

1.1 Executive Summary

1.1.1 Background

In September 2006, not just Limerick but the entire nation shuddered with disbelief at the horror inflicted on five-year old Gavin and seven-year old Millie after a petrol bomb attack on the family car they sat in outside their mother's Moyross home. As the young brother and sister recovered slowly from their third-degree burns, a nationwide debate raged over the sheer inhumanity and depravity that this barbaric and senseless act represented. The attack literally assaulted the senses of the nation but unfortunately for Limerick, this was not unfamiliar territory.

As savage as the attack was on the young siblings, there had been many crimes with graver outcomes in Moyross and across other disadvantaged areas of the city. Examples are sadly too plentiful: the bloodletting of gangland thugs in ongoing feuds; the horrific killing in a petrol-bombing of a four-year old on Limerick's southside some years ago; the taking of innocent lives in unprovoked attacks. There have been attempted pipe bombings, alleged kidnappings, loss of limbs in violent attacks, arson on homes.

But the brutal assault on little Gavin and Millie was the tipping point. The shameless attack on innocents sparked a massive outcry from the city as Gardaí, church leaders, politicians, members of the public, media commentators etc. joined in a single voice of abhorrence. But what differentiated this outcry from the many others that had gone before was that it was the acknowledgement it drew that Limerick more specifically, certain areas of Limerick - had, indeed, a unique set of problems; problems that had reached a new low and now required a unique set of answers.

Government responded by ordering an extensive examination of social exclusion, crime and disorder issues in disadvantaged areas of Limerick and engaged former Dublin City Manager Mr. John Fitzgerald to carry this out.

Six months later, after conducting a comprehensive review, Mr. Fitzgerald submitted his report to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, chaired by then Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern. The report included two key recommendations:

1. Assign at least 100 additional Gardaí to Limerick City*
2. Establish two Government agencies to plan and implement the regeneration of housing estates and adjoining lands in disadvantaged areas**

This gave rise to the creation of the Limerick Northside and Southside Regeneration Agencies, which were established by Ministerial Orders S.I. 275/276 of 2007. Fundamentally, both Agencies were charged with the task of designing and implementing a comprehensive and integrated programme for the areas of Moyross on the Northside and Southill/Ballinacurra Weston on the Southside. Subsequently, in March 2008, another social-exclusion hotspot, St. Mary's Park, was added to the remit of the Regeneration Project.

It is not doing any disservice to these areas to state that, collectively, they are home to many of Limerick's criminality. It would, however, be doing a great disservice to suggest that criminality is anything other than in the absolute minority in these areas.

Throughout these vast local authority estates, there is a common desire amongst the great majority for a better life, one attained through peaceful, law abiding means, one which will enable them to build a solid future for themselves, their children and children's children.

Unfortunately, to a great degree they are victims of circumstance, inflicted on them through a failure of social policies, inadequate services, investment and intervention. This has fed a downward spiral of disaffection and disadvantage, the ugliest by-product of which is the type of lawlessness that was horribly typified in the brutal attacks on Gavin, Millie and many others.

But the darkest hour is just before dawn and the ultimate goal of the Limerick Regeneration Agencies is to build a platform from which these good people can be lifted out of this morass and brought to a brighter and lasting future, a future that will be in keeping with the rest of this emerging, vibrant Limerick.

- * **Over 80 additional Gardaí have been assigned to Limerick with a Government commitment that the balance will follow shortly**
- ** **The Agencies are also tasked with implementing all other recommendations in Mr Fitzgerald's report, which can be viewed on www.limerickregeneration.ie**

1.1.2 Structures/initial steps

The Limerick Regeneration Agencies officially began their work on June 25th, 2007 when I was appointed as Interim Chief Executive for both. Mr John Fitzgerald was appointed Chairperson of the Board of Directors, with the boards comprising of senior representatives from all the relevant Government departments, An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive, and the local authority managers of Limerick City, Limerick County and Clare County Councils. There are also three representatives on each board from the community and business sectors in the areas designated for regeneration. Out of this the Agencies developed Vision Statements for the Moyross, Southill/Ballinacurra Weston areas in the latter months of 2007. These Vision Statements were launched by the President of Ireland, Ms. Mary McAleese on January 21st, 2008.

