

# SECTION 25A REPORT

REPORT DATE	LOCAL AUTHORITY	PREPARED BY
31/1/2024	Limerick City & County Council	Carmel Brislane A/SEP

The purpose of the table below is to assist the local authority in completing the Section 25A (1) report to the Regional Assembly. This report will be used by the Regional Assembly to complete the Section 25A (2) Monitoring Report to be submitted to NOAC and which will focus on progress made in securing the overall objectives of the RSES.

It is intended that the Monitoring Report will be succinct, covering the 2-year period 2022-2024, and therefore we would ask that the response to the questions are as short as possible and for example we do not need the full detail of each policy or programme outlined.

The Regional Assembly is keen to capture examples of good practice initiatives and actions undertaken by the Local Authority which relate to the objectives of RSES and would welcome the inclusion of such examples where appropriate.

For further information, please contact Brigh Ryan at [bryan@southernassembly.ie](mailto:bryan@southernassembly.ie) or Claire Breen at [cbreen@southernassembly.ie](mailto:cbreen@southernassembly.ie)

Please return the report to this office by **Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024**.

This can be submitted by email to: [cbreen@southernassembly.ie](mailto:cbreen@southernassembly.ie)

RSES THEME & RPO REFERENCE	RSES IMPLEMENTATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY & SUPPORTING PROJECTS/INITIATIVES
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SUSTAINABLE PLACE FRAMEWORK & A TAILORED APPROACH RPOS 2 TO 30	Please complete the following table relating to the status of your County/City Development Plan
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Name and Date Made	Date Came into Effect	Direction	Judicial Review	Variations
Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 Adopted 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 - in relation to a number of Material Amendments, directing that the Plan be altered with respect to the zoning of a number of sites at risk of flooding in Limerick City and Suburbs.	Ongoing – Court date expected during Q1 2024	Variation No. 1 adopted on 22 <sup>nd</sup> of May 2023 comprising an amendment to Policy TR P11 Road Safety and Carrying Capacity of the non-national Road Network and Objective TR O37 Land Uses and Access Standards

	Please outline briefly how the Core Strategy supports the guiding principles and Settlement Typology contained in the RSES
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	<p><b>Section 2.3 Core Strategy Methodology</b> of the Development Plan establishes that the Core Strategy is developed around a framework of high-level population and household targets that are set out in the NPF, the NPF Implementation Roadmap, the RSES for the Southern Region and Section 28 guidance document ‘Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning’, (DHLGH, December 2020) and the ESRI population figures published in January 2021.</p> <p><b>Section 2.7 Core Strategy Policies and Objectives</b> establishes that the growth allocations aligns with the Southern Region’s Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy population targets for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area specifying the allocations for the City and those parts of the MASP area outside of the City that lie within Limerick. The growth allocations for the remainder of the county are allocated in line with national and regional policy.</p> <p><b>The settlement hierarchy as set out in Table 2.4 of the Development Plan</b> reflects consistency with Section 3.3 of the RSES. In setting out the Spatial Strategy, the Plan considers the Regional Planning Objectives (RPOs) of the RSES for the Southern Region, including those which support the compact growth, revitalisation, brownfield and infill development objectives of the National Planning Framework and economic growth.</p>
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- In preparing the Core Strategy, the patterns of development up to 2022 were taken into account, prioritising the development of brownfield sites and reducing vacancy in Limerick City and Town/Village Centres, increased density requirements and policy support to help revitalise many rural towns and villages as well as their surrounding areas underpinned by the 10-minute city/neighbourhood concept.
- The Plan includes a spatial strategy, which is supported by a Housing Strategy and opportunities for employment to support the growth of the settlements (Section 3.4.2.1 Developing a Spatial Strategy).
- Core Strategy Policies include Policy CSP P1: Core Strategy Implementation; Policy CSP P2: Compact Growth; Policy CSP P3: Availability of Land; Policy CSP P4: Local Area Plans; Policy CSP P5: Road Network; Policy CSP P6: LSMATS and Policy CS P7: Settlement Strategy.

The Year 1, Core Strategy Monitoring Report 2022-20 may be accessed here.

[Annual-Report-Core-Strategy-2023.pdf \(limerick.ie\)](#)

Please provide details on progress with the preparation of any Local Area Plans or other area-based plans (e.g. Masterplans) in your Local Authority

#### **(i) Local Area Plans**

Following the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan(LDP), Local Area Plans for Caherconlish, Castleconnell, Rathkeale, Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West have been reviewed and new Local Area Plans are now in effect.

The review process for the Local Area Plans of Adare and Patrickswell are on-going and nearing adoption.

#### **(ii) Other Plans**

- **Arthur’s Quay - Framework Plan:** To be completed by Q1 2024 to feed into Worldclass Waterfront. Framework will guide development, reliant on individual landowners thereafter to initiate planning applications. URDF – Part of Worldclass Waterfront funding allocation (€73.4m)
- **Newcastle West Masterplan for the Castle Demense:** A masterplan of the Demesne parklands in Newcastle West has been prepared and a public consultation due to be held in early 2024. The purpose of the masterplan is to maximise the potential of this amenity for recreational and associated tourism benefits for the town.
- **Kings Island Walled Town Spatial Framework Plan:** The spatial framework will outline the role of the public realm, including key urban spaces, pedestrian-friendly connections, and streetscape enhancements, with a particular focus on Nicholas Street. This plan will guide and stimulate future investments in the area and is set to be completed in 2024.
- **Toppin’s Field Masterplan:** Masterplan prepared with funding approval in July for 56 housing units at Toppins Field. The masterplan envisions the delivery of a minimum of 285 new homes in the area.

- **Development of King Johns Castle:** In November 2023, €2.264 million in Government funding for King John’s Castle’s continued development was announced. First stage of the redevelopment is the completion of a Conservation and Management Plan to assist in planning a programme of conservation measures and works for the site including making recommendations on the protection and conservation of the castle and improving the visitor experience.
- **Limerick City Public Realm Strategy:** The preparation of a Public Realm Strategy for Limerick City Centre is supported within the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 and is incorporated within it’s policies and objectives. The aim of the non-statutory Strategy document is to guide the enhancement, management, use and development of the public domain in collaboration with all stakeholders. The Strategy, which is at Draft Stage, will support the implementation of National and Regional Policy, and directly aligns to Strategic Objectives set out within the Development Plan as they relate to public realm enhancement. A key component of the Strategy is in identifying opportunities within the public realm for future projects, which will attract funding from the National Development Plan 2018-2027, and other possible funding avenues. At a more granular level, the Public Realm Strategy will act as a guide with the aim of developing a simple, uncluttered and consistent design approach. The study area consists of the area zoned *City Centre* within the Development Plan. The Draft Strategy is anticipated to be on public display in Q1 of 2024, and is expected to be finalized in Q2 2024.
- **Adare Public Realm Plan:** Adare Public Realm Plan is incorporated into the Local Area Plan, which is nearing completion. These documents complement each other, contributing to the consideration of opportunity sites and the future projects action list for Adare. These documents underwent public consultation in Q3 2023, and it is expected that the draft Local Area Plan will be finalized in Q1 2024. This Plan seeks to address public realm design within Adare village. A further aim of the Plan is to put well-designed streets and other public spaces at the heart of sustainable communities, with the goal that the enhanced streetscape will create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, namely walking, cycling or public transport. The place-making approach adopted within the Plan was an overarching objective so as to take account of the needs of a wide variety of needs within the village of Adare.
- **Askeaton Public Realm Plan:** Published in March 2023, works identified in the public realm plan will proceed in 2024 to include a number of projects including a parklet project commencing in April 2024, kerb realignment, connection of footpaths and a feasibility study on the bank building.

### **Limerick 2030**

- **Opera Square:** Construction of the Opera development in the city centre has commenced with phase one to include basement works and the development of one of the landmark builds on the site, One Opera Square. This will contain 10,000 square metres of office

space, 960 square metres of retail and 430 square metres of restaurant/café use at ground level.

- **Cleeves Riverside Quarter** – Masterplan prepared and Design Team appointed to prepare planning application to be submitted in Q4 2024. URDF 2 - €34.5m approved.

#### Land Development Agency

- **Colbert Quarter** - Overall Framework completed. St. Joseph’s Hospital Draft Masterplan was launched in November 2023. The masterplan for the 6.4-hectare site identifies the potential for the phased delivery of between 500 and 600 new affordable and social homes, 1000 sq metres of community space and a significant amount of open green space, with the latter accounting for 35% of the entire site area.

#### METROPOLITAN AREAS - GROWTH AMBITION

RPO 6: Collaboration  
between Metropolitan Areas  
RPO 10 Compact Growth in  
Metropolitan Areas  
ALL MASP Policy Objectives

How has the designation of a Metropolitan Area & the MASP impacted on the following?

- Any joint initiatives between Metropolitan Areas: Cork, Limerick – Shannon, Waterford, and Galway, to advance the combined proposition for effective regional growth e.g. exchange of good practice/ examples of joint research papers on urban policy.
- Cross-boundary collaboration/key strategic initiatives in areas such as sustainable mobility, infrastructure delivery, urban regeneration.
- Progress on delivering some of the key development sites/projects identified in the Limerick-Shannon MASP

#### RPO 6: Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas

**Cross boundary collaboration/key strategic initiatives in areas such as sustainable mobility, infrastructure delivery, urban regeneration.**

- Section 7.3 of the Limerick Development Plan establishes that the integration of land use and transportation is a fundamental principle in rebalancing the transport system (Policy TR P3: Integration of Land Use and Transport Policies; TR P4: Promotion of Sustainable Patterns of Transport Use; and TR P5: Sustainable Mobility and Regional Accessibility).
- Limerick City and County Council in conjunction with Clare County Council and the National Transport Authority have prepared the Limerick – Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy, which provides a strategy for the delivery of key infrastructure and sustainable transport within the Metropolitan Area.
- **Section 7.4 Key Enablers for Growth in Limerick** in line with the NPF, NDP and RSES for the Southern Region, identifies a number of key enablers to support the growth of Limerick, which will enhance connectivity within Limerick and benefit the wider region. Furthermore Objective TR O16 - Rail Network provides for the potential to explore a pathway to rail-based development in the review of the RSES and MASP, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority and the Southern Regional Assembly.
- **Section 3.2.4 A Collaborative Approach** recognises that the Southern Region’s three Cities (Cork, Limerick and Waterford) and their Metropolitan Areas are primary economic engines for the Region. Limerick City and County Council are committed to a collaborative intra-regional partnership approach between the Limerick-Shannon, Cork, Waterford and Galway regions. In this regard, Limerick City and County Council are committed to

continuing the collaborative approach undertaken with Clare County Council to ensure the sustainable and co-ordinated development of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area. There is a history of public and private stakeholders working together for the betterment of the area. In addition, a current example is the Shannon Consortium, comprising a collaborative alliance between the three higher level institutes of UL, Mary Immaculate College and Technological University of the Shannon, aiming to establish the region as an area of excellence in teaching, learning and learner support.

- The MASP supports the consolidation, revitalisation and continued investment in Limerick City through Limerick 2030 and Limerick Regeneration, to drive its role as a vibrant living, retailing and working City, as the economic, social and cultural heart of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and Region (Section 3.2.3 *Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan*). The opportunities presented by the Regeneration Areas through the Limerick Regeneration Integration Framework Plan (LRIFP) will address services, facilitate education and training and provide additional housing stock and employment opportunities, which is supported through the objectives of the Plan.
- **Section 3.4.3 Strategic Revitalisation** states that the Council will encourage and facilitate the continuous revitalisation and redevelopment of existing settlements across the Limerick Metropolitan Area, to create more desirable places in which people can live, work and visit supported by Objective CGR O10 – *Revitalisation*. The succeeding sections set out examples of some of the key initiatives and strategic sites proposed to facilitate the revitalisation of Limerick City Centre in a consolidated and compact manner including Limerick 2030, Living Limerick City Centre Initiative, the identification of Opportunity Sites and Limerick City Opportunity (Regeneration) Areas to name a few.

#### **Examples of collaborative working in the MASP:**

The designation of the MASP supports the collaborative approach, which already existed between the Local Authorities and provides greater policy support for the growth of the City Region.

- **Limerick – Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy:** The LSMATS was prepared by the NTA in collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The cooperation of Irish Rail was also a key input.
- **Retail Strategy for Limerick – Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Limerick 2022 – 2028:** The Retail Strategy was prepared concurrently with the Retail Strategy for County Clare on behalf of Clare County Council, which also covers the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area. The joint strategy is presented in two separate reports, which informed two separate statutory Development Plan processes. The Strategy is aligned to the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy of the LDP. It focuses on maintaining and further developing Limerick City for its dominant retail function in the Midwest hierarchy, the development of District Centres, the Key Towns of Newcastle West and other towns as the main retail centres in the county.

- **Bus Connects:** In collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and Bus Éireann, the NTA carried out an extensive review of the bus network in Limerick in 2022 and following an extensive public consultation process, published a final new bus network for Limerick in December 2023.

### **Progress on delivering some of the key development sites/projects identified in the Limerick-Shannon MASP**

#### **(i) Worldclass Waterfront**

**Arthur's Quay:** (Part of URDF Worldclass Waterfront funding allocation (€73.4m)). Framework Plan to be completed by Q1 2024. Framework will guide development, reliant on individual landowners thereafter to initiate planning applications.

**Cleeves Riverside Quarter:** Regeneration, Conservation and adaptive re-use of a key 10-acre site in City Centre. Masterplan provides for up to 290 residential units, and potential to provide a further 275 student residential beds. Additional plans for the site include an educational hub and landmark office building.

#### **(ii) Living Limerick City Centre Initiative**

The Living Limerick City Centre Initiative (LLCC Initiative) was awarded funding in 2021 under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund and is a 7-year programme focused on targeted interventions to renew vacant and underutilised building stock in Limerick City Centre. This includes a targeted programme of renewal that will increase footfall and support the development of economic, employment and residential uses. The projects aim is also to lead the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient City, deliver compact growth, transport the city's public realm and strengthen the economy through the development of innovation and enhance existing public amenity and heritage. Projects that have been undertaken so far or are ongoing include:

- The Living Georgian City Programme
- The Digital Innovation Cluster
- The Futureproofing Place Programme
- The Citizen Collaboration Programme
- Limerick Laneways Project

As part of the Limerick City Initiative, implementation of Meanwhile Uses on 2 of 3 key transformational sites began in Q3 of 2022:

1. UL City Campus
2. Verdant Place, Toll Cottages
3. Green adjacent to King John's Castle

The Meanwhile Uses were funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF, 75%), and Limerick City & County



Council (LCCC). The Meanwhile Use comes under the “Worldclass Waterfront” strand of funding.

Various meanwhile uses were developed including the following:

- **Murals:** To take advantage of the strategic location of the UL city campus in the heart of the city and on the bank of the river Shannon, and to take advantage of a window of opportunity as the site awaits redevelopment, it was deemed important to significantly enhance the attractiveness of the existing building exterior and its surrounds without a need to undertake major physical interventions. The aim of the proposed creative measure which took the form of a “3D mural” incorporating both groundscape and façade, was to galvanise the attention of the public and to invite people into the building and campus perimeter, whilst providing a playful environment that would provoke new uses for the underutilized waterside public space. A second mural was then developed at the Toll Cottages at Verdant Place in collaboration with TUS Limerick School of Art & Design. The project was part funded through the Creative Ireland Strategic and Legacy grant. This vibrant, colourful intervention delivered on an objective within the Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027 for Limerick in the strategic priorities of Place-Making, Cultural and Creative Careers and Connections.
- **Mobile Forest:** A moveable urban forest project began as a small scale pilot to show off how pedestrianisation could appear in take place in new areas connected with the Waterside. The mobile forest consisted of over 70 silver birch trees planted in marine plywood containers, which was a collaboration between LCCC, Monuru, and Limerick City Build. Honan's Quay adjacent to the UL City Campus building was closed to motorised traffic for the Summer months of 2022 & 2023 to facilitate the forest, along with ping-pong tables and events which included live music, art and food. The Mobile Forest was shortlisted for the Green Cities Europe Award 2023 – Ireland, held in Portlaoise last October.
- **Outdoor Cinema:** As Meanwhile Uses are the temporary use of a space awaiting redevelopment, in light of the Kings Island Flood Relief Scheme which is progressing to site in 2024, a brief was developed to house a temporary outdoor cinema adjacent to King John’s Castle. The objective of the brief was to allow expressions of interest from various cultural backgrounds to test new ideas, increase footfall to the area through activation and events, provide local employment and training opportunities, create genuine social value, and enliven the open space which does not have a designated function.

### **(iii) Arthur’s Quay Framework Plan**

A multi-disciplinary team has been appointed to progress a Framework Plan for the Arthur’s Quay area of Limerick City. The Framework Plan will set out the guidelines for a comprehensive, plan-led and place-based approach to the redevelopment of this area and lead to the transformation of the city centre. Funding for this Framework Plan will come from the World Class Waterfront Urban Regeneration Development Fund Programme. The Council is working with landowners in the area on the Framework and Limerick City and County



Council continue to engage with the public. The Framework will sit under the new Limerick Development Plan and the area includes Arthur's Quay Park and Sarsfield House and will incorporate the flood protection work ongoing for the city.

