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Settlement and Housing Strategy

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the policies and objectives aimed at providing for sustainable population growth for Limerick, in accordance with the Core Strategy, whilst achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental factors. Underpinned by national and regional planning policy, the Housing Strategy, including Housing Need Demand Assessment and Settlement Strategy encourages new developments to locate within Limerick City, existing towns and villages, where social and infrastructural services are in place, to support development and where services may be provided or developed in the future.

Place-making, compact growth, active land management, as well as addressing the impact of climate change, are some of the key themes to be considered in terms of the growth strategy for Limerick. There is also the key objective, which is to create attractive and liveable environments, where more people will choose to live. In order to deliver compact growth, whilst ensuring a high quality of life for residents in Limerick, it is imperative that the Council protects and enhances residential amenities, through enabling the creation of vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods. This will be facilitated through access to good housing choice, regeneration and revitalisation, open space and recreation, a range of quality and sustainable transport options and appropriate levels of retail, social and community infrastructure to support our residential communities.

The concept of developing a 10 minute city/town with a series of neighbourhoods and vibrant towns and villages, which are compact, that can support a range of jobs, services and housing choice, not only provide the basis of strong economies and communities, but also support a greater range of sustainable modes of transport, both within and between settlements. The development of a network of settlements that work together to the benefit of Limerick and all its inhabitants, including those in rural areas can only occur in a planned way. The main tool of achieving this, is a robust Settlement Strategy. A Settlement Strategy is the enabler of growth and sets out the overall approach to development over the lifetime of the Draft Plan, in line with national and regional policy guidance.

In order to deliver the ambition set out in the NPF and the RSES, which is to continue to secure economic growth and increased productivity in Limerick, it is essential that there is a clear and coherent strategy in place, outlining how and where this growth will take place. This Settlement Strategy seeks to support the strengthening of Limerick City and Environs, Newcastle West and Kilmallock as Key Towns and Limerick's towns and villages. The Settlement Strategy seeks to create attractive living and working environments that will make Limerick an attractive location in which to live and work.

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3.2 National and Regional Policy Context

One of the NPF's core principles is to 'ensure a high standard quality of life to future residents as well as environmentally and socially sustainable housing and place-making, through integrated planning and consistently excellent design'. The RSES growth strategy employs a robust evidence based approach, to derive a settlement hierarchy, which identifies locations for population and employment growth, with matched consistency and alignment with national and regional policy. Limerick's framework for growth is therefore guided and directed by both the NPF and the RSES infrastructure and service investment, to satisfy and accommodate future growth needs.

The Settlement Strategy for Limerick focuses on the creation of sustainable communities, including increased density and compact growth, in line with national policy, where appropriate and the provision of a wide range of household types and tenures for Limerick.

Policy SS P1

Settlement Strategy

It is a policy of the Council to:

- a) Align with the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.
- b) Accord with the Core Strategy set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy and the Draft Housing Strategy, including the Housing Needs Demand Assessment for Limerick set out in Volume 6 of the Draft Plan.
- c) Seek to promote the creation of sustainable places and healthy communities, while ensuring that development occurs at an appropriate pace and that infrastructure is delivered in tandem to support this growth.

3.3 Settlement Strategy

3.3.1 Introduction

The Settlement Strategy sets out the role of each settlement on the hierarchy, settlement size, population distribution and the pace of growth identified for each settlement, over the lifetime of the Draft Plan. The Settlement Strategy provides a planning framework for the nature and location of development and population growth over the 6 year life span of the Draft Plan.

The aim of the Settlement Strategy is to provide a strong network of settlements, which can facilitate the balanced growth of Limerick, over the lifetime of the Draft Plan. The Settlement Strategy will guide where new development should appropriately take place in Limerick. The development of settlements will be promoted in a planned and sustainable manner, whilst seeking to enhance quality of life for all residents.

In order to align with the provisions of the NPF and RSES, the Settlement Strategy and overall vision for Limerick, the Council will continue to utilise all policy avenues available to it to ensure the optimum delivery of residential development over the lifetime of the Draft Plan, from both the public and private sectors.

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3.3.2 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy for Limerick, which is set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, consists of different Levels of settlements ranging from small rural villages to larger towns and Limerick City Metropolitan Area at the top of the hierarchy. Chapter 2: Core Strategy of the plan also includes a methodology on how the settlement hierarchy was determined. Each settlement has an important function at a local level and some at a regional level, in supporting jobs, providing services and a mix of housing, as well as acting as a focal point for community networks and activities. The settlement hierarchy for Limerick has been developed to take account of the role and function of each settlement, aligned to the new hierarchical format set out in the RSES,

which correlates with the Core Strategy and is underpinned by a Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment (HDNA), as required under the National Planning Framework.

Policy SS P2

Development of Limerick in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy

It is a policy of the Council to develop Limerick in accordance with the Settlement Strategy and Hierarchy and to require future residential development to locate at and be of a scale appropriate to, the settlement and growth levels identified in the Core Strategy.

