

2. Strategic Context

2.1 Regional Setting and Regional Implications for Land Use

Importance of the context

There is a need for Limerick City to become a model urban environment, that is an object of pride and enjoyment for everybody, and for this to happen the region and the 'Gateway' must thrive economically and socially.

'A city can only exist when it is inhabited in the imagination of its citizens' - Alistair Gray,

The Limerick City Regeneration Project is an ambitious, long-term programme of actions to address long-established, multi-faceted issues in the City of Limerick that have had negative impacts on the communities of the areas that are its focus, the City of Limerick and its environs and, indeed, the larger regional area.

In order for this project to be successful it will require significant investment in social, economic and physical capital and services. If this investment is to be secured and successfully applied, it is imperative that the project is consistent with national and regional policy and reflected in the policy and programme decisions of regional and local bodies.

The achievement of the required consistency with national and regional policies can be ensured by the Regeneration Agency given a suitable local policy environment. However, the positive involvement of regional and local bodies is something that will be achieved by dialogue; collaborative approaches to policy-making across a range of key organisations; and the synchronisation of policies and programmes at different levels of detail. This collaborative approach is required as, ultimately, the Regeneration Project is not an autonomous, self-regulating activity that can make decisions independently of national, regional and local policies and projects. It must fit clearly and effectively within such policies, enhancing their effectiveness but being consistent with them. Indeed, the Orders establishing the Regeneration Agencies states that they are "(ii) to prepare, taking into account relevant strategies and programmes of statutory bodies and other relevant bodies operating within the Area, a strategy for the regeneration of the area and promote implementation of that strategy;"

Given the importance of the Regeneration Project it behoves other organisations to respond positively to the Project's needs – but such positive response is not assumed or taken for granted. The proposals contained in these documents set out a vision for the regenerated areas and an indication as to how such vision can benefit all those directly and indirectly affected.

While it is necessary that the Regeneration Project develops a clear strategic approach and a vision of the goals that it will seek to achieve, it is also important that the fluid nature of the environment within which they are situated is borne in mind. From a land-use and planning perspective matters are changing on a regular basis. Therefore, for example, the Regional Planning Guidelines are due for review shortly as are some of the relevant Local Authority Development Plans. In addition, the changing economic and social circumstances of the country may have some implications for population growth and development options which may, in turn, impact on the approaches taken with regard to regional development.

Having regard to all these matters it is recognised that, while the overall goals, objectives, mechanisms and strategies of the Regeneration Project are likely to remain stable over time, the details of the projects and plans will need to be more flexible and in a position to respond to the changes that occur within the fluid environment within which they operate.

The multi-agency and multi-administration context within which the project is set reinforces this requirement, since imperatives that are externally driven may impact on the goals, objectives and capacities of partner organisations and, in that context, also require a capacity on the part of the project to respond to change in the social, economic and political environment. While this part of the Plan sets out a planning context, it is recognised that such a context is a snapshot in time and has no guarantee of long-term stability at least in its detail. It is therefore crucial that the regeneration process and implementation be set in the context of strong alliances and cooperation between communities, organisations and business, becoming a key element of the 'region of excellence'

Structure

This part of the Regeneration Plan document is structured in accordance with the thinking outlined in the paragraphs above. In order to facilitate an understanding of the various factors involved, the different elements that are relevant to the Regeneration Project in this context have been divided as in table 1.

The following is a brief outline of what each level refers to –

National – Government-level

Inter-regional – Those linkages (particularly transport and economic) between the Mid-West and other regions and, in particular, the West, South-West and South-East regions.

The Region – The area of the Mid-West Regional Authority - Limerick City, Limerick County, Clare County and Tipperary North.

The Sub-Region – This refers to the area shown in map one that is under the direct influence of and that directly influences Limerick City. It includes zones 1 and 2 of the Regional Planning Guidelines and an area of the South-East Region that includes Tipperary Town and Newport.

The Greater Limerick Area – This refers to Limerick City and its adjoining environs in Clare and Limerick.

Limerick City – This refers to the administrative area of Limerick City Council

The Limerick Regeneration Areas – This refers to those areas of the City that are included in the project.

In the light of these relationships (which by no means identifies all of the issues or strategies that may be of relevance to such a complex and multi-faceted project), it will be clear that a considerable amount of integration between policies and processes is required.