Separate teams of multi-disciplinary consultants began their work in February 2008 while a team of consultants had already begun a draft strategy for the St. Mary's Park project and were further commissioned by the Regeneration Agencies to bring this strategy to Masterplanning Stage.

From the outset, the Agencies conducted a thorough process of local engagement, which included consultation with residents, community groups, sporting organisations, other state agencies and stakeholders either directly involved in or interested in issues relating to the designated regeneration areas of Moyross, Southill/Ballinacurra Weston and, latterly, St. Mary's Park.

The Agencies conducted 'open days', met regularly with residents and held meetings with a multitude of local community and voluntary groups.

Critically, to ensure structured, ongoing engagement, the Agencies facilitated the formation of new local regeneration committees in each area. These committees consist of residents, community groups, senior gardai, senior officials from Limerick City Council and senior executives from the Agencies. The following committees are, as a result, now in place:

- Moyross Regeneration Committee
- St. Mary's Park Regeneration Committee
- O'Malley/Keyes Park, Carew/Kincora Park, and Balinacurra Weston Regeneration Committees

Central to the success of these committees was the selection of a suitable independent Chairperson, and we very much appreciate the effort and commitment of Mr. Michael McNamara, Mr. Niall O'Donovan and Mr. Phil Mortell for taking up these important roles and consistently holding monthly meetings (at least) throughout the planning process. A number of subcommittees have also dealt with design and social issues and the Agencies greatly appreciate their input and commitment.

These Regeneration Committees have succeeded in providing an open forum for communication between residents, other organisations and the Agencies and promote participation and real involvement from the community.

It is our intention to continue to build the capacity of communities in the Regeneration Areas and to strengthen the Regeneration Committees as we move towards implementation. We want to ensure there are strong community structures in place and that they are fully empowered and capable of taking over when the work of the Agencies is completed.

In addition to engagement with all of the above, we have also consulted with a range of other key stakeholders, including business, sporting governing bodies, the construction industry, Limerick University, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick Institute of Technology, school principals, teachers and frontline staff from local state agencies.

'Without doubt it is clear that the system (i.e. the system of delivering state services) has failed the communities of the Regeneration Areas'

**Vision Statement
January 2008**

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1.1.3 The Programme - Limerick Regeneration

1.1.3.1 The Strategic Context

While the primary objective is to carry out a much needed Regeneration of certain areas within Limerick, it is vital that this is planned in a strategic way.

If we are planning to do this comprehensive Programme over a ten year period and if we consider that it will be a programme to cater for the next 50-100 years (a once-off opportunity) then we must absolutely take into account all national, regional and local strategies in the interest of long-term success and sustainability.

In addition it is clear that Social Exclusion Issues (including image etc) relating to the Regeneration Areas has caused considerable social and economic damage to the city and the region and therefore the Programme must consider those areas.

The successful transformation of the Areas designated for Regeneration will bring very positive social and economic benefits to the city and to the region.

While there are currently problems, and some of them serious it is important now to give out the message that there is a comprehensive programme to deal with these issues and that we are (all Limerick) on a pathway to a brighter and lasting future that will be in keeping with the rest of this emerging, vibrant Limerick.