Table 3.1: Settlement Hierarchy for Limerick

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement
Level 1 Limerick City Metropolitan area	Limerick City and Environs, including Mungret and Annacotty
Level 2 Key Towns	Newcastle West, Kilmallock
Level 3 Towns (> 1400 population)	Abbeyfeale, Castleconnell, Rathkeale, Caherconlish
Level 4 Large Villages (>500 population)	Adare, Askeaton, Ballingarry, Bruff, Bruree, Cappamore, Croom, Doon, Dromcolliher, Foynes, Glin, Hospital, Kilfinane, Murroe, Pallasgreen, Pallaskenry, Patrickswell
Level 5 Small Villages	Ardagh, Athlacca, Athea, Ballyagran, Ballyhahill, Ballylanders, Ballyneety, Broadford, Carrigkerry, Castlemahon, Clarina, Croagh, Fedamore, Galbally, Herbertstown, New Kildimo, Kiltelly, Knocklong, Loghill, Oola, Montpelier, Mountcollins, Nicker, Shanagolden, Templeglantine, Tournafulla
Level 6 Rural Clusters	Anglesboro, Ardpatrick, Ashford, Ballybrown, Ballyorgan, Ballysteen, Banogue, Caherline, Cappagh, Castletown, Crecora, Dromkeen, Elton, Feenagh, Feohanagh, Glenbrohane, Glenosheen, Glenroe, Granagh, Kilbehenny, Kilcolman, Kilcornan, Kilfinny, Kilmeedy, Knockaderry, Knockainy, Knockdown, Martinstown, Meanus, Monagea, Old Pallas, Raheenagh, Strand
Level 7 Open Countryside	

3.3.3 Overall Settlement Strategy Objectives

Development will be encouraged to locate within the built up footprints of Limerick City Metropolitan Area, towns and villages across Limerick, in accordance with Local Area Plans, settlement boundaries and in accordance with zoning objectives and the Settlement Strategy set out below.

Objective SS 01 Compact Growth

It is an objective of the Council to strengthen the core of settlements and encourage compact growth, through the development of infill sites, brownfield lands, under-utilised land/buildings, vacant sites and derelict sites, within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements and develop outwards from the centre in a sequential manner.

Objective SS 02 High Quality Design

It is an objective of the Council that residential development proposals shall be prepared, designed and laid out, in accordance with the standards as set out in Chapter 11: Development Management Standards and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. This includes promoting higher densities, high quality design, layout and public realm for new residential development appropriate to its location and surrounding context, while recognising the need to protect existing residential communities and the established character of the area, to which the development will be inserted.

Objective SS 03 Capacity of Town/Village to Absorb Development

It is an objective of the Council that development within towns and villages shall be considered on the basis of its connectivity to the existing town/village core, capacity (infrastructural, social, cultural and economic), good design, community gain and proper planning and sustainable development.

Objective SS 04 Prevention of Urban Sprawl

It is an objective of the Council to prevent linear roadside frontage development on roads leading out of towns and villages in order to retain the identity of towns/villages, to prevent sprawl and to ensure a distinction in character between built up areas and the open countryside.

Objective SS 05 Monitoring Growth

It is an objective of the Council to monitor growth patterns and the pace of growth within individual settlements and apply appropriate management measures in ensuring compliance with the Core Strategy. The additional households permitted within each settlement shall not exceed the growth identified in the Core Strategy Table in Chapter 3.

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3.4 Role of each Settlement

3.4.1 Level 1: Limerick City Metropolitan Area including Mungret and Annacotty

Limerick City and Environs has a population of 92,878 (CSO 2016) with a wide range of services, employment, leisure and retail facilities of regional significance for the surrounding catchment area. The NPF supports ambitious growth targets to enable Limerick City and suburbs to grow by at least 50% to 2040 and to achieve its potential to become a City of scale.

The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, as set out under the RSES, recognises that for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area to prosper and develop in a sustainable manner, a strong Limerick City is paramount. As the largest urban centre in the Mid-West, focus must be on the growth in population and employment, so that Limerick City can compete effectively for investment and jobs. To do this, growth must complement and consolidate the development of the City as a whole, to create a compact City region with improved supporting infrastructure, public transport improvements to provide linkages to local residential populations and the provision of high levels of community facilities and amenities. Provision must be made to bring about increased density and height of development within the footprint of developing sustainable mobility transport corridors and networks.

Policy SS P3

Level 1 – Growing Limerick City Metropolitan Area, including Mungret and Annacotty

It is a policy of the Council to strengthen and consolidate Limerick City Metropolitan Area as a key driver of social and economic growth in Limerick and become a vibrant living, retailing and working City. In accordance with national and regional policy it is a requirement that at least 50% of all new homes will be located within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement, in order to deliver compact growth and reduce unsustainable urban sprawl.

Objective SS O6

Limerick City Metropolitan Area

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote development which incorporates a high quality, sustainable and inclusive approach to proposals in the City Metropolitan Area, which is supported by sustainable means of travel and which creates locally distinctive neighbourhoods and positively contributes to the existing built and natural heritage.
- b) Promote residential development in the historic areas of Limerick City, provided development is consistent with the architectural integrity and character of the area.