Consultation on the framework plan commenced in the summer of 2023 and in person and an online forum to gather information and ideas for the future of Arthur's Quay.

**(iv) Opera Square**

Construction of the Opera development in the city centre has commenced with phase one to include basement works and the development of one of the landmark builds on the site, One Opera Square. This will contain 10,000 square metres of office space, 960 square metres of retail and 430 square metres of restaurant/café use at ground level.

**(v) Bishops Palace**

Construction continues for the development of a mixed-use commercial and residential development scheme on a brownfield site approx. 0.4ha, in the City Centre. Located on the waterfront, the development includes a nine storey glass tower building including 110,000sqft of Grade A office space

**(vi) Draft Limerick Regeneration Plan Status Update 2024 – 2030**

A Draft LRFIP Status Update has been prepared by consultants KPMG in conjunction with the Regeneration Directorate of Limerick City and County Council. This was submitted as a working draft to the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government (DHLGH) in July 2023 for their consideration. It sets out a Draft Strategy for Limerick Regeneration to 2030, including the continuation of funding for physical social and economic regeneration measures.

**(vii) UL City Campus**

Planning permission for the change of use of the former Dunnes Stores building on Sarsfield Street in Limerick City Centre from retail to educational was granted by Limerick City and County Council in November, as part of the university's plans to develop a city centre university campus.

**(viii) Limerick Public Realm Strategy**

Development of a plan to look more closely at the public spaces within the central area of Limerick; streets, squares, laneways, linkages, riverside, bridges, parks and green spaces. Initial information gathering consultation stages took place in Q1 & Q2 of 2023, and the publishing of the Final Strategy is planned for Quarter 2 2024.

**(ix) Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) 2040**

This Strategy sets out the framework for the delivery of the transport system required to further the development of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and comprises a

comprehensive approach to transport planning for the strategy period. Project implementation examples are provided for under the Theme relating to Sustainable Mobility of this form.

**(x) Bus Connects**

In collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and Bus Éireann, the NTA carried out an extensive review of the bus network in Limerick in 2022 and following an extensive public consultation process, published a final new bus network for Limerick in December 2023. Key benefits of the new service include: an approximately 70% increase in the amount of bus services in Limerick city and its suburbs; The extension of bus services to new areas with more routes with frequent services and an enhanced Sunday timetable; A new 24-hour bus service operating between University Hospital Limerick, the city centre and the University of Limerick; Provision of bus services to previously unserved areas such as Ennis Road, Dock Road, University of Limerick north campus and Ardnacrusha; Simpler fares.

**(xi) Limerick Northern Distributor Road**

The Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road

Section: Following Department of Transport approval to proceed to tender for the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road section, the Council will procure and appoint a contractor to complete the Main Works Contract for this Scheme in early 2024. It is expected that works will commence on site in Q1 2024.

Works will continue on in 2024 with completion of the main works contract. A number of interim works contracts were completed in 2023 on the Scheme including:

- Completion of the Ballygrennan Railway Bridge
- Trunk Watermain Contract.

**(xii) Connectivity to Shannon Foynes Port**

The Foynes to Limerick Road (Including Adare Bypass) Project was approved by An Bord Pleanála in August 2022 and has proceeded to the next stage of delivery. The proposed project is 35km in length and will provide a motorway upgrade from Attyflin to Rathkeale, in addition to connecting the port of Foynes to the motorway network. The project promotes efficient and effective transport links in the Munster region, improving connectivity between Foynes Port, Limerick and the surrounding areas. An Bord Pleanála approved the Foynes to Limerick Road (including Adare Bypass) which comprises the Foynes to Rathkeale Protected Road Scheme 2019, the Rathkeale to Attyflin Motorway Scheme 2019 and the Foynes Service Area Scheme 2019 on 30th August 2022. In November 2023, approval was given to advance the construction of the Adare Bypass section of the project.

**(xiii) TUS Engineering Campus**

Limerick City and County Council support the extension of TUS Campus to Coonagh Cross Shopping Centre which will be home to a new state-of-the-art campus and an industry-relevant

engineering, technology, teaching and learning facility. It will become the primary base for up to 800 engineering students and apprentices and is due to open in early 2024.

**(xix) Carbon Neutral City**

Limerick City and County Council’s Urban Innovation Department which works on new methodologies and model of regenerating the historic core of Limerick City is spearheading a number of projects including:

Co-Create Distributed Positive Energy Blocks through Citizen Engagement: The project includes a participatory framework that enables communities to become more engaged in efficient use of energy in their daily lives, and the emergence of Positive Energy Champions and innovative local organizations and businesses within these communities.

**SUPPORTING GROWTH / DEVELOPMENT OF KEY TOWNS**

RPO 11 Key Towns

Please outline progress made in developing Newcastle West’s role as a Key Town as envisaged in RPO 11 Key Towns and RPO 22 Newcastle West. Please identify progress on delivering some of the key development sites/projects identified in the RSES

The Limerick Development Plan acknowledges the key role of **Newcastle West** within the settlement hierarchy of Limerick and its capacity for growth and the opportunity for future economic development and employment growth whilst noting its strong sub-regional interdependencies with Listowel, Rathkeale and Abbeyfeale. (Section 2b: Limerick County Spatial Strategy 3.5 Level 2: Key Town).

In accordance with Section 3.5 of the Limerick Development Plan, the **Local Area Plan** for Newcastle West has been reviewed and a new Local Area Plan for the period 2023-2029 was adopted in December 2023. The Local Area Plan deals with the more detailed approach to the development of Newcastle West in line with its ambition as a Key Town. The LAP considers in detail employment and economic development opportunities, placemaking initiatives, upskilling, lifelong learning and social infrastructure etc. There are nine identified actions in the adopted Plan, which support the enhancement of the vitality of Newcastle West and to create a positive public realm experience in the town. The LAP identifies nine development opportunity sites to encourage and support the appropriate and sustainable development or redevelopment where appropriate, of lands identified of which are mostly located within the town core. In addition, the Council has prepared a Local Transport Plan for Newcastle West, which addresses sustainable mobility and placemaking, as a key element of the growth of Newcastle West.

The RSES lists **key infrastructural projects** for the key town of Newcastle West.

In this regard:

- The **Newcastle West Regional Athletics Hub** was officially opened in September 2023. This regional athletics hub consists of a world-class standard 8 lane synthetic athletics track,

associated track and field facilities with a surrounding walking path. The track is fully floodlit with 10 number sports flood lighting masts with LED lamps to IAAF Class 2 standard which will provide optimum lighting during winter conditions.

- A **Local Transport Plan** for Newcastle West was prepared and adopted in parallel with the Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023-2029. The aim of this document is to improve the integration of Land Use and Transport Planning in the preparation of this local area plan. This will be delivered in tandem with sustainable compact growth in the plan area, through appropriate means such as the development of lands in the existing built-up footprint of the town.
- The Limerick Development Plan provides policy support for the **N21 Newcastle West Road Scheme** – A key project in enhancing regional connectivity with the South West Region and alleviating congestion. Initial route selection and public consultation has been complete. Route option currently being finalised with a planning application planned to be lodged to An Bord Pleanála in 2024.
- In July 2021, the **Limerick Greenway** reopened, which included a upgrading of the surface and development of additional amenities along the route, which connects Rathkeale, Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale along the former Limerick to Kerry railway line. It is now a significant recreational and tourism amenity for Limerick.  
Work is continuing on pre-construction activities and the development of the Limerick Greenway Hubs at Rathkeale, Ardagh, Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West, as well as the West Limerick Tourism Hub at Fullers Folly
- **Development of the West Limerick Tourism Hub at Fullers Folly:** The proposed Fuller’s Folly redevelopment in Newcastle West as an attractive Tourist Office for the town and the wider West Limerick links in with the Newcastle West Vision 2023, which is a five-year development strategy and the new Limerick Tourism Strategy, which will exploit and develop Limerick’s tourism potential. The redevelopment is currently going through the Part VIII Planning Process; the development includes the refurbishment and renovation of the Fullers Folly buildings (which is a protected structure, RPS 1488 & 1489) and courtyard, and change of use to commercial, community and tourism. Development also includes the construction of a new building between the two existing structures. The redevelopment will include toilets, café, visitor information, retail, viewing area, interpretation and open courtyard space. In addition, the development will provide for a pedestrian link between the Fullers Folly courtyard and the riverside. The site and location is strategic to developing a tourism experience of scale in the town of Newcastle West.
- **Newcastle West Masterplan for the Castle Demense:** A masterplan of the Demesne parklands in Newcastle West has been prepared and a public consultation due to be held in early 2024. The purpose of the masterplan is to maximise the potential of this amenity for recreational and associated tourism benefits for the town.

REGENERATION &  
SUPPORT FOR  
COMPACT GROWTH

Please provide details on the implementation of your Core Strategy to date, including the achievement of compact growth targets (include details of planning permissions, housing commencement and completion figures in the tables below, where available)

RPO 34 Regeneration, Brownfield and Infill Development  
 RPO 35 Support for Compact Growth  
 RPO 36 LDA  
 RPO 37 Active Land Management  
 RPO 38 Retrofitting Initiative Priorities  
 RPO 176 "10-minute" city and town concepts

**Please outline briefly, examples of significant regeneration projects/Initiatives planned or recently delivered, or innovative examples of delivering quality high density residential development, or any projects to develop lands planned in conjunction with the LDA.**

**Please identify details (including amounts) of any funding sources identified to deliver such projects**

**Please provide details on progress in the delivery of enabling infrastructure and identification of any capacity issues or challenges faced in progressing such projects, including details of programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann's Investment Plan and prioritisation programme**

**Please identify any challenges faced in delivering objectives for development of compact growth, in particular the unlocking of key regeneration sites and/or development of brownfield land.**

**Implementation of Core Strategy:**

Limerick City and County Council issued the first Core Strategy Monitoring Report 2022 – 2023 in October 2023. The full report is available here [Annual-Report-Core-Strategy-2023.pdf \(limerick.ie\)](https://www.limerick.ie/Annual-Report-Core-Strategy-2023.pdf)

**Overview**

During the first year of the Plan, approximately 766 no. dwellings were completed across Limerick City and County. The majority of units were completed in Limerick City and Suburbs, followed by the Key Town of Newcastle West, substantially in accordance with the objectives for compact growth (NPO 3) and the Core Strategy. However, the level of completions remains below the average annual and quarterly targets across all settlements. This can be accredited to the current economic climate.

With respect to planning permissions, a total of 1,149 units have been granted permission across the City and County during the first year of the Plan. Across all of the settlements, 986 no. residential units have been granted permission, comprising 556 no. apartments and 431 no. dwelling units. The majority of units granted (337 no.) comprise three bedrooms, followed by two bedrooms units (259 no.). The quantum of lands zoned for residential development that remains without planning permission across all settlements is sufficient to cater for the forecasted housing requirements to 2028.

In relation to rural areas, 163 no. one off dwellings have been granted planning permission during the first year of the Plan, this is in excess of the Core Strategy average target of 128 no. units per annum. The majority of these units (114 no.) were granted in the areas designated Strong Urban Influence, with 17 no. of the permissions located within the Rural Metro Area.

**Details of planning permissions, housing commencements and completions**

Housing requirement	Units completed since beginning of	Units from extant planning	Units from extant planning permission – not yet commenced
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<b>identified in Core Strategy</b>	<b>Development Plan period</b>	<b>permission – commenced</b>	
15,591	959 (does not include Q4 2023)	764	5,556

**Details of planning permissions, housing commencements and completions (Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas)**

	<b>Housing requirement identified in Core Strategy</b>	<b>Units completed since beginning of Development Plan period</b>	<b>Units from extant planning permission – commenced</b>	<b>Units from extant planning permission – not yet commenced</b>
<b>Metropolitan Area</b>	11,873	655 (does not include Q4 2023)	494	3,802
<b>Remainder of County</b>	3,718	304	270	1,754

**Significant Regeneration Projects:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Infrastructure Requirements</b>	<b>Services Delivery</b>	<b>Permissions Granted</b>	<b>Funding Applications</b>	<b>Project Timelines</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Cleeves Riverside Campus</b>	ESB Substation	Project delivery team in place  Design Team appointed to submission of planning permission	None  Non-statutory masterplan completed August 2023  Planning due for submission Q4 2024	URDF 2 - €34.5m approved  Preliminary Business Case approved  Drawdown commenced	Submit planning Q4 2024  4-5 year construction period	Design Team appointed to prepare planning application
<b>Opera Square</b>	Under construction	Project delivery team in place  Demolition and Enabling Works	An Bord Pleanála Permission Granted Feb. 2020  Amendments Submitted Nov. 2022 –	URDF 1 - €1.8m approved.  Draw down complete  Department of Rural and	Construction Q4 2020 to Q4 2026	Works progressing on site



		<p>Contract (Dec. 2020- Dec. 2022) Complete</p> <p>Basement and One Opera Sq. Contract (Jan. 2023 to Feb. 2025) Ongoing</p> <p>14-storey OPW Building Mar. 2024- Aug. 2026) now at Tender Stage</p> <p>Library, Central Plaza and Four Opera Sq. (Mar. 2024-Dec. 2026) now at Tender Stage</p>	Under review by An Bord Pleanála	Community Development on 5th May 2023. Under Review		
<b>Arthur's Quay</b>	None	In place	None	URDF – Part of Worldclass Waterfront funding allocation (€73.4m)	Framework Plan – To be completed by end 2023 to feed into Worldclass Waterfront	Framework will guide development , reliant on individual landowners thereafter to initiate planning applications
<b>Colbert Station Quarter</b>	None 2023. Going forward some infrastructure	None	None	TBC	St. Joseph's Masterplan – to be completed by end 2023	Overall Framework completed

	may be required to support St. Joseph's and Carey's Road sites				Carey's Road – N/A 2023	
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**SMALLER TOWNS AND VILLAGES**  
RPO 26 Towns & Villages  
RPO 31 Sustainable Place Framework

Please outline progress made in strengthening the role and viability of towns and villages identified in the Development Plan, including details of housing units planned/developed through programmes such as the RRDF funding and 'Town Centre First'

Limerick City and County Council have been working proactively to strengthen the role of towns and villages, throughout Limerick, seeking to enhance the viability and vitality of the centres of town and villages, utilising all tools available to the Local Authority and also securing funding under all funding streams available to support and enhance Towns and Villages throughout Limerick. The Council appointed a Town Regeneration Officer in 2023, with responsibility for Rural Development, and a Town Centre First Plan was finalised for Abbeyfeale in 2023. Work commenced in late 2023, to establish a Town Team in Rathkeale, with a view to completing a Town Centre First Plan in 2024.

Limerick City and County Council have proactively sought funding to deliver projects in towns and villages, with a particular focus on tackling vacancy and dereliction. In terms of Rural Regeneration and Development funding, the Council have been successful in securing funding and delivering projects across Limerick. The Table below outlines projects completed and/or currently in progress. A number of the projects are directly linked to the enhancement of town and villages, including increased economic activity, through tourism projects, adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized properties, or through the redevelopment of derelict properties.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund - Project Details						
Project Reference Code	Project Title	Total Project Cost	Total RRDF Funding Approved	Year project approved	Project Status	Total Project Expenditure to date
RF0003	Great Southern Greenway Limerick (Limerick Greenway), Abbeyfeale, Rathkeale, Newcastle West: Barnagh Tunnel Works & Trail Resurfacing (Category 1)	€10,000,000	€2,724,657	2019	Completed	€ 10,000,000

RF0063	West Limerick Tourism Gateway incorporating Fuller's Folly, Newcastle West (Category 2)	€440,000	€330,000	2019	Completed	€440,000
RF0121	Rural Limerick Housing Development Initiative: Dereliction & re-use for housing development in the core of target towns and villages in rural Limerick	€3,333,333	€2,500,000	2020	In progress	€2,258,367
RF0154	Expansion & upgrading of Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum, Category 1, 3rd Call	€4,533,261	€1,750,000	2021	Substantially completed	€4,420,261
RF0178	Limerick Greenway Hubs @ Ardagh & @Abbeyfeale: Preparatory, Category 2	€750,000	€600,000	2021	In Progress	€388,709.29
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>€19,056,594</b>	<b>€7,904,657</b>			<b>€17,507,337</b>

**Rural Limerick Housing Development (RLHD) Project** - A successful application was made to the Rural Regeneration Development Fund in 2020 with an allocation of €2,500,000 grant funding received for the regeneration of 12 towns across Limerick. This funding has been used as an additional approach to tackling dereliction in Rural Limerick.

Properties vested to the Council via the Dereliction Process, for which there is a limited market in the private sector, in their existing state, will be refurbished and sold on the open market. This is a demonstrator project with Limerick being the first county to receive such funding. The project is providing local employment and will breathe new life into local communities. 2023 has seen significant advances in this area, with 4 completed properties now on the market for sale - one in Bruff, one in Abbeyfeale and two in Askeaton.