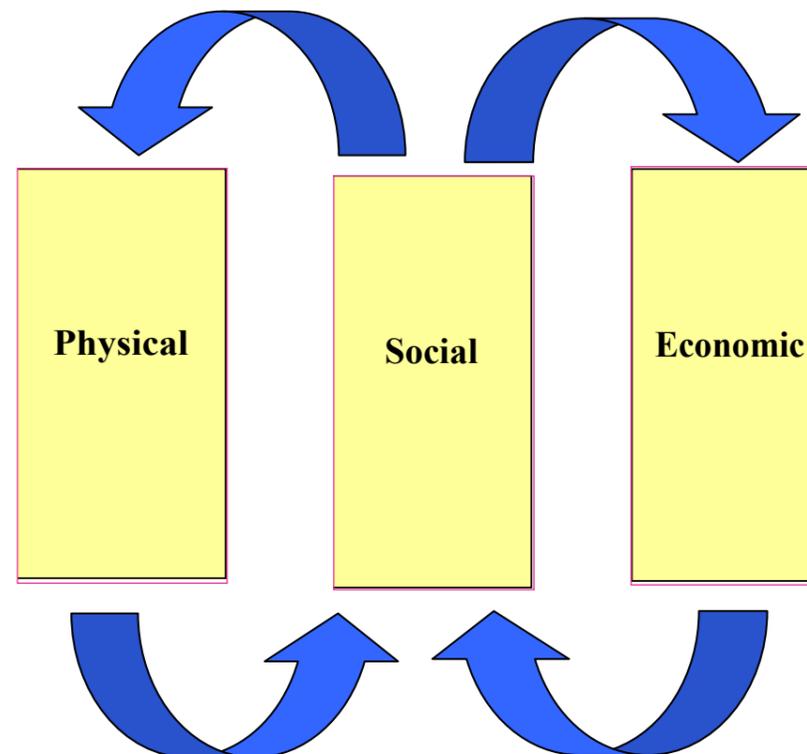
It is within these dynamics that the Programme has a strong section setting out the Strategic Context (in particular planning for the future) within which the development of the Limerick Regeneration Programme will evolve over the coming years.

Increasingly this Programme has wider implications for the City and the Region and must be consistent with all Planning Strategies, national, regional and local to secure funding support.

1.1.3.2 Regeneration pillars

The Regeneration Programme has identified three key 'Pillars' – Social Regeneration, Economic Regeneration and Physical Regeneration - around which this entire plan will be built.

There is a certain symbiosis between the three, yet each has distinctly individual and differing requirements and value.



1.1.3.3 Social Regeneration

The most fundamental challenge for this Programme is to succeed in transforming the social demographic of the regeneration communities. The delivery of this will require greater integrated development and service provision, both by local agencies and national government departments. This will ensure greater efficacy and sustainability of investment, both in infrastructure, service provision and service delivery.

The role of the Limerick Regeneration Agencies is to act as a catalyst for change in this regard. It will also serve as an agent of interagency work and development. This role will support the successful delivery of the social objectives set out in this Programme.

Since the establishment of the Agencies, Social Regeneration has been identified as THE key pillar/goal. Indeed, from the outset this message has been largely misconstrued by some people who have tended to be more focussed on the Physical Regeneration, which despite its significance in the overall process would simply fall way short of our overall aims on its own. However, the public preponderance on Physical Regeneration is completely understandable as it is the most visible and achievable of the pillars yet Social Regeneration is, without doubt, the most beneficial.

Indeed, it is widely recognised nationally and internationally that physical regeneration of areas is more of a means than an end.

Social Regeneration is ultimately about building key characteristics among constituents, such as self-esteem, confidence, civic pride and motivation. These ingredients, if developed throughout communities, heighten social standards and lower disadvantage; they also break down external prejudices and build trust. They create a sense of pride, empowerment, ownership and mutual respect – all of which are typically lacking in areas of disadvantage and social exclusion.

The Social Regeneration Pillar is broken down into 4 parts:-

- Education
- Children, Youth and Family Support
- Health
- People and Neighbourhoods

In relation to neighbourhoods and people this covers all the real issues that affect people as they carry on with their lives on a daily basis e.g. policing and safety, management of estates, community development/participation and empowerment, sport and leisure, arts and culture and public realm issues.

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1.1.3.4 Economic Regeneration

The creation of long-term employment locally and for local people, is a central theme for the Economic Regeneration Pillar. Currently, high unemployment levels, running way above the national average, exist in the regeneration areas and merely serve to exacerbate social exclusion.