Table 1

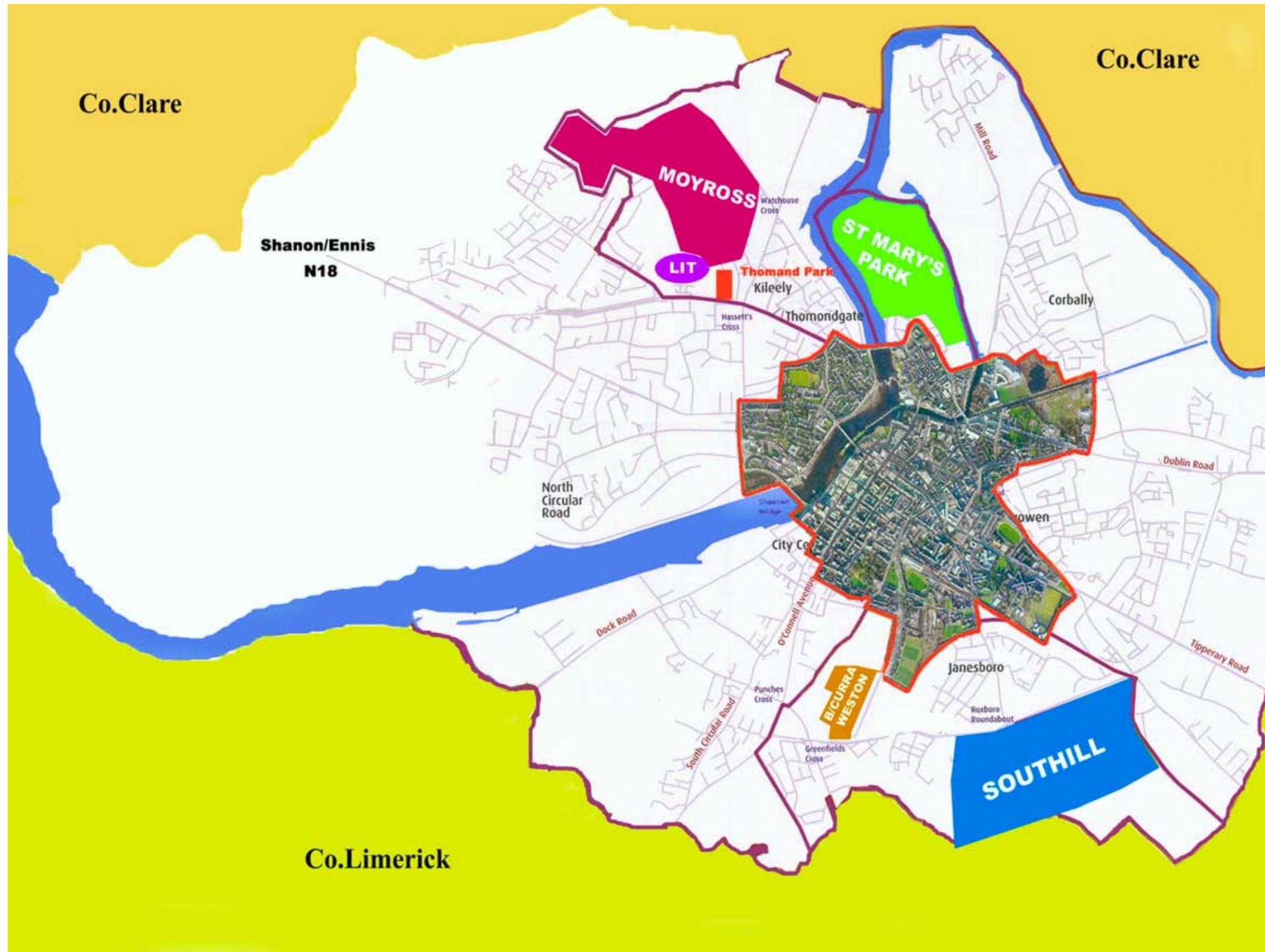
Level	Some Key Policy Documents	Role for Regeneration Plans
National	National Spatial Strategy (NSS) Gateway Investment Priorities Report National Development Plan (NDP) Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities Quality housing for Sustaining Communities Draft Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas	Set national guidelines to be reflected in plans Identify issues that might be addressed in plans
Inter-regional	Atlantic Gateway Report and Vision Document 2020* Transport 21	Set inter-regional priorities to be reflected in plans
Regional	Regional Planning Guidelines and Economic Strategy Regional Tourism Strategy Regional Retail Guidelines	Set population, land-use and service provision guidelines to be reflected in plans An ambitious integrated regional vision
Sub-regional	Regional Planning Guidelines Limerick City Development Plan Limerick County Development Plan Clare County Development Plan North Tipperary County Development Plan South Tipperary County Development Plan	Provide strategic context and legal framework for the implementation of the Regeneration Project's proposals Provide collaborative framework for the achievement of the Regeneration Project's goals
Greater Limerick City Area	Regional Planning Guidelines Limerick City Development Plan Limerick County Development Plan Clare County Development Plan Limerick City Development Board Strategy Limerick County Development Board Strategy Clare County Development Board Strategy Gateway Innovation Fund Submission	Provide strategic context and legal framework for the implementation of the Regeneration Project's proposals Provide collaborative framework for the achievement of the Regeneration Project's goals
Limerick City	Limerick City Development Plan Limerick City Area Plans Limerick City Development Board Strategy Limerick City Sports and Recreation Strategy	Provide strategic context and legal framework for the implementation of the Regeneration Project's proposals Provide collaborative framework for the achievement of the Regeneration Project's goals
Limerick City Regeneration Areas	Regeneration Draft Plan	Provide detailed proposals and actions for the achievement of the Project's goals

Note: The list of relevant documents does not purport to be exhaustive but to refer to some key relevant documents and to illustrate the range of considerations to be taken into account.

* The Atlantic Way approach advocates integrated and holistic regional planning by its four pillars of Knowledge and Enterprise, Social Inclusion, Tourism and Leisure and Connectivity and Infrastructure.

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Map 1



2. Strategic Context

Key Implications of each level

National

National Spatial Strategy (NSS)

Limerick City is located at the centre of the Mid-West Region. The city, in association with Shannon Town, has been identified as a 'Gateway' in the National Spatial Strategy, with Ennis identified as an associated 'Hub Town'.

The National Spatial Strategy states that it "is a twenty-year planning framework designed to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development between regions." 2002-2020.

The NSS also identifies the following as being among the 'key concepts' that lie behind its approach.

Critical mass which relates to a size and concentration of population that enables a range of services and facilities to be supported and which in turn can attract and support higher levels of economic activity and improved quality of life.

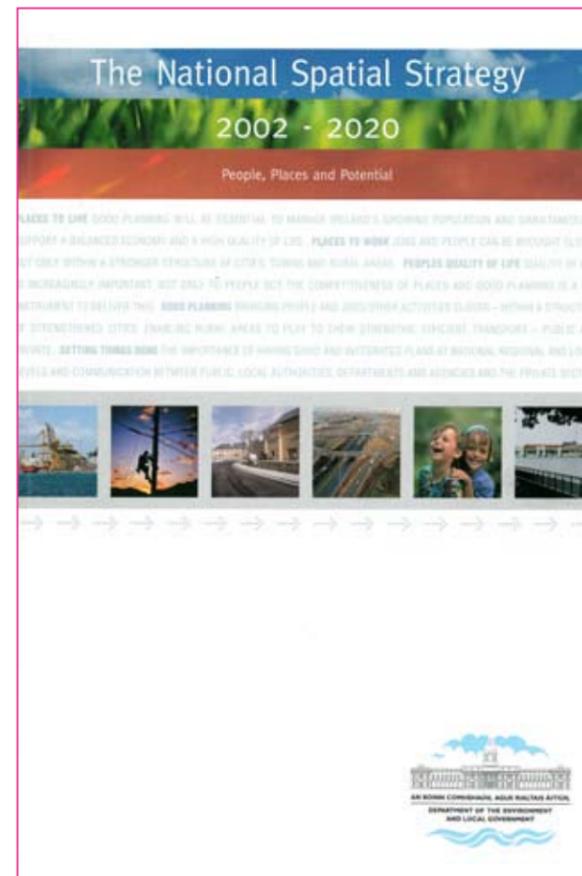
Gateways have a strategic location, nationally and relative to their surrounding areas, and provide national scale social, economic infrastructure and support services. Further development of the five existing gateways at Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon, Galway and Waterford is a key component of the NSS.

Linkages in terms of good transport, communications and energy networks are vitally important to enable places and areas to play to their strengths.

In addition, the NSS notes that "Ireland needs to renew, consolidate and develop its existing cities, towns and villages – i.e. keeping them as physically compact and public transport friendly as possible and minimising urban sprawl, while also achieving a high quality of design in new development and refurbishment. Urban land needs to be used carefully, sensitively and efficiently – with the aim of reducing dereliction and under-utilisation."

Implication 1: *The Regeneration Project provides an unusual opportunity to redevelop major blocks of land within an existing Gateway City. The NSS statements regarding the development of critical mass, the better utilisation of (particularly residential) land and the creation of higher development densities in the vicinity of public transport corridors, need to be taken into account when the planning policies regarding the project areas are being considered, while also having regard to the social and recreational needs of the communities of these areas. This may have implications for land-use, housing densities, public transport provision and so on.*

Implication 2: *The Regeneration Project provides an unique opportunity to identify and provide for some elements of the 'national scale social, economic infrastructure and support services' that are not presently available in the Limerick/Shannon Gateway. Such provision, however, can be effectively identified and allowed for in the context of a gateway-wide assessment of the needs and existing gaps.*



Another key element of the National Spatial Strategy is set out in the following statement :

"There is evidence of growing interaction between Cork and Limerick and also between Waterford and Cork and between Limerick and Galway. This interaction suggests future possibilities for combining the complementary strengths of these cities and expanding such interaction to achieve a critical mass strong enough to balance the type of critical mass that has been achieved by Dublin."