#### Other activity in 2023

- 33 properties – Feasibility Reports: Structural reports, Cost plan, Asbestos Assessment complete;
- 4 properties – Design and Tender to main Contractor stage;
- 7 properties – On site under refurbishment.

The Council takes a proactive approach to addressing dereliction and vacancy throughout the City and County, there are a team of derelict site officers that identify properties which contravene the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended) and works with land owners to address dereliction and seek to repurpose the properties. Where the works are beyond the capacity of the property owner, the Council may progress the property to Compulsory Purchase and seek

to redevelop or sell the property on the open market, the primary objective is to reactivate the property. Significant progress has been made in this area, see below table, which outlines progress made in this area 2019 – 2023

A summary of LCCC’s activity on vacancy and dereliction of the period 2019 to end of April 2023 is shown in the Table below:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Number</b>
Site Inspections carried out	5,016
Notices served under the Derelict Sites Act 1990	1,926
Properties now entered on the Derelict Sites Register	411
Properties proposed for Compulsory Acquisition	250
Properties vested in Council ownership	159
Properties sold / for sale / sale agreed	76
Properties assigned to Council Housing (Social Housing)	13
Applications for consent to acquire currently with An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála), awaiting determination	28
Properties Compulsorily acquired (CPO’s) under the Housing Act 1966	8

The Council are currently preparing three applications for Call 5 of the RRDF funding Stream. Building on previous success in terms of the Rural Limerick Housing Development project in terms of tackling dereliction and vacancy in town centres and attracting footfall to the towns, projects are identified as follows:

- Adaptive re-use of Kilfinane Market House, a derelict protected structure, as a centre for local artisan food promotion connected to cultural and activity tourism and community uses;
- Adaptive reuse of a number of buildings along the Limerick Greenway to develop a number of greenway support buildings some of which are derelict protected structures, to support tourism in West Limerick;
- Adaptive reuse of Fullers Folly, a derelict protected structure in Newcastle West Town Centre to develop a tourism offering adjoining the Castle Demesne, in Limerick’s only key town.

Limerick City and County Council have also sought funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The 2023 funding continued to focus on tackling vacancy and dereliction and bringing additional footfall into town and village centres. The funding is also available for outdoor public realm projects, such as plazas, parks or farmer and artisan markets, as well as refurbishment of existing community centres. The 2023 Scheme sought to prioritise projects that align with the objectives of Government policies, such as *Our Rural Future and Town Centre First*. Submissions under the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme were submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development in November 2023, following a public call

for expressions of interest that closed in September 2023. Projects sought under this funding stream included a variety of applications, such as the development of community facilities – such as community childcare facilities, amenity and recreational facilities and upgrade of existing community facilities.

Over the last number of years, the Council have delivered significant progress in towns and villages through the Town and Village Renewal Programme, Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme and the CLÁR programmes to enhance existing and to deliver new facilities to support the growth of towns and villages in line with the growth of populations in line with the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

### RPO 31 Sustainable Place Framework

As detailed earlier in the report LCC have pursued a Local Area Plan programme since the adoption of the LDP. This has prioritised important sub-regional settlements and settlements that have specific needs that warrant a LAP. In turn, this has allowed for a tailored development strategy for these towns and villages, and gives appropriate emphasis to needs for Transport Plans, public realm, way finding, etc as appropriate to the individual settlements.

- Abbeyfeale LAP
- Adare LAP
- Askeaton LAP
- Caherconlish LAP
- Castleconnell LAP
- Croom LAP
- Newcastle West LAP
- Patrickswell LAP
- Rathkeale LAP

In addition, the role of the Town Centre First Officer has greatly enhanced the potential for Towns and Villages and the proactive use of funding as detailed above.

### RURAL AREAS / RURAL DEVELOPMENT / NETWORKS & CROSS BOUNDARY INITIATIVES

- RPO 27 Rural
- RPO 28 Collaboration/Partnership
- RPO 29 Rural Settlement Networks
- RPO 43 Rural Economy & EU Good Practice
- RPO 44 Common Agricultural Policy
- RPO 45 Action Plan for Rural Development
- RPO 46 Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas
- RPO 47 Rural Partnership Models

**Please outline progress made in supporting vibrant rural communities and sustainable economic development, such as initiatives to develop networks/shared resources between settlements.**

## RPO 27 Rural

### (i) Rural Areas/ Rural Development – Policy Provision

The vision for Limerick includes ‘self-sustaining rural communities’ and this theme runs right through the Plan. The Plan is centred on the concept of compact growth and revitalisation of towns and villages in accordance with the provisions of the NPF and the RSES.

#### Policy CGR P4-

**Revitalisation of Towns and Villages states:** It is the policy of the Council to:

- a) Actively address issues of vacancy and dereliction in settlements across Limerick.
- b) Promote projects contributing to compact growth and the physical, social and economic revitalisation of the towns and villages throughout County Limerick.

Section 10.3.2 Rural Communities **Policy SCS1 P4** Rural Community Development includes policy support for Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.

#### Approach

Section 3.2.4 **A Collaborative Approach** of the Plan recognises the value of collaboration and establishes that Limerick City and County Council are committed to a collaborative intra-regional partnership approach between the Limerick-Shannon, Cork, Waterford and Galway regions.

This is further supported in Chapter 5, A Strong Economy including:

- Objective **ECON O12 County Towns and Villages** relating to policy support for economic growth and development
- Objective ECON O13 relates to **Rural Retail** and provides support for retail ancillary to farm diversification.
- Objective ECON O37 supports **farm diversification** and Objective ECON O42, which supports **Limerick Food Strategy**, the aim of which is to develop and enhance Limerick’s reputation for outstanding food and drink, by supporting Limerick’s food and drink producers.
- The Plan sets out policy support for the development of **rural working hubs** in rural towns and villages to support remote working and the Council have been actively progressing the development of hubs through Innovate Limerick (ECON O34). In addition to Community Hubs Chapter 10 -Objective SCS1 O3.
- Objectives ECON O23 and ECON O24 relate to the development and enhancement of **education and skills**.
- Objective IN O2 **Digital Connectivity** provides policy support for the development of digital services to enhance digital innovations and digital transformation throughout Limerick. **Objective SCS1 O7** relates to **Smart Towns and Villages**.



**(ii) Rural Development** – focused on community-led local development.

**Ashford – Kantoher Development Group CLG.** This is an example of a rural community located in a remote area of west Limerick with strong community spirit, self-reliance and a capacity to develop local projects building on local resources. Kantoher Development Group purchased the old Ashford Tavern pub/dance hall for the local community which had been vacant for over 5 years and fallen into a state of disrepair. With support from **the LEADER programme**, the Group refurbished the largest building at the very heart of the village as a much-needed community facility. This was done following the completion of a community plan for the parish of Killeedy, which identified key needs and opportunities. The project involved renovating and converting the derelict old bar into a multipurpose facility including a room that acts as a Teach Ceoil at night time; an after school club during the day; kitchen and toilet facilities; space for running classes; meeting space for smaller groups. It also acts as a venue for walkers and cyclists to have tea/coffee facilities as well as for coffee mornings and many other local activities.

### **RPO 29 Rural Settlement Networks & RPO 28 Collaboration/Partnership**

**Rural Settlement Network: North Kerry/West Limerick Periphery and Border Areas Initiative.**

This was a cooperation project funded by the LEADER Programme involving West Limerick Resources CLG and North East West Kerry Development (NEWKD), where the latter was the lead partner. Peripheral parts of North Kerry and West Limerick are impacted by demographic weakness (population decline and population ageing), economic underperformance and lack of services. However, core zones in the border areas have experiencing population growth and a number of them have development potential, particularly in rural tourism and other diversification opportunities. This project involved profiling and working on community planning with a number of settlements in the area to plan for their sustainable development addressing social and economic needs, overall quality of life and climate change. The Limerick settlements involved in the project were: Abbeyfeale, Ardagh, Athea, Ballyhahill, Carrigkerry, Glin, Loughill, Mountcollins, Shannagolden, Templeglantine and Tournafulla. The methodology involved using the EU SMART Villages concept to explore how local services can be enhanced and sustained through well planned community-led actions and projects, the deployment of information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and consideration of future impacts of climate change. It involved multi-stakeholder engagement including participation of Limerick City and County Council and Kerry County Council. The outcome was a Regional SMART Village plan for the border area of north Kerry and west Limerick structured under the core pillars of: Digitalisation and Technology, Innovation, Enterprise and Employment, Sustainability and Community. Local actions under the same pillars were developed for each of the settlements.

### **RPO 46 Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas & RPO 48 Innovation Hubs and Centres of Excellence**

**Abbeyfeale ENGINE E-Hub.** Innovate Limerick, the innovation arm of Limerick City and County Council in relation to small and medium-size enterprise development, developed an E-Hub at

Provincial House, Main Street Abbeyfeale, following the successful purchase of the former bank building. The E-Hub provides a central community space including access to high speed broadband, co-working space, meeting rooms and a training room. The services offered on site connect with support for start-ups and small businesses. This project was part-funded by the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, DRCD.

In June 2022, Innovate Limerick was the successful lead partner for two successful Connected Hubs applications, totaling €408,250, to upgrade 7 existing hubs across Limerick. The 7 hubs included Bruree Food Units, Croom Enterprise Centre, The Pavilion, Adare and The Yard, Newcastle West. This project will expand remote working capacity and support the hubs in improving their sustainability goals. This investment will enable the continued development of a collaborative hub network, which will feed into the regional and national economic development strategy, the development of the National Remote Work Strategy and support the National Hubs network.

#### PLACEMAKING

RPO 31 Sustainable Place Framework  
RPO 61 Health Place Audit (HPA) for Place-making  
RPO 70 Bidding capacity

Please provide a brief summary of progress on major projects and initiatives identified through the Development Plan to support Placemaking such as improvements to the public realm, developing new streets/spaces/pocket parks. Details of funding sources (including amounts) to deliver such projects should also be included.

#### RPO 31 Sustainable Place Framework & RPO 61 Health Place Audit (HPA) for Place-making

The Council have established a dedicated Directorate within Limerick City and Council dealing specifically with Environment, Planning and Placemaking. The importance and significance of place making is key to improving quality of life, increasing residential development in the city and town centres and creating employment opportunities. A public realm strategy for the city centre and a number of towns have policy support in the LDP and are currently progressing.

**(i) O'Connell Street:** In 2023, O'Connell Street and Thomas Street in Limerick City underwent a comprehensive transformation under the O'Connell Street Revitalisation project. Completed in 2023, the primary objective of this project was to rejuvenate the city's main street. This was achieved by expanding pedestrian amenities and establishing dedicated cycling lanes, as well as improving public transport connections. The overall aim was to create a more vibrant and welcoming urban environment for both residents and visitors. The O'Connell Street Revitalisation project was made possible through co-funding from the European Regional Development Fund's S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme, which is managed by the Southern Regional Assembly, the National Transport Authority & the Urban Regeneration Development Fund in partnership with Limerick City and County Council. This collaborative effort has significantly improved the urban environment in Limerick City.

### **(ii) Limerick Public Realm Plan**

Expected delivery timeframe: 2024. The Public Realm Plan will look more closely at the public spaces within the central area of Limerick; streets, squares, laneways, linkages, riverside, bridges, parks and green spaces and will set out a vision and strategy for improvements to guide investment and development in the future. The project is at pre draft stage and expected delivery timeframe is 2024.

### **(iii) Laneways and Street Upgrades**

A Laneways Toolkit has been prepared as a study to support the upgrading Limerick's historical laneways in Limerick City Centre. The Preliminary Business Case will advance in 2024 and will outline the preferred options to advance both the laneways and city centre streets. These projects are funded from Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and the National Transport Authority (NTA).

### **(iv) Limerick City Wayfinding & Orientation Signage Project**

LCCC Placemaking & Public realm are progressing the Limerick Wayfinding & Orientation Strategy. The aim of this plan is to enhance the visitor experience and drive visitation and economic impact by encouraging people to explore and experience key areas of the City. The Limerick Wayfinding and Orientation Signage project consists of the removal of 45 existing pedestrian wayfinding & information signs and the installation of 70 new pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signs comprising 18 Map Totems, 19 Route Markers and 33 Finger Posts at various locations throughout Limerick City Centre. The project received Part 8 Planning in November 2023 and a contractor was appointed in January 2024. The fabrication and installation of the signs shall commence in February 2024 with project completion due in July 2024.

The project is partly funded by Failte Ireland through Destination Towns Scheme for €468,750 with the remaining funding provided by LCCC through Development Fund contributions.

### **(v) Adare Public Realm Plan**

The Adare Public Realm Plan has been developed to draft stage and incorporated into the Local Area Plan. These documents complement each other, contributing to the consideration of opportunity sites and the future projects action list for Adare. These documents underwent public consultation in Q3 2023, and it is expected that the Draft Local Area Plan will be finalized in Q1 2024. This Plan seeks to address public realm design within Adare village. A further aim of the Plan is to put well-designed streets and other public spaces at the heart of sustainable communities, with the goal that the enhanced streetscape will create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, namely walking, cycling or public transport. The place-making approach adopted within the Plan was an overarching objective so as to take account of the wide variety of needs within the village of Adare.

**(vi) Shopfront Guide:**

In 2024, the Public Realm Team will develop a shopfront guide recognizing that shopfronts play a crucial role in shaping the character, quality, and perception of retail streets in towns and villages. Objective ECON 015, Active Street Frontages of the LCCC Development Plan requires that a Shop Front Design Guidelines is prepared within the lifetime of the Development Plan. The project rationale is two-fold: the development of Shop Front Guidelines that will both act as a guide for Development Management planning and for businesses to help inform them of the required process, and to seek clarifications from LCCC. The guidelines will be particularly useful for new businesses.

**(vii) Abbeyfeale Public Realm Scheme:** The Abbeyfeale Public Realm Scheme commenced with the demolition of O’Riordan’s Pub on Main Street. Phase 1 contract involving 400 meters on the Killarney Road N21 and upgrade of Grove Crescent car park tender documentation is currently being finalised.

**(viii) Askeaton Public Realm Plan:** Published in March 2023, works identified in the public realm plan will proceed in 2024 to include a number of projects including a parklet project commencing in April 2024, kerb realignment, connection of footpaths and a feasibility study on the bank building.

**RSES ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

- RPO 40 Regional Economic Resilience
- RPO 64 Facilitate new business formation, growth and industrial re-organisation
- RPO 72 Brexit
- RPO 74 Economic Risk Management System
- RPO 62 Locations for Employment Development

Please provide details of progress in supporting the RSES Economic Strategy and the role of the Region’s Economic Drivers. Details on progress with the delivery of Strategic Locations for Employment Development should also be included

**RPO 64 Facilitate New Business**

**(i) Land Use Plans:**

The Employment Strategy of Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 seeks to align strategic employment locations with public transport corridors, increasing the efficiency of land-use, reducing sprawl and minimising carbon footprints and seeks to retain and enhance the important role of employment in Limerick City and Environs and the County’s Town Centres. From a sectoral perspective, the LDP aims to support and facilitate the economic development of Limerick across a broad range of sectors, while acknowledging in particular the importance of the knowledge economy. The focus on employment creation is based on consolidating the strong job generation capacity of professional services, ICT, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and logistics technology and knowledge based industries. In addition, the LDP

provides for a wide range of employment needs to ensure that people with a diverse range of skill levels can both find and help grow employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the Council will seek to work in conjunction with state agencies and the government to support and facilitate education, upskilling and job creation programmes.

**Chapter 5, A Strong Economy sets out policies and objectives relating to the Enterprise and Employment** across a range of sectors including a section on Economic Principals as identified in the economic vision set out in the RSES.

Overarching Policy support includes:

- Policy ECON P1 Strong Economy
- Policy ECON P2 Economic Development and Enterprise - It is a policy of the Council to promote and facilitate opportunities for sectoral development in Limerick, to increase productivity, create employment and to diversify the economy and ensure future economic resilience.
- Policy ECON P3 Urban Economy
- Policy ECON P4 Retail
- Policy ECON P5 Enterprise and Employment Development Opportunities
- Policy ECON P6 Tourism
- Policy ECON P7 Marine Economy

#### **RPO 62 Locations for Employment Development**

**(i)** The LDP **zoning for Enterprise and Employment** has regard to the ‘Guiding Principles to identify locations for Strategic Employment Development’, and RPO 62 Locations for Employment Development of the RSES with regards to a sequential and compact approach to development, while increasing the integration of land use and sustainable modes of transport.

Chapter 5, A Strong Economy includes **Policy ECON P6 Enterprise and Employment Development Opportunities** and further states that the Local Authority supports the on-going operations of the strategic employment zones identified in the MASP, the LDP and any sustainable economic development opportunities on appropriately zoned lands. In this regard, the capacity for employment growth is acknowledged and lands have been zoned to cater for existing and new industry and enterprise and employment related uses. Bus, pedestrian and cycle linkages will connect many of the potential employment areas to the City Centre as identified in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.