Successfully tackling the dearth of employment opportunities in these areas will make a very significant contribution towards the overall goal of regeneration but can, the Agencies believe, only be achieved through a joint public-private sector approach.

We strongly recommend that appropriate financial incentives are introduced by Government for the Regeneration Areas to attract the private sector investment crucial for changing the prevailing social and economic problems.

There is no mistaking that ongoing issues in relation to crime and other anti social behaviour have created a jaundiced view of the regeneration areas and have considerably hampered their job creation potential. Redressing this and delivering long-term employment opportunities is a key ingredient in the transformation of these areas through the regeneration process over the years and will not alone be of significant benefit to these specific areas but to Limerick City and much of the Mid-West region.

Indeed, in the relatively short time since their inception, the Regeneration Agencies have evolved from being entities with an exclusive focus on addressing issues of social exclusion in individual regeneration areas themselves into entities with a wider Limerick City Regeneration 'brand' focus that will feed into the concept of Limerick as a gateway for the region.

To that end, education plays a very significant role in the Economic Regeneration process. Job creation is greatly challenged by the educational deficits in these areas. Currently there is a very high percentage of people in these areas with only basic primary education and creating an environment whereby young people are not alone encouraged but want to remain in education is central to Economic Regeneration.

In addition to strengthening their ability to win meaningful, long-term employment, enhanced education standards, over a period of time, will also significantly reduce the numbers of young people falling into crime and other anti-social behaviour, therefore enhancing the overall social regeneration of the areas, as well as strengthening self-esteem.

There is a strong requirement also for adult education/training in these areas and with that in mind the Agencies have already begun proactive engagement with FÁS and will continue with this throughout the implementation of Regeneration Programme. Furthermore, the Regeneration Agencies have already developed and will continue to foster close links and partnerships with job creation agencies/organisations such as FÁS, Shannon Development, Enterprise Ireland, City Enterprise Board and the PAUL Partnership on this very important issue.

1.1.3.5 Physical Regeneration

Physical Regeneration is an absolutely essential element of the overall programme and the Agencies have ambitious and innovative concepts in mind but we are absolutely cognisant of the reality that on its own, physical regeneration will achieve very little indeed.

The physical regeneration element of the overall process has, in the public domain, arguably been the most discussed and anticipated aspect of all, simply because it is the most predictable and imaginable of the three pillars.

It will radically reform the appearance/physical environment of these areas, which is not alone long overdue and badly needed but essential to help grow that vital and vibrant sense of community pride and self-esteem needed to make any regeneration project successful.

The overall investment in the Physical Regeneration element of the Programme will be high but will be spread out over the entire 10 year programme (2009-2018).

The Programme will involve the likely demolition of 3,000 homes in the three areas and their replacement by a number in the region of 2,400. The differential exists by virtue of the fact that approximately 500 houses in these areas are currently vacated/abandoned/burned out and demolition of these houses has already commenced. While at this stage we are talking about total demolition there may be a necessity or desirability to retain some homes (refurbished). We are conscious that we are talking about people's homes and we will need to do all this with appropriate sensitivity and intensive and ongoing consultation.

Replacement housing will be limited only to what will be required to house existing families who wish to stay in these areas. However, in order to help redress the current and historical social imbalance in the housing mix, all additional housing above that, will be private and/or affordable housing.

A very important ingredient in the overall mix for regeneration to be successful is that there is a strong sense of locality and, even with current social exclusion, this very much exists, with a very high percentage of people living in these areas intent on continuing to live there, particularly now that the process has given hope and confidence for the future.

The physical regeneration element of the Programme is, however, by no means exclusive to housing and will also include provision for retail, sporting, youth, educational and childcare infrastructural developments.

Contrary to public opinion, current housing densities in the three regeneration areas are low and not consistent with Government guidelines and regulations. At the same time, as none of the three areas are green-field sites, this will create a challenge between demolition and completion of construction phases for individual homes.

