submit a freedom of information request. I have already published my ethics return and I am hoping that all elected councillors will follow my example.

(c) Working with the Elected Council

Each of our elected representatives, represent a different grouping of the residents of Limerick (either from a geographical or political perspective) and therefore have a unique insight into their needs. It is important to me then to find ways to work with each and every one of them to help drive forward the issues of particular concern to their electorate – as of course I was elected on a broader basis to serve the entire population of Limerick not just one segment of them.

To this end, I plan to have regular interaction with councillors both in my role as Mayor and as a councillor myself. I will continue to try and have monthly bilateral meetings with the leaders of each of the political groupings and the electoral districts similar to those I initiated right after assuming my role. In addition to choosing Councillors to help with the management of the DAC's and to work with me on the statutory Implementation Committees and its sub-committees, I plan to also involve individual councillors from time to time in the development of policy proposals or delivery of projects of particular interest to those councillors especially where they have a particular expertise to lend to the questions to be solved.

(d) The Operation of the Designated Activity Companies (DAC's)

I believe it is important to better align the operation of the three DACs of which I am going forward the sole shareholder more closely to the principles and rules of governance for national level state agencies. This would mean the publication of accounts and annual reports for those companies on their website, information about expenses of the most senior management, information about the attendance of directors at board meetings and sub-committees. Information should also be published to prove that the board operates in line with best governance practices including having the right skills and experience to deliver value for taxpayer money, to show how the board ensures a diversity of views and to show relevant experience to fulfil the mission of the particular company. Each year, I shall deliver to shareholders, expectation letters to guide their management of the company and its activities. I also plan to carry out independent reviews of the performance of each DAC and act on any recommendations for improvement.

(e) New National Level Structures

I believe it will be optimal for the operation of Ministerial level meetings to establish clearing houses at official level and at political advisor level to advance matters in advance of and between the collective Ministerial meetings I attend as Mayor. I will prioritise the establishment of them as soon as the Mayoral Programme is finalised. I intend to lobby for the introduction for Limerick of a Limerick Infrastructure and Growth Steering Group or Agency. This will be an innovative departure to ensure better delivery of local infrastructure and to take strategic but holistic decisions about the priorities for national funding for Limerick's needs. Funding and authority for the Steering Group or Agency can be delegated by the semi-annual ministerial meetings which create a governance framework to justify this departure uniquely for Limerick.

(f) Implementation Committees

To drive delivery of the Mayoral Programme, I anticipate also setting up three subcommittees of the statutory mandated Implementation Committee. After soliciting expressions of interest, I have received contact from many persons wishing to serve on those committees and I shall be selecting persons with due regard to the expertise needed and those expressions of interest. As vacancies arise or there is the

need for additional expertise, I shall be mindful of the need to ensure diversity of views and the advantage of public disclosure that a vacancy needs to be filled to secure the best expertise available.

(g) Public Accessibility

I am acutely aware of the need for the Mayor to be accessible and present across all communities and available for questioning. I shall make it a priority to continue to make myself as available as I can for the media and community groups. Sometimes that will involve just casually visiting communities all over the city and county and walk the streets and roads of Limerick. Other times, I shall do media interviews or shows permitting questions to be posed from the general public.

(h) Outreach

The success of this programme will depend not just on outcomes in Limerick but the success of the new mayoral office to catalyse support and investment from national and international politicians, agencies, public banks, investors and many other stakeholders. I will prioritise the cultivation of external partnerships. The fact that I will be the only directly elected mayor can be a differentiator to allow me to spread the good news about Limerick and seek to encourage others to work with Limerick and its businesses.

Strategic Overview of Limerick

Limerick plays a fundamental part in Ireland's broader national development strategy, as outlined in Project Ireland 2040. Located strategically on the River Shannon as the capital of the Midwest of Ireland, Limerick is poised to play a central role in achieving a more balanced economic distribution across the country. Project Ireland 2040 identifies Limerick as a key driver of regional growth, with its development expected to contribute significantly to the national goal of economic and spatial equity.

Alignment with Project Ireland 2040

The Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and this Mayoral Programme is aligned with the objectives of Project Ireland 2040. This alignment ensures that Limerick's growth contributes to the national agenda of achieving regional balance and economic cohesion.

By integrating Limerick's strategic goals with national policies, the Development Plan and this Programme support a cohesive approach to delivering economic prosperity and spatial equity throughout Ireland in a sustainable way. The focus on economic diversification, urban renewal, sustainability, and innovation positions Limerick to be a significant driver of regional development and a key contributor to Ireland's broader economic objectives.

Economic Vision and Strategic Focus of Limerick 2030

The Interim Review and Update of the Limerick 2030 Plan (the "Interim Review") articulates a comprehensive spatial and economic strategy aimed at transforming Limerick into a leading European city. Central to this strategy is the diversification and expansion of our economic base. The plan emphasises the importance of improving infrastructure and fostering an environment beneficial to business innovation. This includes attracting foreign direct investment and supporting local businesses to stimulate sustainable economic growth and job creation.

In addition to economic diversification, spatial strategy and urban renewal is a significant focus of the Interim Review. Central to these is the revitalisation of key areas such as the Limerick Docklands, Moyross and the city centre. By promoting mixed-use developments and upgrading public spaces and transportation networks, Limerick aims to enhance its urban appeal and functionality. Investments in these areas are designed to facilitate increased economic activity and improve the city's overall competitiveness.

Four functional areas or neighbourhoods linked through sustainable travel routes are identified. Within these neighbourhoods, opportunities are focused into economic centres aligning place-based intensification in the appropriate locations with city level investment in movement infrastructure. This will create four interconnected 15-minutes city neighbourhoods, all working together in a polycentric way to form a vibrant modern sustainable and resilient city.

Sustainability and livability are also central to the Interim Review. The plan includes initiatives to develop green infrastructure, implement energy-efficient practices, and improve public transportation systems. These efforts are aligned with national sustainability goals and aim to create a resilient urban environment that supports long-term economic and environmental objectives. There is great appetite in Limerick for becoming globally recognised for our educational institutions and as a hub for innovation, creativity and advanced manufacturing. By strengthening educational institutions and encouraging

research and development, the plan seeks to position Limerick as a knowledge centre that drives economic growth through technological advancements and a skilled workforce.

The Interim Review, adopted by the last Council as part of the Limerick Development Plan, identified key concepts and interventions. Those concepts and interventions, which are fully shared by this Programme and have informed the selection of focus areas, include:

1. Quality Housing for a Growing Population
2. The city as Neighbourhoods
3. Enhancing Livability
4. Embrace and Grow Economic Strengths
5. Growing the Green Economy
6. Grow Culture an Identity
7. Prepare People for the Future
8. Reanimate the Waterfront
9. Develop a Sustainable City and County

Impact of the Programme in each Municipal Area

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to ensuring that every corner of our city and county thrives through equitable development, robust infrastructure and amenities to deliver a better quality of life.

The main principles of this programme are generally not targeted at a specific geographical area but of broader application.

That said, each area has its own challenges and opportunities may differ from one part of Limerick to another.

To ensure alignment of the deliverables of the programme in so far as possible with the objectives of each electoral area, I asked councillors in each of the electoral areas to work together and share with me 5-10 of their area's own priorities. I wanted to ask for those as a group to ensure greater cohesion and buy-in for the programme locally by all residents whatever their political leanings.

What follows in the next few pages reflect the priorities agreed by those who completed this exercise for their voters.

The alignment of the preferences of the other councillors and the broader priorities of my Mayoral programme, itself influenced by the priorities of my election manifesto, will be evident and fills me with confidence that delivery of the Mayoral programme reflects the desires not just of those who voted for me but the broad coalition of all of the residents of Limerick.

At the highest level, the Programme is based on the concept of the polycentric growth of the city with its four neighbourhoods, a described above.

Beyond that, the plan envisages the development of a corresponding and centrally located (within Limerick) growth triangle to anchor the development of the county and the location of services for residents of all of Limerick. Running from Adare to Kilmallock and to Limerick's only Level 2 Key Town, Newcastle West, this triangle facilitates further hub and spoke ecosystems centred in their three towns and involving nearby towns and villages for services, population growth and enterprise. The northern most apex of the triangle, Adare, will be in time connected by rail transport directly to Colbert's transportation hub in the city centre and again in time the easternmost corner, Kilmallock, should be able to leverage its position on the main Dublin to Cork intercity railroad.

How this structure influences the outcome for each of the electoral areas and the priorities arising therefrom are described in the following sections.

Metropolitan District of Limerick

The Metropolitan District of Limerick contains Ireland's third largest city and is the largest urban centre in the Mid-West. Over the coming years, our city centre is poised for significant development and growth.

As our principal urban hub with strong global and national connectivity through Shannon International Airport and Shannon Foynes Port, Limerick City is well-positioned to drive regional and national economic growth.

The city faces key choices in the realisation of this growth potential. This programme recommends a compact growth strategy for which it is perhaps the best suited among Irish regional cities. The existing rail network provides a unique opportunity to drive transport-oriented development leveraging hundreds of under-utilised hectares of state-owned lands within our city.

The Programme in line with the Interim Review proposes development by looking at four city neighbourhoods (Northside, University-Castletroy, Raheen-Dooradoyle and the Historic Core). Each can evolve as “15-minute” district neighbourhoods in their own right with key locations and amenities connected to one another by a suburban light rail network, supplemented by a bus network and active travel system. Together they form one holistic and integrated modern urban city poised for growth.

Population Growth and Urban Development

The Metroplitan District is expected to experience substantial population growth. The Southern Region RSES provides for a population growth target in Limerick City and Suburbs (including Mungret and Annacotty) of 34,692 between 2016 and 2028. This growth will be supported by the strategic urban development plans outlined in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan.

Since the approval of the Development Plan 2022-2028, there is growing acknowledgement that the national and local housing needs may be even significantly higher than expected. This means that Limerick, like many other locations, needs to be planning for even greater housing delivery. To take advantage of our rail network and avoid suburban sprawl, we will need to prioritise living in multi-family buildings surrounded by higher quality public realm and amenities.

This Programme emphasises the need for significant housing delivery to meet rising demands and the public sector playing a greater role in the delivery of such housing. However, this will take time to realise as new apartment construction presents viability challenges, which have to be overcome. Innovative housing solutions, such as off the shelf modular building techniques, or what we term “SMART” homes, will provide temporary relief while more permanent housing stock is developed. Residents who rent SMART Homes on an affordable basis will be prioritised for longer-term solutions once they are delivered.

Student accommodation is also a critical component of the Metroplitan Districts housing strategy. With major institutions like the University of Limerick, the Technological University of the Shannon, and Mary Immaculate College all having a considerable presence in this electoral area, ensuring an adequate student housing supply (which could reach into the thousands of units) is essential to supporting those institutions’ respective growth plans and attracting even more talent to the region.

Neighbourhoods Concept for Limerick City

As explained, the Interim Review introduces the Neighbourhoods concept, creating a city of connected neighbourhoods that integrate all areas of the city, including Munget and Annacotty, into four functional zones. These neighbourhoods are linked through sustainable travel routes, supporting the principles of the 15-minute city as outlined in the Limerick Development Plan. This framework retains the most important aspects of the city centre, while promoting the importance of key economic centres as mixed-use local hubs with substantial residential occupation.

Each neighbourhood is designed to ensure residents can access essential services within a 15-minute walk or cycle, fostering vibrant, self-sufficient communities. The Interim Review emphasises the importance of placemaking, strengthening the connections between these centres through investments in infrastructure and public spaces. This approach aligns with the Limerick Development Plan's goals of sustainable urban growth, improved quality of life, and reduced car dependency. The Programme focuses on the renewal and enhancement of these neighbourhoods to ensure a connected, resilient, and prosperous Metropolitan District in and of itself and also focuses on how that District connects to the county and other towns in Limerick's hinterland and city region.

1. Historic Centre

Limerick boasts some of the most interesting (albeit sadly neglected) historical urban space in Ireland with both Medieval and Georgian heritage buildings. This presents an opportunity to develop a residential historic quarter to rival those of other European cities, especially given the waterfront location.

The Programme provides a particular focus on enhancing the quality of public realm and amenities in historic neighbourhoods where many vacant or derelict buildings remain. This will be done in tandem with large scale interventions on Strategic Sites as more fully described below. This focus will increase the appeal of living in these areas, which will in turn encourage investment and renovation in such buildings.

As a starting point, we will develop a more comprehensive and integrated development plan for the historic King's Island to include all neighbourhoods on the island, especially the most vulnerable. This will identify ways to animate Nicholas Street as a vibrant street steeped in history but housing our creative industries. It will reimagine the public lands surrounding King John's Castle and the ancient City Walls and look to transform and better integrate the neglected public housing estates on the island and their public realm.

A focal point of this strategy is also the renewal of the Georgian Neighbourhood. This Programme aims to restore Limerick's Georgian Quarter to its former glory, preserving its historical and architectural significance while integrating modern amenities and uses. By revitalising the Georgian area, Limerick city not only enhances its cultural heritage but also promotes residential occupancy, economic activity and urban vibrancy. The Georgian Quarter strategy and plan should set out an ambition for this to be a UNESCO heritage quarter with much enhanced quality of living, housing and retail opportunities.

Limerick's centre also contains many other neighbourhoods home to some of the state's worst deprivation, health outcomes and unemployment. All aspects of this Programme will be tested to ensure better outcomes for all communities and using shared amenities to break down barriers between adjacent neighbourhoods and create more equal opportunities for all.

2. University and Castletroy

This neighbourhood has seen very significant population and job growth in recent times, which is likely to continue. This places a demand on the enhancement of community and leisure amenities to meet the ever-growing population. Many of those working or studying in the University or nearby industrial parks already commute to the area by car. This is likely to continue, but steps need to be taken to ensure greater use of park and ride, public transport and active travel options to avoid excessive congestion. Solutions to congestion at the Mackey Roundabout and entering the Plassey Industrial Park and University will also need to be priority projects.

Connectivity of this neighbourhood with the historic centre and other parts of Limerick will need to be enhanced by higher density development focused close to rail stations at the Parkway, Ballysimon and in the Annacotty Business Park. Increasing student housing is a particular challenge for this neighbourhood.

Recent private sector and public developments in the Groody Valley confirm the potential of this area for another new mixed-use growth community for Limerick. This will require careful planning to enable change of use and densification of existing light industrial and retail uses.

3. Northside

There is a considerable opportunity over the term of this plan to reimagine the Northside of Limerick city.

Home to Limerick's second university, the area is now well positioned to become a thriving mixed-use neighbourhood which in time will echo the success of Castletroy, Plassey and UL. Given its closer proximity to the Historic Centre and the new rail station in Moyross which could be located on a line linked to Shannon airport, the area, however, presents the opportunity for a less suburban design than that which Castletroy followed in prior decades and one more suited to low carbon spatial development.

A new train station and extra road connectivity to Moyross will be a priority to open up the potential of the serviced state lands. Removal of other barriers between existing communities on the Northside will be a key part of providing significant quantities of new attractive and affordable housing on already serviced state lands. The realisation of University Way will be a priority of the Programme.

The appeal of the Northside to accommodate significant amounts of the future growth of Limerick will be much enhanced by the addition of new amenities for the entire city, including significant investment in sporting facilities and the development of considerable hectares of quality public realm along the riverside and over to and including the Delmege Estate. Investment in such amenities will benefit not just the Northside, but the city as a whole.

4. Raheen/Mungret

Like the area around Castletroy, this neighbourhood has seen very considerable population and job growth in recent decades largely following a suburban pattern. This has left the area short of centrally located community cultural and community amenities and without strong community centric public realm.

The settlement pattern in this area is dispersed and somewhat haphazard, making it the most challenging of Limerick's four neighbourhoods to operate as a true 15-minute neighbourhood. Many of the new

amenities are now located in the Munget Park area at one extreme, and many of the sporting facilities are located at the other end putting pressure on the need to develop full active travel networks for ready access for all.

The area has a strong resilience though as the home of Raheen Industrial Park and UHL. These provide strong job anchors for the area while the Crescent Shopping Centre remains a key part of the retail and entertainment fabric of the neighbourhood as well as being another important source of employment. Each require strong transport connectivity to the rest of the city and beyond to other parts of Limerick

Development of the rail corridor to Adare and Foynes with the potential for stations in this neighbourhood may present new locations for higher density transport-oriented development along that corridor. The dispersed nature of settlement in this area will continue to provide challenges for active and public transport.

Strategic Development Sites

Redevelopment of key strategic brownfield sites in the city centre is vital for Limerick's urban revitalisation. Projects such as Opera Square, Cleeves Riverside Quarter, the University of Limerick Riverside Campus, Colbert Quarter and the Docklands can transform our city. The Colbert Quarter development, for example, will begin this transformation in earnest by essentially creating a new mixed-use neighbourhood with considerable new residential supply in our historic centre along with integrated facilities for employment, education, retail, health, transport, and leisure. This will create a new focus of activity at our largest transport node, with public transport connections not just across Limerick but beyond to other regional towns and cities.

The Limerick Development Plan encourages the construction of taller buildings in the city centre, particularly in areas like Colbert Quarter, Cleeves and The Docklands. These developments will help accommodate growing housing and commercial needs while enhancing the city's skyline.

World Class Waterfront

The World Class Waterfront Project along the River Shannon is a major initiative to transform the City Quays into one of Ireland's primary entertainment and leisure destinations as well as setting a backdrop for this part of the city's transformation into a much more desirable residential location.

This project must now be advanced with speed so as to create new or better-quality public spaces, cultural attractions, and recreational facilities, protect against flooding and enhance Limerick's appeal for city centre living and contribute to our economic growth.

The priority actions listed reflect individual suggestions by councillors of the Metropolitan District.

MTR01 Limerick 2030 - Drive on the Limerick 2030 DAC projects. Make substantial progress on the Opera site, including securing funding and design work for the new public library. Advance the development of the Cleeves site and establish a new

shareholder representation framework for managing the governance of the Limerick 2030 DAC.

MRT02 Transportation Initiatives - Progress the development of rail stations in Annacotty Business Park, Ballysimon, and Moyross.. Implement Bus Connects and Connecting Ireland projects, and aim to be the first city in Ireland to complete the Active Travel project. Secure planning and advance the additional pedestrian bridges located in the city centre.

MTR03 City Centre Revitalisation - Address dereliction in the core city centre. Develop a vibrant nighttime economy and deliver on the objectives outlined in the retail and tourism strategies, including new cultural and arts facilities. Develop standards for shop front design and encourage their adoption. Keep an enhanced focus on ensuring good public order and reducing anti-social behaviour through work with Garda and other agencies.

MTR04 Development of Public Amenities - Progress the Arthurs Quay framework, the Milk Market public realm and the greening of Newtown Perry. Master plan Kings Island and make our historical neighbourhoods more desirable places to live, including development of an enhanced the public realm strategy. Remove barriers between communities and develop new sports facilities at Colbert Quarter.

MTR05 LDA – Through a monthly implementation group, bring Colbert Quarter to life, complete design reviews for state owned lands at Moyross and the Docklands, identify strategic landbanks with high potential for growth and complete the design and planning work for the Living Room proposal.

MTR06 Housing Delivery - Develop innovative living solutions to quickly address housing demands. Take action to activate sites with existing planning permissions to expedite the delivery of new homes.

Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale

The Adare-Rathkeale Municipal District is about to enter a transformative era, ready to capitalise on its strategic location and its cultural assets. In many ways, Adare is like a gateway into County Limerick, integrating urban energy with rural heritage. Over the next few years, we will see significant investment in infrastructure, tourism, and community development, driven by a vision that connects local aspirations with national growth plans.

Ryder Cup

Adare's selection as the host for Ryder Cup 2027 presents an extraordinary opportunity to showcase this district on the global stage. This prestigious event will attract international attention, bringing with it substantial investment into Adare and the surrounding area. The Ryder Cup will serve as a deadline for the completion of many major projects. The benefits of which will be felt in other towns, such as Askeaton and Croom, ensuring that the district is ready to welcome visitors and maximise the economic benefits of this once-in-a-lifetime event.