Chapter 5 includes the following:

- Objective ECON O17 Strategic Employment Locations City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty
- Objective ECON O19 Employment Locations County Limerick
- Objective ECON O20 Location of Industry or Enterprise in Brownfield Site

In addition, each Local Area Plan prepared since the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 supports the policy objectives as set out in the LDP to facilitate economic development and employment generating activities in each of the settlements in a sustainable manner, in accordance with higher-level spatial plans, including the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028

### **(ii) Enterprise and Employment Zoned Lands**

Limerick City and County Council are actively seeking to establish sites that can accommodate enterprise and employment opportunities and are preparing a study to look at long-term enterprise and employment zoned lands to accommodate future growth.

### **(iii) Local Enterprise Office**

- The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the European Regional Development Programme through a service level agreement between Enterprise Ireland on behalf of the Department and Limerick City and County Council.
- By the end of the third quarter in 2023, similar to last year, 29 companies were approved direct grant assistance which should result in additional job creation but getting and keeping suitable staff is proving more difficult for the SME sector in an economy that is beyond full employment.
- 1245 people participated in LEO training programmes and 294 received individual mentoring which is a threefold increase on 2022.
- The job creation potential associated with Measure 1 grant aided LEO clients will see the creation of approximately 150 net new jobs in the small business sector in Limerick City and County in 2023.
- LEO supported the roll out of new national programmes and funds to support the SME sector including Digital Start, Green for Business, IP Start, and GradStart. Due to the disruptive change of Covid, LEO has developed a hybrid model of supports and is developing new models to encourage networking and collaboration between entrepreneurs and within sectors e.g. meet-ups, food, and technology sectors.
- LEO continues to support local companies to avail of wider market opportunities created through online technology e.g. 51 trading online vouchers were approved to date.
- The LEO team will continue to participate in National programmes such as the Student Enterprise Programme, Women In Business Network, National Enterprise Awards and Showcase to foster entrepreneurship, business skills development and innovation within the Limerick City and County.
- For 2024, greater emphasis will be put on programmes such as Green for Business, LEAN, Export and Digital. All of these supports are designed to aid competitiveness and develop exports in an environmentally friendly manner.
- From 2024 LEO will support larger companies greater than 10 employees and up to 50 who are not existing Enterprise Ireland clients.



- LEO training programmes will continue to respond to the needs of the SME sector and encourage sustainability and growth through tailored management development, LEAN and mentoring programmes. These programmes are vital to support local companies and give them a competitive edge in a global market.

Please provide details of progress that has been made with respect to the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for your Local Authority

**Local Enterprise and Community Plan 2023-2028**

The Framework LECP is fully developed to pre-Final Draft stage. This follows on from an extensive consultation processes based on the Socio-economic Statement including workshops in different geographic areas of the city and county and consultation workshops with groups that are not traditionally engaged in such consultation processes. The analysis of the socio-economic context draws on latest data from the 2022 Census and HP Pobal Deprivation Index (2022). The SEA/AA screening has been completed and a full draft report has been completed. This will be sent to the relevant environmental authorities. In Q1 2024, the Pre-Final Draft will be brought to the LECP Advisory Steering Group and, then to the LCDC and the Economic SPC. Any amendments needed following this stage will be completed. The Draft Final Framework Plan will be brought to the Municipal Districts / Metropolitan Area Council structures for review and comment in Q2. Following screening for consistency of the LECP with the RSES by the Regional Assembly, the Framework LECP is expected to be approved by the full Council in Q3 2024.

**ECONOMIC CORRIDORS**

RPO 41 Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)

Please provide details of progress that has been made to advance development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor

**RPO 41 Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)**

It is an objective to develop the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative as a driver for enterprise growth, investment and attracting entrepreneurial skills and talent to the rural catchments as an economic complement to the role of metropolitan areas and larger urban centres on the AEC. The RSES recognises the combined advantages and opportunities of the AEC including delivering a high-value and low-carbon economy.

**Progress/ Initiatives**

- In June 2022 Innovate Limerick was the successful lead partner for two successful Connected Hubs applications, totalling €408,250, to upgrade 7 existing hubs across Limerick. The 7 hubs involved are Spark Hub, Roxboro, Bruree Food Units, Croom Enterprise Centre, The Boat Club, Limerick, The Pavilion, Adare, The Yard, Newcastle West, and Engine, Limerick. This project will expand remote working capacity and support the hubs in improving their sustainability goals. This investment will enable the continued development of a collaborative hub network, which will feed into the regional

and national economic development strategy, the development of the National Remote Work Strategy and support the National Hubs network.

- Engine Hubs, the first collaborative cluster of business hubs spanning the Mid West and North Kerry was launched and developed by Innovate Limerick. It is a connected network of 19 private and public enterprise spaces throughout Limerick, Clare, Tipperary and North Kerry. The aim of Engine Hubs is to strengthen the enterprise ecosystem in the Mid West to make it an attractive area to set up or use as a multinational landing pad. Its aim is also to provide high quality workspace to remote workers who wish to remain within their community. Since Engine Hubs was created in 2021, over 600 jobs have been created, with a further 100 due to be created in the coming months. The Engine hubs network has directly secured €700,000 funding for upgrades and marketing on behalf of the Enterprise Hubs since it began.
- The Engine Hubs Network in Limerick, supported by the national hubs network Connected Hubs, was selected to run a flagship event for Ireland's inaugural 'Digital First Day' in November 2022. Digital First Day is part of the Digital Atlantic Economic Corridor Programme, and supported by Connected Hubs. The event 'Champions of Collaboration - How To Progress Through Partnerships' was aimed at any business looking to digitise their offering, learn from successful collaboration stories and will offer networking opportunities. It highlighted the benefits of digital growth through collaboration to help communities attract investment, remote workers, home buyers and visitors to their area, thereby advancing sustainable regional development and quality of life.
- Engine Hubs was a selected flagship partner for the Western Development Commission Digital Atlantic Economic Corridor Connected Hubs showcase day. The Connected Hubs Showcase Day 2023 in Limerick, showcased 6 hubs the following towns in County Limerick - Newcastle West, Castleconnell, Abbeyfeale, Adare, Croom and Bruree, in terms of their offering to enterprise stakeholders in the Mid West. The event highlighted the importance of hubs working collaboratively to reduce the urban/rural divide and strengthen the Limerick County offering.
- The Engine Hubs Network also established monthly networking meetings for small business hubs throughout the Mid West. The Engine Hub Network has worked closely with hubs in urban and rural areas to support hubs in creating the optimal space for business development such as grant assistance for infrastructure development, in house business training in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office for hub members.
- In 2023 the Engine Collaboration Centre fully opened its doors as Limerick's only city centre collaborative workspace, co working venue, which aims to achieve long term regional differentiation through partnership and collaboration. In its first year, the Engine Collaboration Centre became home to over 11 businesses accommodating over 100 personnel. In excess of 330 events took place in the Engine Collaboration Centre, with over 1,000 attendees passing through the doors for networking, meetings and trade events in sectors ranging from medtech, sports tech, Film, early stage start up,

community and enterprise networking. Networking events and community-building activities are organised regularly to strengthen connections among members, and gain support from other businesses in the wider network of hubs.

**TOURISM**

RPO 53 Tourism  
RPO 54 Tourism & the Environment

Please outline any recently completed or planned projects of significance to support tourism development, culture, heritage or the arts in your Local Authority

**RPO 53 Tourism**

**(i) Limerick Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City Strategy'**

In 2021, the 'Limerick Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City Strategy' was launched which provides a framework for tourism businesses and stakeholders to work in partnership to 2026 to create new and improve existing visitor experiences while maximising the city's role as a base to explore the Wild Atlantic Way. The Limerick Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City Strategy envisions Limerick as a compelling destination for visitors and a base for exploring the Wild Atlantic Way. Limerick City and County Council, as leading stakeholders of this strategy, is leading a number of initiatives supporting the Strategy, including the establishment of the Discover Limerick Pass and development of an overall promotional theme of "Discover Limerick."

**(ii) Limerick Sightseeing Pass:**

On 6th June 2023, Fáilte Ireland and Limerick City & County Council, in partnership with tourism partners and Open Pass UK, launched Limerick's official Sightseeing Pass – the Discover Limerick Pass. The Discover Limerick Pass offers access to the top attractions in Limerick City and County for a total price lower than paying for each attraction individually. It is convenient, easy to use, and is available in an instant mobile download to a smartphone. All the visitor has to do is purchase a 1, 2 or 3 day pass on [www.discoverlimerickpass.com](http://www.discoverlimerickpass.com), download to their phones and start exploring. Child passes are also available.

The Discover Limerick Pass is quite innovative in its idea and function and is open to further expansion in terms of the number of attractions/companies on board. It also opens the pathway to all other counties and their Local Authorities in Ireland in terms of developing such a product and continuing to boost Tourism in Ireland.

**(iii) Limerick Greenway**

Built along the former Limerick to Tralee railway line, Limerick Greenway weaves a route through West Limerick's traditional agricultural landscape, linking the towns of Rathkeale, Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale. Limerick Greenway stretches for 40 kilometers to the border with County Kerry.

**(iv) River Shannon Accessibility Study**

Limerick City has been designated as a destination hub in the River Shannon Tourism Masterplan as one of the main destination hubs along the river Shannon. LCCC Tourism Development Department in 2023 worked with Waterways Ireland to further advance, in partnership with other key stakeholders, tourism on the River Shannon within the Limerick

Region. This included a feasibility study being undertaken to consider how accessibility to the river can be further maximised, under the actions for the River Shannon Tourism Masterplan. This Study will be published in Q1 of 2024

**(v) Lough Gur**

Lough Gur In 2023 Lough Gur retained its Green Heritage Flag by An Taisce. In 2024 work will continue on enhancing the facilities at the site whilst working to protect the important biodiversity that makes Lough Gur unique. Funding was received from ORIS for design of a walkway project in Lough Gur. Appointment of consultants to undertake this work will commenced in 2023.

**(vi) Ryder Cup**

Ryder Cup & Bid for Events LCCC will continue to plan and prepare for the Ryder Cup, now moved to 2027. Two internal Steering Groups have been established composed of members of key departments within Limerick City and County Council as part of the Project Management Plan for LCCC. As part of the initiatives in place to prepare for the hosting of the Ryder Cup, LCCC Tourism Department continues an ongoing collaboration on the Working Group for Bid for Events, with the Shannon region Sport and Conference Bureau and UL. LCCC will continue to work to develop Limerick's profile as host of international sporting events.

**(vii) Supporting the Arts**

One of Limerick City and County Council's key objectives is Delivering a cultural and arts programme for the benefit of the Citizens of Limerick and visitors to Limerick. The Council have developed and/or support multiple art and cultural initiatives to support the arts and the role it plays in enhancing the quality of life of its citizens. This includes the following:

**(a) Initiatives Supporting Art and Culture**

- The Music of Eamonn Flynn, Mountcollins, Co. Limerick (January – December 2023) supported by Creative Ireland Limerick. This project, led by the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, explored the musical life of Eamonn Flynn and highlight the Limerick Sliabh Luachra.
- Musicians on Call (referred to under Theme 'Inclusive Communities & Places – Improving Wellbeing and Quality of Life)
- 2023: INSPIRE (referred to under Theme 'Inclusive Communities & Places – Improving Wellbeing and Quality of Life)

**(b) Artists' bursaries and grants schemes awarded:**

- Individual Arts Bursary Awards Scheme 2023
- Dolores O'Riordan Music Bursary 2023
- Engine Short Film Bursaries 2023
- Limerick Theatre Bursaries 2023

- Grants under the Arts Act 2023
- Summer School Bursaries (Tyrone Guthrie, Blas, Meitheal, Drama League of Ireland) Artists' and organisations' professional development:
- Words Ireland National Mentoring Programme 2023

**(c) Visual Artists Ireland Professional Development Training**

- Arts and Disability Training in partnership with Arts & Disability Ireland

**(d) Artists' supports:**

- Publishing of the Stony Thursday poetry book
- Limerick's Residential Artist Apartments Scheme and Artists' studios

**RPO 54 Tourism & the Environment**

**(i) Westfields Management Plan**

A management plan and Natura Impact Assessment was completed for the Westfields Wetlands located on the north side of the City. These wetlands are an important ecological and biodiverse habitat located in an urban environment. The plan focuses on the protection of the area for future generations while sustainably developing the amenity value of the wetlands.

**(ii) Limerick Greenway Biodiversity Plan**

In 2022, Limerick City and County Council commissioned the drawing up of Limerick Greenway Biodiversity Plan. This plan presents a comprehensive assessment of the area's ecology, combining findings from desktop studies and ecological surveys, over a twelve month period from April 2022 to April 2023. The plan collates and presents the results of the surveys, which will inform actions and recommendations for future implementation. These actions and recommendations shall be undertaken to ensure biodiversity on Limerick Greenway is further recognised, protected and strengthened. The main aim of the very comprehensive 300 page plan was to place biodiversity at the heart of this process, with sympathetic management, and retention of the natural corridor. As the popularity of Limerick Greenway increases over time, LCCC is cognisant of the need to ensure minimal impact to species, and to enable the rich biodiversity to be protected, as both an educational asset and a visitor attractor.

The document is the first Biodiversity Plan to be dedicated to a Greenway in Ireland. Measuring the success of the Biodiversity Plan can immediately be seen in the way visitors behave while using Limerick Greenway today.

One recommendation of the Biodiversity Plan that has already been implemented, was to design an education programme for local primary schools, the aim of which is to educate children on the importance of protecting Limerick Greenway. Teachers from schools situated along Limerick Greenway took part in a one day training delivered along Limerick Greenway, by a Botanist. The training programme gave teachers both resources to use in the classroom

with their students, and identified exercises that could be done with the children on class excursions to Limerick Greenway.

### **(iii) Land Use Plans**

Actions provided in Local Area Plans include opportunities to develop greening projects. Opportunity sites which include a heritage aspect or environmental concern, development principles/potential provide for a full consideration given to the protection of heritage/environment in order to avoid unnecessary conflict between development and the projection of the environment including the built environment. For example, the Caherconlish Local Area Plan includes an opportunity site which has important historical and archaeological heritage. Development principles provide for the following: Ensure that full consideration is given to the protection of archaeological heritage, in undertaking, approving or authorising development in order to avoid unnecessary conflict between development and the protection of archaeological heritage.

### **MARINE ECONOMY**

RPO 76 Marine Economy  
RPO 77 Maritime Spatial  
planning -  
Consistency and Alignment  
RPO 78 First Mover under  
the National Marine Planning  
Framework  
RPO 79 Shannon Estuary  
and Other Harbour Plans  
RPO 81 Fishery Harbour  
Centres and  
Local Authority Harbours  
RPO 82 Seafood Sector  
RPO 83 Island and Coastal  
Communities  
RPO 84 Fishing Local Area  
Group (FLAG) Development  
Strategies  
RPO 85 Renewable offshore  
energy  
effects on European Sites  
and  
potential for adverse effects  
on the  
RPO 86 Marine Cluster

**Please provide a brief summary of relevant recent initiatives, planned or completed projects that support development of our marine and coastal assets**

### **RPO 79 Shannon Estuary and Other Harbour Plans**

#### **Review of the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan**

The Shannon Integrated Framework Plan identifies 9 Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) on the Estuary and encourages, facilitates and promotes a balanced approach to the Estuary's growth, whilst simultaneously encouraging careful protection, management and enhancement of its natural environmental resources. On the back of the new Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAP Act) and the establishment of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), a Strategic Policy Review of the SIFP has commenced. A Policy Review Committee with relevant stakeholders and agencies will be established in Quarter 1 2024 to undertake a review of the policy contained within the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan.



Refer to 'Enhanced Regional Connectivity' and 'International Connectivity' for additional information under this theme with regards to the Marine Economy.

**CLIMATE ACTION AND DECARBONISATION: TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY & SOCIETY**

RPO 56 Low Carbon Economy  
RPO 57 National Policy Statement on Bio-economy  
RPO 85 Renewable offshore energy  
RPO 88 National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework  
RPO 89 Building Resilience to Climate Change  
RPO 90 Regional Decarbonisation.  
RPO 91 Decarbonisation in the Transport Sector  
RPO 94 Decarbonisation in the Agricultural Sector

Please provide a brief summary of relevant recent initiatives, planned or completed projects to address Climate Action, including progress with the preparation of your Local Authority's Climate Action Plan and Decarbonisation Zone

**RPO 56 Low Carbon Economy**

Land Use Plans: The Limerick Development Plan recognises one of the key challenges for the climate-neutral transition is to reallocate resources from carbon-intensive to climate-neutral developments and infrastructure. The integration of land use and transportation is a fundamental principle of the LDP, which supports the rebalancing of the transport system towards more sustainable modes of transport, in order to mitigate against the potential impacts of climate change and to remove congestion from our city, towns and villages.