Home ownership accounts for some 52% of the houses, with the vast majority expressing a desire to remain living in these areas (i.e. provided that regeneration happens). Relatively high ownership rates

also exist in St. Mary's Park, which dates back to the mid-1930s. As a result it will not be easy to achieve the necessary balance between the existing situation and full compliance with current national density guidelines and regulations.

Nevertheless, we do believe that it is possible to achieve this balance across each of the areas and our consultants have set out innovative ways of achieving much higher levels of density in the future within each area.

We are also conscious of the fact that areas surrounding the regeneration areas have low residential densities and are quite affordable. They will also benefit from proposed amenities for the regeneration areas and, as such, could amount to competition for higher density residential units proposed for the regeneration areas.

1.1.4. Social Mix

The delivery of a much stronger social mix is paramount to the success and sustainability of the new housing estates in the Regeneration Areas. Such a mix has to be greater than just mixed tenure, it is essential that over the period of the Plan that these Areas achieve a population that has a greater level of income than at present. This will be achieved by the development of private/affordable housing, the expansion of home-ownership within the existing community and more importantly improving the life chances of the current child population through education and job opportunities which clearly highlight the sheer importance of Social Regeneration. The achievement of a stronger social mix in the newly regenerated communities is a crucial objective of the Programme.

There has not ever been a comprehensive and analytical study carried out as to why and how the current Physical, Social and Economic situation has come about.

This situation has persisted despite the very strong national economic climate of the past 15 years and the implementation of numerous social inclusion initiatives over the same period.

Many of these initiatives, although merited and worthy have made a difference but overall the 'on the ground' investment did not materialise.

A significant (but not the only one) contributor to the problems that have arisen relates to the creation of large concentrations of single tenure housing in the past and the failure to provide adequate management, social and other services over a period of time.

It has been accepted for a long time now that such concentrations of single tenure housing is the wrong thing to do and that social housing generally should be developed in a more dispersed way.

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'The delivery of state services must be brought closer to these communities'
Vision Statement
January 2008

Over recent years policies and practices on the issue have changed significantly right across the country towards the concept of mixed housing i.e. social, affordable and private with proper community facilities and strong management and integrated working between all the relevant Agencies.

In the Regeneration Areas the achievement of such a social mix is more challenging because these areas are not green-field sites and have existing communities with residents who have reared their children, educated their children and where their long-time homes are situated.

Hence the emphasis on Social, Economic and Physical Regeneration and the creation of a community environment that is radically different to what is there now.

There is no doubt that some residents in these communities (small minority) have brought fear, havoc, intimidation and harassment through criminality and anti-social behaviour.

The vast majority of decent law-abiding hard working residents have in part been 'battered into submission' by the activities of this small minority and unfortunately this 'battering into submission' has been, in their view, compounded by the failure of the State Authorities to deal with this small minority and the failure to provide them with the support and interventions required to make any kind of community based stand against the above activities.

A key element of our plan is to assist the Gardaí and Local Authorities in strong and unrelenting action against criminality and anti-social behaviour while at the same time supporting and empowering the communities to develop the necessary leadership skills and structures to deal with the challenges that they face.

Typical of international standards (UK, Europe and USA), large scale single tenure housing estates that are lacking in basic services, like those in the Limerick regeneration areas, inevitably result in serious social problems.

Over the last 30 years, the bulk of social housing in the Mid-West region has been provided and managed in the city area (to the credit of Limerick City Council) but such concentrations of social housing have brought a significant burden and a range of social problems to the city. It is clear now that a policy of greater dispersal of social housing in the region in the past could have avoided the problems that have led to this regeneration programme. But the situation today is what it is, and it provides a very serious challenge (but not insurmountable) for the Regeneration Project which would not be there if we were dealing with cleared or green-field sites.

The Regeneration Agencies wishes to reiterate that we are not proposing any widespread relocation of existing residents in the three areas. However, we do believe that it is essential to have a comprehensive joint Local Authority Housing Strategy and agreed procedures for more balanced and dispersed provision of housing in the future.