This indicates the understanding of the NSS that individual gateways will not, on their own, offer a sufficient critical mass to provide an effective counter-balance to Dublin. This sentiment has been well articulated by the Atlantic Way Initiative www.atlanticway.com.

Implication: *The Regeneration project should be aware of and accommodate any potential for linking their redevelopment with inter-regional access and facilities provision.*

National Development Plan

The National Development Plan is not specific about the Regeneration Project in Limerick. However, it does note that "Many of the gateways contain a significant stock of social housing whose physical and social regeneration is an important aspect of enhancing their attractiveness for investment. "and that Gateway Innovation Funding could include proposals for "Integrated physical and socio/economic regeneration projects designed to rejuvenate important or significant parts of the gateway."

Implication: *The implication of these statements is that, while the regeneration of the Limerick areas that are included in the project is desirable in respect of the quality of life of the residents the Project must also have regard to the extent to which its regeneration will impact positively on the attractiveness of the gateway as an area for investment. This may have some implications for the ways in which the regeneration of these areas is approached as well as the way in which the impacts of the regeneration is publicised.*

Implementing the NSS: Gateway Investment Priorities Study

The investment priorities for Limerick City identified in this study do not specifically refer to the regeneration of the areas that are included in the project. The improvement of the image of the city is referred to as a key requirement and the Regeneration Project can have a very significant impact in that regard.

Implication: *While the establishment of the Regeneration Projects was a Government decision that post-dated the publication of the Investment Study Report, the absence of a clear reference to the need to improve the areas that are the focus of the Regeneration Project is noteworthy. In that context it is important that the regeneration of these areas be identified by all key bodies and stakeholders as priority projects and programmes.*

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Inter-regional

Atlantic Gateway Initiative Report

One of the principal inter-regional issues which may be of relevance to the Regeneration Project relate to the creation of strong transport links between the gateways and the development of a critical population mass within the inter-linked gateways and hubs. The Atlantic Gateway Report notes that each of the city regions should:

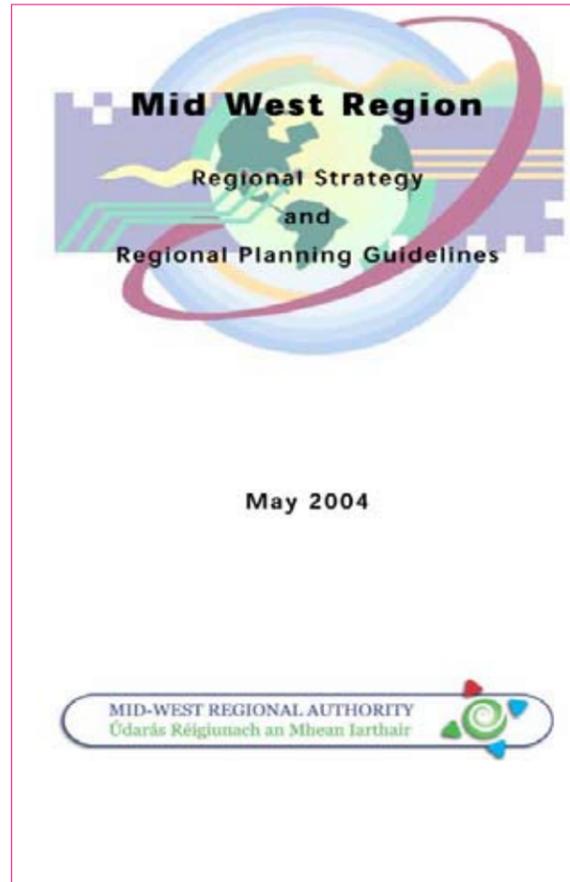
- Vigorously pursue the implementation of the city region planning strategies prepared since the NSS with, as appropriate, dedicated implementation resources
- Prepare a highly focused investment priorities strategy targeted at investments that would leverage substantial lifts in residential, commercial and employment activity that would have high internal rates of return and have the capacity for substantial private finance. Such a priorities strategy would obviously need to build on existing plans
- Take a combined approach in influencing the determination of longer term investment priorities that would be mutually beneficial such as the transport links between the Atlantic Gateways
- Participate in the Atlantic Gateways Forum to exchange experience and perspectives, raise issues and maintain progress in implementing the Atlantic Gateway initiative.

Implication: The Regeneration Project will need to have particular regard to its role in these actions. In particular, the proposals of the project need to be proofed against their contribution to the creation of transport corridors and the extent to which they can contribute to leveraging private financial investment.

Transport 21

The Transport 21 proposals identify a number of projects that are relevant to the Regeneration Projects. These include the Western Rail Corridor and the Limerick – Galway National Primary Route Upgrade. These projects are of particular importance in developing the inter-regional critical mass identified as a key issue in the NSS and, indeed, in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Mid-West Region.

Implication: The Regeneration Project proposals should be proofed against the detail and purpose of the Transport 21 proposals in the context of the achievements of the NSS objectives. The factors that might be included in this proofing will include the extent to which the proposals will contribute to the increase in the Limerick City population; the extent to which the proposals will facilitate the use of public transport at a local regional and inter-regional scale; and the extent to which the proposals will facilitate the creation of a linked unit between the gateways and the relevant hubs.



transport21
progress in motion

Regional

At the regional level the key policy document and statement is the Regional Planning Guidelines, which are due for review. These guidelines and their associated Regional Economic Strategy seek to provide the framework for the implementation of the key elements of the National Spatial Strategy at regional level. The Local development strategies and development plans are also important at a regional and sub-regional level but they will be dealt with at a later stage.

As well as the RPGs there are a number of other regional policies, both completed and in preparation, that are of relevance. These include the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) which is in progress and the Regional Retail Planning Guidelines which are in place (currently being reviewed).

Regional Planning Guidelines

Some of the key elements of the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Regional Economic Strategy that are of relevance to these projects are as follows:

Population Distribution

The population distribution that was envisaged for the Mid-West area was based on the 2002 Census and on the assumption that the capacity to provide additional population in Limerick City was limited. Therefore, the additional population that was allocated to Limerick City up to 2020 was 3,000 of about 60,000 which would have seen its share of the region's population drop from 15.9% to 14.13%. A revised population growth target based on revised Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government regional projections would have seen the city grow by about 10,000 which is a significant increase. The review of the Regional Planning Guidelines and the opportunities to accommodate additional population in the city that is presented by the Regeneration Project, may lead to a re-balancing of the population targets in the revised guidelines.

Implication: The distribution of population between the city and its hinterland in particular will be revisited as part of the Regional Planning Guidelines Review and as the major redevelopment sites in the city the regeneration areas will need to consider the extent to which they can contribute to a sustainable increase in the city's population.

Needs of the Area

In the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Regional Economic Strategy, Limerick City was considered as part of the central zone 1 sub-region (table 1). Within that zone, the specific needs of Limerick City were considered. The specific strengths and the needs of that zone as noted in that document are set out in the following table (table 2). A number of these needs are directly related to the regeneration areas and they will be considered for a range of development options.