The Shannon Estuary Growth Triangle

The Shannon Estuary, and particularly Foynes, represents a significant opportunity for Foreign Direct Investment and job creation. The proposed offshore renewable energy development opportunities for this region are well documented. This initiative will position the Adare-Rathkeale Municipal District as a key player in Ireland's transition to sustainable energy. As outlined in the Newcastle West Municipal District section of this document, I see the towns of Foynes and Newcastle West as key drivers of this growth. I see the Shannon Estuary coastline from Glin, through Foynes to Askeaton forming a key strategic growth triangle with Newcastle West. The benefits of this development will extend beyond Foynes and Askeaton, impacting surrounding communities such as Adare, Kildimo, and Rathkeale, and contributing to our long-term growth plans. Transportation and connectivity will be central to realising this vision. Planned rail investments and the Adare bypass are critical projects that will enhance accessibility and support economic development. These projects will make the district more attractive for investment, tourism, and residential growth, ensuring that all communities are well-connected and benefit from the region's economic progress.

Heritage and Placemaking

A core element for Adare-Rathkeale in this programme is the preservation and revitalisation of heritage buildings, particularly in towns like Askeaton. By restoring and repurposing these historical assets, we can create vibrant public spaces that not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also attract tourism investment. Placemaking initiatives will integrate these cultural

landmarks into the broader urban fabric, creating a sense of community and pride while boosting the local economy.

Community and Housing Development

Improving the quality of life for residents is a key priority. This includes reopening the swimming pool in Askeaton, investing in heritage assets, and continuing the progress made under the Town Centre First initiative for Rathkeale. By working with government bodies, particularly the Department of the Taoiseach, we will address local challenges and drive key regeneration projects. These efforts include reactivating the former Bank of Ireland building, implementing a public realm scheme, and delivering alternative housing options to increase the population and vibrancy of Rathkeale. We must also explore innovative short-term solutions for the temporary accommodation demand for Ryder Cup.

Having taken into account actions requested by the elected members of the Adare Rathkeale Municipal District, some key strategic priorities for this district are:

- AR01 Enhanced Infrastructure for Sustainable Growth** - Focus on securing increased funding for infrastructure projects, with an emphasis on rail and the Adare bypass, to support the long-term growth plans for the Foynes / Shannon Estuary region. This will align with our overall priority for improved quality of life in this district.
- AR02 Essential Services for Housing Development** – Push for comprehensive water and wastewater infrastructure in the towns and villages of this district to support sustainable housing development and address future population growth. Investigate potential for more housing in Adare close to a new railway station.
- AR03 Enhanced Resource Across the District** – Ensure sufficient funding and resources are available for footpath enhancements, road safety measures, and public lighting upgrades, ensuring balanced development and social inclusion across the district.
- AR04 Revitalisation of Derelict and Vacant Properties** - Implement strategies to address dereliction and activate vacant properties, both social and privately owned, to expand affordable housing options and revitalise communities. Explore a pilot housing project in Rathkeale to introduce a new ownership model for affordable rental housing.
- AR05 Maximise Heritage Assets and Enhanced Placemaking** - Focus on the preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in towns like Askeaton to enhance the character and appeal. Prioritise investment in infrastructure and public realm improvements around these historical sites to maximize their potential as key drivers of local economic and social development.

Municipal District of Newcastle West

The Newcastle West Municipal District is also strategically positioned to leverage the enormous opportunities presented by the emerging offshore wind and renewable energy potential of the Shannon Estuary region. These opportunities and the related transport investment being made to facilitate them provides us with a new and unique way to build on the existing agricultural and small industry backbone of the area to develop greater job opportunities for those currently living in the area and those who will in the future live or work in the district.

The vision set out below for this district focuses on sustainable development, economic prosperity, and community well-being. It will see Limerick, and particularly Newcastle West and Foynes, capitulated to centre stage in Ireland's decarbonisation plan.

The Shannon Estuary Growth Triangle

I see the towns of Foynes and Newcastle West as key drivers of regional growth. Initially, population growth will be centred in Newcastle West, which is designated a "Level 2 Key Town" in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. Increasingly, Foynes will play a more important role here. Although not entirely in this District, the estuary coastline from Glin, through Foynes to Askeaton forms a key strategic growth triangle with Newcastle West. The impetus for growth will be a new national focal point for the renewable energy initiative and associated industries centred around Foynes. The Shannon Estuary Economic Task Force Report highlights the potential for this region to become a global leader in renewable energy, promising significant economic benefits and job creation for its residents.

Early investment in infrastructure will be critical to realising this vision. Upgrading our transport networks, both road and rail, enhancing digital connectivity, better water and wastewater capacity and improving public amenities will support seamless connectivity and compact growth between Newcastle West and Foynes. These improvements will facilitate economic activity, attract investment, enhance the quality of life for residents, and remove barriers between neighbourhoods.

We also need to prepare the region, and, in particular, Newcastle West, for very significant population growth with the potential for thousands of new jobs. The recent announcement of THRIVE funding for revitalising town centres through the renovation and reuse of publicly owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings will allow for a new holistic plan for growth and the identification of the needs of Newcastle West to better serve a fast-growing district.

Abbeyfeale – a Limerick town of the Future

With the development of the recent Towns First Plan for this Level 3 Town, Abbeyfeale, and the announcement of related new investment in the public realm of the town centre, there is now, a real opportunity to move forward Abbeyfeale as an example of what a Limerick "Town of the Future" should look like.

This vision for Abbeyfeale is to create a modern market town, with a distinctive identity that links back to its history, heritage and culture, a place people can be proud of, with a strong visitor economy and high-quality family orientated residential offering in the town centre.

A transformed town centre, which is more vibrant, attractive and accessible, with available sustainable travel choices, enhanced biodiversity, a town which fosters community cooperation, is safer, more integrated, more prosperous, a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Abbeyfeale will be able to facilitate population growth through well-designed residential development that offers a variety of housing choices and tenures, alongside educational and employment opportunities. The vision also emphasises sustainable mobility options, a revitalised retail and commercial core in the town centre, improved community infrastructure, enhanced active lifestyles, recreational choices, and the preservation of Abbeyfeale's unique heritage assets. The future development of Abbeyfeale will prioritise low carbon practices, sustainability and cohesive spatial growth.

The Town Centre First Strategy aims to establish a thriving, attractive, and functional town centres that serve as a hub for residents, workers, and visitors.

Challenges like introducing the use of renewable energy for public lighting, enhancement of public buildings, optimal use of public space and parks as amenities for residents, leveraging new digital tools, how to support residents with better social services, how to see a more thriving local retail and business sector and how to advance a plan for population growth all need innovative thinking not just for Abbeyfeale but for similarly situated towns in Limerick.

At what is a pivotal point in its development, the Programme proposes that new approaches should be trialed and adopted in Abbeyfeale so that Limerick can come up with our own blueprint of how the town can become a thriving town in its own right and better serve its hinterland and become a community of choice for those looking to move to the area even if working in Newcastle West, Tralee or Foynes.

Abbeyfeale presents an ideal location to pilot an innovative housing project, where the Council introduces a new ownership model for affordable rental housing resulting from on-going Council work to combat dereliction. The project could effectively test a hybrid ownership vehicle that combines public and private investment to create sustainable, long-term affordable rental options. Success in Abbeyfeale would provide a blueprint for expanding this model across other towns in Limerick, ultimately addressing housing affordability on a broader scale while.

Housing, Amenities and Domestic Tourism

As Limerick's population grows significantly, there is an opportunity to create a new dynamic not just for Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West but also for the rural villages in this Electoral District. Investment in community amenities, broadband and transport links for smaller settlements in the hinterland of Newcastle West like Athea and Kileedy will be a focus to provide alternative lifestyle choices for families and others living in the area.

Investment in local amenities can also be a magnet for domestic tourism potential. Already the Limerick Greenway which runs through this district has shown how transformative this type of investment can be. More work needs to be done to identify ways to better harness the natural unspoilt countryside of this area, especially the coastline of the Estuary and Glin's unique heritage so as to provide a thriving tourism sector which in turn can serve as a basis for lifestyle living choices as we prepare for the potential of offshore wind.

Having taken into account actions requested by the elected members of the Newcastle West Municipal District, some sample strategic priorities for this District are:

NCW01 Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development - Drive economic growth in this region by implementing the recommendations of the Shannon Estuary Economic Task Force. Advocate for infrastructure investments, including improved transportation links, to position Foynes as a key economic hub in the region.

NCW02 Comprehensive Growth Strategy for Newcastle West - Develop Newcastle West into a thriving urban centre with modern infrastructure and housing. Prioritise the alleviation of congestion, the enhancement of the Demense as a public amenity, identify lands for new housing development and deliver new public housing in collaboration with Limerick 2030 DAC. This also includes enhancing sports facilities and exploring the potential for a new Arts Centre. I will explore the appointment of a local housing officer to address housing-related issue and work with Uisce Éireann to improve water infrastructure and advocate for investment in housing to meet current and future demands, ensuring sustainable growth.

NCW03 Transformation of Abbeyfeale into a Model Town - Position Abbeyfeale as a leading example of modern town development in Ireland. Explore innovative housing solutions, implement a traffic management plan and establish better services such as a family support centre, focusing on sustainable development and improving the quality of life for all residents.

NCW04 Intentionally left blank

NCW05 Tourism Development and Greenway Expansion - Boost tourism in the district, particularly in Glin and surrounding areas. Focus on extending the Limerick Greenway, promoting the overall region as a key tourism destination while supporting local retail businesses and preserving cultural heritage.

NCW06 Enhancement of Public Safety and Community Welfare - Strengthen public safety and community well-being in Newcastle West and surrounding areas. Focus on increased Gardaí presence, invest in anti-social behaviour prevention measures and community policing initiatives.

Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock

The Cappamore–Kilmallock Municipal District plays an important role within the broader Limerick offering with its unique blend of natural beauty, historical richness, and recreational potential. This district can become the "Playground of Limerick," given that it is home to some of the county's most cherished amenities and attractions, including the scenic Ballyhoura Mountains, the tranquil Lough Gur, and the historic town of Kilmallock. These assets not only provide residents and visitors with a wealth of outdoor activities and cultural experiences, but also present significant opportunities for sustainable economic development, particularly in the area of tourism, connectivity, and community growth.

My vision for the Cappamore–Kilmallock District is to harness its unique features to create a thriving, connected, and vibrant region. Central to this vision is the concept of a "Hub and Spoke" model of development, with Kilmallock serving as the primary hub around which surrounding towns and villages, such as Bruff, Knocklong, Ballylanders, and Kilfinane, can grow and prosper. This approach will enable us to maximise the potential of the district's recreational amenities while ensuring that the benefits of development are distributed equally across the region.

Enhancing Connectivity and Infrastructure

Connectivity is a critical component for any successful district, and in Cappamore–Kilmallock there is a pressing need to enhance both physical and digital infrastructure to support future growth. Kilmallock, with its central location and rich historical heritage, is ideally positioned to become a key transport hub for the district. During my term as Mayor, I want to explore the potential of reintroducing the train station in Kilmallock, reestablishing valuable rail links to Cork, Dublin, and beyond. This would not only provide residents with improved access to major urban centres, but also enhance the district's appeal as a destination for tourists and businesses alike.

In addition to rail connectivity, we must also focus on improving road networks and promoting active travel options, such as cycling and walking, particularly in and around our key towns and villages. By investing in infrastructure that supports sustainable modes of transport, not only will it reduce traffic congestion and lower carbon emissions, but it will attract more tourists and visitors and encourage healthier lifestyles among our residents. This commitment to connectivity will ensure that the Cappamore–Kilmallock District remains accessible, attractive, and ready to meet the demands of the future.

Tourism

Tourism represents an opportunity for economic prosperity in this region, with its ability to generate revenue, create jobs, and disperse benefits across the smaller towns and villages. I want to place a strong emphasis on tourism development, recognising its potential to unlock new opportunities for growth and enhance the quality of life for the people who live and work here. I would like to explore innovative tourism strategies, such as engaging with our diaspora to tap into a global network of potential visitors and supporters. Bruff and Lough Gur in particular, with their strong historical connections to former US President John F. Kennedy, are particularly

well-positioned to attract international attention and investment. Similarly, Kilmallock's medieval heritage offers untapped potential for tourism development, with the opportunity to create immersive historical experiences that draw visitors from near and far.

Having considered the actions requested by the elected members of the Cappamore - Killmallock Municipal District, some key strategic priorities for this district are:

CK01 Strategic Infrastructure and Connectivity - Promote the development of essential infrastructure, including water and improved transportation links. These projects will support long-term growth and connectivity across the district, aligning with our core priorities.

CK02 Enhanced Public Amenities and Placemaking - Invest in the public realm of key towns such as Kilmallock and Kilfinane, including upgrading amenities and greening urban spaces. This will improve the quality of life for residents while making these towns more attractive to visitors and new residents.

CK03 Support for Local Businesses and Rural Enterprise - Implement initiatives to support and incentivise small businesses in rural towns and villages, including more remote working hubs and a network of enterprise community centres. Promoting business parks and local entrepreneurship will ensure economic opportunities are available to all, creating more inclusive communities.

CK04 Sustainable and Affordable Housing Solutions - Increase support for housing initiatives and advocate for the development of primary care centers in underserved areas. Encourage sustainable development close to transport links, ensuring that housing solutions are affordable, sustainable, and accessible for all.

CK05 Tourism Development and Heritage Conservation - Maximise the potential of the district's heritage assets, such as Lough Gur, Kilmallock, and Bruff, by promoting these sites as key tourism destinations. This includes developing strategic plans to preserve and enhance these historical sites, ensuring they contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of the district.

A MORE LIVEABLE LIMERICK

In the face of the severe housing crisis, it is dangerous to think that simply building more houses will solve the problem. This mindset risks prompting a scramble to rezone greenfield land on the outskirts of our towns and city, potentially leading to future issues. We must also pursue innovative short-term solutions to alleviate the immediate pain caused by rising rents and homelessness.

Good neighbourhoods and cities require thoughtful planning. Without it, even if we have enough housing, we may lack essential services like creches, appropriately located schools, sports amenities, and efficient transport. Those living in apartments, especially young families, often miss out on core facilities and amenities essential for a respectful living environment. Decision-makers, often unfamiliar with apartment living, may overlook these needs.

New housing developments must be complemented by adequate services and connectivity to essential services, work, and leisure areas. For decades, this simple task has been handled poorly in Limerick, leading to the decline of our city and town centres and a lack of critical services. Previous planning decisions have caused isolation, especially among our older residents, by failing to consider the evolving priorities of aging populations. The reliance on car ownership has negatively impacted physical and mental health and financial wellbeing.

In 2024, we must remember the urgent need for new homes while finding the right balance and not delaying in search of the perfect solution. Tough decisions will be necessary, as no decision benefits everyone equally. However, with clear direction and transparency, we can make choices that everyone understands and supports, moving forward together. This will also create of transparency and certainty conducive to encouraging the private investment to supplement public sector activity so as to achieve the demanding levels of development we need to not constrain Limerick's potential.

During the Colbert Quarter planning sessions, the LDA enlisted advice from world-renowned urban planning experts. Their lessons remain relevant to the actions proposed in this Programme. Brent Toderian, former chief planner for Vancouver, one of the world's most liveable cities, offered invaluable advice. The Colbert project, with its vision for Limerick, stalled when political will and energy dissipated. I am committed to reviving this project and many others, driving Limerick's transformation forward.

While some matters lie outside the Mayor's direct control and require negotiation at the national level, many can and should be locally driven.

1. MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Let no one tell you otherwise. We are in a very serious housing crisis, one that needs innovative and bold solutions to avoid scarring generations of our population, perhaps forever. National one size fits all policy has not coped well with Limerick's housing needs and there is a need to implement our own solution.

The Limerick Chamber Rental Barometer has recently revealed a stark reality: on a monthly basis, there were just 41 homes available for rent on average across the entire county, which has a population of 209,000 and is growing every day. This means an average of 12 homes for Limerick City West, 8 homes for Limerick City East, 6 homes for Limerick City North, and just 5 homes each for Adare-Rathkeale, Cappamore-Kilmallock, and Newcastle West. Alarmingly, we built only 26 more homes in Limerick in 2023 compared to the previous year, and overall, the Mid-West region actually decreased in housing output.

As Mayor of Limerick, I recognise that one of the most important responsibilities of any local authority is to provide homes for its people. Our local authority and its related agencies, whether under local control like Limerick 2030 or under government control like the LDA, have failed Limerick in this regard.

We now need to negotiate the freedom to try out new and different solutions here in Limerick rather than work with a one size fits all national solution.

These issues have been festering for a decade. Nearly 10 years ago, frustration was already growing that Limerick was not preparing to build enough housing to maintain its affordability advantage over other cities.

Even ten years ago, and more surely since, it was clear that Limerick had a huge opportunity and need to deliver enough housing supply to keep prices stable and affordable, thus cementing our competitive advantage over other parts of Ireland experiencing rapid price increases.

In considering the recent records of delivery, we must remember that decisions like the small residential component for the Opera Centre were decisions not made by external entities. Elected councillors themselves sat on the Limerick 2030 board, making and guiding those decisions. As your Mayor, I am committed to having boards whose priorities align with this Programme and to hold them as our leadership accountable to drive forward the change we so desperately need.

We need to build more homes, but we must also focus on sustainable development, ensuring that new housing projects are integrated with necessary services and infrastructure. I am dedicated to supporting a collaborative approach, bringing together experts, stakeholders, and the community to create effective and lasting solutions.

MY VISION

Imagine if, instead of the current dire situation, we were already on the way to a Limerick where the population in our city and our key rural villages and towns was increasing sustainably in line with, or even ahead of, national averages. Imagine if towns were each well connected to one another and to the city's main transport nodes by cheap and frequent public transport. If residents were not shut off from work opportunities, from essential services, from amenities or their friends by not having a car. If making cars an option not a necessity put thousands of extra euros in people's pockets every year.

Imagine if by making our rural towns more accessible to people with cars and those who cannot afford a car, we could have them serve a greater role as locations for our growing population and see new housing, new energy, new services and new enterprise in these communities.

Imagine if, as happened before in Georgian Limerick, the Mayor leads by identifying five or more key large-scale sites in the core city neighbourhoods. In five years, we could have those areas planned and well on the way to deliver affordable rental, mixed tenure and mixed activity encouraging compact growth to house a growth in population between them of at least 50,000 by 2040 (which happens to be Government policy by the way).

Imagine if significant numbers of tougher to renovate and older housing like those in the shadow of St Mary's Cathedral on Kings Island, in Irishtown, Georgian Limerick or along the main street of our county towns were renovated. If vacancy and dereliction are finally on a path to no longer being a feature of our city and towns. Imagine a Limerick where the current regeneration areas are no longer known by that name (except in history) but are home to vibrant new and old communities with amenities for all of the city benefiting from the proximity of those locations to all of our city. If all our communities are simply just desirable and affordable mixed "neighbourhoods".

Imagine if Limerick were to take things into its own hands in the face of successive years of government failure on housing delivery and find innovative ways to build up and finance its own stock of public housing using the funds of Limerick savers sitting in our banks and credit unions to build homes for Limerick residents, right here in Limerick.

To deliver this vision, Limerick needs to:

- ML01** Change the mission of Limerick 2030 DAC to incorporate the delivery of more housing, and more quickly for Limerick.
- ML02** Publish a credible plan for delivery of more realistic targets based on Limerick's true needs (and with surge capacity built in to add even more capacity if needed) rather than a percentage of the existing Housing for All targets, even in advance of the ongoing Government u-turn on annual delivery needs. Done well, setting the right levels along with a credible plan to deliver should have an immediate dampening impact on home prices. We will challenge ourselves in local government, and challenge national government and state agencies to deliver on these targets (and report success and failure publicly).
- ML03** Reset the weakened ambition for St Joseph's Colbert Quarter and get the LDA to reinstate the higher density of Limerick's own development plan and demand we increase the level of delivery on that site. Also, I'll negotiate to remove the other undesirable aspects of the scheme I have separately criticised which seem to be driven by territoriality or cost saving. This already serviced site has the potential for it to be used better to increase quickly the amount of affordable rental homes, so that we can help to start decreasing the enormous monthly cost of private rental in our city.
- ML04** Seek funding in this year's national budget to begin the clearance and site preparation of the rest of Colbert Quarter and drive the Limerick link (the active travel skeleton of the site), key access roads, services and sports amenities in place even in advance of the rest of the planning for the buildings. These lands might also be used for short-term modular housing.

ML05 Set up a local implementation sub-group which I will chair to drive all of the Limerick 2030, the Local Authority and LDA projects for housing in Limerick, and face public questioning every quarter to report on progress.