While over 50% of the houses built by the City Council have progressed through the National Tenant Purchase Scheme to home-ownership, it is clear that the usual social mix benefits that have accrued to other areas of the country from such schemes did not accrue to some of the local authority estates in Limerick City. The main reason for this is the long existing negative social and physical environment pertaining to some of the areas. In different circumstances, and certainly through successful regeneration, the Tenant Purchase Scheme and other home-ownership opportunities for tenants can be a major contributor to the achievement of a better social mix.

Currently in the regeneration housing estates, over 52% of householders own their homes, while 48% are renting from the local authority. We plan to change that mix during the course of the Programme implementation to ultimately:

- 20% Social/rented
- 80% Private ownership

The very significant proposals around the radical physical, social and economic transformation of these areas will in time lead to a vibrant housing market, including second-hand house sales and purchases similar to what has happened in other areas around the country that in previous times suffered from serious social exclusion.

It is proposed that no additional 'social' homes are built in the regeneration areas, except for those existing tenants who wish to remain living in these areas.

In light of the current and historical social housing imbalance in the region, the fact that the capacity to provide further social housing in the city area in the future is limited (widespread provision should be avoided so that the situation previously created does not happen again), and in the context of regeneration, it will be vital for the region to have a strong, robust, agreed and achievable Housing Strategy, covering all aspects of housing provision (public and private, including HSE Rent Supplement).

This has been, and no doubt will be a contentious issue and invariably gets clouded by reference to anti-social behavioural problems from some families and a particular historical reality associated with some public housing estates in Limerick City. In response to this, it would be vital that any agreed Regional Housing Strategy would have strong guidelines and procedures on how each local authority can deal with anti-social behaviour and estate management generally. In that regard, the recent legislative bill from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, which has provision on the issue of anti-social behaviour, is welcome and timely and should assist the formation of a Joint Local Authority Housing Policy for the region. (In particular those areas within the environs of the City).

1.1.5. Integration of Services

The Fitzgerald Report and the Vision Statements clearly outline deficits in how key state services are integrated, managed, delivered and accounted for in these areas and while progress has been made with the Regeneration Agencies acting as a facilitator and influencer over recent months there still remains weaknesses on this issue.

The Regeneration Agencies will continue to strive to further improve and enhance the integration of key state services in the Regeneration Areas with the aim of making services more effective and more targeted at those most in need.

We will create participative structures (different to existing local structures) with the emphasis on real integration, and management accountability. These structures will include members of the Executive and Board of the Agencies.

We believe that a lot of real progress can be made (some already made) by the better integration of key services which will not involve any new investment. We also believe that it is essential that the key State Agencies/Bodies should consider making significant changes to their structures and their methods of 'doing business' in order to respond better to the scale of the problems existing in the Regeneration Areas.

1.1.6. Risk Assessment

The Regeneration Agencies intend to put in place an ongoing assessment of risks relating to this very important Limerick Regeneration Project.

These risks may be national, regional or local in nature. We intend to have an annual risk assessment carried out with regular reports to our Board of Directors and to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

An initial assessment will be carried out in the short-term followed in 2009, 2010 etc. with the process shifting to post regeneration risks in the latter years of the Project.

This will be closely aligned with a robust evaluation process which at its core will produce a comprehensive and clear relevant set of benchmarking data.

1.1.7. Evaluation

The Limerick Regeneration Agencies have set ambitious targets and measurables that we are fully confident are achievable. To ensure we keep a-pace with our targets on an ongoing basis, we intend to assess and monitor our progress with a strict evaluation system.

While evaluation of Physical Regeneration, for instance, is relatively easy to track, agreeing key indicators and goals for social objectives is more difficult.

However, we intend to benchmark certain standards, including participation in education, health status of constituents, participation in sport – all of which will be key indicators of our progress with our overall goal of redressing the social exclusion and disadvantage in the Regeneration Areas.