Implication: The development of the regeneration areas should have regard to whether any of the needs identified for the zone 1 area might be incorporated into the regeneration programmes.

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Table 2

Zone	Potential	Needs
Zone 1 Limerick/ Ennis/ Shannon	<p>Development as a key element of the western/southern economic corridor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attraction of foreign direct investment – Location for major research and development functions – Centre for regional scale social and commercial facilities – Location for enterprise-based strategic development zone – Major inter-regional access hub and model interchange – Principal tourist access point and service centre – Base for larger indigenous industry – Location for national centres for specialized activity – Location for major transportation, bulkbreaking and distribution centres to service the areas to the North and South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Co-ordinated development of Limerick/ Shannon as a metropolitan centre – Co-ordinated development of the whole zone as an urban agglomeration – Protection of the role and location of Shannon International Airport and Limerick Docks so that they can continue and enhance their functions – Improvement of road access between/to Foynes and Limerick ports, particularly for road freight traffic – Retention and enhancement of rail access between Limerick City and Foynes – Reinstatement of the Mallow to Limerick (via Charleville) railway line – Provision of new targeted zones for industrial development, including possibility of provision of specific development zone – Focus on key enterprise investment opportunities as noted earlier – Development of its role in attracting foreign direct investment – Improvement of transport infrastructure and public transport including roads and rail, in particular, those roads that provide linkage between the area and the Gateways to the North and South – Development of communications and infrastructure corridors with Dublin and the Greater Dublin Area – Implementation of water and waste-water schemes proposed for Limerick, Ennis and Shannon – Development of dedicated areas for bulk storage, warehousing and transportation – Development of tourism base through implementation of new tourism development projects and provision of access – Development of social, cultural and commercial role of Gateway and Hub – Provision of high-quality affordable broadband infrastructure – Additional population in city area to support developing facilities – Regeneration of disadvantaged and obsolete areas of the city and the implementation of national support mechanisms to assist in this development. – Physical, social and economic linkage to other Gateway areas – Linkage of investment support networks such as education and research centres with each other and to other such centres in adjoining regions and abroad – Provision of region-scale recreation and amenity facilities – Provision of a range of national centres and facilities – Develop direct linkages with Galway Gateway through improved road and rail access to link Shannon International Airport with the Galway Gateway critical mass – Protection of the area's natural resources

Transport Infrastructure

A substantial number of transport infrastructure proposals were included in the Regional Planning Guidelines. Amongst these was the provision of a Northern Ring Road from the Dublin Road to the Ennis Road. It was considered that this road was required in order to provide more effective access to Shannon and Ennis from the North of the Region and beyond, in order to facilitate the development of Shannon Airport and the capacity of those to the North of Limerick City to easily access the major employment zone in Shannon.

Implication: *Since the proposed road link is liable to pass in close proximity to one of the Regeneration Areas (Moyross), it is important that the potential of that link to assist in the redevelopment is taken into account while also recognising the link's wider role in the Regional Transportation Strategy.*

Sub-Regional

As noted above, the sub-regional area that is of importance to the Regeneration Projects includes an area that stretches from Nenagh to Adare and from Tipperary Town and Newport to Ennis. This area has been chosen, since the transport infrastructure (both road and rail) necessary to facilitate close interaction between Limerick City and these areas, either is or will shortly be in place. In particular it should be noted that Tipperary Town, Nenagh and Ennis are linked by rail to Limerick, with the latter two settlements now having a commuter train service between them and the city.

This overall area is of relevance to the Regeneration Project for a number of reasons. It is a strategic objective of the project to change the balance of development within the regeneration areas – increasing the mix of development; increasing the percentage of privately-owned housing and so on. The success of these developments will, in part at least, rely on a strong demand for such developments within the private market sector. Therefore, issues regarding the supply of such developments within the general sub-regional market will be of importance to the success of the Regeneration Project and the likely nature of such supply will also be of relevance in influencing the final shape of the project plan.

There are other elements of the sub-regional development structure, such as the retail development strategy, that are of relevance to the Regeneration Project but their importance will relate to the scale of retail and other development that is planned for the regeneration areas and its significance in a sub-regional context.

Implication 1: *The Regeneration Project should seek to influence the shape of housing supply in the sub-regional area in a way that will not compromise the achievement of the objectives of the project. The project will also need to respond to the way in which that supply is finally determined. The Regeneration Agencies will need to participate pro-actively in the review of the Regional Planning Guidelines with*

these objectives in mind and in the context of the expectation that those guidelines will have a significantly greater statutory role in the future. The Agency will need to work with all local authorities in agreeing an appropriate housing distribution strategy and will have to design the scale and nature of the housing within the regeneration areas to be in accordance with that strategy.

Implication 2: *It is an overall objective of the Regeneration Project to attract commercial and other forms of development into the core of the regeneration areas, in order to create identifiable communities that are connected to the wider city area but that are also self-sufficient to some extent. The appropriate nature and extent of such services can be decided only in the context of a sub-regional strategy that addresses the provision of such services. The Regeneration Agencies will, therefore will work with all local authorities in the context of the review of the Regional Planning Guidelines in agreeing an appropriate set of guidelines for these matters and will design the scale and nature of the services within the regeneration areas to be in accordance with those guidelines.*

Greater Limerick City Area

While the management of development in the sub-regional area is of importance to the success of the Regeneration Projects, the Greater Limerick City Area is of particular relevance. The Regeneration Areas are located within and are intimately connected with what happens in the Limerick City and Environs Area. It has been acknowledged for some time within the implementation processes of the present Regional Planning Guidelines that a coordinated approach to the management of the zone 1 area as identified in the guidelines was desirable, if difficult to achieve. The redevelopment of the Regeneration Areas will have serious implications for a wide range of land uses and projects within both the sub-regional and Greater Limerick City Areas. Some of the matters that require strategic consideration at sub-regional level have been outlined in the previous section. Within the Greater Limerick City Area, however, the development of the Regeneration Areas will have impacts on and be impacted on in a number of key areas.

These include –

- Housing supply and population change
- Social, recreational and amenity provision
- Provision of retail and other commercial services
- Open space provision
- Transport routes, particularly those providing sustainable transport solutions including bus corridors, cycle lanes and pedestrian routes
- The provision of community and social service infrastructure such as schools, childcare facilities, medical facilities, community facilities and so on
- The provision of other services such as local transport

The Regeneration Areas do not inhabit an isolated environment with regard to these matters. While development within those areas must have particular regard to the built-up social and economic needs of the communities that inhabit them, change should happen in a way that meets the needs of those communities while adding value to the general level of services in the city area and while not interfering with the appropriate development of facilities and services in other parts of the area.

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The Regional Authority and the City and County Development Boards as well as the Planning Authorities will offer an excellent range of forums within which such discussions can take place and decisions be made.