ML06 Work with the LDA to carry out a review of lands in Limerick to identify large strategic sites (even if not in public ownership) capable of housing the future growth of Limerick to 2050. Our existing pipeline is not adequate.

ML07 Make proposals to the elected council to amend zoning, if required, under the development plan to reflect the much-increased targets now becoming the views in the Department of Housing.

ML08 Complete RIAI or other design reviews in consultation with the local authority similar to that done for Colbert Quarter on all sites, starting with Moyross, with significant growth potential to set parameters for private and public housing on those lands so that a holistic vision of our new city emerges.

ML09 Accelerate the delivery of a new masterplan for each area of Limerick which is getting a new train station. It will be a priority to clearly identify growth plans in advance of the next Development plan and ensure the principles of Transport Oriented Development are the basis of the plans from the beginning.

ML10 Gather and publish ownership stats on housing and deliver a plan with targets, publish KPIs to reverse decline in ownership by younger cohorts, and improve monitoring and delivery of housing to younger buyers as a percentage of new jobs created.

ML11 Produce a much more ambitious plan for the growth of Foynes with a particular emphasis on housing, considering Foynes is set to become the home for Offshore Renewable Energy in Europe. This must be completed fast enough to influence the next Limerick development plan and secure exceptions from national growth ceilings.

ML12 Produce an ambitious plan for Newcastle West's growth as a Key Growth Town to include age friendly housing within short walking distance of amenities so as not to make isolation an outcome of bad planning.

ML13 Identify bottlenecks to new housing delivery, such as water and sewage treatment (e.g., Askeaton) and put these bottlenecks on a priority plan for resolution with government Ministers. Consider the establishment of new delivery joint venture with funding from ISIF to resolve these issues.

ML14 Get Limerick 2030 more involved in the delivery of housing with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and other stakeholders, especially in areas outside the city which are not the focus of the LDA. Limerick should have a plan to own thousands of its own affordable rental housing stock (as is done in Vienna) so that once they have been paid for, the rents payable in perpetuity to the local authority can subsidise the delivery of housing for future generations.

ML15 Deploy risk transfer mechanisms and equity sharing to unlock rental delivery with AHBs and renovation of old housing stock, perhaps deploying a new Limerick led Co-operative venture like that under consideration for Abbeyfeale.

ML16 Establish ambitious targets for retrofitting of housing stock to reduce fuel poverty and make the achievement of these, and financing of same, a priority for the Mayor and Director General.

ML17 Secure agreement with Councillors and other stakeholders so that building standards, floor space etc. are set “in Limerick for Limerick”. Public housing should be capable of being delivered at a lower cost and more rapidly by council self-regulation of standards (such as dual-aspect, floor space, storage space etc.) as less regulation should be needed for housing built only by state agencies especially where it is to remain in the ownership of state agencies.

ML18 Set up a co-development structure with infrastructure funds or similar for the co-development of several thousand student housing units in locations which can also contribute to the development of key transport nodes across the city and bringing vibrancy and safety to less active neighbourhoods.

ML19 Take advantage of the delivery of additional public affordable rental and for sale housing to provide a share of fully accessible housing to satisfy all of Limerick’s needs for people of all abilities and ages and no longer rely mainly on the private sector to deliver such housing.

ML20 Design, deliver and manage a prototype apartment building of scale owned by Limerick City and County Council which is pet friendly and family friendly. This will encourage other such schemes in the private sector to follow, with others in future public housing too.

ML21 Work with the HSE or UHL to deliver family friendly affordable rental accommodation for key health workers moving to Limerick.

ML22 Drive on the assault on dereliction in our villages, towns and even our city centre and consider the establishment of a fund to finance the acquisition of derelict homes and their refurbishment where the private sector is unwilling or unable to complete desirable projects.

ML23 Use innovative financing means and accelerated delivery focus to construct Smart housing in Colbert (and perhaps in serviced lands in Mungret College or elsewhere) so as to provide sufficient short term private sector rental accommodation for all those in need of accommodation and shift the risk of rising rent to landlords who then risk an empty property. The occupants of these schemes, if in good order with their rent, can have a right of first refusal over suitable affordable rental to be provided in those same locations by the local authority.

ML24 Establish a working group with Department of Housing to progress modular housing, which we will term Smart Housing, in Limerick.

2. A MORE DESIRABLE LIMERICK

We face significant challenges in our city's growth and development trajectory, but these can be overcome with a new ambition.

The numbers are stark and undeniable. Despite a promising start a decade ago, Limerick is still lagging a number of key national growth centres in population growth—a crucial indicator of desirability and infrastructure adequacy such as housing and transport. With a growth rate only close to the national average of 8% and far behind leading counties like Meath (13%) and Longford (14%), Limerick is progressing, but at a pace that sees us losing ground each year especially to counties on the East coast.

There are multifaceted reasons for this disparity. Some issues are addressed within the framework of other policy pillars, while others stem from the short-term focus inherent in Irish political cycles. However, for Limerick, there is also a risk of complacency stemming from a low level of ambition driven by previous setbacks and a tendency to highlight and focus on positive news without critically assessing our performance against more ambitious benchmarks. This approach fails to highlight the gap between our current outcomes and our true potential.

As your Mayor, I am committed to addressing these challenges head-on. We cannot afford to settle for slow progress or overlook our city's true potential. We must adopt a proactive approach that sets ambitious targets and holds ourselves accountable for achieving them. This means supporting a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across all sectors—housing, transport, infrastructure, and beyond.

By leveraging our strengths and addressing our weaknesses with determination and foresight, we can reignite Limerick's growth trajectory and ensure that our city thrives as a vibrant, desirable place to live and work. Together, we strive for a future where Limerick fulfils its promise and stands as a leader among Irish cities.

MY VISION

Imagine if instead Limerick has become one of the most desirable locations to live in Ireland and perhaps even in the EU. Remember, our true competitors for talent are not just other Irish regions but regions all across the EU. Imagine if we have managed to deliver enough new housing and public services in a more innovative way so that prices and waiting lines do not go up but come down while we use our amazing natural environment and built heritage to create a location topping European liveability and happiness league tables. Imagine if job creation on Shannonside has climbed to 10-15% of the national total if not more, rather than a paltry 6%.

Imagine if people were talking about Adare and also in the same breath talking about the appeal of Kilmallock with its medieval heritage and Askeaton situated on one of the most gorgeous stretches of the River Deel overlooked by its Abbey and imposing castle steeping in history. Imagine a full use of our most majestic River Shannon in the city centre and all along the estuary and a morning swim in a pool on the river or an evening walk along the riverbank looking at a fleet of sailing boats heading off the sunset

Imagine if we lived in a bustling and well-kept city centre where Georgian buildings owned by the local authority or Limerick 2030 were examples of what good restoration looks like not dereliction. Imagine a bustling vibrant O'Connell Street and other Georgian streets with lights from front living rooms of homes or restaurants nestling at the level of the Georgian doors and the basements home to interesting shops or entertainment like jazz clubs or little galleries for local artists and others. Imagine lights on in all the

upper floors of the buildings in Abbeyfeale and people walking around in groups or hanging out in the town square chatting over a game of chess or a coffee or tea, having come from an event in the renovated old town cinema.

To create this vision, Limerick needs to:

- ML25** As a guiding aim, work to deliver all of the items identified in the KPMG Limerick 2030 plan review document which I worked on for the 2022-2028 development plan, including those tracked by the Limerick Chamber Strategic Development Pipeline.
- ML26** Have an Implementation Committee which I will chair to improve delivery of the existing long-standing plans of Limerick 2030 and the Development Plan and have an external report and review of Limerick 2030 every 2 years, the first to be delivered by 2025 to deal with current logjams and to form the basis for Mayoral decisions about desirable changes in governance or strategy.
- ML27** Work with key towns and their community groups to establish each town's unique selling point (USP) in line with the growth objectives for those towns outlined in Section 7, get them supported for Towns First Plan schemes and build consensus around a 10-15 year development plan to be reflected in the next Limerick Development Plan (2028-2038). Towns like Foynes cannot be the centre of our offshore energy and be capped to grow at 50 homes as in the current development plan.
- ML28** Use the deadlines of the Ryder Cup to drive the delivery of many key projects, like the train station in Adare and modular accommodation for workers which can be repurposed after the event to remain in Limerick's housing stock and ease the current log jams until more permanent solutions are implemented.
- ML29** Work with TUS and UL to produce a comprehensive study to understand why thousands of our talented workers and graduates leave every year and do not come back and by the time of the next development plan have a clear set of actions to be incorporated into the development plan for 2028-2033 to reverse that trend.
- ML30** Assess the four main city centre neighbourhoods and key towns for liveability and develop a plan by 2028 to address gaps in amenities.
- ML31** Ask Councillors to allocate budgetary resources to conduct the review on social services delivered county wide mandated by the current development plan (but not yet completed) and ask the Director General to appoint a Director of Services to have specific responsibility to drive the rationalisation and improvements (and generate further savings) in this sector and report on quarterly progress to the Mayoral Implementation Committee.
- ML32** Develop a plan and related marketing to create a “Welcome to Limerick” office which might be located in Arthur’s Quay and act as a single point of focus and contact to make it easier for people to consider and be convinced to make the move to Limerick (and stay here once they have landed). The office and its staff will lead on integration work for all communities and be a single point of contact to make access to Limerick’s services easier and to identify in advance and solve deficiencies whether arising from the growth of population in a particular area, the differing needs of new cultures or simply existing shortfalls and gaps in our services for all residents.

ML33 Clean and repair built infrastructure to revitalise public realm amenities in the city centre, and the three bridges walk

ML34 Create a high-level expert group to look at revitalising and produce a master plan for the city centre

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3. A SAFER MORE COMMUNITY DRIVEN LIMERICK

Ensuring safety and security is paramount to the well-being of our community.

People deserve to live in an environment where they feel safe and assured that help is readily available when needed. This goes beyond just increasing police presence or installing CCTV cameras, although these measures are important.

Jane Jacobs, in her influential work "The Death and Life of Great American Cities," highlighted the crime-preventative effect of active street life and the integration of different functions within buildings. She coined the terms "street watchers" and "eyes on the street," which have guided urban planning principles ever since.

However, our sense of security is not solely determined by physical measures. It is also influenced by social factors and the upkeep of our public spaces. While statistics may not always reflect it accurately, well-maintained public areas tend to instil a greater sense of safety compared to neglected neighbourhoods. Therefore, it is crucial to address both real and perceived safety concerns comprehensively.

By investing in vibrant and well-maintained city streets, parks, and natural areas, we can encourage their active use by the community. This proactive approach will not only enhance safety but also promote community engagement and a sense of pride in our shared spaces.

This Programme commits us to collaborate with local stakeholders, Gardaí, and community organisations to implement effective strategies that prioritise both the physical and social aspects of safety.

MY VISION

Imagine if in Limerick streets and roads were fully designed for greater safety for pedestrians and other road users. Where fears about public safety on our streets, in our city parks and on our greenways is no longer a key concern of residents or visitors.

Where streets are designed to allow children to once more play in the streets under the watchful eyes of family and neighbours.

Where public spaces are well lit from both shops and dwellings as well as attractive public lighting to increase the feeling of safety. Where solid metal shutters on our shops at night are replaced with attractive window fronts encouraging night wandering in our city streets in our towns.

Where people can walk to their destination or use their own gardens without feeling intimidated by others on the street and good street signage makes it easy for us to find our way around

To create this vision, we will:

ML35 Fund additional security measures such as CCTV and community wardens to patrol and supervise city parks and adjacent streets. Support and protect the funding of the existing public CCTV network provided by the Limerick Regeneration Programme.

ML36 Seek additional resources so that the days of calling for Gardaí help and being put through to a call centre in Cork are to be no more and that we see more Gardaí presence on our streets.

ML37 Call for visible booths /mobile Gardaí vans, for greater security presence in areas of concern for crime, anti-social behaviour and drug use.

ML38 Introduce a new traffic calming policy and implement greater use of traffic calming measures to ensure safety on streets for children.

ML39 Design a super-block type system in Georgian Limerick to reduce transiting vehicular traffic and use four-way stop junctions to reduce risk of accidents for cars and pedestrians.

ML40 Significantly enhance public lighting and improve general maintenance to encourage people to use streets and public realm, particularly at night and explore the use of localised solar panels to power public lighting to reduce our carbon footprint.

ML41 Increase enforcement of illegal parking and enhance restrictions designed to facilitate safer street use. We will design shared public realm to allow vulnerable residents to be picked up and dropped off safely as well as to make deliveries to business more efficient and safer.

ML42 Introduce municipal rules governing utility covers on cycle/e-scooter paths, as well as the use, sharing and parking of eScooters on our streets.

ML43 Introduce more active travel schemes to provide safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

ML44 Offer direct Mayoral support for extended hours for public transport to allow people travelling early or late to move more safely, particularly those needing to be in work early in the morning or late in the evening.

ML45 Offer direct Mayoral support and encouragement for more community groupings using neighbourhood watch and text alerts.

ML46 Follow through on the commitment in the Limerick Development Plan to protect existing community facilities and create new ones especially in higher density neighbourhoods in the city and main towns.

ML47 Introduce planning guidelines for new developments which encourage soft edges and mixed use, as well as gathering spots for community interaction.

ML48 Investigate the feasibility of credits against commercial rates for shops in key pedestrian friendly areas who agree to remove metal shutters and commit to leaving windows displays lit up until say midnight.

ML49 Ensure that safety and security always form part of the standing agenda for the semi-annual Mayor's meetings with Government Ministers so that there can be no more hiding from accountability for non-delivery and make sure that there are monthly meetings on safety on our streets with Limerick representatives of an Gardaí Siochana and other stakeholders.

4. MORE CULTURE, VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Arts, culture, and the performing arts have a key transformative power to enrich our community as well as establishing Limerick in a leading light among competitor European city regions. These need investment and better supports and visibility

We've all enjoyed places across the world where these facilities are not just attractions for tourists but integral parts of daily life for residents. Whether in major cities like New York or London or in towns and cities the size of Limerick, these cultural amenities play a crucial role in supporting community well-being and stimulating creativity and innovation across generations.

It is essential that Limerick provides affordable and accessible spaces for a wide range of artistic endeavours. This ensures that all residents, regardless of background or income, have equal opportunities to engage with and benefit from the arts. This inclusivity is particularly important in countering existing disparities, where some families have greater access to cultural experiences for their children than others.

By investing in diverse cultural programming and accessible venues, we not only enhance our quality of life but also cultivate a vibrant community spirit. These efforts will support local artists, attract visitors, and nurture a dynamic cultural scene that reflects the rich diversity and creativity of Limerick.

This programme is committed to championing policies that prioritise the arts and cultural sector, ensuring that they are integrated into the fabric of daily life in Limerick. As Mayor, I would like to create a Limerick where everyone can participate in and benefit from the transformative power of the arts.

MY VISION

Imagine if in Limerick, instead of the arts being largely hidden away from view, we had a much more visible public realm and buildings celebrating the arts.

Imagine that we have built and completed the Living Room of the Colbert Quarter plans and it is available for use for all communities new and old. Its mission being to celebrate all of the cultures of the world represented in the population of Limerick including our own national music and culture to reflect the diversity of our new Limerick

Imagine if the Royal Cinema and the old town cinema in Abbeyfeale is again operational and the Gaff on Cecil Street is a daily part of the night life of Limerick's Georgian Quarter.

Imagine if Fidget Feet Aerial troop are no longer in a suburban warehouse but operating right in a central and visible building in the city centre. Imagine, if Limerick once more resonates frequently to the sound of marching bands. Imagine if our film industry is no longer centred out in Troy but also visible on our streets with crews filming in our urban landscape or natural environments in the county and one of our city galleries or street display pods playing host to costumes and equipment from movies shot in Limerick.

To create this vision, Limerick needs to:

ML50 Resolve outstanding issues which prevent the Royal Cinema reopening as a city centre film/performing arts location.

ML51 Have Limerick play host to a cutting-edge art exhibition and related educational activities with artists, not just from the 27 European countries which featured in the European Expo in 2022, but from all over the world.

ML52 Secure on street or other locations to advertise exhibitions and events on across Limerick.

ML53 Resolve access issues to out of city centre cultural facilities for those without cars and to city centre locations from key towns.

ML54 Explore, and if feasible, set up a new ownership structure (perhaps under the Discover Limerick DAC) similar to Glasgow Life to deliver and finance new local authority supported and owned arts and other buildings for amenities in the city and right across the county.

ML55 Secure funding for the design of the Limerick Living Room in Colbert Quarter and progress the project to planning permission stage.

ML56 Allocate seed funding to acquire further quality art from graduating LSAD students, local artists or works by other artists from Limerick or with strong Limerick associations.

ML57 Push to secure funding for the capital development of the Hunt Museum in tandem with the building of the new Library facility in the Opera Centre.

ML58 Work with our existing world-class biennale EVA and LSAD to establish a new starting location for a permanent Limerick Museum of Modern Art to complement the Hunt Museum and the City Art Gallery. We must have sufficient space to give a deserving home to showcase the history of Limerick based artists and other world-renowned artists. A more permanent future home will be identified and set out in the development plan (2028-2038) with a particular openness to considering new locations in neighbourhoods we have long neglected, like perhaps Southhill. This area could become home to a new city park looking back down over the city hosting with pride such a facility.

ML59 Establish and seed-fund an initiative in conjunction with the Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) to establish an interactive museum of fashion and work-spaces and retail outlets for our creatives, near or on Nicholas Street, to reflect Limerick's strong tradition in clothing and the creativity of our new fashion industry.

ML60 Secure a building to temporarily serve as a Culture House to celebrate all the cultures of Our Limerick until the Living Room becomes a reality.

ML61 Have supported the Arts initiative “Inspirations” so that it can include artists and locations from all across Limerick.

ML62 Provided funding for the upgrading of one or more community centres, like Askeaton, so as to include an exhibition space for locally interesting exhibitions to be curated by the relevant county service – e.g. Limerick Museum, Limerick City Gallery.

ML63 Consider a use for and restore the old Gaff building on Cecil Street and identify more locations suitable for a community/volunteer theatre and other performing arts in each of the four city neighbourhoods and main towns.

ML64 Expand the Hunt Museum in Gardens across the city and into a county town.

ML65 Conduct an audit of and encourage temporary uses of underutilised publicly owned spaces which could provide suitable spaces for volunteer theatre groups to rehearse or store props. Consider rates exemptions for private owners of such premises if they allow their property to be leased at lower than market rent for this purpose (minimum 3-year lease agreement).

ML66 Have designed and secured planning permission for a new community theatre facility in Moyross and another connected to the King's Island Community Centre or in another suitable location on the island. Provide greater performing arts facilities adjacent to or available to local educational facilities.

ML67 Support the development of small-scale galleries selling art and antiques in Limerick's Georgian and Medieval cores, perhaps by innovative restoration of laneway derelict coach houses or guaranteeing lease covenants to encourage landlords to rent to them.

DRAFT

5. MORE PEOPLE-CENTRED BETTER QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

Our public spaces, particularly in the city centre need significant and urgent enhancement to make our towns and city safer and more attractive for residential compact growth.

Our current public realm lacks cohesion and fails to reflect the vibrant community spirit that defines Limerick. According to Jeff Speck in "Walkable City," surveys confirm that creative class citizens, especially millennials, prefer communities with active street life and a pedestrian-friendly culture.

I firmly believe that vibrant street life enriches the quality of urban and town living for everyone. It fosters a sense of community and facilitates chance encounters that can lead to lasting friendships and collaborations.

To achieve this, we must prioritise both safety and attractiveness in our public spaces. Safe streets are essential, but we also need inviting and well-maintained areas that encourage people to walk, gather, and linger. This includes green spaces, well-designed streetscapes, and cultural amenities that contribute to a lively and inclusive city centre.

Improving our public realm will not only enhance the daily experience for residents but also make Limerick more appealing to visitors and new arrivals. It is about creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels connected and engaged in the life of our city.

As your Mayor, I am committed to working with urban planners, community groups, and businesses to protect and revitalise our existing public realm and will look to also acquire lands for additional spaces. I would like to create a more walkable, vibrant, and attractive Limerick that we can all be proud of.

MY VISION

Imagine if we lived in a city or towns where the quality of our public realm reflected the pride we have in Limerick. Where every corner is an opportunity to see new quality public realm or vistas to quality public or private buildings encouraging wandering.