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1.1.8. New Partnerships

The Limerick Regeneration Plan has involved and will involve a significant number of key stakeholders apart from the communities themselves.

The Agencies will continue the work that has started in the enhancement of integrated working in particular with the relevant State Agencies (including the Local Authorities).

In addition we consider that greater synergy and strategic thinking and planning can be achieved by the development of successful partnership working by the Agencies with very important educational institutions in Limerick such as the University of Limerick (UL), Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) and Mary Immaculate College (Mary I).

We have already discussed with the University of Limerick the possibility of setting up an 'intelligence unit' within the University which would include key faculties within the University and include some people from outside the University who have a keen interest and willingness to participate and advise on the development of the Limerick Regeneration Programme within the context of the 'bigger picture' of the City Region.

We will be happy to participate on this 'Unit' and we would see it as a very important asset for our work in the future. In the early stages of the Programme the development of shared ideas and completion of various feasibility studies would be very welcome for the Agencies as we gradually move towards the implementation of this challenging but opportunistic Regeneration Programme for Limerick.

We would also be keen to support and assist where possible the bringing of University services and faculties into the Regeneration Areas.

We would be keen to develop other similar arrangements with the Limerick Institute of Technology and Mary Immaculate College.

Other key Agencies where we consider that these are opportunities for key partnership working in the coming months and years would be the City Enterprise Board, Shannon Development, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (L.E.D.P.) and the PAUL Partnership, Limerick City Chamber of Commerce, IBEC and the Trade Union movement

1.1.9. Implementation and Governance

While two Regeneration Agencies currently exist for the Northside and Southside, we envisage the amalgamation of both into one – the Limerick Regeneration Agency – for implementation of the Programme.

This will, however, in no way denude from the three-way focus on the individual communities of Moyross, Southill/Ballinacurra Weston and St. Mary's Park.

Therefore, one Agency will be more suitable and appropriate to implement:

- The physical regeneration of the three areas including procurement/contracts etc

- Oversee the Social Regeneration
- Oversee the Economic Regeneration

The make-up of the Board of Directors of the Agencies, drawn as it is from all key stakeholder departments and agencies leaves it ideally placed to govern the implementation of regeneration over a period of years. This issue will be given strong consideration as we move forward.

The proposed implementation timeline for the programme is 2009-2018.

1.1.10. Structure of Programme

There are three outline Plans: (1) Moyross (2) Southill/Ballinacurra Weston, and (3) St. Mary's Park and they have now been integrated into one comprehensive programme titled 'Limerick Regeneration'. It consists of the following key elements:

- Strategic Context
- Social Regeneration
- Economic Regeneration
- Physical Regeneration for the three areas.

The following separate documents are also relevant to the programme:

- The Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Strategic Environmental Assessments
- Sustainability Framework and Audit
- Executive Summary Documents for each of the three Areas

All of the above will be available from the offices of the Regeneration Agencies or through down load from our website www.limerickregeneration.ie

1.1.11. Conclusion

The process of regeneration began with the acceptance by Government (Cabinet) of the recommendations outlined in the Fitzgerald Report and continued with the setting up of the Agencies, assignment of additional Garda Resources and the launch of the Vision Statements by the President of Ireland in January, 2008.

This Programme (Limerick Regeneration) is another but very important step in that process and sets out an evolving pathway towards regeneration over the term 2009-2018 and in the context of the reviews of Regional Planning Guidelines, Mid-West Area Strategic Plan and the upcoming review of the Limerick City and Limerick County Development Plans.

We will continue with our policy of extensive consultation and any changes required will be brought back to the Agency Boards and the various local consultative structures that have been put in place e.g. Local Regeneration Committees.

While the areas designated for regeneration unfortunately failed to properly benefit from the unprecedented economic boom over the period 1995-2007, we are now presenting a strong plan at a time when the national economy is in great difficulty, probably the worst situation in 30 years, and a situation that has deteriorated seriously since the Regeneration Project was initiated, particularly so over the last few months.

We obviously, then, are moving forward within a very difficult current economic context.

