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Safe and sustainable communities where people of all ages enjoy a good quality of life, a decent home and feel a strong pride of place. Well serviced and attractive neighbourhoods will be fully integrated with the social, economic and cultural life of Limerick.

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## Executive Summary

Vision – Safe and sustainable communities of opportunity where people of all ages enjoy a good quality-of-life, a decent home and a sense of pride about their place. Well-serviced and attractive neighbourhoods will be physically connected and fully integrated with the social, economic and cultural life of Limerick.

### **Ambitious but achievable**

Geared towards delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and with key deliverables set out under each area covered, the aim of the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan is twofold –

- To improve the quality-of-life and wellbeing of the communities in the regeneration areas by responding

comprehensively to the problems (physical, social, community safety and economic) that exist, addressing the identified needs of people and adopting a sustainable development approach.

- To promote greater social and economic inclusion in the regeneration areas so that they reach the averages for the wider city and see

increased public and private sector investment. This will be achieved by opening access to training and education opportunities, harnessing and promoting existing resources and making early interventions – recognising that it is often as early as pre-school or at primary school that life courses are set.

## Executive Summary

### Starting point

There is a recognised need to diagnose and treat the root causes as well as the symptoms of social and economic exclusion in Limerick's regeneration areas – Moyross and St Mary's Park on the city's northside and Southill and Ballinacurra Weston on the southside – so that future generations don't face the same challenges as current and former residents.

As well as offering potential for better lives for those who live in them, these localities represent a valuable untapped asset for Limerick and cover substantial areas all within a short distance of the city centre – albeit with a need for improved access.

Every available socioeconomic indicator shows these areas lag Limerick and Irish national norms for labour market participation, educational attainment, dependency on State payments and community participation while there have also been well-documented issues around crime and anti-social behaviour.

To look at economic participation in a little more detail, the unemployment rate in the four areas has consistently been among the highest in the country –

- St Mary's Park (58%);
- Moyross (57%);
- Southill (47%) and;
- Ballinacurra Weston (43%).

Not coincidentally, more than half the adult population (55%) in St Mary's Park has primary level as their highest educational attainment while the figure is similarly high in the other regeneration areas.

Current issues in the regeneration areas can, then, be summarised as follows –

- Unemployment – especially among young people;
- Poverty;
- Lack of skills to improve employability;
- Early school leaving;
- Physical and mental health problems arising from social exclusion;
- Population decline;
- Lack of diversity in terms of social classes;
- Below average levels of owner occupancy;
- Limited economic activity;
- Poor quality and design of ageing housing stock and public areas;
- Poor mix of land use and over-concentration of standard house types;

- Poor transport connectivity and access;
- Crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Disconnection from the city's social, educational, economic and cultural life.

Following an incident at Moyross in September 2006, the former Dublin City Manager and Limerick-man John Fitzgerald was asked to urgently report to Government on the interventions required. His report was presented in March 2007. In the following year, masterplans were prepared for each of the regeneration areas with these later integrated to become a single Limerick Regeneration Masterplan.

After five years of valuable work – much of it through turbulent economic times – the Limerick Regeneration Agencies functions were transferred in mid-2012 to Limerick City Council which is currently merging with Limerick County Council.

Framed to align with the national and EU policy framework on sustainable cities and communities and informed by all relevant regional and national planning legislation and guidelines, the current Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan has been prepared by the Office of Regeneration based at Limerick City Hall.

While this Office will play a lead role in coordinating delivery of the plan, it will do so in partnership with the communities as well as a range of Irish and European agencies, local community and voluntary organisations and the private sector.

### Strengthening pillars

Recognising that no single aspect alone will be effective in delivering the change agenda for the regeneration areas, the Framework Implementation Plan integrates measures that can be summarised as follows –

#### Physical:

- Removal of infrastructural barriers stifling connectivity;
- Develop connecting routes within regeneration areas;
- Community safety through design and CCTV monitoring;
- New housing construction with mixed unit sizes and types to promote diverse occupancy;
- Renewal and retrofitting of existing housing stock;

- Energy efficiency improvements;
- Social and educational infrastructure – refurbishing existing accommodation and building further capacity and;
- Environmental protection and management with attractive landscaping;
- Improve quality of the public realm.

#### Social:

- Education and learning initiatives appropriate to each life stage;
- Health and wellbeing of entire population – again with age-appropriate provision;
- 'Ageing well' neighbourhoods to reflect changing demographics and respond to the particular needs of older residents;
- Employability and work interventions for people currently detached from the labour market;
- Targeted support for families with difficulties and youth at risk and;
- Community development, empowerment and capacity building;
- Facilitate tenure and social diversification by improving the provision of private housing.

#### Economic:

- Sectoral training, work experience and work placements and job creation initiatives;
- Economic engagement platform bringing together all stakeholders and focused on regeneration areas;
- Social innovation/social enterprise hubs with supports for start-ups;
- Niche economic activities that can develop in line with national opportunity sectors such as green technologies;
- Developing a 'knowledge economy' subsector in community development and enterprise as skills are built locally;
- Inward investment to be incentivised with long-term revolving loan financing for new public, social and educational infrastructure and;
- ICT infrastructure, skills training and usage projects to support economic and social development.