Imagine if we live in a place where public realm is designed for the residents and local businesses first, not last. Where one walks the public realm of our city and towns and villages and sees a Limerick style not the current mismatch of styles, but one sensitive to the medieval or Georgian heritage. Imagine in this context if all overhead wires and unnecessary poles were removed in our key urban spaces facilitating a complete re-look of how those streets should look during the day and be lit up for nighttime ambling.

Imagine if we drive all utility services into channels underground which do not require to be dug up over and over leaving poor patched ground cover

Imagine also that we design our public realm and its uses for all incomes and abilities. Where sitting at a table talking to a friend by the side of a street, reading a book quietly alone or looking at a historic building is not a privilege reserved for those who can afford the coffee or meal to use a restaurant terrace.

Imagine that we animate our public realm with quality entertainment or sports facilities which are free and accessible to all. Imagine that quality public realm becomes the publicly available heart of new compact growth apartment block developments and the magnet for larger communities to gather in retail/restaurant facilities there not just something adjacent to it to satisfy some "green space" planning guideline

To create this vision, Limerick will need to:

- ML68** Put in place much of the public realm/sports facilities planned in the strategic framework for Colbert Quarter including the key Limerick Link.
- ML69** Introduce a comprehensive policy to set new rules for the look and feel of public realm and streets in our city core reflecting and enhancing the historic fabric of our city and setting strict rules governing the use of public realm for utilities and signage.
- ML70** Finish off the development over the rest of O'Connell Street (but not the way the first one was done) incorporating the New Town Park idea of a significant public plaza at the Crescent.
- ML71** Engage with traders and others to see what fixes are required to make O'Connell Street work for all once the destiny of the bus corridor is resolved (see mobility).
- ML72** Implement the New Town Park greening of the residential quarter of Georgian Limerick and begin the implementation of the new public realm strategy design.
- ML73** Continue to develop a quality waterside public park with quality sports activity facilities including a public athletics facility for all ages on the green lands from Thomond Bridge to the county border on the way to Parteen.
- ML74** Design the best use for Delmege Estate as an amenity area and secure funding for same.
- ML75** Redesign the public realm of town centres, like that in our Limerick Town of the Future, Abbeyfeale, to make them more attractive destinations for locals and others.
- ML76** Redesign and animate the public realm of the main shopping streets in our city centre especially near Cruises Street and the Milk Market and Roches Street and in a number of towns and villages so as to complement and foster the businesses on that street, encourage people to live overhead their shops and provide reasons for footfall to increase, a key ingredient in greater success for those businesses.
- ML77** Fix the acres of poor quality of green space in the city centre, such as for example in Garryowen (especially close to St Patrick's Well) and in Kings Island by not just cutting the grass but incorporating into the design outdoor sporting and performing arts amenities and areas for communities to meet with each other and others visiting or passing through.
- ML78** As one of the prime existing city centre green lung parks, invest properly in Arthurs Quay Park.
- ML79** Remove delays and use all of the funding allocated for the riverside public realm including the new bridge for additional cross river access.
- ML80** "Encourage" all new office and large-scale residential development to incorporate interesting accessible public plaza space before planning can be granted.
- ML81** Condition the use of public realm by private businesses (terraces, loading zones etc.) to quality of shop fronts and better waste management strategies especially in historic areas of our towns or villages.
- ML82** Work with the Director General to develop a new strategy for waste management collection in the core city centre. Focus on historic or key retail areas with the objective of reducing individual wheelie bin use and remove mobile bins from streets and laneways.

6. MORE OPTIONS FOR MOBILITY

We will not solve existing logjams or deliver the housing we need unless we rethink how we approach compact growth living and transportation in the face of population growth and climate change challenges.

Private transport remains one of the largest monthly household expenses for many residents, especially after accounting for accommodation costs. In an increasingly expensive world with mounting cost of living pressures, reducing the financial burden of mobility would significantly benefit our growing population. This would free up resources that could be better allocated towards housing or other essential living expenses.

As governments worldwide strive to minimise private car usage, there is an opportunity for forward-thinking cities like Limerick to lead in creating attractive and sustainable living environments. By prioritising public transport, walking, and active travel infrastructure, we can reduce reliance on cars, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve air quality.

Embracing sustainable transportation solutions not only enhances our quality of life, but also strengthens our resilience to future challenges. It encourages healthier lifestyles, community cohesion, and supports economic vitality by making our city more accessible and enjoyable for all residents.

As Mayor, I am committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders, urban planners, and transportation experts to develop and implement innovative strategies. I would like to transform Limerick into a model city that prioritises sustainable mobility, enhances affordability, and ensures a high quality of life for generations to come. Together we can build a greener, more connected, and prosperous future for Limerick and find a fair path to transition to that future.

MY VISION

Imagine a Limerick where significantly greater percentages than today of our expanding population live in locations which make it possible even desirable not to have to own a car but be able to rely on car sharing options when needed. Where other options for mobility supplement a multi-line backbone of commuter trains running from Ennis to Limerick and onwards to Nenagh or Foynes or Raheen, Patrickswell and Adare. Where towns like Kilmallock connect to the inter-city network by reopening the station already in the town.

Imagine that this rail network is supplemented by park and ride facilities, by a much more advanced network of local buses and once one reaches key stations in the city, that connectivity to all parts of the city is guaranteed with reliable public transport options or safe active travel corridors for bikes and eScooters for the “last mile”.

Imagine if all future significant growth and critical public services and amenities were mandated by planning rules and the development plan to occur at such transport nodes or be easily accessible to same. Where required, car-sharing and even autonomous driverless taxis being designed in Shannon could be used to supplement the network.

Imagine that ready access to central city locations for those arriving by car is guaranteed by widespread drop off and collection spots, park and ride locations along transport corridors and using public and private car parking close to but not necessarily right at the main destinations

To create this vision, Limerick will need to:

- ML83** Deliver in a timely fashion the LSMATS and the transport plan (other than as amended by new ideas in this Programme). This already covers much of what needs to be done under this heading.
- ML84** Advocate to reinstate disused rail lines, especially the Adare line in time for the Ryder Cup and develop a new station in Moyross, Ballysimon and Annacotty Business Park.
- ML85** Have a much-progressed bus connects system in place across the city in line with the LSMATS having resolved some of its remaining defects such as lack of connectivity with the emerging transport node at Colbert. This should also include the centralisation of all arrival and departures for regional bus services to a single location located at or near the Colbert Bus Station.
- ML86** Advocate to resolve, in the short term, connectivity issues for Shannon Airport and Shannon Industrial Estate and have developed a longer-term solution for connecting Shannon Airport to a Park and Ride at either Cratloe Train Station or Sixmilebridge in line with the recently published national rail strategy.
- ML87** Have resolved public transport access issues for Annacotty Business Park and the new hospital and school on the Ballysimon Road.
- ML88** Have a fully developed (if not implemented in part) plan to resolve vehicular transport access issues at UL, Plassey Technological Park and the Mackey roundabout. We will complete the west side access road to Moyross, parking for the duration of this Programme any further consideration of the final and east-west central section of the Northern Distributor Road.
- ML89** Revisit the wisdom of giving over the main street of O'Connell Street to a double East-West bus corridor disconnected from the main regional transport node of Colbert Station and preventing vehicular access to the street for residents and retail outlets and public plaza development. We will push to reconsider if Parnell Street and Hyde Road and/or a corridor through Colbert Quarter would not provide a better option.
- ML90** Have consulted and agreed a new traffic management plan in time for the next development plan which reduces the use of the core city centre for vehicular traffic transiting the city centre and reflects the increased ambition I have for Limerick's growth and the implementation of LSMATS (Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy).
- ML91** Have either achieved or be well on the way to achieving the status of Ireland's first city with a fully integrated safe active travel network.

7. MORE VALUED HERITAGE ASSETS

It is critically important to preserve our history and heritage to reconnect with our past, define who we are for the future and as one of the great differentiators of Limerick from other places lacking our rich heritage.

History shapes our identity and connects us to our past in profound ways. Once lost, it is irretrievable. Therefore, it is imperative that we value and protect our historical buildings from decay and neglect. These buildings not only hold intrinsic cultural and historical significance but also contribute to the unique character that distinguishes Limerick from other places.

Many of our historic buildings, although physically still with us, are currently deteriorating before our eyes. This neglect diminishes their generational value and erodes our collective heritage. It is our responsibility to ensure these structures are maintained and revitalised, preserving them for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

Disused historical buildings present an opportunity to address pressing community needs. They can be repurposed to provide much-needed space for housing, cultural activities, and community gatherings. By breathing new life into these spaces, we not only preserve our heritage but also contribute to the social and economic vitality of Limerick.

As your Mayor, I am committed to working with heritage experts, local communities, and developers to create sustainable strategies for the preservation and adaptive reuse of our historic buildings. We will ensure that Limerick's rich heritage continues to thrive as a source of pride and inspiration for all residents.

MY VISION

Imagine a Limerick where heritage buildings are not viewed as expensive liabilities but irreplaceable and highly prized parts of our Limerick. Where homes with windows overlooking heritage assets are as much prized homes of our built environment as in other places. Who should not want to look every day at an amazing 13th Century fortress or abbey just as Parisiens strive for glimpses of the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame in their day-to-day lives?

Imagine a Limerick where unique medieval assets like those in Kilmallock or Askeaton are valued properly and repaired to protect them for generations to come and are the places around which our towns and their public spaces flow. Imagine people the world over talking about and coming to make films with our unique medieval and Georgian city centre and our reuse of historical industrial buildings for contemporary living. Imagine people flocking to see our unique Irish towns and not just Adare but for example also the fascinating and artful plaster work and town square of Abbeyfeale or historical sites like Mungeret monastic site or Carrigogunnell Castle. Imagine the Delmege estate in Moyross as a Curraghchase like parkland but with its historic house fully restored and a surrounding public park for all inhabitants of the city with walks all the way along the river side and over to Kings Island.

To create this vision, Limerick will need to:

ML92 Have surveyed all of the principal historic assets owned by the OPW and LCCC in Limerick and come up with a ranking of those in greatest danger and associated remedial plans.

ML93 Set up a steering group to seek UNESCO Heritage status for Limerick's unique residential and industrial heritage and carry out better enforcement to penalise those not respecting the protected nature of their buildings.

ML94 In tandem with the THRIVE project, have begun a focused and time mapped plan to restore and reanimate buildings along Nicholas Street and restore that street and the surrounding heritage assets and public spaces to the more central position they deserve in our city.

ML95 Have resolved issues and sought to bring out of dereliction the Royal Cinema and adjacent buildings in the ownership of the state in a way which value their unique history.

ML96 Have secured buildings, such as the former Bank of Ireland building in Bruff, the former co-op in Herbertstown, the Market House in Kilfinane, the old Fire Station in Cappamore, or the old medieval home in Kilmallock, and have sought to convert them into active community-based enterprise or cultural centres.

ML97 Have invested in the greening of the streets and laneways of New Town Pery in line with the new Public Realm policy so that owners of buildings are encouraged or obliged to invest in their buildings so that the area becomes a dynamic residential quarter in our city.

ML98 Have developed schemes (along equity sharing lines) to remove funding obstacles stopping owners restoring and reactivating underused derelict buildings right across the entire county and set aggressive public targets for reuse of vacant buildings, with particular reference to those eligible for Living Cities Initiative tax credits.

ML99 Have developed a local enterprise scheme to have locally trained and available craftspeople to carry out key restoration tasks in line with best practice and sought heritage funding to grant aid expensive works such as sash window replacement and wigging of Georgian brick facades.

ML100 Have developed maps of our built heritage across the county and worked with transport providers to make public transport options available to connect them to the larger towns and our city centre at least initially on weekends.

ML101 Have developed with the LDA and the HSE a new public use and related implementation plan for St Joseph's hospital buildings.

ML102 Working with Limerick and Foynes Port Company have ensured the redevelopment of the Ballantyne Mills as new office space and the restoration of the Sailors Home as a new cultural facility.

ML103 Accelerated the delivery by Limerick 2030 of the Cleeves Centre with particular attention to the safeguarding of historic heritage buildings on the site.

ML104 Have used the Mayor's new powers as shareholder of Limerick 2030 so that more of the Georgian buildings on the Opera Site are used for affordable rental residential use and their facades restored to set the highest quality standards in what should be deliverable and advisable for Limerick especially for the parts of Georgian heritage visible to the public.

ML105 Designed and secured expansive new North city parklands, including public athletics facilities and developed a policy to restore and use the historic building of the Delmege Estate.

8. A MORE FUN LIMERICK

Limerick should be a place where people of all ages can thrive and enjoy a high quality of life. Sometimes, this mean just turning the corner on a daily walk and finding a free public performance or a quiet spot to sit and rest and meet someone new.

It's not just about constructing buildings and infrastructure. Too often, planners and local government focus solely on housing and basic amenities like roads and water, overlooking what truly makes a place enjoyable and attractive to live in. We need to prioritise holistic planning that considers the social, cultural, and recreational aspects that enhance community life.

The Colbert Quarter development exemplifies what we need more of in Limerick—holistic, thoughtful planning designed by world-class urban architects, not just focused on the engineering aspects or viability of a scheme in a narrow financial perspective. These plans integrate housing with green spaces, community facilities, and cultural amenities, creating vibrant neighbourhoods that foster a sense of belonging and well-being for residents.

However, having impressive plans is only the beginning. It is equally crucial to ensure that these plans are implemented effectively and not left to gather dust. As your Mayor, I will prioritise active engagement and collaboration with developers, stakeholders, and the community to ensure that our city's vision for growth and development becomes a reality.

By focusing on comprehensive planning and sustainable development practices, we can create neighbourhoods and communities in Limerick that are not only functional but also enriching and enjoyable places to live for generations to come.

MY VISION

Imagine if all new significant housing developments in Limerick were not led by developer preference based on site ownership but had to fit into a broader plan set by the local authority for a neighbourhood where the local authority has identified the gaps and is driving on with delivering the amenities even in advance of the housing. It happens with housing in the proximity of public transport in what is referred to as Transport Oriented Development (or TOD). Now imagine if Limerick also sets its planning by what we will term Fun Oriented Development (what we will term FOD) – you focus building housing around the already existing or planned amenities. Think of it like this, we hear many stories of people commuting long distances to Limerick for work, because they cannot get appropriate housing. Now, imagine is they could live close to work at the centre of our city or in a Limerick village or town, close to theatres, museums, work, restaurants, clubs, creches, schools, GP offices, and so on. FOD will take the not so fun commuting times out of daily life to ensure people can focus on what really matters, themselves, their family and friends.

Imagine what those amenities might be. Could there be an outdoor swimming pool in the city on the river? What about regular new community festivals based on the heritage of a neighbourhood or town such as an annual medieval festival on King's Island. Could we have one the same weekend in Kilmallock, another one of our medieval jewels? Imagine if Henry Street were host to the Game Cube, Ireland's first museum of gaming, not just nice plans and imagery of it. Imagine dotting all weather facilities and pitches all over the county not just for teenagers but for people in their 50s, 60s and 70+ to battle the physical effects of aging.

Imagine if Limerick were really the national centre of Music of all types in Ireland. Host to the Irish Chamber Orchestra, to jazz festivals and clubs, to opera on the street, to clubs and bars showcasing Limerick's emerging modern music scene and our traditional music together with all of the music and culture of the many new communities now living in Limerick. A healthy local music industry building on the reputation of our existing venues along with other cultural organisations must be central to and no longer peripheral to a new vibrant night economy.

To create this vision, Limerick will need to:

- ML106** Deliver the Game Cube, Ireland's first Museum of Gaming (and perhaps even a first for Europe).
- ML107** Secure a building, and in the five years have secured at least the planning and funding for at least one cinema in Limerick's city centre and an operator of the cinema decided by competitive tender. Depending on the building we might even be much further advanced within five years.
- ML108** Conduct a feasibility study with stakeholders to establish on what basis Limerick could be home to a new multi-use municipal stadium for Limerick to host larger sports, cultural and musical events.
- ML109** Work with our councillors and the Night-time Economy Advisor to implement the changes necessary to develop a vibrant and safe night-time economy in our city centre. This should include the changes necessary in the Development Plan, such as change of use for basement and ground floors of buildings in Limerick's Georgian Quarter. We must also consider public transport options for those not living in the city.
- ML110** Establish an implementation group, which will be steered by the Mayor, to consider implementing actions arising from the review of Limerick's night-time economy on a countywide basis.
- ML111** Have ensured that the new library building will be delivered in the Opera Centre and open up consideration of other locations for permanent branches of the main library across the county.
- ML112** Have developed a plan for a significant music festival (genre to be determined based on a competitive process) to take place as part of the offerings in one of our key towns.
- ML113** Over no longer than the initial 3 years, audit neighbourhoods in the city and towns around Limerick to establish gaps in the cultural and sporting amenities available to the community so as to unlock barriers and kickstart at least 5 key projects in villages across the county, like the playground in Athea or pop-up temporary use sports facilities (basketball, kids playgrounds etc) in underused state lands. By the end of year 1, we will have audited the main four city neighbourhoods and the three county towns of Adare, Newcastle West and Kilmallock which form the corners of our central triangle in the county. By the end of year 3, if not before, I would aim to get to the rest of the other villages around our home county.
- ML114** Secure planning for the Colbert Quarter Municipal Sports Building and the Living Room.
- ML115** Submit funding requests to government for the development of the Colbert Quarter Municipal Sports Building, the redevelopment of the Kilmallock Road Sports Campus, the Markets Fields Stadium, Munster Rugby development in Rosbrien, GAA Sports development in Patrickswell

village and the TUS Velodrome and conducted a feasibility study and initial design for a public athletics hub on the riverside lands in Ballynatty/Watch House Cross.

- ML116** Have secured public transport links from key towns and the city to permit people to travel off business hours to the city and vice versa.
- ML117** Waive charges and fund or provide insurance framework and logistical help for people organising street feasts and festivals or even street opera on Limerick's streets.
- ML118** Establish a plan to secure rights to use land to connect the Limerick greenway to the city centre or a future train station with service to the city centre.
- ML119** Create a high-level expert group to develop a masterplan for heritage and public nature parks across the county, to map existing facilities, identify gaps in facilities or amenities and come up with practical steps to be taken to improve coverage and availability for all residents of Limerick, especially those living in urban and town locations without private gardens, to improve range of facilities (sports, eco-friendly, outdoor dining, pet friendly etc), to improve walking or active travel linkages between facilities and assess how technology can be used to improve visibility of existing locations and their facilities.
- ML120** In the absence of a current plan, establish a countywide implementation group which will be steered by the Mayor to drive home recommendations arising from a review of Limerick by the Nighttime Economy Advisor (which initial review I shall ask to have completed before the end of 2024);
- ML121** Develop a plan to invest in and secure the future of the Grove Island sports facility and to alleviate disruption from the planned closure of the Factory facility.
- ML122** Develop a plan and seek funding for the development of the existing swimming and gym facilities in Newcastle West as part of a future proofing of facilities for future growth of the town.

A MORE PROSPEROUS LIMERICK

What will make Limerick the most desirable place to live in Ireland. Is it community? Is it our natural environment? Is it our sporting teams?

Of course, it is not one thing. It is why in the previous policy pillar the Programme talks not just about housing, but about More Liveability, about the quality of life. In a world of rising costs and financial pressures, we know that, while money does not buy happiness, it is important to have financial stability to feel secure. The comfort of knowing you can get through every month in the year without the constant fears of not being able to pay bills, that if children need something for school, you know there is enough money left to buy it, or as aunts or uncles or grandparents, knowing you do have that little extra to buy a present for someone special.

In the ever-changing world of global economies, wars, and technology shifts, city regions like Limerick must navigate through complex challenges and opportunities, and so must its residents.

For Limerick, we need to be ready to adapt and thrive. The "More Prosperity" policy pillar is born out of this ambition, mapping out a strategic course towards a brighter future for Limerick. This policy pillar focuses on a Limerick rich in opportunities for everyone, founded on the values of education and hard work, a place where innovation and tradition come together and blend seamlessly.

Limerick's potential is as broad as it is untapped, and this policy pillar is designed to harness it fully. The Programme envisages a Limerick where the Golden Vale agri-food sector, and our technology sector, feeds much of the nation and is a leader in innovation. Limerick based manufacturing and engineering form the bedrock of our industrial might and help improve income equality. The Programme is based on a creative pulse of music, theatre, film, design, and fashion to drive more energy and fun, not just into the streets of Limerick but into the heart of the global cultural scene.