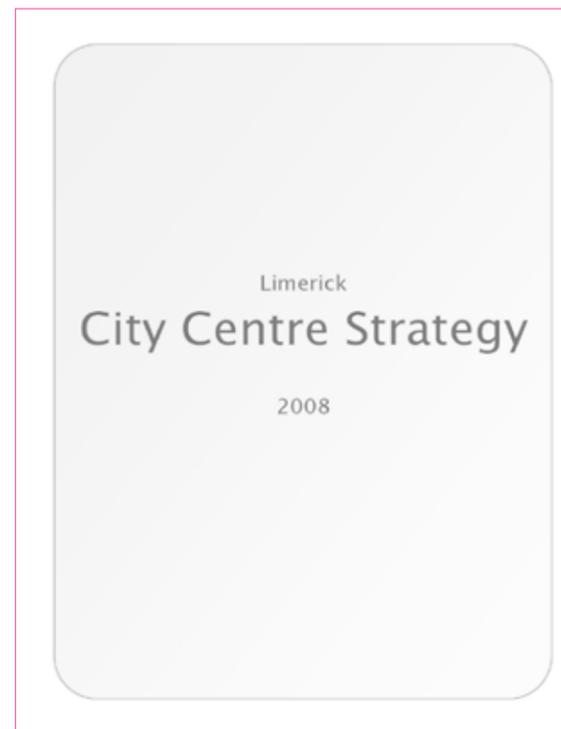
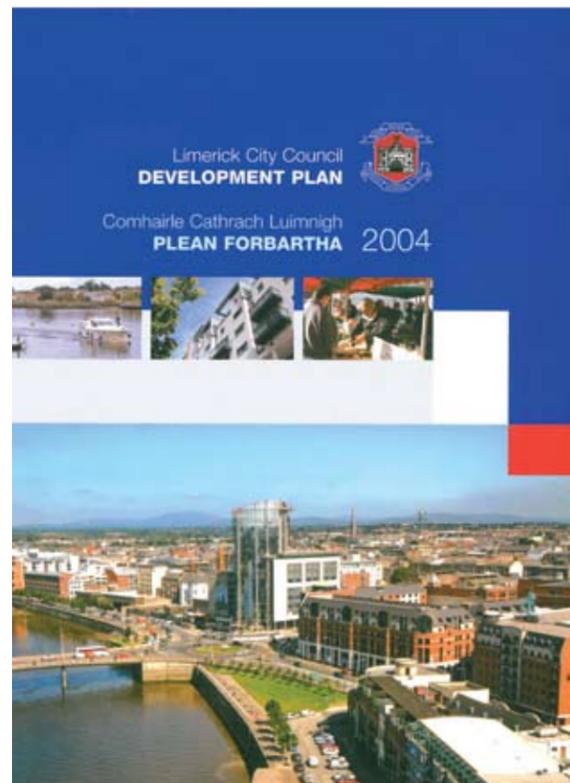
Implication: A coordinated approach to the provision of key services within the Greater Limerick City Area is required, particularly between the Local Planning Authorities but also with the providers of services in the areas of transport, education, commerce, health and social services. The Regeneration Agencies will work with key agencies and providers to develop overall strategic approaches to these provisions for the Greater Limerick City Area, in the context of the revised Regional Planning Guidelines and the strategic sub-regional approaches referred to earlier. The Agencies will seek to influence the outcomes of these discussions but will ultimately need to be guided by the outcomes in the design and implementation of our own detailed plans.

Limerick City

While the overall regional context at its various levels is of particular importance in providing a forum for strategic decision-making as well as a basis for guidance of the work of the Regeneration Agencies, it is recognised that Limerick City and the City Council is the key collaborative partner of the Agencies in achieving the objectives given to them by Government. The strategies, plans and activities of the Agencies must be in accordance with the plans and policies of the City Council and the City Development Board if they are to be successfully implemented.

In that context it is recognised that the plans for the Regeneration Areas must meet the requirements of the City Plan. However, it is hoped that if the strategic approaches that have been referred to in the previous two sections are successfully agreed, the regeneration proposals will be fully acceptable within the context of the City Plan. There are aspects of that plan that will be of particular importance for the Regeneration Project. These include policies regarding densities and design of buildings; policies regarding open space provision; the extent of commercial and other development that the City Plan envisages as taking place within the regeneration areas; the opportunities for linking the Regeneration Areas to the rest of the city through sustainable means of transport; the land-uses proposed for those parts of the city that are adjacent to the regeneration areas and so on.

As well as these general matters that will be of importance to the overall development of Limerick City and the Regeneration Areas, there are two current strategies that are of particular importance. These are the 'City Centre Strategy' and the 'Gateway Innovation Fund Proposals'. The City Centre Strategy has particular relevance for the St. Mary's Park and Ballinacurra/Weston Regeneration Areas since these areas are either directly connected to or in close proximity to the Centre City Strategy Area. It will be of particular importance that this strategy and the Regeneration Plans work together in harmony and the Regeneration Agencies will have regard to the Limerick City Centre Strategy when preparing our own plans and proposals. The City



Centre Strategy Document itself recognises the importance of these linkages and undertakes to work closely with the Regeneration Agencies. To ensure that the various plans are linked and working together in harmony a Strategic Planning Study could be undertaken jointly by the Agencies and the Local Authority which would inform the upcoming review process of the City Development Plan. The Agencies and the Local Authority have begun discussions on initiating this study.

Implication: The Regeneration Areas lie within the administrative area of Limerick City Council which is the Planning Authority for the area. The proposals for the regeneration areas insofar as they apply to land-use and environmental management should be in accordance with the requirements of the City Plan. It is hoped, however, that while that plan will set clear strategic approaches and requirements within the context of the sub-regional and Greater Limerick City strategic decisions referred to in previous sections, the Regeneration Agencies will be given significant latitude with regard to the detail of the ways in which the regeneration of these areas is accomplished.

Conclusion

The overall aim of the regeneration of the designated areas of Limerick City is to improve the quality of life of the residents of those areas; to improve the general perception of Limerick City and to enable recognition to be given to the major, wide-ranging improvements that have taken place in the city over the past decade; to add to the quality and range of facilities of all types available in the city; to enable the regeneration areas to have their own identities but ones that are integrated with the city as a whole; and to help create a living city that will be attractive to potential residents and investors and a pleasant place to live and work in.

While the focus of these document is the city's Regeneration Areas, it is acknowledged that the Regeneration Areas do not inhabit an isolated world. The success of the Regeneration Project and the degree to which it facilitates the achievement of Government policies with regard to the NSS in particular, are intimately bound up with the decisions that are made by others. It is not suggested in here that sub-regional decisions and those regarding Limerick City and the Greater Limerick City Area should be made primarily to ensure the success of the Regeneration Project. It is suggested, however, that the success of this Project will be related to collaborative approaches to decision-making that will benefit all those involved.