Each Local area Plan prepared since the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 provide policy provision in support of a transition to a low carbon society. Each lower tiered plan has a dedicated chapter outlining how climate action is a key consideration of all land use plans and provides the necessary policy for the protection and enhancement of the quality of our environment and implementation of climate action measures through the planning process.

**RPO 85 Renewable Offshore Energy**

The LDP Objective ECON O59 provides policy support, which relates to Offshore Renewable Energy in addition to Objectives CAF O8, CAF O31 and CAF O32 support the development of offshore wind. CAF9 supports the adoption of emerging renewable technologies as they become available.

The Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Report: This report sets out the vision for the Shannon Estuary to become Ireland's Atlantic Green Digital Corridor. The plan was launched by the Taoiseach, joined by Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Minister

for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Minister for Education at the Ardnacrusha hydroelectric dam on 8 July 2023.

The taskforce was established in April 2022, consulted extensively with regional, national and international stakeholders and across industry including Government, local authorities, elected representatives and members of the public. The taskforce has a number of objectives including how the installation of offshore wind in the Atlantic can be expedited with the next decade

### **RPO 88 National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework**

#### **Draft Limerick Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP)**

- The Draft Limerick Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) was placed on public display in December 2023 and is due for adoption in March 2024. The Limerick Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) will actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances and Limerick City and County Council will be responsible for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from across our own assets and infrastructure, whilst also taking on a broader role of influencing and facilitating others to meet their own targets. The Plan further incorporates a proposed decarbonisation zone which is centred on the Georgian core in Limerick City Centre. Working with KPMG consultants, Limerick City and County Council developed an evidence base, which includes a Climate Change Risk Assessment for County Limerick and a Baseline Emissions Inventory for County Limerick and also for the proposed Decarbonisation Zone, details of which are presented in the Climate Action Plan Summary Report.

### **RPO 89 Building Resilience to Climate Change**

**(i) Community Climate Action Fund Programme:** The Community Climate Action Fund Programme was launched in Limerick in December 2023

- Síolta Glasa: Limerick City and County Council led a successful application to the second strand of the Creative Climate Action Fund, securing a grant of €249,936 for delivery across 2023, 2024 & 2025. The project will partner with seven creative, and seven community, partners with the aim of exploring creative climate action and enabling localised behaviour change. It is anticipated that there will be seven outputs from the collaborations in a range of creative mediums and skills. The collaborations will support learning and doing together, and will use, as appropriate, Limerick's Citizen Innovation Lab as a collaboration platform to create impact through empowering communities in decarbonising Limerick by 2050, with citizen creativity placed at the core of the process.

**(ii) Energy Management Team:** LCCC has had an Energy Management Team (EMT) in place since 2009. The EMT has overseen the Councils drive to reduce its energy consumption and associated carbon emissions by 51% by 2030. As of Q3 2023 LCCC had achieved an improved energy efficiency of 41.3%.

**(iii) Decarbonising Together:** LCCC completed the “Decarbonising Together” project funded by Creative Ireland where 4 communities across Limerick City investigated and carried out a climate action initiative with the support of the Creative Community. Funding was secured in late 2023 for a follow up initiative “Siolta Glasra” that will support up to 7 communities across Limerick City and County.

**(iv) Energy Retrofitting:** LCCC has secured funding under the Technical Support Instrument Initiative from DGREFORM. The project in partnership with the OPW will produce guidance on the energy retrofitting of historic buildings and the business case for the establishment of a sustainable investment fund to support historic building retrofitting in Limerick. This will include advice on the legal and technical structures such a fund should have.

**(v) CFRAMS:** The Council received approval from the Government in 2018 for Flood Risk Management Plans under CFRAMS (Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management) to progress flood relief schemes (FRS) in Limerick City and Environs, Athea and Castleconnell. Subsequent approval was received to progress Adare. Whilst, design/investigation works are advancing for all schemes, the following provides an update on each of the individual schemes:

- **Adare Flood Relief Scheme:** Public Participation Day held in November 2023, envisaged to lodge a planning application for the preferred scheme to ABP at the end of Q3 2024 / start of Q4 2024.
- **Athea Flood Relief Scheme:** Currently working towards a Public Participation Day in February 2024 to display the emerging preferred option(s). Subject to feedback received, it is anticipated that the preferred scheme will be submitted for planning consent in early Q3 2024.
- **Castleconnell Flood Relief Scheme:** Anticipated to be submitted for planning consent in Q1 2024.
- **Kings Island Flood Relief Scheme:** Tender will be advertised Q1 2024 and contractor onsite in Q2 2024.

#### **(vi) Limerick City and Environs Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy**

Completed in 2023, the aim of the strategy is to inform and guide the planning and management of green and blue spaces in Limerick City and Environs, including its rivers, parks and open green spaces, helping drive the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. One of the main elements of the BGI strategy is the development of the Limerick Blue Green Ring encircling the City. A consultant has been appointed to develop a masterplan for the blue green ring to incorporate where feasible, active travel measures.

#### **RPO 91 Decarbonisation in the Transport Sector**

**(i) Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy:** The Strategy is due for completion in early 2024. The strategy is taking a proactive approach in assessing the expected power requirements on the

network and determining the necessary number of charge points needed to support the growing number of electric vehicles across Limerick

**(ii) Pilot Charging Project:** LCCC are progressing a pilot charging project with a focus on delivering residential and destination charging solutions at a number of locations around the city and county. There are 14 pilot locations identified, eight are located in the metropolitan area.

**RESOURCE EFFICIENCY  
INCL. RENEWABLE  
ENERGY**  
RPO 98 Regional  
Renewable Energy  
Strategy  
RPO 109 Bio-Energy  
Implementation Plan

Please provide details of renewable energy targets, projects or initiatives to support renewal energy

**RPO 98 Regional Renewable Energy Strategy**

Limerick City and County Council welcomes any future collaboration at a regional level on a regional renewable energy strategy and a bio-energy implementation plan.

**Sample Initiative:**

LCCC through the +CityxChange EU H2020 project has supported the development of an innovative tidal turbine. In September 2023, a 12kW hydrokinetic tidal turbine was deployed just downstream of Sarsfield Bridge on the River Shannon, in the city centre. The deployment saw successes in a number of areas, and pioneers a design that showcases the most advanced urban deployment of river turbine technology to date. Due to the protected status of much of Limerick’s buildings, utilising roof and wall space for solar and other renewable energy sources was not feasible. Instead, an alternative energy source was identified – the River Shannon. The design for the turbine is the most advanced and effective on the market, it is also kind to aquatic life, moulded to the needs of citizens, and able to efficiently produce clean energy. The deployment process has also been expanded into learnings for other cities.

The turbines have received planning permission and followed Marine Area Consent expected in 2024, the turbines will be installed.

**BLUE GREEN  
INFRASTRUCTURE**  
RPO 110 Ecosystem  
Services  
RPO 122 Sustainable  
Drainage Systems (SuDS)  
RPO 124 Green  
Infrastructure  
RPO 125 Green  
Infrastructure Corridors  
RPO 126 Biodiversity  
RPO 127 Invasive Species  
RPO 128 All-Ireland  
Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support the development of Blue Green Infrastructure, ecosystem services and biodiversity

**RPO 124 Green Infrastructure**

Limerick City and Environs Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy was completed in 2023. The aim of the strategy is to inform and guide the planning and management of green and blue

spaces in Limerick City and Environs, including its rivers, parks and open green spaces, helping drive the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

The strategy identifies 10 high-level priority actions which the plan aims to achieve. These objectives, while specific to the City and environs, are relevant to any village or town in the County and can be incorporated and promoted as appropriate. One of the main elements of the BGI strategy is the development of the Limerick Blue Green Ring encircling the City. A consultant has been appointed to develop a masterplan for the blue green ring to incorporate where feasible, active travel measures.

In addition, the Local Area Plans for Abbeyfeale, Castleconnell, Caherconlish, Newcastle West and Draft Adare and Patrickswell Local Area Plans includes a number of policies and objectives that will guide the direction and support the delivery and enhancement of GBI within the settlements.

### **RPO 125 Green Infrastructure Corridors**

- As part of the implementation of the Limerick City and Environs Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy, the enhancement and development of a Blue Green Ring is the first major action, which cross cuts many of the priorities identified in the strategy. The Blue Green Corridor includes the River Shannon, some of the most important wetlands (such as Bunlicky, Coonagh and Westfields Wetlands) as well as other important habitats for fauna and flora (such as King's Island, Shannon Fields, the Baggot Estate, Ballinacurra Creek and the Groody Valley) in the city. A consultant has been appointed to strategically investigate and develop this element of the strategy and work on this vision will progress throughout 2024.
- Castletroy Greenway enhanced as part of the Go Green Routes European Project, to enhance linear routes through, planting/natural play, mini forest creation, bioblitz.

### **RPO 126 Biodiversity**

- Hedge row survey of the County undertaken in 2023 which assessed the quality of hedge rows in Limerick and made recommendations.
- Westfields Wetland Management plan completed and presented to the elected members; outlines management of an important urban wetland going forward.
- LCCC were successful in partnering in two URBACT 4 projects, *BiodiverCity*, and *GreenPlace*. BiodiverCity will develop methods of measuring and valorizing biodiversity in an urban environment; Greenplace will develop a methodology of greening and introducing biodiversity into derelict or neglected urban areas.
- Limerick City & County Council is in the process of recruiting a Biodiversity Officer funded by The Heritage Council who will promote biodiversity actions throughout the City and County. It is anticipated this position will be filled in early 2024.

### **RPO 127 Invasive Species**

- Loobagh catchment - Giant Hog weed removal. 5<sup>th</sup> year of project with Hogweed more or less eliminated.
- Mulkear Catchment feasibility estimate. The catchment was surveyed to estimate how much it would cost to undertake a Hogweed removal program for the whole catchment incorporating both Limerick and Tipperary functional areas.
- The Smart Phone app for reporting Invasive Plants is now available and more than 1,500 occurrences of invasive species in the City and County have been reported via the app. Currently the app is being upgraded and moved to a new platform which will allow for more flexible data input and easier access to data by the public. Further promotion will be carried out to encourage people to use the app and this data will be shared with National Biodiversity Data Centre.

**RPO 128 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020**

A number of green areas designated as “Let it Bee” sites, where the grass is allowed to grow for longer between cuts. Biodiversity friendly pollinator planting schemes implemented as part of a corporate sponsorship scheme on a number of Limerick roundabouts.

**RPO 122 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems**

In conjunction with relevant stakeholders and agencies and multiple consultation processes, SuDS objectives and area specific actions to encourage the integration of sustainable water management solutions have been incorporated into the review of all local area plans undertaken since the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. This includes Abbeyfeale, Castleconnell, Caherconlish, Newcastle West and the Draft Plans of Adare and Patrickswell. This includes policy objectives that require all new developments to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to control surface water outfall and protect water quality. In addition, the local area plans provide that proposals shall have regard to national policy including the Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Run-off in Urban Areas – Best Practice Interim Guidance’ document. Where necessary, the diversion of surface water from combined sewers have also been included within policy of the local area plan review process.

Climate Action Enhancements Opportunities, as provided for within the Local Area Plans, further illustrate the role the Local Area Plans have in supporting the integration of surface water management solutions into the settlements landscape, including nature-based SuDS.

**RECREATION & SPORTING FACILITIES INCL. BLUEWAYS & GREENWAYS**

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support recreation and sporting facilities including blueways and greenways

**Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme**

The 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme provides for the development of new and existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas with a particular focus on developing amenities for adventure tourism in rural Ireland. Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme

builds on the commitment under “Our Rural Future” and is a key strand to the implementation of “Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors”, the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2024. The Scheme provides funding for small-scale repair, development or promotion and marketing in relation to existing infrastructure, medium/large scale upgrade works and new trail or amenity developments as well as a Project Development Measure to provide for the development costs for strategic large-scale projects. In 2023, projects completed included the upgrade and provision of universal access to the Kilmallock Riverside Walk, signage and animation on the Limerick Greenway and the upgrade of Adare Riverside walk, in addition, €84,200 was allocated for two project development measures at Kiltteery Pier, Loughill and Blackrock Loop, Ballyhoura Way. A number of applications have been submitted under Measure 1, 2 and 3 relating to the funding call for 2023, which are yet to be announced by the Department Rural and Community Development.

### **CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais)**

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that provides funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered the greatest levels of population decline.

Ten projects approved under the 2022 Scheme were implemented during 2023, with all projects approved under Measure 1. Martinstown National School, Athea GAA, Kiltteely Tidy Towns and Kantoher Development Group all had their car parks resurfaced, Glenroe GAA installed LED flood lighting at their All-Weather Sports Facility and Templeglantine GAA and Camogie Club developed the artificial playing surface at their Ball Wall. Both Mountcollins AFC and Oola GAA club installed fencing and walkways around the perimeter of their pitches, Glin Development CLG upgraded their Adult Exercise Equipment and Tournafulla Community Council used their funding to develop an Outdoor Community Recreation Area.

This year, the Council submitted 15 project application to the Department of Rural and Community Development. In the 2023 CLÁR, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced a new €5 million fund to support over 100 sports clubs throughout the country. Seven Limerick clubs received a total of €263,426 in funding; Athea Utd, Ballylanders AFC, Mountcollins AFC, Galtee Gaels GAA, Galbally GAA, Cappamore GAA and Blackrock GAA were successful in receipt of funding. These projects range from improving spectator areas, refurbishing clubhouses and installing outdoor gym equipment. There is more funding due to be announced by the Department of Rural and Community Development in the coming weeks and hopefully the remaining applications will be successful. Examples of the prospective projects are community centre upgrades, car park developments and resurfacing and outdoor gym equipment.



## WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

RPO 110 Ecosystem Services  
RPO 111 Water Resources  
RPO 112 Water Quality  
RPO 121 Effective Collaboration to Implement River Basin Management Plans and Water Framework Directive  
RPO 122 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)  
RPO 123 River Basin Management Plan and Spatial Planning  
RPO 124 Green Infrastructure  
RPO 126 Biodiversity  
RPO 127 Invasive Species

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive including ecosystem services, SuDS and biodiversity

### RPO 112 Water Quality

**(i)** Water Framework Directive: Water Framework Directive (WFD) The third cycle of the Water Framework Directive commenced in 2023. The emphasis for the Limerick City and County Council's WFD team in 2024 will be on carrying out investigative assessments to identify specific pressures on waterbodies, which are deemed at risk of not meeting their status objectives under the WFD. The team will also have a protective role under the WFD and will aim to ensure that waterbodies which currently are at "good status" do not deteriorate. The team will work with sectoral interests to resolve any pressures identified which are impacting on water quality.

**(ii)** The European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (as amended) sets out the minimum standards for farming practices to realise the Water Framework Directives ambition of achieving 'Good' status for all waters by 2027. Limerick City and County Councils role is to oversee implementation of these Regulations and to ensure that farming practices do not negatively affect waters. Limerick City and County Council published a booklet which includes a compendium of articles, prepared by various agencies, which focus on topics such as water quality, biodiversity and agricultural emissions. The booklets aim is to help build greater resilience into farming operations and is available on the LCCC website and is given to every farmer at the time of an inspection by local authority staff.

**(iii)** In addition, each Local Area Plan prepared since the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, support the policy objectives as set out in the LDP and equally recognise the importance of ensuring the protection of ground water through the use of ground water protection schemes as part of land use planning. These LAP's provide the necessary policy protection of the Water Cycle in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

**RPO 121 Effective Collaboration to Implement River Basin Management Plans and Water Framework Directive ( check with Siobhan)**

The LCCC booklet referred above ‘Building Resilience into Your Farming System’, heavily focuses on the prevention of water pollution from farming enterprises. Over 600 farm inspections have been undertaken in Limerick by local authority staff, which focus on water quality, GAP regulations and implementation of the WFD.

### **RPO 123 River Basin Management Plan and Spatial Planning**

LCCC, working in conjunction with LAWPRO has identified Priority Areas of Action in which the Council will concentrate its resources over the next 4 years. There will be a focus on inspections and enforcement in these areas.

### **RPO 124 Green Infrastructure**

The BGI Strategy discussed under the ‘Blue Green Infrastructure’ Theme, emphasis the importance of preserving and enhancing riverine banks and margins and highlights their importance to enhancing and preserving water quality.

In addition, each Local Area Plan prepared since the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, support the policy objectives as set out in the LDP and the Limerick City and Environs Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Although the strategy is used to inform and guide the planning and management of Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) within Limerick City and Suburbs, Mungret and Annacotty. Nonetheless, many of the GBI principles are identified as being relevant to the remainder of the County, where the strategy’s objectives and priority actions proposed can be adapted to suit all settlements and to which can influence any public realm improvements proposed during the lifetime of each of the local area plans.

### **RPO 126 Biodiversity**

LCCC is in the process of appointing a Biodiversity Officer whose function will be to promote biodiversity and develop a Biodiversity Plan for the City and County. LCCC has developed a Biodiversity Plan for the Limerick Greenway, which will enhance the experience of using the Greenway and will protect the unique Biodiversity of this linear corridor.