The Programme proposes an integrated approach that positions Limerick to capitalise on the opportunities brought about by offshore renewable energy, the digital revolution brought about by technology changes and AI, and the changes in modern construction, as it faces into new challenges.

The Programme also highlights the value of every resident in Limerick, providing equal opportunities for all by helping those in need through education and job support. It ensures the wealth of talent nurtured in our third level institutions plants its roots firmly in Limerick's soil.

Many challenges lie ahead. Yet, with each policy proposition, the Programme offers tangible actions that align closely with the resilient spirit of Limerick's people. From the rejuvenation of our city centre to attracting more foreign investment and leveraging the public wealth of Limerick for the greater good, each initiative is a step towards a more prosperous tomorrow.

In the following pages, the Programme expands a vision for Limerick's prosperity, a vision that is ambitious yet attainable, innovative yet inclusive. It is a plan not just for growth but for a renaissance of commerce, culture, and community — a blueprint for a Limerick that prospers as one.

1. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Our current urban systems, though robust, previously fell short in fully addressing the growing demands for sustainable infrastructure and community resilience. This gap has now become our opportunity to redefine Limerick's approach to urban development.

This Programme harnesses Limerick's strengths to create a county that is resilient and sustainable. Imagine our streets lined with green infrastructure, electricity markets powered by renewable energy, community gardens, and innovative manufacturing as the norm, not the exception. Through strategic actions, we need to transform Limerick into a beacon of sustainability, ensuring that Limerick's development is both progressive and sustainable. By integrating green technologies and community-driven initiatives, we can significantly advance Limerick, making it a model for city regions worldwide.

Limerick's future can be proactive, inclusive, and sustainable. I will work very hard to prepare our city and county to meet tomorrow's challenges head-on while enhancing the quality of life for all our residents.

MY VISION

Imagine if the heart of Limerick City, bustling with history and commerce, transformed its grey streets into green arteries. Where O'Connell Street is lined with native trees and pollinator-friendly plants, where biodiversity thrives amidst apartments, cafes and shops.

Imagine if the bustling market stalls of Limerick's Milk Market district could operate year-round under eco-friendly, smart canopies that collect rainwater and harness solar energy, showcasing a perfect blend of tradition and innovation - a model to be replicated in other markets across the city's four neighbourhoods and the county.

Imagine if Limerick's FabLab in the city centre became the cornerstone of innovation in resilient manufacturing, innovating materials and methods that endure environmental and economic shifts. Envision it as a beacon for sustainability-minded innovators contributing to a robust local economy.

Imagine if community gardens across Limerick, from Moyross, King's Island to Monaleen Heights, grew into a comprehensive network. Where residents connect through the cultivation of food, enhancing community ties and local food security.

To create this vision, Limerick will need to;

MP01 Work with National Regional bodies to ensure that Limerick's needs are represented in broader resilience planning, securing funding and support for local initiatives.

MP02 Support local manufacturers by advocating for grants and training to adopt resilient manufacturing practices that can withstand supply chain disruptions.

MP03 Support the growth of emerging sectors such as digital technology and green energy reducing Limerick's economic dependency on traditional industries but also increasing Ireland's energy security

MP04 Develop community projects that build resilience, such as the community garden on King's Island or the Sean Moran Community Garden in the Hunt Museum

MP05 Implement rules for green infrastructure projects in local authority parks and public housing schemes, such as rain gardens and permeable pavements, especially in urban areas like the city centre to manage stormwater and reduce urban heat effects.

MP06 Seek councillor support and government funding to upgrade emergency services and infrastructure, particularly in flood-prone areas like King's Island and Corbally. We need to improve response times and effectiveness in crisis situations. We need to finish off the flood protection scheme in King's Island and create heat-maps and remedial plans for all other areas at risk of flooding in Limerick.

MP07 Develop and regularly update disaster recovery plans for critical infrastructure and services, ensuring quick restoration of utilities and services post-disaster.

MP08 Publish an annual risk register for Limerick. A public meeting will be held to prepare and debate this in the council chamber to further encourage analysis and debate about threats to livelihoods in Limerick. These threats could be from economic or natural shocks, but we must allow businesses to build-in mitigation measures into their operations.

2. OFFSHORE WIND OPPORTUNITY

My vision for Limerick's future is rooted in the belief that no single factor makes a city or county great, but rather a harmonious blend of community, environment, and opportunity.

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to transforming Limerick into a dynamic leader in renewable energy. The Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce report has laid down a challenge for us: to move from a passive participant to a frontrunner in the renewable energy conversation.

The natural resources off the western seaboard offer us an opportunity to redefine our energy landscape. However, our response thus far has been muted, leaving vast economic potential untapped. Harnessing this power means more than just generating energy; it's about igniting a sustainable economic engine that can propel the entire country towards a carbon net-zero future and create 50,000 high-quality, green jobs in the wider Limerick region.

The taskforce's vision is ambitious, aiming to position Limerick and the wider region as pioneers in Ireland's transition to a carbon-neutral future. Additionally, the task force report highlights the potential to enhance Ireland's energy security and reduce reliance on international sources. By aligning our actions with this strategic blueprint, we can offer the people of Limerick tangible benefits, leveraging the Shannon Estuary as our greatest natural resource.

But it is not all within our control. National policy makers need to help unlock this opportunity for us.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick and the Shannon Estuary had become an energy provider having a direct impact on reducing the energy bills of every house in Ireland.

Imagine if, by harnessing the Atlantic winds, Limerick not only contributed to Ireland's energy independence but also carved out a leading role in the EU's transition to sustainable energy, creating high-quality, green jobs for generations to come and allowing Ireland to become a significant energy exporter or, indeed, using that green energy supply to encourage companies to set up in Ireland with access to 100% green energy as our unique selling point.

Imagine if Limerick's third-level institutions, from the University of Limerick to Technological University of the Shannon, became seedbeds for a new wave of engineers and entrepreneurs, their breakthroughs in wind energy echoing through Europe.

Imagine if right along the Shannon Estuary, we have hectares and hectares of industrial plants working on the green products of the future as well as innovating the technologies to be used in, and exporting, offshore windmills to the rest of the world

To create this vision, Limerick will need to;

MP09 Use the Mayoral office to advocate for and work closely with national agencies to expedite the development of necessary legislative change and infrastructure to support the offshore wind industry within the region and to protect our oceans

MP10 Promote partnerships with local third level institutes to develop a pipeline of talent and to establish an innovation hub focused on green technologies, tapping into the offshore wind potential.

MP11 Facilitate education programmes via the Limerick SME Hub for local businesses to transition to sustainable practices, leveraging the region's developing green energy sector.

MP12 Use the office of Mayor to endorse and support initiatives that position Limerick as a prime location for FDI and R&D in green technologies, including offshore wind and its associated industries.

MP13 Coordinate with educational and vocational training centres to develop programmes that equip the workforce with skills pertinent to the emerging offshore wind industry.

MP14 Ensure that pressure stays on the Government to expedite and deliver the West Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) which is critical to developing offshore wind potential in Limerick.

MP15 Ensure that Limerick City and County Council is cognisant and supportive of the circular economic and long-term use of existing wind assets by supporting life extension and repowering.

MP16 Lobby for policies that prioritise Limerick's offshore wind opportunities, focusing on sustainable economic growth.

MP17 Lead efforts to ensure that local planning and zoning regulations are conducive to the growth and needs of the offshore wind industry.

MP18 Work with council colleagues to develop a simplified and expedited planning process for sustainable energy projects, reducing bureaucracy to encourage the growth of the offshore wind sector in Limerick.

MP19 Advocate for improvements and developments in maritime infrastructure, making Limerick's ports capable of supporting offshore wind logistics.

MP20 Advocate with national energy agencies to ensure that Limerick's offshore wind development aligns with broader energy strategies and contribute to the national grid.

MP21 Engage in intergovernmental collaboration and discussions with the European Investment Bank and/or ISIF to secure investments for infrastructure critical to the offshore wind industry, such as port upgrades, grid enhancements and transportation networks that will benefit the broader Limerick region.

MP22 By working with the local education institutions, we can ensure that Limerick has the appropriate skills to hit the ground running with the development of offshore wind.

3. Equal Opportunity for All

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to transforming Limerick into the most desirable place to live in Ireland. However, we cannot ignore the stark disparities that exist within our communities. Many Electoral Divisions in Limerick city and suburbs are classed as disadvantaged or very disadvantaged, with "John's A" classed as extremely disadvantaged since 2011. The Electoral Division of Rathkeale also falls under the "disadvantaged" category according to the POBAL HP Deprivation Index. These and other factors highlight the significant journey ahead to achieve genuine equality for all in Limerick.

The differences in population change across the city and county in recent years underscore these inequalities. The CSO Census results of 2022 reveal that 11.1% of the population within Limerick City and suburbs have attained only primary education. While we have seen a welcome influx of residents from other countries, many of whom possess skills needed by our local economy, they face barriers to full participation due to language skills or non-recognition of their qualifications.

Achieving equal opportunity for all in Limerick means ensuring access to critical support services, lifelong education, and comprehensive job support across all demographics. This involves enhancing educational facilities, adapting job training to meet evolving market needs, and ensuring all residents, regardless of background, have the resources to succeed professionally and personally. Prioritising inclusivity in education and employment creates a more equitable society and strengthens our local economy by maximising the potential of every resident.

MY VISION

Imagine if no resident in Limerick felt disadvantaged on life's journey by the address into which they were born, where they are living today, the language they speak most comfortably or the school they attend.

Imagine if they had equal access to continuous learning opportunities that allowed them to thrive in a rapidly changing job market.

Imagine if support systems for employment were so robust and accessible that all residents, including the historically underemployed groups, felt empowered and fully supported to pursue their career aspirations.

Imagine if especially in disadvantaged areas, thriving community development centres operated and could focus on providing critical services not spending a lot of time on funding applications. If lifelong learning centres were established throughout Limerick, making critical education accessible to everyone, regardless of their income, age or previous educational attainment

To create this vision, Limerick will need to;

MP23 Work with Paul Partnership, West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Developments to ensure adequate services and facilities are provided in the areas where most needed, for example King's Island. For this reason, representatives of each will be asked to serve on the initial Implementation Committee.

MP24 Ensure there is support for lifelong learning in limerick by encouraging participation from the wide range of local educational institutions, businesses and community centres to offer continuous learning opportunities tailored to the needs of the community.

MP25 Ensure specific attention is given to the funding of the provision of English language training to those in need of it, irrespective of ability to pay.

MP25A Work with immigration authorities to streamline and improve (including by digitisation) the visa application process in Limerick to achieve the best levels of efficiency and friendliness in Ireland.

MP26 Develop a comprehensive job support programme that includes career counselling, job placement services and upskilling courses designed to meet the needs of Limerick's diverse population.

MP27 Introduce a Mayoral recognition scheme and Voluntary Charter for businesses that actively participate in training programmes and hire from within the local community, focusing on creating opportunities for vulnerable groups.

MP28 Provide support for initiatives like Engage in Education as part of a Mayoral third level scholarship scheme.

MP29 Allocate funding from the Mayoral budget and work with organisations like Rethink Ireland to provide leverage to a new Mayoral Social Entrepreneurship fund, funded by philanthropical and Mayoral funding which will support priority projects across the county which work towards more equal opportunities for all.

MP30 Design and implement a volunteering and mentoring system for those in gainful employment to be able to reach out and advise those starting out on that road, and ensure they take full advantage of the opportunities provided and the services available to them.

MP31 Support sporting organisations located or operating in disadvantaged areas who focus on sporting prowess and the development of rounded young adults.

MP32 Find a solution for the Factory so that it can transition to a new location without withdrawing its services for extended periods in the transition period.

MP33 Continue the work of Limerick Regeneration supporting the most disadvantaged areas of Limerick City move towards being areas of opportunity for all.

4. SME & INDIGENOUS FOCUS

The Programme is committed to ensuring that our small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and indigenous businesses, the backbone of our economy, continue to thrive. These businesses provide significant employment and drive local innovation, comprising not just hi-tech start-ups but also tradesmen, retailers, agri-businesses, personal trainers, hotels, fashion designers, and graduates or former employees pursuing entrepreneurial paths.

In November 2020, I volunteered to deliver a report for Limerick City and County Council, which was subsequently approved by the elected representatives. This report identified essential steps to support our SME industry through the COVID crisis. While many of these recommendations remain outstanding, they are still equally valid and merit re-emphasis. As I noted in that report:

“We need a thriving community of agile SMEs working in a distributed manner, better capitalised and resilient to shocks and change.”

Supporting these businesses through targeted policies will ensure their growth and sustainability, contributing to the economy of the region. While foreign direct investment (FDI) companies are crucial for regional development, providing excellent employment and innovation opportunities, locally owned and managed firms contribute in numerous other ways. Often smaller and more geographically dispersed, these operations play a vital role in our community.

The programme commits me as Mayor to provide a supportive environment for SMEs and indigenous firms by securing financial assistance, removing bureaucracy, and use the office of Mayor to enhance access to international markets.

The following principles, which guided my approach towards policy formulation for SMEs and other indigenous businesses, remain valid and essential even four years later.

[INSERT FROM SME REPORT]

MY VISION

Imagine that Limerick’s political leadership are known to be vocal supporters of SMEs and Limerick is the most supportive city region in Ireland for SMEs and indigenous businesses, with a thriving ecosystem that encourages local entrepreneurship and supports start-ups and companies through their growth phase.

Imagine, if the SME ecosystem in Limerick is such that every local business owner has access to the resources and networks necessary to succeed, including state-of-the-art facilities and business mentorship programs.

Indigenous firms in Limerick not only succeeded locally but also have grown and innovated new products so as to make a mark on the global stage, showcasing the innovation and quality of products from Limerick

To get more for our SME and indigenous companies, Limerick will need to;

MP34 Change the local political climate to put indigenous business, whether engineering, retail, agri or individual sole traders in the health and leisure space, front and centre of the business conversation in Limerick. I will lobby strongly on their behalf at national level as I did during the SME recovery Ireland campaign.

MP35 Establish an SME Task Force to be chaired by me as Mayor and include selected councillors and stakeholders to build a 5-year SME Action Plan. Starting with the recommendations in this programme for recovery and growth of the SME sector, the Task Force will drive the SME Action Plan and report to the Council Chamber on an annual basis.

MP36 Review the recommendations from my 2020 SME recovery report to reestablish a focus on the delivery of these recommendations with urgency.

MP37 Create a Limerick SME Hub that acts as a one-stop-shop for business support, offering advice, financing options and networking opportunities specifically tailored to SMEs and indigenous businesses and bridge the gap between LEO and EI supports and enhancing the supports otherwise offered by those agencies.

MP38 The SME Hub should produce a more accurate mapping of Limerick's SME sector and produce semi-annual updates on the performance of the sector to be reported and discussed by the relevant SPC and the full Council, if requested

MP39 Launch a "Made in Limerick" branding campaign to promote products created by local businesses, both within Ireland and internationally, enhancing market reach and brand recognition and create a Mayoral Forum to open opportunities for local SME firms to sell services and products to FDI companies established in Limerick and beyond.

MP40 Develop partnerships with universities and technological institutes to facilitate innovation and technology transfer, ensuring that local businesses stay competitive in the digital age.

MP41 Produce an evidence based Action Plan and related implementation plan to ensure better access to training and part time mentorship of Limerick SME companies who have not achieved scale so as to be able to afford full time support but who can benefit from the learning of other professionals in Limerick. This task should include finding ways to connect dots to those persons retired from full time roles or others who might be willing to help other Limerick firms on a part time basis.

MP42 Better leverage the Limerick "Diaspora" to provide assistance to Limerick firms wanting to access foreign or even other domestic markets outside of Limerick.

5. AGRI & FOOD

As Mayor of Limerick, I am proud to champion our agriculture and food sectors, which are vital components of our economy and deeply rooted in our culture and heritage. With nearly 6,000 farms and over 7,000 individuals directly employed on these farms, and thousands more in processing, logistics, and retail, Limerick's agricultural sector is a cornerstone of our community.

Limerick stands as the third largest producer county in Ireland, following only Cork and Tipperary, and accounts for roughly 10% of all milk produced in the state, valued at approximately €360 million. Considering the local economic impact, this translates to a value of over €700 million for Limerick when farm incomes are spent within the local economy.

Despite this significant contribution, farm incomes and margins are under constant pressure, exacerbated by changes in the Nitrates derogation, which acts as a stocking limit. To ensure the sustainability of our commercial farming sector while making progress on environmental goals, we need innovative thinking and strategic actions.

National and EU policies will play a critical role, but by integrating these components in a new way, we can develop a distinct Limerick Agri & Food sector under our “Made in Limerick” brand, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and infrastructural objectives.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick was internationally recognised as a centre of excellence for sustainable agriculture and gourmet food production.

Imagine if locally we enhanced the Agri & Food sector promoting sustainable agricultural practices, supporting local food producers, and developing a robust local-to-global supply chain. Imagine if we emphasised innovation in food production and distribution and transformed Limerick into a leading centre for agricultural technology and high-quality food products, benefiting both rural and urban communities.

Imagine if our local farmers and food producers were at the forefront of ecological farming practices, reducing environmental impact and setting standards nationwide.

And imagine if the region's rich agricultural heritage and new food sector can not only provide a richer quality of life to residents of Limerick but be leveraged to create a unique food tourism experience, attracting visitors from around Ireland and beyond to sample Limerick's reputation as one of the State's leading farming and food producing area

To get more from our Agri & Food sectors, Limerick will need to;

- MP43** Support the formation of a Limerick Agri-Food Innovation Centre. Working with educational institutions such as the Pallaskenry Agricultural College, the Limerick Agri-Food Innovation Centre will service as a hub for innovation in sustainable agriculture and food technology and an avenue for financing.
- MP44** Support a programme for sustainable and organic farming practices, providing technical and financial assistance to farmers transitioning to these methods and incorporate this within the work of the SME Hub.

MP45 Develop a "Farm to Fork" scheme that encourages and facilitates direct sales from farmers to consumers and local businesses, reducing carbon footprint and supporting local economies. This can be achieved through local farmers' markets across the county and food tourism trails.

MP46 Propose to Councillors that we allocate some of the annual festival and events budget to annual Limerick Food Festivals to celebrate and promote local produce, integrating with national tourism strategies to enhance Limerick's visibility as a food destination.

MP47 Work with the Milk Market Trustees, and councillors who serve as Trustees, to extend both the opening hours and the Milk Market itself and look at the possibility of arranging good access for deliveries etc. while closing off and incorporating some of the streets and area immediately around the market as part of a new public realm strategy. Every attempt will be made to facilitate Limerick farmers or Urban Co-op attempts to get sustainable non-corporate food products "closer to the till" in a way that makes it easier for the consumers to choose them. This could include the development of markets for county towns or others in the four city neighbourhoods.

MP48 Support local breweries and distilleries as they grow upwards and outwards.

MP49 Investigate the possibility of securing financing to establish a new Limerick-based milk processor on a Co-op basis that will be charged with developing "value-added" dairy-based products like yogurt and ice-cream.

MP50 Conduct a feasibility study for developing anaerobic digestion (AD) and bio-methane facilities that will enable Limerick's farmers to develop these new income streams. Local ownership and control will be encouraged and facilitated.

MP51 Explore with both UL and TUS the introduction of third level courses that feed into, and work with, our farming and food sector so that local students will be able to avail of third level education without having to leave family farms while studying and lobby Government to support the bid for a new Vet Faculty for the Mid-West.

MP52 Lead international trade and investment missions which are not just focused on technology and life sciences. My trade missions will focus on re-opening the supply lines to global food importers and the world's great restaurants. In the 1900's menus from the Dorchester Hotel had "Limerick Ham" featured alongside Dover Sole and other place-specific delicacies.

MP53 Support the development of an indigenous craft and artisan food sector as part of a broader "Made in Limerick" brand. I will ensure that Limerick producers, where available, are given prime spots and retail opportunities in functions sponsored or carried out by the local authority.

MP54 Will investigate if Limerick marts can become co-location options for downstream and local food markets to make them more central options for farmers buying or selling from right across North Munster.

MP55 Support a programme of better retirement planning and inter-generational transfer of assets for participants in the agricultural sector.