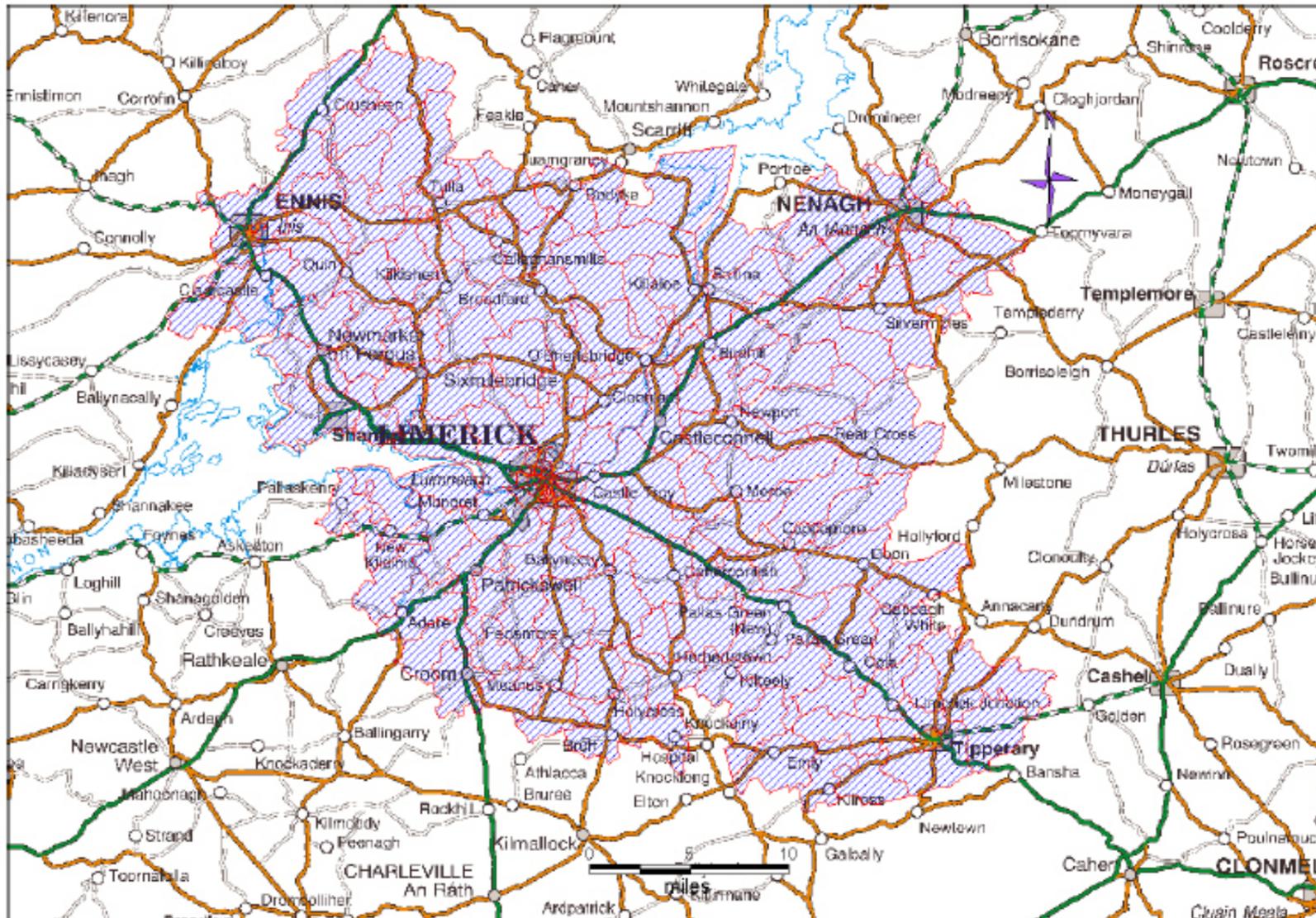
It has been accepted both nationally and regionally that a strong and vibrant Limerick City will have benefits for the whole region and for areas beyond the region and contribute to the development of a sustainable multi-gateway development arc in the South and West. It is also accepted that areas of Limerick City that have suffered generations of deprivation and in effect been severed socially, economically and physically from the city and the compromise the development of a vibrant city area.

It is also accepted, and the agreement to prepare the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan is evidence of this, that the improved transport linkages at the heart of the region mean that the areas involved can no longer seek to act in isolation. The hugely improved public and private transport systems have created one metropolitan entity.

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It is imperative, therefore, that the relevant authorities collaborate in the creation of long-term sustainable strategies with regard to the location of key forms of development within the region – sustainable transport hubs; housing of all types; large-scale social recreation and amenities; retail and other commercial provision. Without this context within which to work, the Regeneration Project will be hampered and may not have the significant beneficial impact on the city and the region that it might.

If, however, the key agencies are willing to work positively together in the context of national policies, express these policies in regional guidelines with an appropriate area of focus and commit to their adoption and implementation, then a sound basis will be provided for the Regeneration Agencies to ensure that the regeneration of the identified areas of Limerick City will be both effective and beneficial.



Our Community, **Our Vision**
Our Future

Regeneration of
Southill and Ballinacurra Weston



LIMERICK SOUTHSIDE
REGENERATION
AGENCY

LIMERICK NORTHSIDE
REGENERATION
AGENCY



Regeneration of
Moyross

Our Community, **Our Vision**
Our Future

2. Strategic Context

Sustainable Residential Development

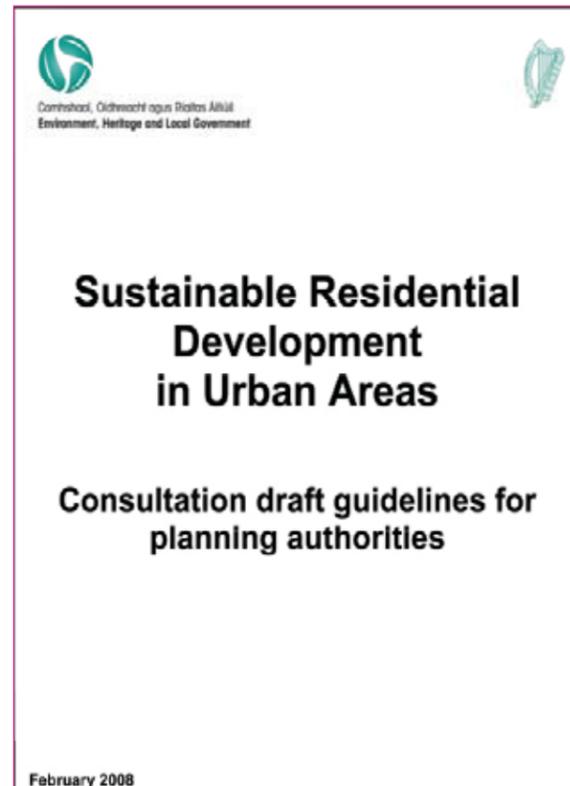
The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published draft guidelines for sustainable development in urban areas in February 2008. The key principles in these guidelines are that:

- 'Demand for housing has put pressure on our cities, towns and villages in terms of their physical expansion and the necessary infrastructure and facilities to service these new residential urban areas. An ever-expanding footprint of our urban areas is not sustainable into the future. In line with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning
- Guidelines we must aim to consolidate this new growth by providing for high-density residential development in the right locations which are well-served in terms of public transport and community facilities and which are built to the highest possible standards. In essence, we must provide for and support sustainable communities into the future; this will in turn contribute to an overall better quality of life for people.
- Improved integration between the provision of housing and the essential supporting community and social infrastructure, such as schools, community amenities and childcare facilities, should be at pre-requisite. This policy guidance further reinforces the Governments 'Developing Areas' Initiative which is aimed at providing a holistic and partnership approach to the integrated delivery of both hard and soft infrastructure, water and waste water services, roads and public transport, schools and sports and community facilities.