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3.4.2 Level 2: Key Town

Key Towns are settlements with a strong employment base and a broad range of services that serve a wide catchment area. They each play a critical role in underpinning the RSES objectives to ensure a consolidated spread of growth beyond the cities to the sub-regional level. It is envisaged that the Key Towns will be a focus for significant growth.

The Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy describes the location of Newcastle West as presenting opportunities for future economic development and employment growth. Identified by the RSES as a key town, Newcastle West will play a critical role in ensuring a consolidated spread of growth beyond Limerick City and Suburbs to the sub-regional level. The RSES also identifies its location as an opportunity for future economic development and employment growth and highlights its strong sub-regional interdependencies with Listowel, Rathkeale and Abbeyfeale. Kilmallock is also a Key Town serving the East of County Limerick.

Objective SS 07

Level 2 - Key Towns Newcastle West and Kilmallock

It is an objective of the Council to promote Newcastle West and Kilmallock as key service centres and to promote the sustainable growth of the towns to become self-sufficient settlements and act as service centres for their inhabitants and rural hinterland. At least 30% of all new homes shall be located within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements, in order to deliver compact growth and reduce unsustainable urban sprawl.

Objective SS 08

Newcastle West and Kilmallock Local Area Plans

It is an objective of the Council to monitor and review the Local Area Plans for Newcastle West and Kilmallock to align with the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 on completion, which will recognise the roles of Newcastle West and Kilmallock as Key Towns for growth within Limerick.

3.4.3 Level 3: Towns

Towns with population of over 1,400 people will be promoted as secondary development centres for future population growth. They provide a wide range of services and their functions are complementary to the Limerick City Metropolitan Area, Newcastle West and each other. They also have an important regional employment function within their surrounding catchment areas. Acting as important local drivers, Level 3 Settlements provide a range of functions for their resident population and their surrounding catchments including housing, employment services and retail and leisure opportunities.

These settlements have experienced varying levels of commuter focused residential expansion, without equivalent increase in jobs and services. They require consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment in services, infrastructure, suitable transport options, amenities and local employment, whilst balancing housing delivery and focusing on consolidation to become more self-sustaining. In line with National Policy Objective 3c, 30% of all new homes targeted within Level 3 settlements shall be within their existing built-up footprints.

Objective SS 09

Level 3 - Towns

It is an objective of the Council to monitor and review existing Local Area Plans and prepare new Local Area Plans for the following settlements: Abbeyfeale, Caherconlish, Castleconnell, Kilmallock and Rathkeale to align with the Limerick Development Plan on completion and to consolidate the growth of these towns and focus policy on ensuring these towns become more self-sufficient, in terms of job creation and services.

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Objective SS O10**Scale of Development within Level 3**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the scale of new housing developments, both individually and cumulatively, shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development generally. No one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10 – 15% within the lifetime of the Draft Plan, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the settlement has adequate capacity, in terms of both physical and social infrastructure to support additional growth.

3.4.4 Level 4 Settlements: Large Villages

These are settlements generally with a population of over 500 and less than 1,400 persons that cater for the daily and weekly needs of their inhabitants and the needs of the surrounding wider catchment area. Level 4 settlements provide a range of employment opportunities and services appropriate to their size and function, such as secondary and primary schools, childcare facilities, sports grounds/complexes, libraries, Garda stations, medical centres and a good range of local services including shops, pubs, post offices and banks/credit unions.

There is considerable variation in the settlements from small towns and large villages, included in this level in terms of scale, character context and infrastructure. However, all have potential for appropriate levels of growth and consolidation. In line with National Policy Objective 3c, 30% of all new homes targeted within Level 4 settlements shall be within their existing built-up footprints. In order to realise the consolidation of these towns/villages, development will be encouraged to be delivered in a sustainable, sequential manner from the town/village core outwards, while promoting the reuse and redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites and buildings.

Objective SS O11**Requirements for Developments within Level 4 Settlements**

It is an objective of the Council within these settlements to facilitate development, subject to compliance with the following:

- a) To ensure that the scale of new housing developments both individually and cumulatively shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development. Generally, no one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10 – 15% within the lifetime of the Draft Plan, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the settlement has adequate capacity in terms of both physical and social infrastructure to support additional growth.
- b) The development of these centres shall provide for serviced sites and a variety of other house types and densities as appropriate.
- c) New commercial developments shall generally be located within the core area and shall contribute positively to the village urban fabric and streetscape.
- d) New community and social facilities shall be provided in conjunction with residential development as required.

Objective SS O12**Local Area Plans in Level 4 Settlements**

It is an objective of the Council to review existing and prepare new Local Area Plans for Adare, Askeaton, Croom and Patrickswell, to align with the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 on completion.

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3.4.5 Level 5 - Small Villages

These are smaller settlements generally ranging in population from 150 – 500 people with a range of infrastructural, social and community facilities. These settlements have some essential infrastructure (i.e. Council water and/or sewage facilities) and a range of community infrastructure that provide for convenience and daily needs of the local population and surrounding area. They also provide some small-scale employment opportunities and local level community facilities, such as primary schools, churches, local sporting facilities and a community hall. In line with National Policy Objective 3c, 30% of all new homes targeted within Level 5 settlements shall be within their existing built-up footprints.