6. IT & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Limerick has a strong and under-appreciated IT industry, driving economic growth and creating a dynamic environment for our technological professionals. As we look to the future, AI emerges as the next frontier. It is not merely a buzzword but a strong force shaping the landscape of future jobs and industries in our region.

Our city is uniquely positioned to lead this AI revolution. The foundation laid by initiatives like the Limerick for IT cluster, which nurtured networks such as Limerick for Engineering and the Precision and Turned Parts Manufacturing Association (PTMA), coupled with the influx of skilled graduates from institutions like UL and TUS, provides us with a robust platform for AI development and innovation.

However, our ambition does not stop at adaptation; it extends to leadership. My office will cultivate an ecosystem that seamlessly integrates AI advancements into every aspect of urban life. We can position Limerick as Ireland's premier AI hub, where innovation is not just theoretical but tangible—transforming our streets, homes, and workplaces.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick's streets were a live canvas of smart city solutions, from AI-driven traffic management to energy-efficient buildings that adapt to their environment, making daily life smoother and more sustainable. Where our public services—from waste management to city planning—were enhanced by these technologies, ensuring Limerick not only runs efficiently but also becomes a beacon of smart urban development.

Imagine if, through our Limerick for IT initiative, we could connect local talent with global tech leaders, creating a robust network that fuels continuous innovation and job creation in the heart of our city delivering something like the ISE initiative already delivered in UL.

We already know that MNCs are embracing and integrating AI into their business operations. Imagine Limerick not just participating in the digital transformation but leading it. This leadership would not only retain but expand our MNC ecosystem, securing Limerick's position as a magnet for future foreign direct investment and reinforcing our role as a leader in technological innovation.

To get more from IT & Artificial Intelligence, Limerick will need to:

- MP56** Convene a group of experts from government, academia and industry to oversee the implementation of AI-driven smart city solutions across Limerick and consider how this could benefit the residents of Limerick and Limerick based businesses.
- MP57** Initiate pilot projects to integrate new digital technologies into public services like waste management and city planning, showcasing efficiencies and encouraging wider adoption.
- MP58** Explore the feasibility of, and if suitable, establish a Telecoms Unit for the local authority as has been done in Dublin.
- MP59** Review the procurement processes to identify any unnecessary obstacles to test bedding innovative technologies and the ability of small businesses to tender for contracts.
- MP60** Organise at least two technology conferences in Limerick. The aim will be to foster innovation, attract global tech leaders and showcase local developments in AI and smart technologies, especially innovations happening or planned for local authority services.

MP61 Support partnerships between industry, local government and other public bodies and universities and technical institutes to create training programmes that focus on AI and its application, preparing the local workforce and those seeking jobs and willing to reskill for the jobs of tomorrow.

MP62 Investigate and trial initiatives to use new technology for traffic management and energy-efficient building design, improving urban living conditions.

MP63 Establish guidelines and frameworks to ensure that AI technologies are used ethically within LCCC's operations and make suggestions for their use within local businesses.

MP64 Encourage collaborations between local government, academic institutions and industry to support research in AI that can lead to innovative public service solutions.

MP65 Strengthen Limerick's ties with international city governments and tech hubs through partnerships and cooperative agreements, ensuring the city remains at the cutting edge of technological advancements.

DRAFT

7. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (MUSIC, FILM, DESIGN, FASHION)

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to supporting creative industries, which include music, film, design, and fashion—vital sectors that not only enrich our cultural heritage, but also support vital employment.

Limerick has a strong foundation for creative excellence, supported by institutions like the Limerick School of Arts and Design (LSAD), the Limerick School of Music and initiatives such as Music Generation. My goal is clear: to support our artists and creators, encourage innovation, and elevate Limerick as a vibrant cultural hub on both national and international stages.

This Programme prioritises the development of workspaces, performance venues, and cinemas that provide essential infrastructure for our creative professionals. These spaces will support the day-to-day work of artists and serve as cultural landmarks in our city centre, revitalising historic areas with creativity and vibrancy.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick was internationally recognised as a cultural capital, celebrated for its vibrant music scenes, innovative fashion, cutting-edge design, and compelling film productions.

Imagine if local designers, musicians, filmmakers, and fashion entrepreneurs were regular fixtures on the global stage, bringing renown and pride to the city but their workshops and performance spaces were very visible especially in historic parts of the City Centre.

Imagine if Limerick hosted an array of festivals, exhibitions, and shows that drew visitors from around the world, particularly to engage with local talented artists making Limerick a must visit destination for cultural tourism.

Imagine if the new bank holiday weekend in February belonged to a music and creative festival in Limerick.

To do more for our creative industries, Limerick will need to;

- MP66** Create a Limerick Creative District, a dedicated area that offers visibility to local artists and creators, perhaps within the shadows of some of our oldest heritage buildings including St. Mary's Cathedral.
- MP67** Set up an Expert Working Group to produce a detailed report on the growth potential of Limerick's creative sector and thereafter as Mayor, I will chair a Task Force to deliver on specific recommendations from the report which can be achieved within the mayoral term.
- MP68** Partner with educational institutions, in so far as possible within nationally set guidelines, to develop and support those teaching curricula in creative fields to ensure the next generation of artists have the skills and knowledge required to thrive.
- MP69** Work with our new city centre film house and the Belltable to ensure that Limerick is host to a short film festival showcasing international short films and those created by our local film producers.

MP70 Advocate for more parts of RTE to be decentralised from Montrose to Limerick. In particular, ongoing series productions which will ensure consistent supply of work for Limerick based TV and film crew.

MP71 Establish and champion an annual “Limerick Design Week”. This will include Limerick's industrial design and a related annual fashion show.

MP72 Support and nurture an early identified list of festivals and events, such as film, theatre and a music festival, especially over the February bank holiday which will showcase Limerick's multi-national creative talents and attracts cultural tourism and set up a point of contact and help support the management of logistics (street closures, accommodation etc) for such festivals and events or related activities like music video shooting or film production.

MP73 Investigate the feasibility of a dedicated officer in Innovate Limerick, or the SME Agency, assigned to supporting the growth of the self-employed persons or small businesses operating in creative industries sector. This resource can help with the settling in process for individuals moving to Limerick before the Welcome to Limerick office is established.

MP74 Work with Council Officials to review public procurement approaches especially minimum size or turnover requirements to ensure they do not prevent local creative industries operators from participating in a bidding contest.

8. MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to strengthening our city's manufacturing and engineering sectors, which are critical to our economic growth, employment, and industrial output. Limerick has a proud history of manufacturing excellence, and we are now poised to expand our footprint in key areas especially medical devices, aeronautics and beyond.

Our strategy involves embracing advanced manufacturing techniques, supporting engineering innovation, and integrating digital technologies. By focusing on these priorities, we aim to enhance productivity and competitiveness and to ensure the long-term sustainability of these industries in Limerick.

New opportunities are emerging in response to pressing challenges such as the housing crisis and climate change. These challenges present avenues for future job creation and economic development.

Imagine Limerick as a global hub for advanced manufacturing and engineering, renowned for its cutting-edge technologies and skilled workforce. We would become a base for global companies looking to leverage our expertise and innovation capabilities, thereby strengthening our local economy and creating high-quality jobs for our residents.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick has a global reputation as a centre for advanced manufacturing and engineering, attracting global companies seeking to leverage cutting-edge technologies and skilled talent.

Imagine if local manufacturers were leaders in sustainable practices, using green technologies and processes that minimised environmental impact. Imagine if locally led firms are developing new solutions to the problems of climate change, renewable energy and smart infrastructure not just for Limerick but solutions which are road-tested in Limerick with a willing local authority to be exported from Limerick across Ireland and across the globe.

Imagine if we have taken advantage of the offshore wind potential of our region to have developed a heavier engineering and manufacturing sector along the Foynes Industry, for example, designing and building the offshore turbines of the future right here on Shannonside rather than importing them from other parts of Europe.

To strengthen our manufacturing and engineering sectors, Limerick will need to;

MP75 Give visible support from the Mayor's office to Digital Manufacturing Ireland and the "Digital Factory" so both are properly leveraged to cement Limerick's place as a leader in Industry 4.0 where true collaboration takes place between local firms and research institutions.

MP76 Develop a targeted skills programme, in partnership with local universities and technical institutes, to ensure a steady supply of highly skilled engineers and technicians trained in the latest industry practices. We will work with initiatives such as "Explore Engineering" and "Digital Midwest" so that they perhaps become nationwide initiatives, where the leadership and IP remains firmly rooted in Limerick.

MP77 Support the Local Enterprise Office and Enterprise Ireland to advise firms about EU and national incentive schemes for manufacturing and engineering firms who invest in sustainability. We must reward environmentally friendly technologies and accompany firms on that journey, ensuring that Limerick is a European leader in this respect.

MP78 Support a biennial Manufacturing and Engineering innovation conference in Limerick to showcase local innovations, attract international investors and facilitate networking among industry professionals.

MP79 Work with Digital Mid-West and Explore Engineering to examine the entire supply chain in order to drive Limerick forward as a location for Life Sciences Manufacturing, as was done for the creation of the Aero cluster for aviation manufacturing.

MP80 In close collaboration with TUS and UL, secure a city centre building and/or land on which to establish a visible and centrally located "Limerick Engineering" and "Made in Limerick" pavilion. We will create a support office to showcase the best of what Limerick offers in Manufacturing and Engineering and drive the development of these sectors. In time, this can evolve to an "Engineering Gallery", similar to the Science Gallery in Dublin's TCD

MP81 Work with companies like Takumi Precision Engineering and the Department of Further Education to ensure that their pilot project for CBS Sexton Street, installing cutting edge machining technology in schools, has been expanded to all secondary schools in Limerick by the end of the Mayoral term.

MP78 Work with our colleagues in Kerry and Clare County Councils to review the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary to identify and secure land along the Estuary for the development of heavy industry engineering facilities connected to the Off-Shore wind opportunity. This will then be aligned to the next Development Plan.

9. Retail

As Mayor of Limerick, I recognise the crucial role that the retail sector plays in our city's economy, serving as a significant employer and a cornerstone of our vibrant community life.

Our retail sector stands at a critical moment, faced with economic challenges and changing consumer trends. Yet, within these challenges there is an opportunity for meaningful intervention. By modernising the customer experience and adopting best practices from global retail leaders, Limerick city centre can reclaim its position as a regional retail leader.

I believe in building long-term resilience for our retail environment, supporting local businesses to enhance their competitiveness against global franchises and online giants. As economist E.F. Schumacher espoused in 'Small Is Beautiful', a diverse array of local retailers not only strengthens economic resilience but also enriches our community fabric through increased diversity and mutual support.

Developing our retail offering will strengthen Limericks economic resilience and elevate the city centre and county towns appeal to residents and tourists alike. A thriving retail sector, known for its quality and diversity is essential.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick was a trendsetter in retail innovation, offering unique shopping experiences that blend technology, culture, and sustainability, leveraging the talent graduating from our local colleges like LSAD or moving to Limerick annually.

Imagine if every shopping district in Limerick was bustling with activity, featuring a mix of global brands and vibrant local enterprises that draw shoppers from near and far.

The city and key towns were known for their eco-friendly and pet friendly shopping options, including markets that exclusively feature locally sourced and sustainably produced goods.

Imagine if many retail spaces in Limerick are located in buildings also hosting community hubs, hosting cultural and social events and together all enrich the area's social fabric

To improve our retail offering, Limerick will need to:

MP83 Progress the actions set out in other areas, such as increasing residential populations in the city centre and towns and villages, enhancing public realm and safety, and developing a more active food market ecosystem.

MP84 Develop the Limerick Retail Innovation Programme to assist local retailers in adopting digital tools and e-commerce platforms, enhancing their competitiveness and reach.

MP85 Launch a "Shop Local" marketing campaign to promote local businesses, including regular markets and fairs that showcase local artisans, producers and retailers highlighting retailers who implement sustainable practices, providing them with promotional support and financial incentives.

MP86 Revitalise shopping streets with improved infrastructure and amenities, creating attractive and pedestrian-friendly environments that encourage shopping and social activities. We will focus on additional USP's for pilot streets like Roches Street so that they become child friendly or pet friendly and incorporate facilities for autistic persons.

MP87 Conduct a survey of underutilised public spaces and public buildings for potential for temporary uses. This may be rotating pop-up shops, providing vibrancy and continual novelty to shopping districts in towns and the city centre.

MP88 Work with city centre traders, cultural institutions, hospitality operators and the Nighttime Economy Advisor to develop a plan for Sunday and late-night opening one night a week in the city centre. We will animate streets and align the opening hours of cultural amenities, and if successful, consider extending this model to one of more volunteering county town.

MP89 Conduct a survey of key new neighbourhoods planned for development to assess deficiencies in retail offerings available to new residents and agree a plan with the planning and economic development services of the local authority to secure the missing retail offerings in a way which minimises commuting or car dependency of residents of the new neighbourhoods.

MP90 Explore new models for community-led micro-retail and retail coop opportunities, particularly in areas or communities without immediate access to shopping districts.

MP91 Develop a Retail Mentorship Network that pairs established retail leaders with new entrepreneurs to share knowledge, strategies and support across generations.

MP92 Provide investment support (perhaps using rates rebates) for the revitalisation of retailer shopfronts, with particular focus on improvements to both marketability and the quality of public space.

MP92A Develop a Shop Local voucher scheme in conjunction with Limerick Chamber and local businesses.

10. SUPPORTING CONSTRUCTION

The housing crisis in Limerick presents a clear and pressing challenge to our city's prosperity and social cohesion. The skyrocketing prices and rents creating barriers to economic stability. This crisis not only threatens our society but also undermines our competitiveness and hinders the growth of local businesses, exacerbating the gap in shared wealth.

To address these urgent issues, scaling up our construction sector is paramount. A robust construction industry is not just about building homes; it is about creating valuable employment opportunities and driving essential urban development and infrastructure projects that benefit all residents.

Supporting this sector involves promoting sustainable building practices that reduce environmental impact and enhance long-term sustainability. Streamlining regulatory processes will expedite construction timelines, making it more feasible to meet the urgent demand for housing.

Equally crucial is ensuring a skilled workforce through apprenticeships and other training programs. By investing in the next generation of builders and construction professionals, we can elevate Limerick's construction industry to a national centre of excellence, pioneering new construction methods and technologies that set standards across Ireland.

Enhancing the construction industry will create economic development that improves the quality of life for all Limerick residents. By tackling the housing crisis head-on and supporting a vibrant, sustainable construction sector, we can create a region where prosperity and opportunities are shared by everyone.

We can build a Limerick where affordable housing is accessible, economic growth is inclusive, and our city stands as a model of sustainable urban development.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick had a pipeline of construction talent so that as projects obtained planning and permission and were ready to start, the current shortage of workers in the sector was not a factor in the risk of construction price inflation or delays in projects. The construction sector could provide abundant employment opportunities but with a focus on fair wages and safe working conditions.

Imagine if Limerick projects show a leadership role in sustainable construction, with all new buildings meeting high environmental standards and contributing to the city's green goals. The Limerick firms working on these exemplary projects would then have the expertise to tender for other projects nationwide and beyond leading to greater success for the Limerick based firms.

Imagine a well-trained pool of Limerick based crafts workers were available to work on heritage buildings rather than see the costs of such projects increase as a result of needing to seek workers and expertise from elsewhere.

To support construction, Limerick will need to:

MP93 Bring together a group of local builders, developers and construction professionals to understand the blockages in the system which are delaying projects with planning permission from getting underway.

MP94 Produce a locally focussed action plan to activate sites which already have planning permission and to secure planning permission for other sites worthy of development.

MP95 Introduce a programme to encourage and remove obstacles to new participants with international expertise in building taller buildings or modular buildings of scale.

MP96 Encourage the LDA and Limerick 2030 DAC to organise procurement competitions for sites in Limerick which allow Limerick based builders and other consultants to tender for these projects thereby developing local knowledge for other projects.

MP97 Encourage education and training (including seeking funding for exchange programmes with other industry players elsewhere) in innovative and best practices in the building industry, focusing on sustainability and efficiency for local builders.

MP98 Ensure that there is a robust skills development initiative in partnership with local technical colleges to ensure a continuous supply for trained professionals in modern construction techniques.

MP99 Task the “Welcome to Limerick” office with the job of identifying an ongoing supply of construction sector workers who are interested in moving to Limerick.

MP100 Conduct a review of the workings of local planning decisions to identify improvements to streamline, speed up and improve accountability for planning and approval processes. This will reduce costs for new construction projects, making it easier for developers to initiate and complete projects.

MP101 Propose to councillors the allocation of budget to permit Limerick City & County Council or Limerick 2030 DAC to pre-plan for apartments on state owned lands (in excess of the public housing needs) so that developers and builders can fast track the delivery of private projects by acquiring these sites from the local authority with approvals already in place for the type, size and design of buildings which the planners have deemed desirable in that area.

MP102 Commission a report to analyse the steps needed to be taken so that Limerick based construction professional firms, builders, suppliers, tradespersons or manufacturers can grow rapidly to become national or international players in the industry.

11. TOURISM

As Mayor of Limerick, I see a huge opportunity to harness our city and county's tourism potential, propelled by events like the upcoming Ryder Cup at Adare Manor. This event presents a rare chance to position Limerick as a premier destination on a global stage.

However, our success depends not only on international visitors but also on attracting domestic tourism to Limerick. We need to enable our towns, villages, and hidden gems, ensuring that every corner of Limerick contributes to our tourism offering.

Tourism isn't just about economic growth in our city centre; it extends throughout our region. As highlighted in the Shannon Estuary Taskforce Report, tourism plays a vital role in sustaining communities in rural areas such as those along the Wild Atlantic Way, where it supports a significant portion of local employment and contributes to our social fabric.

The question now is whether we have the infrastructure, the unique experiences, and the strategic vision to capitalise on this moment. It's time to reimagine Limerick's tourism industry, developing a vibrant and sustainable sector that benefits all our communities.

We will invest in enhancing our tourism infrastructure, ensuring that visitors have seamless and memorable experiences across the city and county. We will showcase our cultural heritage, natural beauty, and hospitality, tempting visitors to explore beyond the city and discover the diverse offerings of our county.

By supporting collaboration between local businesses, communities, and tourism stakeholders, we will create a tourism ecosystem that thrives year-round. This approach will not only drive economic prosperity but also preserve and celebrate the unique character of each locality within Limerick.

MY VISION

Imagine a Limerick where every town feels like a discovery. Picture yourself exploring hidden corners of Castleconnell, where local guides unveil forgotten tales against a backdrop of riverside charm. Envision a vibrant food scene in Kilmallock, where farm-fresh flavours meet modern culinary creativity in every bite under the shadow of Kilmallock's unique medieval heritage.

Imagine cycling a newly linked network of trails, connecting heritage gems from Adare to Abbeyfeale, and encountering pop-up events celebrating local craft and culture. Picture a bustling app that suggests personalised itineraries, revealing the "Limerick only locals know" – whether it's a lively music session in Patrickswell or a new buzzing vintage market near Newcastle West.

Imagine our revitalised city centre is one which plays host to weekenders from all over Ireland who come for sporting events, quirky shopping, museums and music of cultural offerings, quality restaurants or just to stroll around a refurbished Georgian Quarter or along the riverbanks of the River Shannon.

This is the new Limerick tourism. It's about unearthing the unexpected, connecting with the authentic heart of our towns, and celebrating the energy and warmth that make our corner of Ireland so special.

To get the full potential from tourism, we will;

MP103 Support the delivery of the recommendations in the Shannon Estuary Economic Task Force in so far as they relate to tourism in Limerick, and report quarterly.

MP104 Publish a Ryder Cup preparation strategic plan. Establish a task force with national agencies, representatives from Limerick tourism stakeholders and residents in Adare to ensure the funding is secured from Government to support the delivery of logistics for the Ryder Cup and the refurbishment of the Adare Heritage Centre.

MP105 In partnership with local tourism providers, publish more multi-day itineraries that combine the excitement of the Ryder Cup with the opportunity to explore Limerick City, surrounding towns and the wider region even after the Ryder Cup is over.

MP106 Task the Tourism DAC with making public and maintaining a forward plan for events in Limerick even if only in planning, so that other groups can avoid unnecessary date conflicts.

MP107 Establish a working group led by the Mayor's office, to include representatives of hotels and other short-term accommodation to pre-plan for tourism accommodation needs (especially for the Ryder Cup) and if necessary, consider with the Director General if tourism accommodation projects can be fast tracked for planning permission.