Also, LCCC has completed a management plan for Baggot Estate urban woodland, which details the sustainable management of the forest into the future with an emphasis on enhancing biodiversity.

In the Biodiversity field, LCCC is partnered in two URBACT 4 projects, “BiodiverCity” and “GreenPlace”; both deal with elements of biodiversity and greening in urban environments with a particular emphasis on the City.

### **RPO 127 Invasive Species**

Loobagh catchment, giant Hog weed removal. 5<sup>th</sup> year of project with Hogweed more or less eliminated. , Mulkear Catchment feasibility estimate. The catchment was surveyed to estimate how much it would cost to undertake a Hogweed removal program for the whole catchment incorporating both Limerick and Tipperary functional areas.

**DIGITAL  
CONNECTIVITY/SMART  
REGION/SMART CITIES**

RPO 133 Smart Cities  
RPO 134: Smart Cities and  
Smart Region:

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support the development of a Smart Region/Smart City/Smart Towns. In rural areas, please outline progress made in the development of Remote Working & Digital Hubs and other relevant initiatives for the optimisation of digital connectivity.

**RPO 133 Smart Cities & RPO 134: Smart Cities and Smart Region**

**(i) Broadband & Telecoms Office:**

Through 2023, the Broadband Office continued to support National Broadband Ireland for the roll out of high speed broadband in Limerick. To date, €84m has been invested in Limerick. Out of 22,000 premises included in the project:

- 28% of premises have a status of 'Survey Pending'
- 23% of premises have a status of 'Survey Complete'
- 4% of premises have a status of 'Network Build in Progress'
- 45% of premises have a status of 'Available to Pre-Order/Order'

For rural Limerick, Broadband Connection Points continued to be supported throughout 2023.

**(ii) Digital Systems:**

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council embarked on a critical upgrade of its CRM system, initiating an 18-month project in February to migrate the existing CRM to a modern, cloud-based solution. This transformation, utilizing Microsoft Dynamics 365, is not just a technological upgrade but a strategic move to enhance our service delivery capabilities. It positions the Council to effectively serve the community for the coming decade with an enterprise-scale, modern data infrastructure. Alongside this, the implementation of data and dashboarding using technology in Qlik Cloud is a significant step forward, enabling more sophisticated data analysis and decision-making capabilities, breaking down data silos. This technological advancement supports our commitment to becoming a smarter, more connected, and efficient city. This infrastructure is fundamental to becoming a smart region, encompassing our city, our towns and rural communities. It positions Limerick City and County to capitalise on smart technologies such as IoT, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Twins.

**(iii) European Projects:**

Limerick's active participation in various EU projects like +CityxChange, INTEgreat, PACTE Plus, and GoGreen Routes reflects its commitment to European collaboration in smart city and region development.

**(iv) Smart Cities Initiatives**

- Development of the Digital Collaboration Centre in Limerick's Georgian Innovation District. Tech collaboration centre for SME's and MNC's

- November 2022: Digital First Day, Champions of Collaboration event held both in person and online to engage remote and digital hubs with a wider audience. This event promoted new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity, innovation and enterprise. The event highlighted the benefits of digital growth through collaboration to help communities to attract investment, remote workers, home buyers and visitors to their area, thus advancing sustainable regional development and quality of life.
- Growth of the Engine Hubs Network to 16 member hubs to enable growth opportunities, linkages and optimize connectivity between urban and rural areas. Engine Hubs, the first collaborative cluster of business hubs spanning the Mid-West and North Kerry was launched by Innovate Limerick in May 2022. Engine Hubs provide a hybrid working infrastructure for remote workers and business owners, as well as full landing pad services to multinationals looking to set up or expand their operations in the region.
- Support of remote working hubs through the provision of support to leverage Connected Hubs Funding in Limerick. Assistance was provided by Innovate Limerick bringing the hubs together to create a joint hub application.
- Proposed development of a Med Tech incubation centre- Phase 3 of Engine will attract young indigenous and international med tech companies that can avail of innovation supports and programmes delivered through Innovate Limerick on behalf of Limerick City and County Council, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA. These programmes will be complemented with coaching and mentoring delivered by experts with a founder-first approach. The facility will essentially offer companies mentorship, networking and connections enabling them to scale rapidly.

**INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY/  
PORTS/AIRPORTS,  
FREIGHT & LOGISTICS**

RPO 139 Low Carbon International Connectivity  
RPO 145: Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region  
RPO:149: Airport Strategy for the Southern Region  
RPO 141: Regional Freight Strategy  
RPO 143: Ports and Airports

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support development of the Region's International Connectivity, development of ports, airports, freight and logistics.

**RPO 145: Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region**

**Shannon Integrated Framework Plan:** As noted under the theme 'Marine Economy', the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan identifies 9 Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) on the Estuary and encourages, facilitates and promotes a balanced approach to the Estuary's growth, whilst simultaneously encouraging careful protection, management and enhancement of its natural environmental resources. A Policy Review Committee with relevant stakeholders and agencies will be established in Quarter 1 2024 to undertake a review of the policy contained within the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan.

**Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Report:** The independent Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce was established in April 2022 to make recommendations to government on the economic development potential of the Shannon Estuary region. The taskforce consulted extensively with regional, national and international stakeholders and across industry including Government, local authorities including Limerick City and County Council, elected representatives and members of the public.

The Taskforce's Final Report sets out recommendations for the delivery of up to 30GW of Atlantic Offshore Wind through the Estuary by 2050, and measures to maximise the industrial development opportunities arising from this. Also included are proposed actions for scaling up the deployment of onshore renewable energy across the region, and proposed new initiatives in the transport, logistics, connectivity, and tourism sectors. The report envisions the Shannon Estuary as a lead location for Atlantic offshore wind energy generation. It sets out clear targets, including the creation of 10,000 new green jobs by 2035 and 50,000 by 2050 as well as having 2GW of green energy capacity in development by 2030, and up to 30GW installed by 2050

One of the actions included in the Taskforce report includes the re-establishment and resourcing of the Shannon Estuary Strategic Integrated Framework Plan Steering Committee and the role in which the Local Authorities have in considering a collective planning designation for the Shannon Estuary region.

#### **RPO 141: Regional Freight Strategy**

LSMATS supports the development of a Regional Freight Strategy to accelerate the decarbonisation of the freight sector; integrate smart technologies in logistics management and reinforce the important role that the strategic rail and road (including TEN-T) network play in efficiently moving freight. Measure FDS3 *Regional Freight Strategy* of the LSMATS outlines the following:

*'It is the intention of the NTA, Southern Regional Assembly and the local authorities to: Support the development of a Regional Freight Strategy to accelerate the decarbonisation of the freight sector, integrate smart technologies in logistics management and reinforce the important role that the strategic rail and road network play in efficiently moving freight.'*

A Strategic Transport Objective of the LSMATS is to identify and protect key strategic routes for the movement of freight traffic and to improve access to Shannon-Foynes Port and Shannon Airport. As part of this transport strategy, actions include the reinstatement of the single-track Limerick to Foynes line to provide a 'freight only' service, adopting a cost effective design approach. Measure RL4 *Rail Freight* outlines the following:

*'It is the intention of the NTA and Iarnród Éireann to:*

- *Reinstate the Limerick to Foynes railway line to provide a freight service;*
- *Investigate the potential for the delivery of a rail freight facility at Limerick junction;*  
*and*
- *Investigate the feasibility of rail freight from the Port of Foynes to Cork and Rosslare over the lifetime of the Strategy'*

In addition, further consideration between linking the Tier 1 Ports of Cork and Foynes and the Tier 2 Port of Rosslare by rail is recommended over the lifetime of the Strategy in addition to the assessment of a rail freight facility at Limerick junction

Further information on Freight Rail provision is provided in the next section under RPO 170 Rail (Foynes to Limerick Rail Line).

#### **RPO 143: Ports and Airports**

The Council fully support the operations at Limerick Port as a key trade route for Limerick and the region and acknowledge the importance of the Port for direct and indirect employment, business and economic growth. The Council recognise the importance of the Shannon Estuary, **Objectives Econ O57** sets out policy support for strategic development locations along the estuary. **Objective ECON O58** relates to **Shannon Foynes Port** and includes (c) to promote Limerick to become the primary hub for the development of Ireland’s west coast renewable energy potential in research, innovation, logistics, development, maintenance and administration.

In terms of identification of lands for development, particularly in Foynes Village and on Foynes Island are in line with the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary. The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary is also included as Appendix 6 of the Draft Plan and sets out a comprehensive framework for the development of Limerick’s coastal assets.

The Draft Plan also includes **Objective TR O28 Docks and Ports** to support the continued development of Shannon Foynes Port as an EU Core Network Port (TEN-T) and Limerick Docks as marine related assets, in accordance with the 2013 National Ports Policy.

#### **ENHANCED REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

RPO 169 Strategic Road Network Improvement Priorities  
RPO 170 Rail  
RPO 171 Bus

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support enhanced regional connectivity – by road, rail and public transport.

#### **RPO 169 Strategic Road Network Improvement Priorities**

The Mid-West National Road Design Office (MWNRDO) continues to progress key major infrastructural projects in the Mid-West region in partnership with the participating local authorities including Limerick City and County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. Some of the Major Transport projects being progressed in Limerick include:

**(i) N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project:** The project team have progressed the design and environmental evaluation in 2023. Following a project update in November 2023, a consultation programme commenced to inform and consult with the public and stakeholders. Limerick City and County Council in partnership with Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Department of Transport are progressing Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation. Further project updates will be published in Q2 (draft design) and Q4 2024 (final design and fence line), and following this, government approval to submit the planning application to An Bord Pleanála.



**(ii) Foynes to Limerick (Including Adare Bypass):** The proposed project is 35km in length and will provide a motorway upgrade from Attyflin to Rathkeale, in addition to connecting the port of Foynes to the motorway network. The project promotes efficient and effective transport links in the Munster region, improving connectivity between Foynes Port, Limerick and the surrounding areas. An Bord Pleanála approved the Foynes to Limerick Road (including Adare Bypass) which comprises the Foynes to Rathkeale Protected Road Scheme 2019, the Rathkeale to Attyflin Motorway Scheme 2019 and the Foynes Service Area Scheme 2019 on 30th August 2022. In November 2023, approval was given to advance the construction of the Adare Bypass section of the project.

**(iii) N21 Newcastle West Bypass:** Limerick City and County Council is working in partnership with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport to develop a scheme to relieve congestion on the N21 Limerick to Tralee Road through Newcastle West. The project is at Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation.

**(iv) N21 Abbeyfeale Bypass:** Limerick City and County Council is working in partnership with Kerry County Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport to develop a scheme to relieve congestion on the N21 Limerick to Tralee Road through Abbeyfeale. The project is at Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation. This involves further development of the scheme, including design of the road, identifying the land take required, junction design and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

#### **(v) Other Projects**

- N24 Cahir to Limerick Junction and Oola Project
- N19 Shannon Airport Access Road
- The N24 Bearys Cross improvement,
- The N20 O'Rourke's Cross improvement scheme
- N69 Mungret to Boland's Cross scheme.

#### **(vi) Greenway Schemes**

The MWNRDO is also tasked with the development of a number of Greenway schemes in the region. These schemes are being developed as part of the National Cycling Network, in conjunction with TII. They include;

- UL to Montpelier via Castleconnell
- Patrickswell to Charleville,
- Limerick to Cahir, and,
- Rathkeale to Limerick.

#### **RPO 170 Rail**

**(i) Foynes to Limerick Rail Line:** The railway line, covers a 42km stretch between Limerick and Foynes. As provided for in RPO 170 to 'Optimise rail freight to ports in the Southern Region' and supported in Section 7.58 Rail Connections and associated policy objective, advances have been made in the first phase of the project to reopen the Foynes to Limerick railway line for freight transport. Excavation and earthworks for the new track bed and ballast are underway, accompanied by the installation of ducting and drainage pipes along the route. Track laying, a



critical phase of the project, is anticipated to commence in early 2024. The second phase of the project will see the implementation of a modern signaling system for the railway route, CCTV-equipped level crossings, an advanced train communications system, and necessary track connections and upgrades at Limerick and Foynes Port. Subject to funding allocations for phase two, it is expected that this work will take approximately 18 months to complete, ultimately opening the route for freight services in 2025.

**(ii) Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS):** Published in November 2022, the function of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy is to provide a long-term strategic framework for the planning and development of transport infrastructure and services for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA). LSMATS proposes to maximise opportunities offered by the existing rail network to enhance regional and suburban connectivity.

Objectives or Measures included as part of LSMATS Rail Provision includes:

- Facilitate the improvement in InterCity services and journey times between Dublin, Limerick Junction, Waterford and Cork in accordance with the All-Island Strategic Rail Review and rail proposals which emerge from strategic infrastructure projects.
- Provide a dual-track between Limerick Colbert and Limerick Junction to facilitate improved national and regional connectivity and improve service frequency in line with increased demand.

As part of a Phase 1 rail proposals identified for inclusion in the Strategy which could be developed in the short to medium term based on the current forecast levels of population and employment growth and current land use policies, LSMATS provides the following Measure:

Measure RL3 Limerick Commuter Rail Network: It is the intention of the NTA, in conjunction with Irish Rail, Southern Regional Assembly, Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council, to:

Provide investment in the Phase 1 Rail Network for the LSMA as follows:

- A new rail station at Moyross as demand for travel increases in line with the regeneration of this area;
- A new rail station at Ballysimon, including Park and Ride; Review the potential for additional stations on an on-going basis, including the potential to integrate the bus-based Park and Ride at Newport into the rail network;
- Improve the frequency of services on the Ennis Rail Line to provide for an efficient and effective commuter rail service in the long term;
- Improve the frequency of services on the Limerick-Nenagh-Ballybrophy line as demand for travel increases.

As part of a 'Phase 2 Rail Network for the LSMA', the feasibility for a full commuter rail network for the study area will be examined including the re-use of the Foynes line and new stations at appropriate locations

**(iii) Local Area Plans:** Limerick City and Council recognise the importance of the provision of major infrastructure to enhance regional connectivity, to promote economic development and to enable the development of new homes. The Local Area Plans for Adare and Patrickswell, currently at Draft Stage, are aligned and consistent with the objectives of higher-level spatial plans, including the NPF, RSES and the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 as outlined in policy provision included in both LAPs, all of which support and facilitate the implementation and delivery of the proposals contained in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. Both LAPs include supportive text and appropriate policy objectives to safeguard the rail lines traversing the settlements against encroachment that would compromise the long-term development of the facility.

### **RPO 171 Bus**

#### **(i) Bus Connects**

In collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and Bus Éireann, the NTA carried out an extensive review of the bus network in Limerick in 2022. Following an extensive public consultation process, published a final new bus network for Limerick in December 2023. Key benefits of the new service include:

- An approximately 70% increase in the amount of bus services in Limerick city and its suburbs;
- The extension of bus services to new areas with more routes with frequent services and an enhanced Sunday timetable;
- A new 24-hour bus service operating between University Hospital Limerick, the city centre and the University of Limerick;
- Provision of bus services to previously unserved areas such as Ennis Road, Dock Road, University of Limerick north campus and Ardnacrusha;
- Simpler fares.

The new bus network will enable more people to avail of public transport resulting in increased access to a greater number of schools and workplaces across Limerick city. Overall, 41% of residents will live within 400 metres of a high frequency bus route (running every 15 minutes or better).

**(ii) Bus Shelters:** A total of 15 bus shelters have been installed in 2023 throughout County Limerick to promote the use of public transport in rural towns and reduce the modal share of the private car. There are 7 more planned for early 2024

**(iii) Land use plans:** Policy provision provided for and incorporated into the land use plans for Castleconnell, Abbeyfeale, Caherconlish, Newcastle West and the Draft Plans for Adare and Patrickswell including the continued support for the implementation of the National Transport Authority's 'Connecting Ireland: Rural Mobility Plan' and the 'Local Link' rural transport service. In addition, support is provided for the implementation of an integrated, multi-modal and accessible public transport network across the settlements and their hinterlands.

**SUSTAINABLE  
MOBILITY / LOCAL  
TRANSPORT PLANS  
(AND  
OBJECTIVES/INITIATIVE  
S**

RPO 151 Integration of  
Land Use and Transport  
RPO 152 Local Planning  
Objectives  
RPO 154 Land Use Plans  
RPO 157 Local Transport  
Plans (LTP)  
RPO 163 Sustainable  
Mobility Targets  
RPO 165 Higher Densities

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support sustainable mobility e.g. public transport, walking cycling, the 10 minute city/town concept, sustainable mobility targets. Please also provide details of any Local Transport Plans in respect of relevant settlements in your Local Authority.

**RPO 151 Integration of Land Use and Transport**

**(i)** The Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, the local area plans for Abbeyfeale, Castleconnel, Caherconlish, Newcastle West and the Draft Adare and Patrickswell local area plans, recognise that rebalancing the transport system towards walking, cycling and public transport, including ensuring high quality interchanges between modes, will require sustained investment. In addition to including improving street environments to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive and providing enhanced public transport services to ensure that alternatives to the car are accessible, affordable and appealing. Consolidation of development in appropriate locations is fundamental to ensure that development can be well served by sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.