Objective SS O13

Development within Level 5 Settlements

It is an objective of the Council within these settlements to facilitate development, subject to compliance with the following:

- a) The scale of new residential schemes shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development and shall be located within the development boundary, thus avoiding 'leap frogging' of development and delivering compact growth and providing for the organic and sequential growth of the settlement. Infill and brownfield sites will be the preferred location for new development. In this regard, any development shall enhance the existing village character and create or strengthen a sense of identity and distinctiveness for the settlement.
- b) New commercial developments shall generally only be located within the core area and shall contribute positively to the village streetscape.
- c) New community and social facilities shall be provided in conjunction with residential development as required.

Objective SS O14

Scale of Growth for Level 5 Settlements

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that, generally, no one proposal for residential development shall be larger than 5 – 7 units. A limited increase beyond this may be permitted where demonstrated to be appropriate, dependent on the extent of the settlement and the services in place to serve growth.

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3.4.6 Level 6 Settlements – Rural Clusters

Rural Clusters comprise largely of areas with limited essential infrastructure and services. They generally have one or more existing community or other local facilities. Development within Rural Clusters will be limited to incremental local growth appropriate to their size and character. It is anticipated that each cluster can cater for a small population increase from their current population base over the period of the Draft Plan.

Objective SS O15

Development in Level 6 Settlements

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that:

- a) Permitted growth will be very small scale and on an incremental basis and must be reflective of the rural nature of these settlements. New developments shall be located within or contiguous to the core identified for each settlement, thus avoiding 'leap frogging' of development and shall be designed, to deliver compact growth within the existing villages and provide for the organic and sequential growth of the settlement. Infill and brownfield sites will be the preferred location for new development.

- b) Single units or very small-scale commercial or employment generating development will be encouraged, provided it is of a scale appropriate to the village setting, the infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate same and adjoining uses are not adversely affected.
- c) Where there is public sewage and water infrastructure and where there is capacity within same, a limited number of units may be permitted around the core area. In this case, no one proposal shall be larger than 3 - 4 houses, depending on the existing housing stock and the pattern and grain of the village.
- d) Where there is no sewage treatment plant or limited capacity in the existing treatment plant, sewage treatment shall generally be by means of individual treatment systems, subject to satisfactory site assessment and compliance with EPA guidelines.

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3.5 Serviced Sites in Towns and Villages

To help strengthen and consolidate the settlement structure and reverse the decline in Limerick's towns and villages, residential serviced sites will be promoted in the settlements. This objective is reinforced in the Government's *Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025 – Our Rural Future*, which sets out a clear ambition to support the regeneration, re-population and development of rural towns and villages, to contribute to local and national economic recovery. It aims to enable people to live and work in a high quality environment. Residential serviced sites offer a real alternative to the single one-off rural house, enabling those who seek the opportunity to build their own homes to one's own design, but located in a town or village.

The Council will adopt a flexible approach to proposals for development in all settlements lacking adequate water and sewerage facilities, where such proposals are consistent with the Settlement Hierarchy outlined in Table 3.1 of the Draft Plan and the obligations of the Council under environmental and water services legislation.

Serviced sites refer to a number of individual residential plots of not less than 0.1ha. with access to services such as utility connections, footpaths, lighting and within walking distance of the town or village core. The density shall generally be 10 housing units per hectare. Larger sites may be required for a dwelling unit in excess of 250m² floor area, to allow sufficient space for private amenity, parking and landscaping. Whilst individual house design on serviced sites is encouraged, the overall design of the scheme must be consistent in terms of boundary treatments and landscaping.

Objective SS O16 **Serviced Sites in Towns and Villages without adequate Water Services Infrastructure**

It is an objective of the Council to permit serviced sites in towns and villages across Limerick to offer an alternative to rural one off housing, where individuals can build their house on a Serviced Site, in the case where each house is served by an individual on-site wastewater treatment system, in settlements where there is insufficient wastewater treatment capacity, the existing municipal wastewater treatment plant is not scheduled for upgrade by Irish Water in its current investment plan and there is no risk of nuisance or pollution. (Refer to Chapter 11: Development Management Standards for further information).

The amount and location of these sites shall be controlled to ensure that they would not significantly impact on the fabric and character of the town or village and its sense of identity and place would be retained. The development would also need to ensure the definition of a strong urban edge resulting in a clear distinction between the urban area and open countryside. Where Local Area Plans/ zoning maps exist for towns and villages, these sites may only be located on suitable zoned lands with connection to services if available within the settlement, if no connection is available, exploration of the Serviced Site Policy can be considered.

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3.6 Rural Housing

The NPF and RSES acknowledge that our countryside 'is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape, focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and overspill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities'.

The rural development strategy for Limerick seeks to achieve a balance in terms of promoting sustainable rural development, which celebrates the vibrancy and vitality of our rural areas and also seeks to protect the rich heritage, amenity and recreational value of the rural landscapes and countryside, in line with national and regional policy. Development proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005* (and any amendment thereof) and Circulars SP 05/08 and PL 2/2017.