MP108 Work with local schools to identify and promote lesser-known historical sites with a "Limerick Hidden Gems" initiative, such as the Munget Monastic Site, Askeaton Castle, natural attractions, such as Lough Gur or the Ballyhoura Mountains and cultural experiences such as the Foynes Museum in towns throughout the county to diversify the tourism offering.

MP109 Use the office of the Mayor to establish a greater collaborative network for tourism stakeholders across the City & County, supporting communication, knowledge sharing and coordinated marketing efforts. Organise workshops and training sessions to equip them with skills to develop and market unique tourism products.

MP110 Draft best practices and guidelines for sustainable tourism development in Limerick, ensuring a balance between visitor experiences and environmental and cultural preservation.

MP111 Deliver a waterways strategy in conjunction with other local authorities if relevant, Shannon Foynes Port Authority and with Failte Ireland.

MP112 Deliver on the Game Cube

MP113 Build on Limerick's reputation as a sports destination to showcase and support alternative sporting events such as mountain biking and power lifting.

12. REVITALISING OUR CITY CENTRE

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to revitalising our historic city centre, the beating heart of our community, which holds immense promise but currently underperforms. The statistics are stark: nearly 20% of commercial spaces sit vacant, and 7.7% of residential properties remain unoccupied. These numbers paint a clear picture of untapped potential.

The Interim Review highlights our city centre's economic challenges. This underperformance not only affects our city's vitality but also impacts the broader county and region.

Yet, this current reality creates an opportunity. We must unlock the full potential of our city centre, turning it into a vibrant and sustainable hub that residents, businesses, and visitors can enjoy. By revitalising our city centre, we can ensure that all of communities operate cohesively, without any one area holding back our collective progress.

It's time for decisive action and a bold new vision. While other parts of our plan address transport, security, public realm improvements, and increasing local resident numbers, our focus here is on strengthening business support.

We will introduce new business support initiatives to attract and retain enterprises in our city centre. This includes streamlined processes for starting and growing a business, targeted incentives for investment and innovation, and supporting a welcoming environment that encourages entrepreneurship and economic growth.

By investing in our city centre's success, we will create a dynamic ecosystem where businesses flourish, creating jobs and opportunities for our residents. We will enhance the appeal of the city centre as a destination for shopping, dining, cultural experiences, and community events, making it a place where people choose to live, work, and visit.

MY VISION

Imagine a Limerick where the energy of O'Connell Street never sleeps. Restaurants spill onto a pedestrianised boulevard, vibrant cultural events unfold in Arthur's Quay Park, and everyone feels safe and welcome. Students live above bustling shops on revitalised William Street and Thomas Street, their energy fuelling a creative renaissance.

Imagine if international businesses discover the advantages of Limerick's unique blend of Georgian heritage and modern innovation in the heart of Newtown Pery and nearby in the Colbert Quarter, tapping into our talented workforce living close by in thousands of affordable apartments built with intervention by and/or owned by Limerick itself.

Imagine if pockets of green at The People's Park or even New Town Park or a hidden courtyard off Catherine Street, offer a place to pause and breathe. Imagine a beach of sand during the summer in Georgian Limerick. In a digitised city, a single app connects you effortlessly to Limerick from your city centre doorstep, taking you to work, to UL, or perhaps on an adventure along the revitalised Docklands. There are safe and easy paths for walking right across the city with children or pets or even as residents grow older and crossing streets becomes more challenging.

Imagine if vacant buildings on Cruises Street have been transformed, bustling market halls nestled in historic buildings draw crowds inside, quirky shops invite exploration, and artists find inspiration in

former warehouses. Imagine selected blocks on streets in our city core have been transformed into shop local streets perhaps with Ireland's first pet friendly shopping street.

And just steps from home, the banks of the Shannon come alive – cafes hum with activity, the gentle sounds of kayaks mingle with laughter, bringing new life to our city's historic heart.

To revitalise our city centre, Limerick will need to:

- MP114** Agree to a definition of the "City Centre" and thereafter collect and publish economic and other statistics aligned to that area.
- MP115** Deliver the on-going Limerick 2030 and LDA projects in the City Centre.
- MP116** Agree a targeted 10-year plan for the development of a wider range of retail businesses in the City Centre and seek to appoint an official at the level of Director of Services with responsibility for the delivery of same.
- MP117** Introduce a shopfronts design scheme that incentivises businesses to refurbish or replace historical facades on designated streets. Offer reduced rates or a new scheme developed with national funding with grants or low-cost loans for refurbishing older buildings for retail use.
- MP118** Develop a detailed and future proofed parking strategy for the entire city centre.
- MP119** Partner with educational institutions and infrastructure funds to create a "student hub" within the city centre, offering affordable housing options and supporting a youthful, creative atmosphere, ideally within close walking distance to the new Limerick City Library and / or Colbert Station.
- MP120** Work with businesses on a selected street to pilot a pet friendly shopping street and experience.
- MP121** Enhance the offering of Limerick for Christmas by providing a nationally significant Christmas market and encouraging occupants of Georgian buildings or other residents and businesses of the city centre to make a special collective effort throughout the city centre.
- MP122** Speedfund the development of a Limerick online portal for customers to shop virtually in retail businesses in the city (and main towns across the county) based on the "Shop Limerick" project
- MP123** Set up a Steering Group to be chaired by the Mayor or a Councillor chosen by the Mayor to include representatives of trader groups, Limerick Chamber, businesses, youth groups, sports facilities and residents in the City Centre to drive all the measures affecting the City Centre and develop new actions to respond to new or on-going challenges.
- MP124** Consider with councillors if budget can be allocated to rent or guarantee the rent of empty retail units at key locations for strategic retail outlets.
- MP125** Kick-off a "Living Lab" initiative by partnering with universities and research institutions to test innovative urban design solutions and technologies within the city centre, such as smart lighting or green infrastructure pilots to reduce the cost of operating for businesses operating in historical buildings.
- MP126** Investigate the feasibility of a new system for waste management for businesses operating from the city centre with particular focus on the potential for underground bin storage

MP127 Declutter our city centre signage and introduce a Wayfinding Strategy, install visible street signage showing the variety and location of retail, cultural and historical offerings in the City Centre.

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13. FOREIGN INVESTMENT

As Mayor of Limerick, I recognise the crucial role that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays in driving our city's economic growth, supporting technological advancement, and creating high-value employment opportunities.

Limerick's strategy to strengthen our position as an attractive FDI destination focuses on several key areas. First and foremost, we are committed to enhancing the overall business environment. This includes streamlining processes, reducing bureaucracy, and supporting a regulatory framework that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, we understand the importance of competitive incentives. We are committed to offering attractive living options that are both affordable and appealing to the global workforce, ensuring that Limerick is not only a place to work but also a place to live and thrive.

Furthermore, we are dedicated to providing support structures for multinational companies considering investing here. This includes providing landing space, access to talent and research facilities from our third level institutions, as well as ongoing support to facilitate smooth operations and growth.

In recent years, Limerick has successfully diversified its economy, moving away from dependence on a small number of sectors to becoming a more resilient location. Industries such as technology, life sciences, and financial services are thriving here, offering stability and growth opportunities that are less vulnerable to economic downturns.

I am committed to building on these successes and leveraging Limerick's strengths to attract even more diverse FDI. Together with our community, businesses, and educational institutions, we will ensure that Limerick remains a global leader in innovation, technology, and economic prosperity.

By supporting an environment where businesses can thrive and grow, we will create a brighter future for all residents of Limerick.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick with its central location on the Atlantic Economic Corridor close to Shannon International Airport were recognised globally as one of a few primary EU location for international businesses, known for its business-friendly policies, quality of life, excellent infrastructure, and vibrant economic ecosystem.

Multinational corporations in Limerick continue to be major contributors to local development, offering high-quality jobs and participating actively in community and educational programmes.

The presence of foreign companies in Limerick led to a flourishing of local businesses and startups, benefiting from partnerships, investments, and shared expertise.

To attract more foreign direct investment in Limerick, we will have to:

MP128 Complete the Opera Centre office space so as to be able to offer more quality office accommodation in urban locations in Limerick and seek funding to design and secure planning permission for similar office space at new transport nodes like Moyross and the Parkway.

MP129 Host a semi-annual meeting with the IDA and the CEO's of the largest FDI and indigenous companies operating in Limerick to consider actions which can be taken to continue to grow the scale of FDI operations in Limerick inter-trading with the indigenous companies.

MP130 Work with the IDA to identify the next state-of-the-art business park of scale for Limerick and expand land or buildings available for business parks and innovation hubs which can service as landing space for companies in key county towns.

MP131 Set up a visible office to showcase Limerick's new digital and green energy future and allocate funding for a full-time champion of same.

MP132 Produce an action plan to see what more the Mayor and Limerick City & County Council can do to support strong partnerships between local universities and foreign investors to create research and development collaborations that foster innovation and provide educational opportunities for local students.

MP133 Work to inject new energy into the twinning of Limerick and Quimper beginning with a visit of Limerick representatives to Quimper before the end of 2024.

MP134 Establish at least three more twinning's or sister city collaborations before the end of the Mayoral term.

MP135 Secure land for an innovation building or park which can serve as an identifiable location for companies interested in new digital technologies like AI or the gaming industry.

MP136 Support the establishment of an international outreach officer at either Limerick Chamber or other appropriate organisation.

14. KEEPING AND GROW OUR TALENT

As Mayor of Limerick, I am committed to retaining and nurturing talent, which is vital for sustaining our city's economic growth and supporting innovation. The Programme focuses on creating attractive living and working conditions, providing ample opportunities for career advancement, and cultivating a supportive community environment.

The Interim Review forecasts the creation of 42,500 jobs in Limerick and up to 95,000 in the wider Mid-West region by 2030—an ambitious growth of 40%. This growth underscores the importance of preparing our workforce for the demands of expanding industries.

We have already taken decisive steps to address the housing challenge, ensuring that affordable homes are available in neighbourhoods designed with quality-of-life criteria in mind. This initiative not only supports our residents but also enhances the overall attractiveness of Limerick as a place to live and work.

Enrico Moretti's insights in "The New Geography of Jobs" resonate deeply with our approach. He emphasises that in the twenty-first century, economic prosperity hinges on attracting and nurturing creative workers and entrepreneurs. Limerick is uniquely positioned with a wealth of third-level institutions, including two universities, which serve as hubs of talent and innovation.

By prioritising talent retention and growth, Limerick will ensure a steady supply of skilled professionals to fuel the needs of our rapidly expanding industries. We will continue to collaborate closely with our educational institutions, local businesses, and community organisations to foster an environment where talent thrives.

Together, we will build a city and county where creativity is encouraged, innovation is supported, and opportunities are realised.

MY VISION

Imagine if, among cities in Europe, Limerick was renowned as a supportive place of opportunity, where young professionals and semi and fully skilled workers from various fields saw long-term career and personal growth prospects, could access affordable housing and had a high quality of life and vibrant entertainment options.

Imagine if instead of an annual exodus of talented graduates, we reversed that trend and not only approached 100% of our graduates staying in the region but had net positive migration of graduates from the East Coast of Ireland.

Imagine if local businesses and institutions were recognised leaders in employee development, offering continuous learning opportunities, competitive benefits, and a supportive work culture in conjunction with lifelong learning opportunities provided by our third level institutions.

Imagine if the Limerick's quality of life, including housing, education, and healthcare, was so high that it not only was sufficient to retain or attract back its homegrown talent but also attracted top professionals from around the world

To keep and grow our talent, Limerick will need to:

MP137 Launch the Limerick Talent Initiative, a comprehensive program that includes mentorship schemes, professional development courses and networking events designed to support career

progression for and retention of local talent and attract talent from other places through the “Welcome to Limerick” Office in Action [XXXX]

- MP138** Launch a Mayoral Scholarship scheme in conjunction with other private sector companies or philanthropic organisations which ties the funding to remaining in Limerick for a number of years of post-graduate work.
- MP139** Administer financial supports and grants for businesses that invest in employee training programmes and create high-quality jobs in the region.
- MP140** Enhance the liveability of Limerick by investing in affordable housing, healthcare, education and cultural activities to make Limerick a more attractive place for professionals and their families.
- MP141** Produce student housing at scale to reduce the cost of housing as a barrier to attracting students to Limerick or convincing them to stay to do post graduate study or research.
- MP142** Collaborate with local universities and training institutions to align their curriculums with the current market demands, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to enter the local workforce.
- MP143** Use the office of the Mayor to develop a city-wide job activation scheme for persons in long-term unemployment in conjunction with local employers, along the lines of the scheme working successfully in Moyross for a number of years.

15. LEVERAGING PUBLIC WEALTH OF LIMERICK

I am dedicated to maximising the potential of our city's public wealth by strategically utilising public assets and resources. This approach aims to foster economic growth, enhance public services, and improve the overall quality of life for our residents.

Effective management of land, buildings, and infrastructure is at the heart of our strategy. By employing innovative financing methods, we can fund development projects without placing a burden on taxpayers. This ensures that our investments are both sustainable and impactful.

The state owns numerous assets in Limerick, and it is our responsibility to ensure that these resources are managed efficiently. National government funding often comes with its own set of challenges, such as overspending and delays, which can lead to missed opportunities. Addressing these inefficiencies is crucial for maximising our public wealth.

In addition to investing in physical assets, we must prioritise social development and training, especially for those at risk of being left behind by globalisation or automation. Assessing public wealth involves not only financial assets but also the human capital of our community. By equipping our residents with the skills they need, we can ensure that everyone benefits from our city's growth.

Planning well for these changes allows us to become a "smart" city region, capable of driving growth and enhancing the quality of life for all, even if national governments are not fully supportive. Limerick's unique advantage lies in its own development company, Limerick 2030 DAC, which enables us to leverage our assets in ways that no other Irish local Authority can.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick was a model city for effective asset management, where every piece of public property was used optimally to benefit the community, either through direct public use or through partnerships that enhance its value. Imagine if public spaces and facilities were continuously improved and adapted to meet the changing needs of the community, contributing to a vibrant, dynamic urban environment.

Imagine if we were to see a marked improvement in the education and training and then employment levels of all of the inhabitants of Limerick. If we leveraged our diversity of population to improve our scores on multilingualism among our young and old residents.

Imagine if we were to become truly the smartest of Irish regions, with a local government leveraging our educational institutions and high-tech companies to build the smart city region of the Irish future.

Imagine if rent paid by residents or shops was paying down financing on public homes and state-owned retail for local shops provided by the local authority creating in time loan free assets for future generations to use to fund yet more investment

To leverage public wealth of Limerick, Limerick will need to:

MP144 Conduct a comprehensive audit of all public assets (of value greater than 100,000 euros) in Limerick to assess their current use and potential for better utilisation in line with community needs and economic development goals.

MP145 Develop a Public Asset Management Strategy that outlines clear guidelines for the use, maintenance and development of public properties and infrastructure, for example, consider

whether new traffic improvements or parking might free up valuable land like that running along the east side of the People's Park.

- MP146** Introduce mechanisms to improve public finances sources and also use public-private partnerships that encourage the private sector to invest in the development of public assets, such as revitalising old buildings, improving transportation networks and creating green spaces.
- MP147** Implement community engagement initiatives to gather input on the use of public wealth and ensure in the next development plan that projects align with the needs and desires of Limerick residents.
- MP148** Lead a public educational programme in schools and community groups about civic engagement to improve social norms and reduce the incidence of crime and other social ills.
- MP149** Consider with councillors if Limerick can finance a bursary scheme of its own (with funding as required from the Department of Further Education) to further supplement supports for students in Limerick schools remaining in education in Limerick.
- MP150** Ensure data is at the heart of everything which the local authority pursues and share the data with the private sector businesses operating or piloting initiatives in Limerick.
- MP151** Ensure over the Mayoral term, if not already there, that the staffing in Limerick City & County Council has sufficient skills in economics, data science, IT, Infrastructure financing, urban planning and housing development.
- MP152** Invest in public realm in towns and cities so as to also improve relative property values (and local property tax returns) and attract new and flourishing retail outlets as new rate payers.
- MP153** Develop a Future Assets Strategy and related Plan to secure the ownership of the next generation of public land so as to keep value increases coming from future development plan changes or infrastructure for the residents of Limerick.

A MORE HEALTHY LIMERICK

I am deeply committed to addressing the critical healthcare challenges Limerick faces. It has been evident to anyone following the healthcare situation in Limerick, or indeed in Ireland, that our city has been poorly served by the existing health services. Despite the headlines, I want to acknowledge the dedicated and well-trained staff who are tirelessly struggling to cope with the demand and the history of under-investment in our health system and related IT and management.

However, the lack of investment and acceptance of the status quo have led us to this current state, and that cannot continue. If there is one area that urgently needs #MoreForLimerick, it is healthcare. While change is inevitable, transformation is mandatory.

This Programme is guided by core principles in how to achieve a More Healthy Limerick. These principles ensure that everyone deserves:

- Equitable care
- Care as close to home as possible
- Timely care
- High-quality care

While acute care is crucial and much discussed, chronic illness management and prevention are equally important.

In 2018, Majid Ezzati and colleagues published evidence in the BMJ on the value of greater action to reduce health inequalities within cities. Their analysis showed that urban residents generally have better health than their rural counterparts, but these advantages are unevenly distributed within cities. Our urbanizing world provides an opportunity to improve population health in cities and leverage cities as nodes in national and global networks to improve health across countries. Reducing inequalities is fundamental because population health suffers where inequalities are larger.

Therefore, as we strive to improve healthcare quality in Limerick, we must also work to reduce inequalities within our city and between the city and county. There is much we can do to improve our public health even before we get improved public services.

As Mayor, I have limited scope to directly improve public health services, but there is a lot we can do to improve public health. This is why I am focusing on designing actions that can make a tangible difference. It is also important that the Mayor's office remains vigilant and supports public education programs to deal with communicable diseases, particularly HIV and STIs.

To guide our actions, I refer to a global survey of city initiatives to improve health. Cities worldwide are striving to address non-communicable health issues, and Limerick will join these efforts. By adopting best practices and innovative solutions, we can make significant strides in improving public health and healthcare services in our city.

1. PUBLIC HEALTH IN INFRASTRUCTURE

I am committed to addressing the healthcare challenges that fall outside the official scope of the Mayor's powers. Unless the Government is successfully pushed to implement a resolution to this issue, the rest of the Programme's proposals will not achieve their full potential.

The reality is that significant changes are needed in how healthcare services operate in Limerick. The National Policy of Primary Care Centres is a promising initiative to bring new and better infrastructure to our communities. However, its effectiveness is severely hampered by delays preventing the delivery of the chosen centres. As Mayor, I remain committed to intervene to try and expedite this process, ensuring that these vital facilities are delivered promptly.

Limerick will see some additional capacity with the introduction of private hospital facilities. However, this solution carries the risk of deepening the inequality of treatment and access to healthcare services. While these private hospitals may solve the problem for some in our society who can afford their services, they do little to address the underlying issues for those who cannot. This can lead to a false perception that the problem has been resolved, but it has not. Freeing up some limited services in the face of rapid population growth and chronic underinvestment will leave thousands with inferior healthcare, which is unacceptable.

As your Mayor, I will ensure that we address these inequalities and work towards a healthcare system that serves everyone in our community. The Programme focus will be on accelerating the delivery of primary care centres and advocating for more equitable access to healthcare services for all residents of Limerick.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick no longer topped league tables and newspaper headlines for trolley count and other negative stories from UHL.

Imagine if access to healthcare in Limerick was as good as the best in any other part of the country. If chances of survival of a serious emergency illness were the same as it would be for someone living in Dublin.

Imagine if community-based support services were readily available so that families no longer feared it would fall solely on their shoulders if they began to help with a relative's care needs. Or worse, that by volunteering to step in to help the state (rather than just leave their relative in full time hospital care) it would leave them abandoned by the state for being a good relative when they themselves needed respite or financial help etc. Imagine if supports were readily available to instead encourage families to assist. That way, people losing their independence because of illness or old age would be able to stay at home or out of full-time care much longer if they wished.

Imagine if elective surgery or procedures did not involve long waits for treatment but were done quickly and efficiently in terms of waits for admission dates and when getting treatment. Imagine if the value placed on the time of a patient was on a par with the value placed on the time of the most experienced consultant on the medical team.