**(ii)** Town Center First/10 Minute City/Town: Policy contained in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 provides the necessary support for the implementation of the 10 minute city/town concept promoting a series of neighbourhoods and vibrant towns and villages, which are compact, that can support a range of jobs, services and housing choice, not only provide the basis of strong economies and communities, but also support a greater range of sustainable modes of transport, both within and between settlements. This approach has been transposed into each of the Local Area Plans which promote the Town Centre First approach with a focus on creating a thriving town or village centre with a strong service and social function. Policy support focuses on the re-use of buildings, infill development, re-purposing of under-utilised lands within town/village centres for mixed uses including residential, retail shops or creative workspaces. Each Plan seeks to consolidate the town/village rather than facilitating urban sprawl. In addition, each of the local area plans undertaken support the investment in a high quality pedestrian/cyclists friendly public realm, increased permeability and connectivity and attractive public spaces where people can gather socially. This is provided through a list of actions identified within each LAP which when implemented, will meet town centre first objectives such as the provision of new cycle/walking schemes, creation of linkages/permeability projects or public realm projects.

**(iii) Carparking:** The Limerick Development Plan sets out a comprehensive schedule of car parking standards, with a number of parking zones, including 3 zones within Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty and one for settlements outside of the City. Maximum car parking standards have been applied in all areas, to support the shift away from car dependency and to support the modal shift to alternative modes of transport, particularly in the City Centre.

**(iv) Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy:**

The Strategy is due for completion in early 2024. The strategy is taking a proactive approach in assessing the expected power requirements on the network and determining the necessary number of charge points needed to support the growing number of electric vehicles across Limerick.

**RPO 152 Local Planning Objectives**

**(i) Active Travel Schemes:**

Through NTA funding, the Active Travel Team in Limerick have expanded Limerick's cycling and walking network in 2022 and 2023. This includes the delivery of a number of active travel schemes within Limerick City and the metropolitan area. The Hyde road active travel scheme connecting Childers road with Lower Carey's road is now fully complete. Childers road itself comprises two schemes, Part 1 and Part 2, which have been completed between 2021 and 2023. The Brookville Avenue Active Travel Scheme connecting Moylish Roundabout to Ivan's Cross has now also been completed.

An overview of the key projects already delivered are:

- Castletroy Urban Greenway – a 1.3km off-road cycling and walking network connecting people's homes with schools, shops and a local playground;
- R926 Dooradoyle Road Cycle Lane Scheme Phase 1 – upgraded cycle lanes including kerb segregation;
- Groody Road – reallocation of road space for sustainable travel with segregated cycle lanes added;
- Shannon Bridge – 2-way segregated cycle lanes on Shannon Bridge providing safe cycling access from the north side of the city to the city centre;
- Milford Road, Castletroy – kerb segregation added along existing on-road cycle lane;
- Clonmacken Road - kerb segregation added along existing on-road cycle lanes between Clonmacken Roundabout and the access to the Jetland Shopping Centre;
- R510, Mungret – reallocation of road space for sustainable travel with segregated cycle lanes added between Quinn's Cross Roundabout and roundabout access to Ard Aulin;
- Various locations – Footpath improvements and additional pedestrian crossings at various locations across Newcastle West, Cappamore-Kilmallock and Adare-Rathkeale

#### Projects currently under Construction:

There are a number of active travel schemes proposed for delivery in 2024. These projects include Mill Road in Corbally, Plassey Park road in Castletroy and Fr Russell Road in Dooradoyle. Part 8 approval has been received for other schemes including South Circular Road and Tus to City Centre. Non-Statutory consultations for Active Travel cycle lanes, footpaths and shared surfaces have commenced on Wickham Street to Clare St through the City Centre itself. The focus is on the delivery of a connected cycle network from origin to destination through a series of interconnected routes.

#### **(ii) Safe Route to School Projects**

There are a number of completed school zone projects with a significant number planned for 2024. The Gaelscoil Sairseal on Shelbourne Rd was delivered in 2023, with the Model School in O'Connell Avenue and St Pauls School in Dooradoyle being delivered in 2022. The Safe Routes to School projects planned in 2024 include Laurel Hill Avenue, Limerick School Project and Our Lady of Lourdes Childers Road, St Patrick's, Dublin Road among others.

#### **(iii) Cycle Parking**

The delivery of dedicated, secure and covered cycle parking forms part of housing developments under construction, for example the Mills SHD (Strategic Housing Development) in Castletroy. Other examples of uncovered cycle parking include Mungret Gate in Mungret.

#### **(iv) Mobility Management Plans**

Continuous collaboration is taking place between the Transport Directorate and recently established schools, such as Educate Together in Towerleton, as well as prominent employers like Northern Trust. The aim is to guarantee the effective execution of mobility and travel management plans, facilitated by travel coordinators, and the attainment of realistic targets

#### **(v) LIHAF Project**

The delivery of the LIHAF road in Mungret with active travel facilities (cycling and walking) is a significant piece of infrastructure, which is almost complete. LSMATs identified the need for the LIHAF road at Mungret to unlock residentially zoned lands. The new road will assist in the delivery of the Mungret Framework Plan, which seeks to encourage walking and cycle friendly neighbourhoods.

#### **(vi) Village Renewal**

Significant progress was made on the Patrickswell Village Renewal Scheme in 2023. The scheme had a positive effect on the village providing greater connectivity for pedestrians with more regulated parking and a safer environment for all.

#### **(vii) Abbeyfeale Greenway Connection**

The Limerick Greenway from Rathkeale to Abbeyfeale is a redeveloped off road walking and cycling route linking towns in West Limerick with mobility in mind, it opened in 2021. There are proposals to provide an active travel connection from the Greenway at Abbeyfeale into the town itself with two route options. Non statutory consultations have commenced on the proposed route.

#### **(viii) Drive for More Cycling in Limerick – Research Project**

Limerick City & County Council’s Active Travel team is engaging researchers from the University of Limerick to conduct detailed analysis into the potential of cycling across the city. The project, entitled The Drive for More Cycling in Limerick, will involve the completion of a number of projects aimed at understanding perceptions of cycling infrastructure within Limerick specifically. The collaboration with UL follows the beginning of air quality monitoring and the installation of radar traffic counters from the Active Travel team in 2023. The research will take place for a duration of 24 months, with findings to be collated thereafter.

#### **RPO 154 Land Use Plans:**

Policy surrounding the integration of land use planning and transport have been incorporated into the land use plans for Castleconnell, Abbeyfeale, Caherconlish, Newcastle West and the Draft Plans for Adare and Patrickswell. Policy support and facilitate the integration of land use and transportation policies for the settlements, as a means of reducing the impact on climate change. The Council will ensure the delivery of a sustainable compact settlement, which can be served by various modes of transport with a focus on reducing the need to travel as provided for in LAP policy.

#### **RPO 157 Local Transport Plans (LTP)**

The Council has prepared a Local Transport Plan for Newcastle West which forms part of the Local Area Plan as adopted in December 2023. The Transport Plan provided a long-term strategic integrated transport plan for the town and addresses sustainable mobility and place-making as a key element of the growth of Newcastle West. The LTP was undertaken in consultation with the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland

The Draft Adare Local Area Plan 2024-2030 includes a commitment to undertake a Local Transport Plan for the village commencing in January 2024. Objective SM1(b) provides the necessary policy support in undertaking the transport plan which will identify key transport interventions for the village and key measures for sustainable and active travel infrastructure.

#### **RPO 163 Sustainable Mobility Targets**

The Limerick Development Plan provides for mode share targets for commuting to work and education to 2028. This includes walking, cycling and public transport mode share targets for the LSMATS study area and Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty. Targets are also provided for Newcastle West and the remainder of the county as provided for



in Table 7.3 of the LDP. Table 7.1 of the LDP provides the plan’s policies and objectives which support the Avoid – Shift – Improve approach to transport planning where the appropriate policy, provided for in the plan, allows a shift in focus on integrating land use and transportation. This includes the promotion of the 10-minute town/neighbourhood and to facilitate the transition to a low carbon society through implementation of both infrastructure and behavioral change measures.

Table 7.3: Target Mode Share

LSMA Mode Share Targets (%) for Commuting to Work/Educational Purposes				
Settlement	Walk		Cycle	
	2040	2028	2040	2028
Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Study Area	35	15-20	15-20	7-10

  

Mode Share Targets(%) for Commuting to Work/Educational Purposes (2028)			
Settlement	Walk	Cycle	Public Transport
Limerick and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty (All Work/Education Trips)	30%	10%	14%
Newcastle West (All Work/Education Trips)	20%	5%	7%
Settlement Levels 3-6/Rural Areas (All Work/Education Trips)	15%	5%	12%

In addition, targets are transposed into Local Area Plan and are included in the following plans: Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West, Castleconnell, Caherconlish, Draft Adare Local Area Plan and Draft Patrickswell Local Area Plan.

**Initiatives:**

- Air quality monitors have been installed at 15 locations within the Metropolitan area.
- 19 radar monitor counters dispersed throughout the City to compare cycle /pedestrian levels before and after the delivery of active travel projects.

**RPO 165 Higher Densities**

The principles of compact growth are supported by Table 2.6: Density Assumptions per Settlement Hierarchy in Chapter 2 of the Limerick Development Plan which seeks to increase densities across the Limerick Metropolitan Area to support compact growth and the delivery of high quality urban development. In addition, each Local Area Plan prepared since the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, support the policy objectives as set out in the LDP and provides for a development strategy that consolidate existing development and increasing existing residential density, through a range of measures including re-use of existing buildings and infill development schemes. The local area plans places a strong influence on ensuring the delivery of sustainable communities through the redevelopment



of brownfield, infill, vacant and on greenfield sites, having regard to principles of placemaking, permeability and integration of community and recreation facilities.

New guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements were published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This will require a review of density policies contained within the Limerick Development Plan to determine compliance with the recently published guidelines.

**INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES & PLACES -IMPROVING WELLBEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

RPO 181 Equal Access  
RPO 182 Ageing Population

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support and develop Inclusive Communities and Places and Improved Quality of Life

**RPO 181 Equal Access & RPO 182 Ageing Population**

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council have been working with local communities throughout Limerick, through Health Limerick and the Age Friendly initiative to improve quality of life for all residents of Limerick. Healthy Limerick was successful in its submission under the Healthy Ireland Fund for the period 2023 – 2025. Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. Healthy Ireland takes a ‘whole of government’ and ‘whole of society’ approach. The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 provides a roadmap towards good health, access to services, healthy environments and the promotion of resilience in a manner that leaves no one behind.

**Relaunch of the Not Around Us Campaign** - This campaign was relaunched by Cllr. Francis Foley, Mayor of Limerick City and County on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2023, marking World No Tobacco Day. The campaign aims to de-normalise smoking and vaping for the next generation. The campaign was first created, established and launched in Limerick in 2019. Given the prevalence of smoking is on the rise again (18% nationally) and vaping especially among young people, along with recent changes around legislation it was deemed timely to re-launch and re-energise the campaign. A QR code linking to a newly created partner pack was developed increasing the accessibility of the campaign. The signage continues to be distributed internally within the Council and to external stakeholders and will target both primary and post primary schools.

**Migrant Health and Wellbeing** - A pilot event, a migrant women's health fair took place on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023, in Limerick City Centre. The aim of the event was to create an environment which provides access to information and services that support healthier lifestyle choices, to inform and direct members of the migrant community to existing services, and to scope out health and wellbeing needs of migrant communities.

The project is a collaboration between Limerick City and County Programmes (Healthy Limerick, INTEgreat), PAUL Partnership, community partners and statutory agencies.

A further Health and Wellbeing Fair was held in the Southcourt Hotel in October and this event was expanded to include interactive workshops provided by Gender, Orientation, Sexual

Health, HIV (GOSHH), The Women's Collective, ABC Startright, The World Academy of Music and Dance, and Limerick Sports Partnership.

**Healthy Ireland Ukrainian Refugee Fund** - Health and Wellbeing focused activities were organised for Ukrainian refugees across Limerick City and County. These activities are funded by the Healthy Ireland Ukrainian Refugee Fund. Some key projects included:

- Dance workshops throughout Limerick City and County provided by Dance Limerick.
  - A day trip to the Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch over the Easter break. Individuals travelled from various sites across west Limerick with a large concentration of people from the accommodation centre in Clarina, who were newly arrived at the time.
  - Art and Craft workshops run over the summer months of June, July and August for adults and children, facilitated by the Hunt Museum. The workshops proved very popular.
  - A six week pilot migrant cookery programme was facilitated by Limerick Food Partnership (LFP) in late summer in the Lord Edward St kitchen. Women from accommodation in the Travel Lodge batch cooked meals and brought their meals away in a storage containers to be stored in freezers within their accommodation. Following the success of this programme, LFP recently starting cooking with another group from this accommodation centre on Saturday mornings with MidWest Simon providing supervision in Tait House kitchen.
  - Limerick Opera Festival hosted an evening of opera and contemporary music, featuring Irish and Ukrainian performers in the Abundant Life Centre, Henry St, and Limerick in November. The event was opened by the Deputy Mayor, translation was provided by a member of Limerick City and County Council staff.
- **Limerick Food Partnership** - Limerick Food Partnership coordinator is in position three days a week with the post funded by Healthy Ireland, the Redemptorists and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. This position is largely focused on collating localized data on food poverty. It is proposed to establish a research sub group to oversee this project. Nine, Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) Programmes were delivered by Limerick Food Partnership outside of Sláintecare areas in 2023.
- **Social Health and Education Project** - The Social Health and Education Project programme is well-established in Limerick and Healthy Ireland funding has led to the expansion of the programme. The programme aims to achieve improved health and well-being for our communities through the delivery of community-led supports in the form of advocacy, counselling, community organisation supports and improved interagency approaches at local level. Programme delivery commenced in the autumn with five programmes in County Limerick. These programmes directly support actions within Connecting for Life – Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2024.

- **Healthy Limerick collaboration with Limerick Sports Partnership** - Healthy Limerick collaborated with Limerick Sports Partnership in the provision of funding toward inclusion programmes targeting people with disabilities across Limerick City and County. Some programmes that commenced in September included Inclusive Rowing at Castleconnell Boat Club and Adapted Physical Activity Programme Brothers of Charity Rathkeale, and Adapted Physical Activity Programme Daughters of Charity, Lisnagry. A migrant specific badminton programme, also ran in Limerick City Centre.
- **GAA Wellbeing Boards** - The prototype of the GAA Health and Wellbeing Boards was launched at a GAA Health and Wellbeing evening hosted by GAA Healthy Clubs. All Healthy Clubs (15 + one for the Gaelic Grounds) within Limerick City and County will receive a Health and Wellbeing board. The Boards contain numbers to crisis services both nationally and locally. The project is collaboration between the GAA, Limerick Sports Partnership, Mental Health Ireland, the Health Service Executive's Office of Suicide Prevention and Healthy Limerick.
- **SláinteCare Healthy Communities Programme** - Slaintecare Healthy Communities, Limerick, has successfully secured €75,000 Department of Health Seed Fund for 2023. This place-based initiative is part of the broader Healthy Ireland programme, aiming to reduce health inequalities across the country. Launched in 2021, the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme operates in 19 community areas, where health inequalities are most prevalent, using an evidence-based approach to address local needs and building upon existing health and wellbeing programmes. The programme creates a collaborative platform for agencies and government departments including residents, the Health Service Executive, and community partners. Its primary objective is to work collectively towards enhancing the long-term health and wellbeing of Healthy Community residents.
- **Enhancement Fund Projects** - The Enhancement Fund supports infrastructural projects aimed at improving health and wellbeing in Sláintecare Healthy Communities. With a €250,000 fund awarded to Limerick City and County Council, the fund has been allocated to the delivery of three Greenspace projects within the programme area, work is ongoing to complete these projects, in Garryowen, Ballynanty and Johnsgate, works includes enhancements to greenspace to deliver enhanced recreational amenities and facilities.
- **Healthy Relationships** - This project supports young women and men in Southill by addressing consent, agency, and healthy relationships by fostering a culture where they can challenge sexism and advocate for themselves. The goal is to initiate similar movements in other Healthy Community areas, addressing gender inequality faced by Youth Workers in daily conversations with young people. The project includes a Train the Trainer component to replicate the programme in other youth work settings.