The NPF and RSES make a distinction between areas under urban influence, i.e. those within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, which includes Electoral Divisions where at least 15% of their workforce commute to a City and rural areas outside these catchments, where a more flexible approach to rural housing will apply.

Limerick can be divided into two broad categories, in terms of defining the Rural Settlement Strategy as follows:

- Rural Housing Category 1: Areas under Strong Urban Influence;
- Rural Housing Category 2: Rural Areas Elsewhere

Objective SS O17

Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence

It is an objective of the Council to consider a single dwelling for the permanent occupation of an applicant in the area under Strong Urban Influence, subject to demonstrating compliance with ONE of the criteria below:

- (1) Persons with a demonstrable economic need to live in the particular local rural area;
 - Persons who have never owned a house in the rural area and are employed in rural-based activity such as farming/bloodstock, horticulture or other rural-based activity, in the area in which they wish to build or whose employment is intrinsically linked to the rural area in which they wish to build, or other persons who by the nature of their work have a functional need to reside permanently in the rural area close to their place of work (within 10km). (Minimum farm size shall be 12 hectares for farming or bloodstock).
 - The applicant must demonstrate that they have been actively engaged in farming/bloodstock/horticulture or other rural activity, at the proposed location for a continuous period of not less than 5 years, prior to making the application. In the event of newly acquired land demonstrate that the proposed activity would be of a viable commercial scale, and a detailed 5 year business plan will be required to demonstrate this.

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- (2) Persons with a demonstrable social need to live in a particular local rural area;
- Persons who have never owned a house in the rural area and who wish to build their first home on a site that is within 10km of where they have lived for a substantial period of their lives in the local rural area (Minimum 10 years). The local rural area is defined as the area outside all settlements identified in Level's 1 – 4 of the Settlement Hierarchy. Excluding Level 4 settlements, where there is no capacity in the treatment plant.
- (3) Persons with a demonstrable local exceptional need to live in a particular local rural area, examples include:
- a) Returning emigrants who have never owned a house in the rural area, in which they lived for a substantial period of their lives (Minimum 10 years), then moved away or abroad and who now wish to return to reside in the local rural area (within 10km of where they lived for a substantial period of their lives). The local rural area is defined as the area outside all settlements identified in Level's 1 – 4 of the Settlement Hierarchy. Excluding Level 4 settlements, where there is no capacity in the treatment plant.
 - b) A person who has lived a substantial period of their lives in the local rural area, (at least 10 years), that previously owned a home and is no longer in possession of that home due to the home having been disposed of following legal separation/divorce/repossession and can demonstrate a social or economic need for a new home in the rural area.

Objective SS O18

Rural Areas Elsewhere

It is an objective of the Council that to help stem the decline and strengthen Rural Areas Elsewhere, in general demand for permanent residential development should be accommodated, subject to meeting normal planning and environmental criteria.

In all cases the consideration of individual sites, for rural housing will be subject to normal siting and design considerations, which will include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Any proposed vehicular access would not endanger public safety by giving rise to a traffic hazard,
- That any proposed on-site waste water disposal system is designed, located and maintained in a way which protects water quality,
- That the siting and design of new dwellings takes account of and integrates appropriately with its physical surroundings and other aspects of the natural and cultural heritage and,
- That the proposed site otherwise accords with the objectives of the Draft Development Plan in general.
- The Planning Authority shall have regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements in the implementation of the rural housing policy.
- Climate action measures shall be submitted as part of any proposed application, to support a transition to a low carbon economy.

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Objective SS O19**Refurbishment/Replacement of Traditional Rural Dwellings**