This plan has taken full account of these guidelines.

Guidance in the drafting of this draft plan has also been taken from the:

- National Climate Change Strategy 2007 - 2012
- NESC Report on Housing in Ireland 2004
- Delivering Homes for Sustaining Communities 2007- DoEHLG Policy Statement.
- Health Impacts on the Built Environment.



2.2 Health Impact Assessment

The Limerick Regeneration Agencies are committed to ensuring that the regeneration of the Northside and Southside of the city has the most positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the people living in these and adjacent communities.

The Regeneration Areas not only experience very high levels of social disadvantage, they show equally significant disadvantage in relation to health. The Regeneration Plans provide a unique opportunity to tackle these inequalities in health.

The health and wellbeing of people is affected by a wide range of economic, social and environmental influences. Housing, transport, community safety, social cohesion, education and employment opportunities all affect people's health as much, if not more than, lifestyle issues like exercise, nutrition, smoking and alcohol use. The Regeneration Plan addresses all of these issues and therefore have the potential to have a significant impact on the future health of the communities.

The Health Service Executive and the Regeneration Agencies have agreed to undertake a Health Impact Assessment of the Regeneration Proposals for Moyross and Southill/Ballinacurra Weston (St Mary's Park was not included). Each proposal is assessed as to the possible effect it will have on people's health and recommendations are made on how to maximise the positive health impacts of the plans and minimise the possible negative effects.

The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is undertaken by looking at all the international and national evidence available of the likely effect a particular proposal will have on people's health to ensure that lessons are learnt from past experience. The HIA also considers the views of local stakeholders to ensure that the proposals fit the local situation. These stakeholders include statutory and voluntary agencies working in the area, and most importantly local residents.

Health Impact Assessments have been shown to have many positive benefits. These include:

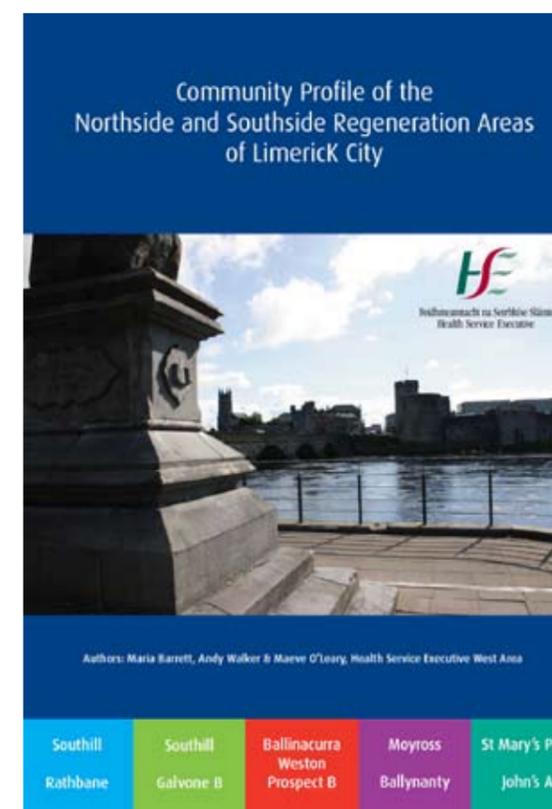
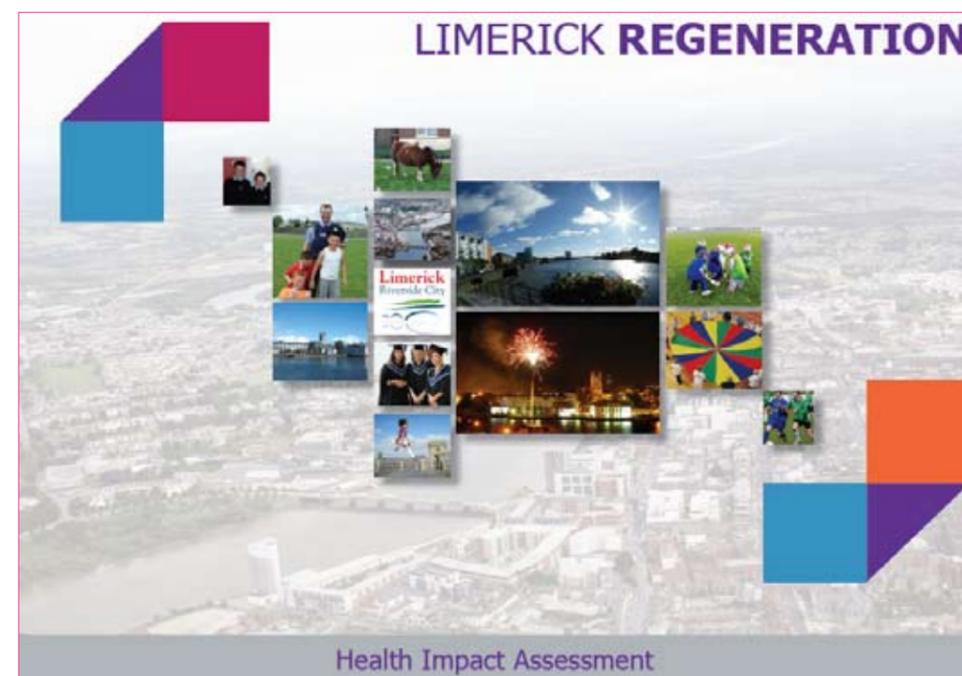
- Promotion of cross-sectoral working - activities in many sectors beyond the health sector influence the characteristics of health. HIA provides opportunities for these different sectors/agencies to identify how they can work together to improve health
- A participatory approach that values the views of the community, in particular the HIA provides a way to engage members of the public affected by a particular proposal. HIAs can send

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- a clear signal that an organisation or partnership genuinely wants to involve a community and is willing to respond constructively to their concerns.
- The best available evidence is provided to decision makers - The purpose of an HIA is to provide decision makers with a set of evidence-based recommendations about their proposals. The decision makers can then make decisions about accepting, rejecting, or amending the proposal secure in the knowledge that they have the best available evidence before them.
- Improved health and reduced inequalities - HIA uses a wide model of health and works across sectors to provide a systematic approach for assessing how the proposal affects a population - but particularly, the distribution of those effects between the different subgroups of the population. Recommendations can specifically target improvement of health, particularly for vulnerable groups.

The Health Services Executive and Limerick Regeneration Agencies have been working together to undertake the HIA of the Regeneration Plan. This work is led by Limerick Health Promotion, HSE West and the support of a steering group with representation from stakeholder agencies and local communities. The first phase of the HIA has been to assess the potential impact of the plan in relation to the regeneration of the built environment. This includes identifying the possible effects on people's health of rebuilding of houses, how the provision of community facilities will impact on health, and how the layout and design of the new estates can contribute to health. Two particular themes have been explored in detail; firstly, the rebuilding of people's homes, and secondly the development of specific facilities for young people. This work has included a thorough review of the international and national evidence of health impacts from other regeneration projects, and a series of workshops involving local residents, community groups and agencies. From this the steering group has made detailed recommendations to the Regeneration Agencies that identify how the regeneration plan can have the most positive impact on the health of the communities.