- **Move Well Physical Activity for Health** - This programme targets health inequalities by promoting physical activity and improving the overall well-being of individuals with chronic conditions in Limerick's Healthy Community areas. Stakeholders, including Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Sports Partnership, and other health organisations were selected strategically based on their shared values and expertise. Training staff to supervise and implement these tailored programmes is a key aim to ensure longevity and sustainability of the programme. Engagement and consultation involved strategic stakeholder selection and ensuring alignment with Healthy Communities' framework. The project will require upskilling Limerick Sports Partnership staff with the British cardiac exercise-training program (BACPR). The programme is ongoing.
- **Venture Out** - The Venture Out project encourages the participation of Healthy Community residents in taking part in targeted activities which improve their overall health and wellbeing. Through engagement with those, most vulnerable living in Healthy Community areas a need was identified from people who have not engaged in a social/physical activity for a long time which leads to isolation, loneliness and inactivity. They face multiple barriers which prevent them from accessing supports and activities in their communities, including a lack of confidence, fear of commitment to longer term activity. Engaging in taster sessions in small group settings allows people to try something new in a safe structured way and builds confidence, making it more likely that they will engage in activities, groups, and classes in their own community.
- **Period Poverty** - The Period Poverty scheme has extended its reach since last year in collaboration with Sláintecare Healthy Communities to Limerick City and County Council public bathrooms and community partners in Healthy Community areas. The initiative has been successfully implemented in the following locations throughout Limerick. The overall response to the programme has been very positive, reflecting its significance and positive impact on the communities most in need. The project is ongoing in all of the original sites.
- **Autism-Friendly Limerick** - In 2023, twenty-six sessions of Autism Awareness training were delivered to Local Authority staff, elected members and members of the Public Participation Network, with further sessions proposed to take place in 2024. As part of the initiative, the libraries were allocated funding to purchase sensory equipment for their branches such as sensory mood light tables, liquid floor tiles and numerous fidget toys and sets. Funding was also provided for both the St Patricks Day festival and Riverfest to provide an area designated as an Autism friendly space in conjunction with ASD Ireland. At a community level, the Council engaged with West Limerick Resources who have initiated some Autism friendly work in West Limerick. Funding was provided to West Limerick Resources to purchase a sensory room package for St Ita's Hall in Abbeyfeale which is currently being renovated.

- **Comhairle Na Nóg** - Limerick City and County Council continued to support Comhairle na nÓg in 2023. Comhairle na nÓg worked collaboratively with various stakeholders on their chosen theme of Mental health. The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, opened Limerick Comhairle na nÓg annual youth conference on the 30th November 2023. Over 120 young people from Limerick attended on the day to voice their opinions on the issues that are important to them and to potentially become new members. The delegates at this year's Youth Conference chose the issue of 'Vaping, Drugs & Smoking' as the theme to address in 2024.
- The *Healthy Ireland at Your Library* programme at Limerick Libraries demonstrated continued growth, delivering a total of 45 in-branch events throughout the year, with over 1,000 attendees. These events were strategically targeted towards the promotion of health and wellbeing in our communities. The event topics spanned many diverse subjects, including nutrition for children, meal prep for families, Tai Chi, breast cancer awareness, yoga, the importance of exercise for children, women's health, mindfulness, and transitioning to secondary school. Additional book titles were distributed to all library branches, enhancing the existing stock of health-related information. Limerick Libraries collaborated with community partners, including the Limerick Mental Health Association, Mental Health Ireland, Men's Sheds Ireland, Women's Sheds, Limerick Sports Partnership, Breast Cancer Ireland, as well as local schools and nursing homes in Limerick. Department of Rural and Community Development funding facilitated the acquisition of wipeable/washable portable seating sets designed specifically for children, enhancing the overall accessibility and functionality of library spaces.

### **School Meals Scheme**

The School Meals Programme (Bun and Milk Scheme) continued in 2023 providing the service to 10 DEIS schools, approximately 1,500 children.

Initiatives proposed for 2024 are as follows:

- **Not Around Us** - An order for new signage promoting this campaign has been placed and signage will continue to be distributed internally within the Council and to external stakeholders in 2024. Future signage distribution will target both primary and post primary schools and will align with the new recently published vaping materials for schools including information and guidance on e-cigarettes. It is worth noting that Comhairle na nÓg Limerick at their recent AGM agreed that substance misuse, vaping and smoking prevention, is a top priority for young people in Limerick in 2024
- **Relaunch of We're Breastfeeding Friendly Limerick** - The relaunch is planned for the first week of October in 2024 and will coincide with National Breastfeeding week. A steering group is currently being established and will work to plan, organise and collate a calendar of events to celebrate National Breastfeeding week 2024, to update promotional materials to reflect recent changes to legislation around supporting breastfeeding in the

workplace and to plan, organise and launch a mural depicting an image supporting breastfeeding by a street artist in Limerick city and possibly Limerick county also. The mural will be part of the awareness raising of this campaign.

- **Migrant Health and Wellbeing** -In 2024, it is planned to develop and expand thematic Health and Wellbeing workshops with various stakeholders in line with the Healthy Ireland priority areas of work, namely Physical activity, Mental Health, Nutrition, Sexual Health, Tobacco, Alcohol and spaces and places for health and wellbeing. These workshops will be designed in response to needs identified in collaboration with migrant communities themselves and services providers working with this cohort.
- **Limerick Food Partnership (LFP)** - Research has now commenced on collating localized data on food poverty/food security, including a mapping exercise of existing services. A research sub group has been established to oversee this project with representatives from the Schools of Allied Health, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College providing their guidance and expertise. It is expected that a high level report will be available within 18 months and the final report ready within 2 years.
- **Social Health and Education Project (SHEP)** - This programme aims to achieve improved health and wellbeing for our communities through the delivery of community led supports in the form of advocacy, counselling, community organisation supports and improved interagency response at local level. Programme delivery will continue in Co Limerick in 2024, with programmes such as Caring for Your Wellbeing, and Introduction to Personal Development, amongst others planned across the county.
- **Limerick Sports Partnership** - Healthy Limerick will continue its collaboration with Limerick Sports Partnership supporting inclusion sports programmes targeting people with disabilities across Limerick City and County in 2024.

#### **Physical Infrastructure Related Projects**

- Mechanical and Plant upgrade in Askeaton Swimming Pool – construction works planned Q2 2024 with reopening of facility in 2024
- Upgrade works Rathbane Golf Course

#### **Physical Infrastructure Funding Submissions**

4 funding submissions issued to Sports Capital Ireland for the following:

- Upgrade to the Grove Island Leisure Complex, which includes a pool, gymnasium, exercise studios and sports hall.
- Provision of a Multi-Use Games Area ( MUGA ) in Hospital
- Upgrade to flood lights in Kennedy Park Soccer Pitches
- Mungret Park Pitch upgrade

#### **New Recreational Spaces**

Limerick City and County Council are working with communities to assist them to identify pathways for the development / provision of sports resources such as



- a cricket batting area within the council's parks in the city or suburbs
- identification of a suitable site for the provision of a full cricket pitch in the city or suburbs
- soccer pitch provision in Pallaskenry

In addition, Limerick Sports Partnership have provided additional fixed infrastructure in Parks throughout the city, which encourages activities such as basketball, ping pong, weights training etc. They have introduced a resource which enables people to access the equipment they need to engage in the sport of their choice see the following: [BoxUp System Unlocks Potential of New Recreational Space at Limerick's O'Brien Park | Limerick.ie](#)

The **Newcastle West Regional Athletics Hub** was officially opened in September 2023. This regional athletics hub consists of a world-class standard 8 lane synthetic athletics track, associated track and field facilities with a surrounding walking path. The track is fully floodlit with 10 number sports flood lighting masts with LED lamps to IAAF Class 2 standard which will provide optimum lighting during winter conditions.

## **RPO 182 Ageing Population**

### **(i) Age Friendly Limerick**

Limerick City and County Council continued to support the Age Friendly Limerick Programme throughout 2023. In 2023, the implementation of the second Limerick Age Friendly Strategy continued, with Consultants Mo Flynn Consultants Ltd. The work undertaken will serve to strengthen the Age Friendly Programme in Limerick, giving greater opportunities for collaborative engagement between all stakeholders. It will continue to build strong working relationships and ensure that the Age Friendly Programme continues to work to greatest effect, in collaboration with the older people of Limerick

### **(ii) Some key Age Friendly events include:**

- The Limerick Age Friendly programme and three Old Person Executive members attended the Age Friendly Ireland National Older Peoples Convention in the Rose Hotel Tralee.
- Age Friendly Limerick were proud to support our Age Friendly Alliance partner An Garda Síochána for National Community Engagement Week by loaning out one of our Property Marking machine. A number of property making events were held at Dromcollogher and Kilmallock Marts and also at Old Pallas Co-Op.
- In June 2023, Limerick Older Peoples Executive in collaboration with the Tourism promotion section conducted a familiarisation trip to the Limerick Greenway to ascertain insights and views of our Old Peoples executive members on making the greenway age friendly.
- In June 2023, Age Friendly Limerick in partnership with St Munchins Community Centre, held an event to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This is a significant event, which occurs every year on 15<sup>th</sup> June, which is dedicated to raising awareness about the



alarming issue of elder abuse. Headquarters at City Hall, Merchants Quay also lit up purple in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

- In November 2023, Age Friendly were delighted to attend the Dementia Conference hosted by Family Carers Ireland at the Strand Hotel.
- TrinityHaus Research Centre in Trinity College Dublin and Medical Gerontology TCD are conducting research titled “Planning and design for Quality of life and resilience in residential long term care settings for older people in Ireland.” Limerick Age Friendly met with the researchers to carry out a mini walkability audit at Carebright Dementia Centre, Bruff on access to and egress from the centre, a full report on findings will follow.
- Limerick City and County Library partnered with the Vodafone Ireland Foundation to pilot a tablet tuition and loan scheme for older people in November of 2023. The objective of the scheme is to eliminate barriers and to enable older people to access the digital world. Nokia T20 Tablet devices are available for loan from the Library. This scheme is targeted at older people who have the option of taking part in a 4 week tuition course funded through Europe Direct or to follow the Hi Digital self - directed learning option which the Vodafone Ireland Foundation have developed with older people in mind. The Nokia T20 Tablet is a further addition to the suite of devices available for loan to enable older people to develop digital skills and literacy.

#### **Limerick Sports Partnership**

- In 2023 over 21,500 participants engaged in programmes, events, and education initiatives throughout the year.
- A Physical Activity for Health Officer with a supporting budget was recruited to engage and support individuals with chronic conditions post level 3 care into community based physical activities.
- Additional staff position secured – an ESF Officer to deliver programmes and educational components to individuals from extremely marginalised communities to enhance their quality of life.
- The LSP is facilitating 3 Community Sports Hubs which host part-time and full-time facilitators in Croom, Moyross and Garryowen. These Hubs will have an investment of €650,000 over a 5-year period promoting physical activity and enhancing local amenities.
- In 2023, LSP were successful in securing €220,000 for an Active Cities project in association with Dormant Accounts. This is an ongoing project with funding support for a further 3-year period. LCCC and UL are key partners on this project.
- LSP were successful with an EU PACTE+ project promoting Active Cities, partnered with Graz, Fredrikstad and Angers, the project included 4 European cities looking at Active, Schools, Mobility, Workplaces and Governance.

#### **LEARNING REGION**

RPO 186: Lifelong Learning & RPOs 39, 63,

Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support lifelong learning and development of a Learning Region or the development of UNESCO Learning Cities

### **RPO 186: Lifelong Learning & RPOs 39, 63**

**(i) Lifelong Learning Limerick** - The Learning Limerick Steering Group is a partnership forum that brings together sectoral networks and partnerships and is committed to creating a culture of learning in Limerick. It is made up of statutory, local development, business, community, and voluntary sector partners. Learning Limerick's primary role is to promote the value of learning in Limerick, across all stages of the life cycle, to share information that enhances members and partners' organisational learning, and to support sectoral networks and groups in their efforts to engage communities in positive learning experiences.

The launch of the 13th annual Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival took place in Istabraq Hall, City Hall in March 2023. The event was a precursor to what was a very successful weeklong run of events that spanned a variety of topics and sectors. This year's theme 'Come learn with me in 2023' saw a number of events taking place ranging from Art, Cookery, Early Childhood Development, Wellness Clinics and Language Taster Sessions. Learning Limerick hosted a "Shared Island "Learning City" exchange programme in May 2023. Mayor Cllr Francis Foley also welcomed delegates to the two day conference at the Strand Hotel.

#### **(ii) Made in Limerick Grants**

Fifteen applications were recommended for funding under the Creative Ireland Made in Limerick Grant 2023, totaling €42,000. In 2024, the open call Made in Limerick Grants will operate once again.

#### **(iii) Cruinniú na nÓg**

A national day of creativity for children and young people, Cruinniú na nÓg took place on June 10. This was delivered by Limerick City and County Council in partnership with Fresh Film. This Programme will also be delivered in 2024.

#### **(iv) Young People Children and Education**

- Limerick Artist in Schools Programme 2023
- Integrated Dance Programme 2023
- The County Limerick Youth Theatre 2023
- Limerick Youth Choir 2023

### **RPO 187 Education & Training**

ENGINE Short Film Scheme 2: Run by Innovate Limerick through Film in Limerick, Engine Shorts is delivered in partnership with the Local Authorities in Tipperary, Limerick and Clare, and the

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. ENGINE shorts has a focus on training and supporting emerging writers, producers and directors in Tipperary, Clare and Limerick. The scheme is open to emerging directors and producers with filmmaking experience, as well new or experienced screenwriters. Practitioners working in other mediums such as television, theatre, literature and other forms of visual and/or performing arts who wish to work in narrative fiction filmmaking are also encouraged to apply.

It also offers the opportunity for emerging local crew to gain real-world experience on funded productions and to receive industry guidance. Shortlisted teams avail of training to develop their project ideas and up to six teams will be awarded production funding of up to €12,500 each to produce a short film.

### **RPO 190 Lifelong Learning & Healthy Cities Initiative**

Healthy Limerick: Healthy Limerick is an initiative of the LCDC. It aims to improve health and wellbeing by ensuring that all sectors are aware of and collaborate to achieve a Healthy Limerick, working through the social determinants approach to health. A Healthy Limerick Coordinator is employed by the Local Authority as part of a funding and resourcing partnership with the Department of Health.

In 2022, funding was received to implement Healthy Ireland initiatives locally. Following a submission to Pobal in early 2023 €198,122 was awarded to Limerick City and County Council to continue the work of Healthy Limerick for the funding period 2023 – 2025. Healthy Limerick is leading various initiatives in partnership with a range of statutory and community partners stakeholders including Limerick Food Partnership, the Social Health and Education Project, local development companies and local communities. At the start of 2023 the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) announced the launch of the first ever ‘Community Recognition Fund’ (CRF). This fund is targeted at projects in communities hosting beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection applicants in recognition of their contribution to the emergency response.

In May the DRCD approved €1,389,505.00 for the delivery of 90 projects. These projects were recommended to the department by Limerick City & County Council from across the city and county, based on direct engagement with local communities. Proposals were required to be consistent with the Local Economic and Community Plan for Limerick.

These projects will contribute to upgrade and improvement works for sports and community facilities, energy efficiency upgrades, purchasing of equipment for festivals, clubs and community projects and the construction of a childcare facility among other projects.

**GAELTACHTAÍ,  
GAELTACHT SERVICE  
TOWNS(GSTs) & IRISH  
LANGUAGE NETWORKS**

**Please provide details of any recently completed or planned projects or other actions to support Gaeltachtaí, Gaeltacht Service Towns (GSTs) & Irish Language Networks**

Aim 2 of Limerick’s Culture and Creativity Strategy is to celebrate Limerick’s heritage and cultural identity. Limerick City and County Council recognise the Irish language as an integral part of our history, heritage and cultural identity. LCCC supports organisations such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Conradh na Gaeilge and Comhluadar Luimnigh that play a vital role in promoting the Irish language, as well as supporting the wealth of traditional music making, Irish dance and song across City and County. Funded through the Creative Ireland Programme, projects such as “Ag spreagadh le Scéalaíocht, Ealain agus ár nOidhreacht” (Inspiring through Storytelling, Art & Heritage), help to promote Irish as a living language. The appointment of an Irish Language Development Officer for Limerick is another positive development in this area.

Limerick City and County Council continues to support creative projects across formal and informal education settings in the delivery of Cruinniú na nÓg and in our approach to Creative Schools, the Local Creative Youth Partnership (Limerick & Clare) and youth engagement. The Irish language and Irish traditional arts are important cultural bridges which may connect different generations. Limerick City and County Council continues to play our role within the Irish Network of Learning Cities, ensuring that culture and creativity remain central to the learning experiences of people of all ages.

Separately, in January 2023, Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, the only Irish secondary school in the county, moved to its new school on the former brownfield Kerry Group site in Clare Street in the city. This was following an investment of more than €28m from Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (ETB) funded by the Department of Education's capital programme for post-primary schools. The school first welcomed students in 2006 and has been in a temporary location on Sir Harry’s Mall in the City. Measuring 8,000 square metres the new building will accommodate 750 students.

Please provide any other comments that you would like to make with respect to your Local Authority and implementing the RSES. This may include any recommendations that you consider would facilitate this process, reduce barriers to implementation or ways to improve implementation.

*Insert answer here*

PLEASE PROVIDE A CONTACT POINT IN THE EVENT THAT WE NEED TO CONTACT YOU ABOUT THIS FORM.

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