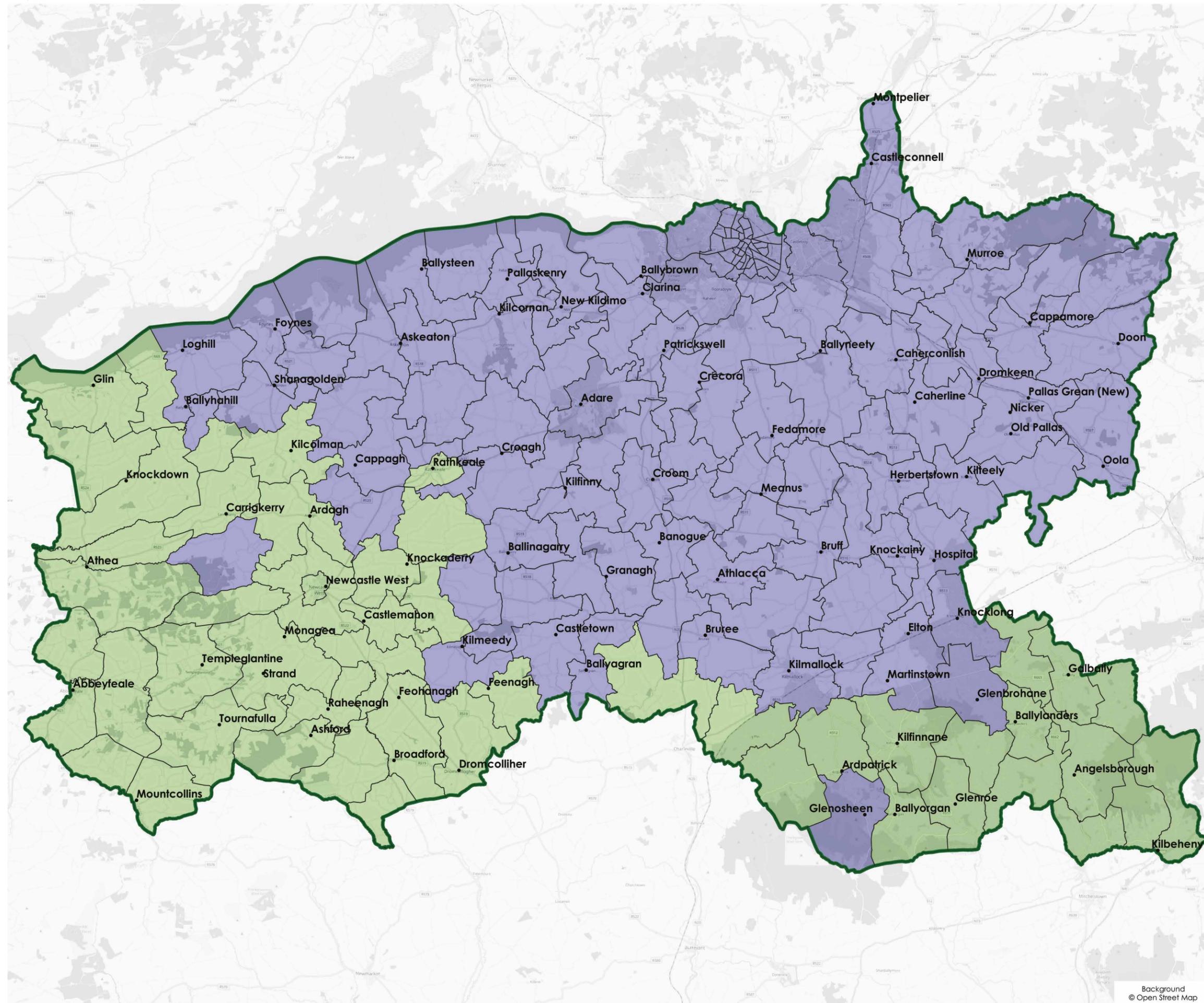
It is an objective of the Council to seek the retention and sympathetic refurbishment, with adaptation if necessary, of traditional dwellings in the countryside in sympathy with the character of the existing building. This will be encouraged in preference to their replacement. Planning permission will generally only be granted for replacement of a dwelling where it is demonstrated that it is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound, or otherwise improved and where the building is not of architectural merit. In this instance, consideration will be given to the replacement of an existing dwelling with a new dwelling at the same location, subject to appropriate design, scale of building and normal planning considerations. Local rural housing need shall not apply in this instance.

Objective SS O20**Occupancy Condition**

It is an objective of the Council to require that any house which is granted planning permission in the rural areas designated 'Areas under strong urban influence', will be subject to a requirement of occupancy of seven years by the applicant.

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Map 3.1: Rural Housing Map



**Draft Limerick
Development Plan
2022 -2028**

Rural Settlement Strategy

LEGEND

- Areas of Strong Urban influence
- Rural Elsewhere/Structurally Weak

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Background © Open Street Map

3.7 Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment

3.7.1 Introduction

The preparation of a Housing Strategy is a mandatory requirement under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended). The purpose of a Housing Strategy is to evaluate the housing needs of the existing and future population in Limerick over the Draft Plan period.

The NPF identified the need to carry out a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA), in conjunction with the Housing Strategy, the purpose of which is to assist Local Authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures, including social and affordable housing and specialist housing. The purpose is also to provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall housing profile.

In tandem with a need to increase housing supply, is the need to facilitate improved housing choice to cater for evolving demographics across Limerick, as analysed in the HNDA. By providing good housing choice, existing residents can remain within their local communities and new residents to Limerick will have better housing options to choose from.

The Housing Strategy and the HNDA process complements the Core Strategy in providing the quantitative evidence base to articulate the medium to longer term spatial development strategy of the functional area of the Local Authority. In so doing, it demonstrates that the Draft Plan and its objectives are consistent with national and regional development objectives.

A Draft Housing Strategy and Draft HNDA for Limerick has been prepared and is set out in Volume 6. It provides a detailed analysis of Limerick's existing housing profile, which forms a basis for housing demand generally and social housing provision. The provisions of the Draft Housing Strategy will guide new residential developments in terms of the form of housing that may be required within Limerick over the lifetime of the Draft Plan. The Draft Housing Strategy and Draft HNDA addresses the provision of housing for the existing and future population of Limerick and takes account of:

- The existing need and likely future need for housing for the purposes of the provision of social housing support and of housing for eligible households;
- The need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income;
- The need to ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households, as may be determined by the Planning Authority and including the special requirements of older people and persons with disabilities;
- The need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds;
- The provision of good housing mix in all developments will be encouraged to ensure that residents have access to a range of house types and tenures.