The report of the Health Impact Assessment (first stage) is available on www.limerickregeneration.ie.



2. Strategic Context

2.3 Sustainability Framework and Audit Report

BRE Ireland (BREI) were appointed as client advisors in sustainability to the Limerick Regeneration Project. The 'Sustainability Framework' is the main output document produced by BREI and includes practical and achievable sustainability objectives against which, the development of the plan for the entire Regeneration Areas will be assessed and measured. Eleven issues have been identified that if addressed holistically will result in a sustainable plan.

Each one of these eleven issues has a number of criteria contained within it which is used to evaluate whether each objective has met the sustainability standards set by the Agencies. All of the criteria can be viewed in the Sustainability Framework document (available on www.limerickregeneration.ie)

Sustainable development is challenging local councils, developers and designers to ensure that all new developments and regeneration schemes are designed and built sustainably, creating places where people want to live and work, in ways which address environmental issues. Social, economic and environmental issues are all important in ensuring a sustainable solution in the regeneration of Limerick.

Evidence of good practice is required across the board, however given the breadth of issues, it is difficult to have an in-house expert on every aspect of sustainable design. It can also be difficult to keep up with what is currently considered to be good practice.

The Sustainability Framework compliments the 'Code for Sustainable Homes', 'BREEAM Methodologies' and other industry recognised tools and standards such as 'Secured by Design' and 'Lifetime Homes'. It has also been developed with a view to staying ahead of current building regulations, setting high standards for energy efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions.

The benefits of the Sustainability Framework approach are to:

- Reduce reworking by helping design teams to work collaboratively and understand sustainability objectives and crosscutting issues at the start of projects.
- Prioritise those sustainability issues that are most important to the site or sites.
- Provide a comprehensive framework and language that is invaluable in communicating the sustainability credentials of a development for key stakeholders.
- Take account of a site's strengths and weaknesses and is adaptable to local priorities, policies and targets.
- Focus on issues that a developer can influence and does not stifle creativity.
- It is an interactive process whereby facilitated workshops allow the design team to fully appreciate the potential for the site.

The full Sustainability Framework and Audit Report is available on www.limerickregeneration.ie

The following table summarises the issues covered by the Framework and Audit Report along with the corresponding objectives.

Each one of these eleven issues has a number of criteria contained within it which is used to evaluate whether each objective has met the sustainability standards set by the Agencies. All of the criteria can be viewed in the Sustainability Framework document.

Issue	Objective
1. Placemaking	To ensure that the design process, layout structure and form provide a development that is appropriate to the local context and supports a sustainable community.
2. Community	To ensure that the development supports a vibrant, diverse and inclusive community, which integrates with surrounding communities.
3. Business	To ensure that the development contributes to the sustainable economic vitality of the local area and region.
4. Buildings	To ensure that the design of individual buildings does not undermine the sustainability of the overall development.
5. Ecology	To ensure that the ecological value of the site is conserved and enhanced maintaining biodiversity and protecting existing natural habitats which can contribute to and enhance the amenity of the area.
6. Transport	To ensure people can safely reach facilities they need by appropriate transport modes, encouraging walking and public transport use and reducing the use of private cars for shorter journeys.
7. Resources	To promote the sustainable use of resources, including the reduction and re-use of wastes, related to both the construction and operation of new developments.
8. Education	To encourage young people to stay in full time education and address properly the issue of early school leaving and truancy. Also, to promote inclusive education and support for all members of the regeneration areas.
9. Health & Wellbeing	To ensure health objectives, initiatives and strategies are inclusive of all members of the Regeneration Areas and that essential facilities are provided.
10. Sport	To provide the regeneration areas with a range of high quality sporting facilities suitable to the needs of the entire community.
11. Climate Change	To ensure that new developments are appropriately adapted to the impacts of present and future climate change and to minimise their own impact on greenhouse gases, flooding, heat gain, water resources and water quality.

2. Strategic Context

2.4 Evaluation

While physical construction and demolition is relatively easy to track, agreeing key indicators and goals for social objectives is more difficult particularly in relation to quality of life issues.

It is the intention of the Agencies to measure the following over the period of the plan implementation (2009 - 2018):

- Early school leaving
- School numbers
- Connection between primary and secondary education levels
- Economic activity versus national and regional figures
- Implementation of youth facilities
- Involvement in arts, culture, sports and recreation facilities
- Health facilities and services
- Community participation and empowerment

There are several others as mentioned in the Social Plan and all will be part of a comprehensive and long-term evaluation template and reporting/accountable process that will be commissioned. This process when completed will form one of the principal evaluation/monitoring tools for the board of the two Agencies and the Executive of the two agencies.

The monitoring system will be developed in cooperation with the key agencies involved in the implementation of the programme to track systematically across the programme the financial and resource inputs (funding and staff time) and a selected number of outputs (e.g. number of new/improved services, new institutional arrangements in place, strategies developed, number of individuals assisted/participating in programmes etc.). The results-based planning model applied in the development of the social programme will inform the definition of the indicator system.

The results and impact of the programme will be established via evaluation using both primary and secondary sources of data and quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection (surveys, interviews and focus groups).

Certain issues of highest priority will be tracked comprehensively (outcomes, results, resources): for instance, numbers (growth/decline) in primary schools in the Regeneration Areas, successful transfer into secondary schools, attendance in school, retention and performance in secondary school, transfer into training, higher education and work after secondary school.

Standard evaluation criteria will be applied to assess the overall contribution of the programme to regeneration of the estates and improvement of the life-chances of people assisted under the programme.

In addition each relevant Government Department and Agency represented on the boards will be requested to produce its own strategy for the Regeneration Areas taking into account the Fitzgerald Report, the Vision Statements of the Agencies (January 2008) and proposals within this plan.

In framing these strategies, they will effectively bring national strategies down to the level of strategies for Limerick. An example of this is the Health Services Executive's strategy for children and family support for the Regeneration Areas which they have already brought to the Boards of the Agencies. The boards endorsed the strategy and we very much welcome the proactive approach in this area by the Health Service Executive and we look forward to a similar approach from other departments and agencies. The Regeneration Agencies will also use such strategies as an evaluation and monitoring tool as we move forward.

'In overall terms the interventions by statutory and voluntary agencies in these areas are geared to meet the needs of more normal situations. However, they are not sufficient to meet the chronic and concentrated nature of criminality and disadvantage in these communities'

Fitzgerald Report
April 2007



'Although there is a plethora of agencies, both statutory and voluntary, operating in these areas, it would be hard to conclude that public funding is achieving an acceptable, let alone optimum, level of direct benefits to the communities concerned or that coordination between agencies is sufficient or effective.'

Fitzgerald Report
April 2007