Imagine if Limerick had used the office of the elected mayor to remove blockages and drive delivery so as to become the exemplar county for Primary Care in Ireland. Imagine if, as a result communities right across the county were well served by primary health care centres providing good local access to healthcare and easing pressure on emergency rooms in our main hospitals.

To have more public health infrastructure for Limerick, Limerick will need to:

- MH01** Begin conversations straight away with the owners of Barringtons Hospital to see what role it can and should play in the provision of short term and/or medium solutions to Limerick's health services emergency.
- MH02** Establish an expert group to provide a report to the Mayor and Council to make specific recommendations as to how medical treatment in the Limerick region should be structured taking into account the long term potential of Barringtons if secured, John's hospital and other regional hospitals and to consider the national imperatives, but with specific provision for the expert group to identify if it is important for Limerick to seek derogation where desirable to improve outcomes for Limerick patients in advance of powers for healthcare transferring to the Mayor.
- MH03** Seek access to management and staff at UHL to be able to conduct an independent Limerick First strategic and operational review for the Mayor and Council of existing reports on UHL and how other efficiencies might be driven in the operation of the hospital. The review to focus on the processes and flows in ED which are causing "bottlenecks" and in acute care services in Limerick's hospital. This will help establish KPIs for the Mayor and Council to monitor to hold the right persons accountable for improvements. Equally, I as Mayor will be equipped and properly informed to correctly represent Limerick's interests in advocating for better healthcare. The review can ask questions like whether chemotherapy needs to be given in hospital beds or could infusion centres not do the task.
- MH04** Convene a public meeting with all relevant local stakeholders to consider the report once delivered and let the report and outcome of the public meeting inform the lobbying to be done by the Mayor in the run up to the General Election or during the formation of the next government.
- MH05** Establish a Task Force, integrated into the Limerick PI 2040 Delivery Board, to include HSE representatives to remove blockages which have delayed primary health care centres for years on the Ennis Road, in Raheen and in Rathkeale or find alternative locations and establish a time-based delivery programme to be monitored by the Task Force.
- MH06** Assess the feasibility and cost of introducing a pilot for an upgrading of community based care and respite facilities using Limerick's only Tier 2 key growth town (Newcastle West) or our Town of the Future (Abbeyfeale) as a test so that dependent relatives may remain at home with family for longer or be discharged home more quickly knowing that there is post-acute facilities with skilled nursing staff close at hand if needed, especially where people are living alone or other families with dependent relatives and children can get the support they need.
- MH07** Request quarterly meetings with the CEO of UHL and representatives of the HSE to monitor progress on designated KPI's and report same to the Council for public scrutiny. The CEO of UHL and of the HSE should be asked to present annual review of performance and forward strategic plan and account for themselves to Limerick Council (or perhaps a non statutory monitoring forum of selected Councillors and the Mayor) along with reporting to the PAC in Dublin.
- MH08** Work with the officials of the Council to ensure that before the next development plan, the provision of good health care solutions are well understood such that lands for the provision of

better services and any other objectives needed form part of the recommendations to the council as the plan is being approved.

- MH09** Advocate for the delivery of better ambulance services to people right across the county and remove roadblocks which currently deliver unacceptable outcomes, such as the fact that there are new ambulances based at Kilmallock but no operating ambulances there.
- MH10** Help alleviate skilled staff shortages with other initiatives in my #MoreForLimerick manifesto specific to healthcare such as rental accommodation for health care workers (1 More Affordable Housing for Limerick – A More Liveable Limerick) and the Mayoral Scholarship scheme (14 Keeping & Growing Our Talent – A More Prosperous Limerick).
- MH11** Create a high-level expert group to suggest practical, sustainable and people-centred solutions to homelessness and drug addiction which can then form part of the Programme.

2. MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

I am acutely aware of the serious mental health issues affecting our city. Walking along the banks of the River Shannon, it is clear that we face significant challenges in this area.

According to the Health at a Glance Report, Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental health illness in Europe, with 18.5% of the population recorded as having a mental health illness such as anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression, or alcohol/drug use in 2016. This illness affects people of all ages and backgrounds.

Much of the suffering across our county, not just in the city, is silent and hidden from view. Often, it is caused by structural issues like isolation, where greater social interaction can provide significant relief. Other times, it is exacerbated by a lack of participation in active exercise or activities.

Addressing mental health must be at the heart of all local government policies. As your Mayor, I am uniquely positioned to coordinate solutions, as this issue intersects with all areas of our local authority's work – housing, public spaces, community services, and planning.

MY VISION

Imagine if in Limerick we had a much greater awareness of the importance of mental health wellbeing and all knew when and how to help others avoid issues. Imagine if we had an annual Limerick Health Week (evaluating annual studies (and trends of the well-being of the Limerick population) to trigger discussion and reduce stigma which captures the public imagination as the Team Limerick Clean up does so well.

Imagine if we had established peer support groups facilitated by qualified individuals operating from drop-in facilities right across the county for those struggling with mental health issues. Imagine if we had focus on social inclusion activities with easy to join groups to encourage all to get involved in adventure walks or other group physical exercises – our own “Adventure Walk App” for every phone in Limerick.

Imagine if Limerick was a leader in fostering inclusion and accessibility of all struggling with changes in their lives and drive ongoing initiatives like “We’re Breastfeeding Friendly Limerick” to support the health of mothers and infants and “Not Around Us” campaign to de-normalize smoking and support tobacco-free environments. Imagine if in a more general way we were to have a programme to encourage everyone to be involved in a local social group and club as only 47% of the Irish population aged 15 and over engage in such activities.

We have a lot of initiatives well underway. We just need More of them for Limerick.

To have more mental health initiatives for Limerick, we will;

- MH12** Make mental wellbeing of the population of Limerick a key cross-cutting and visible priority for the Mayor and chair a quarterly Task-Force with relevant stakeholders to see credible and significant improvements in mental health wellbeing in Limerick. This Task Force will be charged with identifying if there are ways to streamline the work of agencies and share resources so that the services reach more people, avoid gaps in coverage and eliminate overlaps.
- MH13** Work with our third level institutions to set up a Mental Health Innovation Hub as a centralised location where mental health professionals, tech innovators, and community leaders can collaborate on developing new mental health technologies and services.

MH14 Evaluate and progress the development of Virtual Reality (VR) Therapy Spaces which can give VT experiences that simulate therapeutic environments, such as peaceful forests or beaches, for use in therapy sessions to help individuals with anxiety or PTSD and for those for whom our natural environments are less accessible.

MH15 Sponsor public outreach and, in conjunction with Limerick Mental Health Association (LMHA), seek funding to secure a number of Mobile Mental Wellness Units which can deploy vans equipped with mental health resources and staff to provide on-the-spot counselling and support in underserved areas.

MH16 Coordinate with service providers to have a fully impactful annual Limerick Mental Health Week with community festivals that celebrate mental wellness with workshops, speaker events, and activities focused on building resilience.

MH17 Support cultural organisations and community groups promoting better mental health for example Narrative 4 which is HQ'ed here in Limerick to promote mutual understanding or others offering workshops and pop-up art installations that encourage self-expression through art, music, and writing, which can be therapeutic and build social connections and foster conversations about mental health wellbeing.

MH18 Promote green therapy initiatives like gardening and urban farming projects that provide therapeutic benefits and improve community spaces. Pocket parks right across the county should be used as a way to increase positive mental health especially with sensory gardens as was done in the Sean Moran Community Garden at the Hunt Museum and also to regenerate run down spaces

MH19 Grow peer-to-peer support networks where individuals can share experiences and offer mutual support, guided by trained facilitators.

MH20 Encourage residents of Limerick to take mental health first aid training to recognise and respond to mental health crises, creating a community of informed first responders. Monitor penetration of such training within the Limerick population and encourage participation via corporate mental health partnerships between the Mayor and local businesses and other employers in the county.

MH21 Support new financing avenues like crowdfunding and social impact bonds and use the Mayoral Social Entrepreneurship Fund (See 3 Equal Opportunity for All – A More Prosperous Limerick) to finance mental health projects, ensuring sustainability and community involvement.

MH22 Organise digital detox retreats that encourage disconnecting from digital devices to reduce stress and promote mindfulness.

MH23 Produce a series of podcasts and social media friendly content featuring local Limerick stories of resilience and recovery, as well as expert advice on mental health topics.

MH24 Establish and Chair a Task Force to assess how the Mayor can improve Preventative Medicine outcomes in Limerick. The Corpus Christi Family Centre in Moyross is an example of how a community can support its children and families by delivering an integrated service centre on site in the local school.

3. PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES

I am committed to ensuring that our city prioritises preventive healthcare. When people have ready access to, and take advantage of preventive care, it significantly reduces the risk of diseases, disabilities, and death.

However, millions of people worldwide do not utilise preventive care services, even when offered. This Programme will focus on increasing preventive care for people of all ages in our community.

In the Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine, Faith Crittenden and Calvin Fang observed in 2021:

“...the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us the importance of collective health measures and motivating individuals to build a public health mindset for their local community and beyond. Though it has been a challenging journey for us to learn the importance of collective health measures, it has also taught us why preventive medicine and public health are such vital fields to our everyday life, which rely on policy development, planning, and assessment.”

MY VISION

Imagine a Limerick where children get regular well-child and dental visits to track their development and find health problems early. Imagine the local authority having access to a data showing participation in programmes so as to intervene if better participation is required.

Imagine having a leadership role in teaching people about the importance of preventative care and makes sure that Limerick is at the leadership edge of any vaccination and screening programmes.

Imagine if Limerick leads in tackling issues like food insecurity, health food options, combatting alcohol or drug consumption, air pollution and encouraging exercise.

Imagine publishing a regular report showing progress on a range of preventative medicine indicators (Target Met or Exceeded, Improving, No Detectable Progress, getting worse, Baseline only) covering areas like:

- Developmental Screening for children
- Percentage of adolescents who have spoken privately with a provider at a preventative medical visit
- Proportion of females screened for female specific cancers like breast cancer
- Proportion of adults screened for other cancers like lung cancer, bowel cancer (with specific reference to including younger ages)
- Number of facilities in Limerick providing preventative services.
- Diabetes related tests
- Visits to a primary care centre for screening for depression or other mental wellness
- Screening of older adults for osteoporosis
- Early and adequate prenatal care and screening for postpartum depression
- Screening for STIs
- Adult population having active weekly exercise

To have more preventative health measures, Limerick will need to:

- MH25** Establish a Task Force to assess how the Mayor can improve Preventative Medicine outcomes in Limerick.
- MH26** Establish appropriate monitoring indicators to ensure progress over the Mayoral Term and publicly report on same.
- MH27** Support screening programmes in Limerick to reduce the age at which residents in Limerick are screened for acute diseases if international norms are below the HSE standards – e.g., bowel cancer.
- MH28** Work with relevant government departments to audit all Limerick schools to establish baseline scores for facilities and programmes for Preventative Medicine. We will work with relevant government departments to develop a plan to improve scores for any schools with poor facilities or located in areas where better than average facilities would be more desirable.
- MH29** Call for the assessment and monitoring of waiting lists for simply preventative day to day measures like braces after orthodontic assessment and ensure that unacceptably long waiting times reduce over the Mayoral term.
- MH30** Ensure the Mayor and Council have sight of assessments and track social determinants of health and Limerick's relative performance and especially assess any geographical differences between neighbourhoods within Limerick to ensure more equitable outcomes.
- MH31** Support community-based volunteer organisations conducting activities which lead to better health outcomes in their communities.
- MH32** Review national school meals programme implementation in Limerick to see if it can be better coordinated at the level of the local authority in ways which support schools ensure better quality ingredients and more sustainable packaging. Ensure, if possible, that locally grown vegetables and food stuffs are used (especially from local community garden initiatives). If necessary, have allocated some annual funding to supplement national funding to ensure that Limerick's scheme takes better cognisance of Limerick particular issues such as high existing levels of deprivation, rather than be based on a one size fits all national scheme.
- MH33** Implement the actions in other policies about greater sporting and exercise facilities in the city and right across the county, especially that related to the facility in Colbert Quarter.
- MH34** Work with the Director General to assess the skills of the local government workforce to ensure that there are suitably qualified persons to lead in nutrition and preventative medicine policy formulation.
- MH35** Encourage local leaders to publicly participate in screening programmes and in educational programmes about the importance of Preventative Medicine.
- MH36** Ensure that public programmes and buildings are assessed and where practicable designed to take account of users of all abilities.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

I am committed to improving both our environment and public health, recognising the deep connection between the two. Our own University of Limerick's sustainability report highlights this vital relationship: "Health and the environment are inextricably linked and approaches to improve both are deeply complementary. At the most basic level, clean air and water are fundamental components that enable healthy lives. Time spent in rich natural environments has proven benefits for mental health and well-being. Walking and cycling are great exercises, reduce our carbon footprints, and support good air quality. It can be viewed as a symbiotic relationship where a clean environment supports healthier lifestyles, and healthy behaviour leads to environmental benefits."

Many custodians care for our natural environment, and we must support them as they preserve these spaces for our benefit and for healthier lifestyles.

The State and local government must also play their part, and up to now, much has been left to be desired. We have homes in Askeaton, Kildimo, Ballysteen, and Shanagolden under boil water notices for nearly a year. We lag behind state norms in the percentage of land dedicated to forestry. Concerns about our air quality persist, and within our city, vast areas of unbuilt natural lands are poorly maintained due to a lack of investment in quality urban parklands.

MY VISION

Imagine if Limerick were known globally for a healthy lifestyle. Irish cities and counties are involved on the World Health Organisation Healthy Cities project, imagine if every resident of Limerick knew we had embraced that initiative and that they were all seeing the benefits of it in their daily lives.

Imagine if everyone could turn on a tap in Limerick and know that the water is safe to drink. Imagine if every kid who grows up in Limerick not just those lucky enough to have large gardens can look out of a bedroom or living room window and see a tree with birds playing or nesting in it.

Imagine if Limerick were home to some of the best natural woodlands in Ireland full of diversity of habitation and animal life with amenities and safe walkways. Imagine, if everyone living in apartments in our cities and towns were within short walking distances of quiet natural public gardens for relaxing which did not shut at 6pm

To have better environmental health, Limerick will need to:

- MH37** Get straight onto the issue of boil notices in our county and the solutions needed to sort these out and have a report weekly to the people impacted about progress.
- MH38** Request that any policy advice or other proposals going to the councillors for approval include an explanation of how the recommendation progresses the Healthy Limerick Principles and the drive to a healthier environment and if it works against those, the justification for the idea must be clearly articulated.
- MH39** In an effort to have Limerick move up the league table for land devoted to lands covered by trees, we will propose a programme to plant at least one native tree for every resident of Limerick with residents eligible to adopt and foster "their" tree(s).

MH40 Reinforce the benefits of gardening, by having “More for Limerick” seeds and instructions packs for schools and Tidy Towns organisations with native species chosen by some of our local Garden Nurseries.

MH41 Do more to leverage the natural assets we have like Lough Gur, Curraghchase, Delmege and Ballyhoura and my proposed new Shannonside park in the city as amenity areas, not just for locals but for all residents of Limerick particularly those in the city and in particular source lands which can be used as a Cricket pitch for residents of Limerick city.

MH42 Work with and resource Limerick’s Parks department to better manage and support allotment and edible gardens in our public spaces.

MH43 Walking is one of the most accessible exercises that improves your heart and head. We will identify at least ten new locations where spaces full of natural beauty can be better opened up with accessible pathways to connect our communities or provide safe spaces for exercise for all ages.

MH44 Join up those living at the edge of our rural villages and towns to the centre of those towns by ensuring as a first step test that ten such villages have a safe pathway from the lower speed limit sign all the way to the village or town. Ideally, these pathways should loop to a dog park, a playground, a sensory garden and a community vegetable patch.

TIMETABLE FOR DELIVERY

Details to follow once Programme is reviewed by Councillors

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FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

We need to identify all available avenues of national capital and grant funding from central government to secure the necessary finance to deliver the capital projects outlined in this Programme. These projects, which include vital infrastructure upgrades, urban development initiatives, and community enhancement schemes, are crucial for the continued growth of Limerick.

To effectively exploit these funding opportunities, it is important that projects are "shovel ready." This means they must be fully planned, designed, and prepared for immediate implementation once funding is secured. This represents a significant obstacle to securing funding and delivering the ultimate objective. As a result, for this Mayoral term, the Programme focus is to secure funding and drive projects through the initial design and planning stages, leaving them shovel ready as soon as funding becomes available or for successor Mayors to implement.

The council must be prepared to act quickly, ensuring that we are first in line when national capital calls are announced. By having detailed project plans, clear timelines, and all necessary approvals in place, we can confidently present our proposals to the government, demonstrating our readiness to deliver impactful results.

Another important aspect for consideration is that Limerick is often obliged to commit a significant percentage of funding, in order to leverage other funding from national calls. It will be important that development levies are used in priority for such funding, thereby allowing local funds to leverage much more capital investment.

Potential Sources of Funding

There are several potential sources of government funding that we will target, including:

1. **Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF):** To support large-scale urban renewal projects. At present, we have some unspent allocations, and these projects are being prioritised. However, the ambition of the Programme exceed the remaining funds available in the URDF so it will be necessary to lobby the government successfully to have significant funds added to the URDF or allocated specifically to Limerick.
2. **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF):** For enhancing rural communities within our county. These remain a key source of funding especially for rural Limerick.
3. **National Transport Authority (NTA) Grants:** For improving transportation infrastructure. Limerick has run up against caps on allocated funding for Active Travel and so the ambition of the Programme will require additional allocations to Limerick.
4. **Climate Action Fund:** For projects that contribute to environmental sustainability.
5. **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):** For broader regional development initiatives.
6. **Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF):** To support economically beneficial projects.

Limerick Growth and Infrastructure Fund

In addition to pursuing these existing government funding streams, this Programme commits me as Mayor to explore the potential of establishing a unique entity, agency, or infrastructure fund specifically for Limerick. This entity would be established with the relevant Ministers for the funds above and serve as a central repository for all funds allocated to Limerick from various government departments. By consolidating these resources into a single, locally controlled mechanism, we can ensure greater oversight and flexibility in how these funds are spent, enabling us to align investments more closely with Limerick's specific needs and priorities. A new governance would have to be agreed to share decision making between the Mayor and Ministers present at the semi-annual ministerial meetings.

This approach will not only enhance our ability to deliver the capital projects contained within this Mayoral Programme, but also empower Limerick to take greater control over its future development. By effectively managing and directing these funds, we can maximise their impact, ensuring that every euro spent contributes to the long-term prosperity and well-being of Limerick and unlock road-blocks with agencies like Uisce Eireann or the LDA otherwise dependent on allocations of government funding before attacking projects in Limerick.

Limerick Housing Co-op

The Programme envisages the establishment of a Housing Co-Op to initially take over renovated derelict homes so as to make them available for affordable rental.

Because this Housing Co-Op will benefit from rental income which can be used to repay financing, it is envisaged that an allocation of funds from the Mayoral Fund will be used to seed-finance its creation. This will allow for private sector (or HFA) financing to be used to leverage this seed-finance to allow the initial portfolio of homes to be purchased.

Mayoral Fund

The establishment of the Mayoral office saw an allocation of additional funding on an annual basis. A significant percentage of the annual allocation is spent to pay salaries and ongoing costs of the office. In 2024, it has been used also for initial capital expenditures to prepare City Hall for the new mayoral team and operations.

This Programme prioritises the use of 10 million euros of the Mayoral Fund to immediately activate measures to improve security on our streets and support costs of Expert Groups or other implementation groups or initiatives (e.g, Mayoral Scholarship Fund) provided for in the Programme and thereafter, in priority to securing funds for planning and design works to make projects shovel ready.

The remaining 20 million or so will be used for capital projects, or for support of enterprise or equal opportunity initiatives. These funds will in priority be used for projects which by their nature allow the funds to be leveraged by other funding sources to ensure that the value of capital projects to be completed far exceeds the allocation from the Mayoral Fund – e.g., student housing or SMART Homes.

Private Sector and other Funding

Many sources of private sector or other funding are available to help deliver the Programme actions.

EU banks such as the EIB and the Council of Europe Bank are willing to lend to infrastructure type projects.

Moreover, there are a growing number of infrastructure funds willing to participate in PPP type arrangements or co-development projects. The Programme envisages a greater use of off-balance sheet funding of large projects by partnership on a competitive basis with these funds. To date, Limerick has mainly seen this type of funding in the funding of the Limerick Tunnel and Limerick Courthouse.

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