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3.7.2 National Policy

Government policy, as per *Rebuilding Ireland - Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness*, 2016, sets out five pillars for the delivery of housing:

- Pillar 1 – Address Homelessness;
- Pillar 2 – Accelerate Social Housing;
- Pillar 3 – Build More Homes;
- Pillar 4 – Improve the Rental Sector;
- Pillar 5 – Utilise Existing Housing.

In order to align with the provisions of the NPF, RSES and delivery on the five pillars set out above, the Council will continue to utilise all policy options available to it, to ensure the optimum delivery of residential units over the duration of the Draft Plan, from both the public and private sectors in the delivery of a mix of tenures.

Policy HO P1

Implementation of the Housing Strategy, including the Housing Need Demands Assessment

It is a policy of the Council to facilitate the implementation and delivery of the Draft Housing Strategy and Draft Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2022 – 2028, to meet the increasing projected population, changing household size and housing needs, including social and affordable housing requirements for Limerick over the lifetime of the Draft Plan.

3.7.3 Housing Mix

To cater for the projected population growth and the establishment of sustainable residential communities, a mix of dwelling types and sizes will be required to meet the housing needs of all members of society. The HNDA, which informed the Housing Strategy, identifies the need for a mix of house types to reflect the diverse housing needs of the existing and future population.

Objective HO O1

Social Inclusion

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that new developments are socially inclusive and provide for a wide variety of housing types, sizes and tenure, throughout Limerick, to cater for the demands established in the Draft Housing Strategy and the Housing Need Demand Assessment.

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3.7.4 Residential Density

A key objective of the NPF and RSES is to increase the density of development in all built up areas, in order to achieve the indicated population targets in a compact and sustainable manner. Increased densities will facilitate optimising the use of serviced lands and maximising the viability of investment in social and physical infrastructure, in particular public transport. Integration of land use and transport planning is crucial to deliver the 10 minute city/town concept and this will be supported with higher densities at appropriate locations. Residential density requirements have been set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, in line with national planning policy and relevant guidelines.

Objective HO O2

Density of Residential Developments

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote, where appropriate, increased residential density in the exercise of its development management function and in accordance with Table 2.6 in Chapter 2: Core Strategy and the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and the accompanying *Urban Design Manual*, DEHLG, May 2009.
- b) Encourage increased densities that contribute to the enhancement of a town or village by reinforcing street patterns or assisting in re-development of backlands and centrally located brownfield sites.

3.7.5 Protecting Existing Residential Amenity

Residential amenity is influenced by a range of factors, such as private outdoor amenity space, privacy and natural light. The relationship of buildings to each other and their individual design can have a significant impact on these factors and on residents' comfort. In older residential areas, infill development will be encouraged, while still protecting the existing residential amenity of these areas.

Objective HO O3

Protection of Existing Residential Amenity

It is an objective of the Council to ensure a balance between the protection of existing residential amenities, the established character of the area and the need to provide for sustainable residential development is achieved in all new developments.

3.7.6 Re-use of Buildings

The existing housing stock of Limerick provides a valuable resource in terms of meeting the needs of a growing population and its retention and management is of considerable importance. Retaining and adapting, as appropriate, including encouraging energy retrofitting of the existing housing stock, is important to stem population loss in these areas by promoting and encouraging additional dwelling units within existing communities, particularly those suited to the emerging demographics of an area.

Objective HO O4

Re-use of Existing Buildings

It is an objective of the Council to encourage redevelopment and reuse, including energy retrofitting, of existing housing stock.

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3.7.7 Apartments

Just under 10% of households in Limerick live in apartments, according to the 2016 Census which is lower than the national average (12%). Apartments are a key and growing part of the way in which we live in various parts of our country and particularly in our cities and towns. A move towards a much greater level of apartment living is essential in ensuring our major urban areas develop sustainably, rather than sprawling inexorably outwards.

Objective HO 05 Apartments

It is an objective of the Council to encourage an increase in the scale and extent of apartment development, particularly in proximity to core urban centres and other factors including existing public transport nodes, or locations where high frequency public transport can be provided, close to locations of employment and a range of urban amenities including parks/ waterfronts, shopping and other services.

3.7.8 Build-to-Rent Accommodation

Build-to-Rent (BTR) describes the practice of delivering purpose-built residential rental accommodation and associated amenity space that is designed with the sole purpose of being used as long-term rental accommodation and professionally owned and managed. Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR's) for Build-To-Rent (SPPR 7 and 8) set out in the 2020 *Sustainable Residential Design Standards for New Apartments* details the specific criteria, which should be considered in the delivery of this type of accommodation. High quality design and amenity shall be ensured for future residents in terms of delivery of development of this nature.

Build-To-Rent accommodation shall be considered in appropriate locations, close to amenities and high frequency public transport services. BTR will be considered as a key part of achieving an appropriate mix of housing, however, an overconcentration of such accommodation type shall not be permitted.

Objective HO 06

Build-To-Rent Accommodation

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of Build-to-Rent Accommodation* in suitable locations in Limerick, in accordance with the provisions of *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (2020).