However, we must reiterate that the regeneration process can continue the positive change that has been happening over the last 12 months and it is very important to counter the idea that nothing happens until building blocks are laid.

The significant investment that will be required will be over a ten year period is not immediately required but the very significant problems as outlined in the Fitzgerald Report (and accepted by Government) can only be addressed in the long-term through implementation of this Regeneration Programme.

We believe (as set out in the Economic Benefit Analysis) that in the long-term costs will be outweighed by benefits in Financial and Economic terms which means that 'cost' can be a repayable investment.

Even if this was not so, the cost of the 'do nothing' scenario in terms of community suffering is not acceptable. It is very relevant to think about the following:

- It is estimated that it costs the State in the region of €90,000 for each prison place and up to €200,000 in high security prisons.
- It is estimated that each student attaining graduate status in education brings an economic benefit of €200,000 to the Economy.

There are parts of the three Communities including elderly and particularly children that continue to be at serious risk which require an urgent response and no unnecessary delay.

As indicated elsewhere in this document the Programme will evolve, be changeable and flexible to ensure that it can deal with changing and evolving circumstances locally, regionally and nationally and each project and each element of the plan will be subject to robust value for money examinations, prior to commencement and on an ongoing basis.

The Programme is now being presented to Limerick City Council as the next stage of the process and will then be forwarded to Government as a draft outline Plan for the Regeneration of Limerick encompassing the three designated Regeneration Areas of Moyross, St. Mary's Park and Southill/Ballinacurra Weston.

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While it will be necessary for the Government to have time to consider the full implications of this outline plan, in particular the funding aspects at a time when the country is experiencing a very significant down turn in the economic climate, the regeneration process as initiated by the Cabinet decision on the Fitzgerald Report can continue and move forward i.e. policing, social and family and planning/consultation.

Our work over the last twelve months in Limerick and our experience of the very negative Social, Economic and Physical conditions that currently exist and have existed for a long period makes it very clear to us and no doubt to other stakeholders in Limerick that this long-term plan is absolutely essential and that the momentum must continue even if the current economic climate does result in some delays in the achievement of the necessary capital investment.

1.1.12. Acknowledgements

I wish to sincerely thank residents in the three Communities (Moyross, St. Mary's Park and Southill/Ballinacurra Weston) for their support over the last twelve months.

I thank them for their patience, resilience and good humour despite them being surrounded by quite appalling living conditions.

We look forward to working closely with them over the coming months and years in the development of a sustainable regeneration of their communities and the achievement of a far better quality of life which is something that they genuinely and rightfully deserve.

I wish to thank all the officials in the various Government Departments and Agencies that we have worked closely with over the last twelve months.

I thank them for their support, assistance and courtesy. I very much appreciate the help and assistance from the chairperson and members of the two Agency Boards.

We are very grateful to Government for their continued support for the Limerick Regeneration Project and in particular we appreciate the great support and cooperation from senior officials in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

I wish also to thank all those people that participated and supported the Regeneration Process from a wide range of Community, Voluntary, Church and Sporting Organisations.

I wish to sincerely thank all the staff and management of Limerick City Council whom we have worked very closely with over the last twelve months and finally I wish to acknowledge the tireless work of my own team who have been based over the last twelve months out in Moyross, St. Mary's Park, Southill and Ballinacurra Weston.

**Brendan Kenny,
Chief Executive Officer,
Limerick Regeneration Agencies
October 2008**



Brendan Kenny, Chief Executive Officer

'This process will require intensive consultation with the local community on the basis that the vast majority are law abiding citizens who will wish to remain, and can therefore be guaranteed secure, good quality housing within the regenerated areas'

**Fitzgerald Report
April 2007**

'As well as dealing with a serious legacy from past mistakes, the regeneration programme in Limerick is an exciting opportunity to showcase the quality and sustainability agenda, which is now at the heart of our approach to housing'

**John Gormley, TD, Minister for Environment,
Heritage and Local Government**