With a National Social Innovation Hub and a National CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Engagement Centre to be created in Limerick with a view to partnering with multinational companies and indigenous Irish firms to pool expertise and tap into their skills, human resources

and knowledge base, the plan also identifies priority themes under each of the three pillars –

#### Physical:

- Promote healthy communities;
- Require good design;
- Create the environment for a strong, competitive economy;
- Promote sustainable movement;
- Deliver a wide choice of quality homes and tackle dereliction;
- Deliver a multidisciplinary approach to all interventions;
- Support high-quality communications infrastructure;
- Meet the challenge of climate change and flooding;
- Conserve and enhance the natural environment;
- Protect and improve the historic assets.

#### Social:

Each underpinned by community participation and development, empowerment and community facilities and with a whole of government approach -

- Education and learning;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Ageing well;
- Employability and work and;
- Families and youth at risk.

#### Economic:

- Focused training that matches real current and future job opportunities;
- More engagement in a structured way to promote economic activity using current and new resources;
- Fostering a culture of social innovation and enterprise in regeneration areas;
- Creation of a programme of civic and economic interventions that help attract, support and grow micro- and community enterprise;
- Development of niche economic activities that will leverage existing enterprise expertise within Limerick's higher education sector;
- Creation of hubs targeting themed economic opportunities in each area;
- Sustained evaluation and research so that Limerick builds a robust knowledge economy with deep expertise in regeneration;
- Improve the infrastructure and institutional

supports to help attract inward investment to regeneration areas;

- Create employment opportunities in the local areas through the regeneration process itself as well as through promoting sustainable enterprises;
- Integrate the regeneration areas more completely within the broader economic and spatial development plans for Limerick and;
- Provide the ICT infrastructure that supports business and advances economic and social development.

#### Better homes, stronger communities in a revitalised city

How best to provide sustainable neighbourhoods for current and future residents is central to the plan.

Supporting home ownership and the stability it promotes will help create a better balance within communities. The types of housing available within the regeneration areas will widen considerably with a particular focus, for example, on creating environmentally-friendly and intelligently-designed housing for older people.

Greater integration between the regeneration areas and adjacent communities will also be achieved. In addition, it is intended to promote increased provision of new homes by the private sector within and alongside the regeneration areas as and when the housing sector recovers.

All homes that are to be retained in the long term will be refurbished so that there are no units left lagging the new norms in the areas.

Rather than using broad strokes, the framework plan takes a street-by-street approach to analysing the interventions needed so that there is greater precision to what's proposed and all steps are evidence-based with their impact then measurable.

Particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring that improvements deliver lasting benefits and are sustained over time with a measured approach being preferred over radical, higher risk, once-off interventions. Stabilisation and strengthening of the communities is being prioritised with rebuilding to be done in a strategic and considered manner, recognising existing strengths in each area.

The aim is that neighbourhoods will evolve and adapt over time, just as in any vibrant urban area, rather than stand still. The regeneration process also needs to be flexible to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities without losing focus. The foundation for this will be continued analysis and evaluation so that the impact of various measures is robustly assessed.

The revitalisation of the regeneration areas so that they become more attractive neighbourhoods is vital to Limerick's overall success. A thriving city needs thriving residential areas. It also needs a strong central core that attracts and retains people. In this regard, Limerick will also benefit from the sustainable mixed-use development of strategic sites such as the Opera Centre and Nicholas St on King's Island; renewal of the Georgian quarter; development of a multi-occupancy higher education campus in the city centre and renewal of the city's waterfront as well as the main thoroughfares – O'Connell St, Catherine St and Henry St.

In short, what will be delivered is a city to be proud of with connected and living neighbourhoods that people will actively want to live and work in.

#### Implementation & Delivery

It is recognised that even the best prepared and most robustly evidence-based plan will be meaningless unless it is implemented holistically over time. Delivery is the key and, in this regard, there is an entire 40-page volume of the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan devoted to implementation and delivery.

The plan sets out how a multi-level structure will ensure all those who can and must influence delivery are able to do so.

- Within the neighbourhoods involved, structures for community participation and involvement will be enhanced and sustained throughout the lifespan of the plan;
- At this local level, there will also be partnership structures so that the officials from across the public sector that work in the areas on a daily basis have a coordinated forum for meeting and sharing insights;
- Nationally, a group of key officials across government departments and statutory agencies will meet as the Programme Delivery Group with an exclusive focus on where their organisations

- can support delivery for Limerick;
- At a Limerick city level, a partnership to drive the strategy and oversee implementation will be established in tandem with the new Socio-Economic Committee being formed as part of the transfer of local enterprise functions to the local authority structure.

Specific subgroups will then look at key areas of the plan – for example, economic development and social inclusion. Throughout the implementation and delivery phase, there will be a joined up approach across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors with the Office of Regeneration acting as a catalyst for bringing people together to achieve positive outcomes.

This Office will consist of a small Policy and Operations Unit based at Limerick City Hall alongside those delivering physical regeneration works as well as the local authority staff tasked with economic development. In addition, there will be key personnel based at community offices in both the northside and southside regeneration areas.

A Social Intervention Fund will allow the Office of Regeneration to resource projects in the regenerations areas that have a clear strategic value in helping advance the overall plan.

Applying the principle that what gets measured gets done, there will be a large number of very specific performance indicators used to gauge the success of the plan's implementation. These will be based on independent evaluation and monitoring of key data sources, many of them originating with the Central Statistics Office (CSO). This measurement process will look at both what is being delivered and what impact there is so that both outputs and results are rigorously tracked at each phase.