*Subject to SPPR9 - *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020.*

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3.7.9 Shared Accommodation Co-Living

The updated *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* issued in 2020, revised SPPR 9 stating that there shall be a presumption against granting planning permission for shared accommodation/co-living development, unless the proposed development is either:

- i) Required to meet specific demand identified by a Local Planning Authority further to a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) process; or
- ii) On the date of publication of these updated Guidelines, a valid planning application has been lodged to a Planning Authority, appeal to An Bord Pleanála, or Strategic Housing Development (SHD) planning application to An Bord Pleanála, in which case the application or appeal may be determined on its merits.

Objective HO 07

Shared Accommodation/Co-Living

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of Shared Accommodation/Co-Living Accommodation subject to the **requirements of (i) and (ii) above** and in accordance with SPPR 9 of *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (2020).

3.7.10 Student Accommodation

Students are an increasingly important part of the housing demand in Limerick, particularly in Limerick City and Environs. According to Census 2016, 11,703 residents of Limerick City reported their principle economic status as students (15.4% of all those aged 15 and over) as did 8,454 residents of Limerick County (5.4%), which includes some secondary-level students. The main third level institutions in Limerick include University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology and Mary Immaculate College, all of which are seeking to increase student numbers, within the lifetime of the Draft Plan, which accordingly will result in increased demand for high quality student accommodation.

Objective HO 08

Provision of Student Accommodation

It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of purpose-built student accommodation in appropriate and accessible locations and of appropriate design, in accordance with the *National Student Accommodation Strategy* (2017) and any subsequent updates. Applications for change of use from student housing to any other form of housing shall be resisted, without adequate demonstration that an over-provision of student housing exists.

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3.7.11 Housing for Older People

Limerick, like the rest of the country has an ageing population. The Council is committed to accommodating the needs of older people, by encouraging the provision, of suitable accommodation to allow older people remain in their established communities.

Objective HO O9

Support Housing Options for Older People

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Support the provision of specific purpose built accommodation, including assisted living units and lifetime housing and adaptation of existing properties, which will include opportunities for 'downsizing' or 'right sizing' within their community.
- b) Support the concept of independent living for older people within their community and ensure, where possible that such accommodation is integrated with mainstream housing.

3.7.12 Nursing Home/Care Home Accommodation

Proposals for nursing homes/care home accommodation shall be located in existing residential areas well served by appropriate levels of infrastructure and amenities such as footpath networks, local shops and public transport. This will ensure appropriate integration with the local community and afford the residents an appropriate level of independence and access to services.

Objective HO O10

Location Criteria for Nursing Homes/ Care Home Accommodation

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the maximum distance from nursing homes/care homes shall be no more than 300m. safe walking distance to community facilities, convenience retail facilities and amenities.

3.7.13 Housing for Dependent Relatives

The Council will encourage the provision of suitable housing for people with a sensory disability, mental health disability, physical disability and intellectual disability, in appropriate locations served by public transport, local community services and facilities. All development shall comply with Part M of the Building Regulations or any replacement hereafter.

Objective HO O11

Subdivision of Dwelling to Accommodate Dependent Relative

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of accommodation for older people and dependant relatives within the existing family home, subject to compliance with the following criteria:

- Accommodation by way of extension shall be attached to the main dwelling;
- There shall be an internal connecting door with the main residence;
- The extension shall be subservient to the main dwelling;
- In a rural location any external door shall not be located on the front elevation;
- On vacancy of the unit, the accommodation shall be integrated with the main dwelling. No such unit shall be used as rental accommodation. There will be a presumption against proposals for detached independent units within the curtilage of a dwelling, regardless of urban or rural location. Proposals must accord with planning considerations such as residential amenity, environmental and public health standards and traffic safety.

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3.7.14 The Living Limerick City Centre Initiative

The Living Limerick City Centre initiative is promoting the concept of community housing initiatives that supports the development of community led housing proposals for specific cohorts/groups in a cost efficient manner. The use of cost rental and cost purchase models of delivery will be investigated over the course of the Draft Plan and the expansion of this initiative to rural towns and villages will be support.

Objective HO O12

The Living Limerick City Centre Initiative

It is an objective of the Council to support the Living Limerick City Centre Initiative for the delivery of community housing across the City and rural towns and villages.

3.7.15 Social Housing

Social housing is defined as housing provided by a Local Authority or a housing association, to individuals who are unable to provide accommodation from their own resources. Property rented or leased from the private sector by Local Authorities or voluntary housing bodies is now also included in the social housing sector. *Rebuilding Ireland, an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* (2016) set ambitious targets for the delivery of social housing and put in place the mechanisms to support an increase in the supply of housing.

Objective HO O13

Provision of Social Housing

It is an objective of the Council to promote the provision of social housing in accordance with the Council's Draft Housing Strategy, Housing Need Demand Assessment and Government policy as outlined in the DoHPLG *Social Housing Strategy 2020* and to ensure that 10% of lands zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, be reserved for social housing in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and any subsequent amendments to the legal requirement to deliver this housing during the lifetime of the Draft Plan.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) is one of the means through which Limerick City and County Council can seek to address demand for social housing in Limerick. The Council works in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Approved Housing Bodies to deliver and manage social housing. In addition to Part V, the delivery of social housing is achieved through Direct Build, Acquisitions, Void Management, Long Term Leasing, Enhanced Leasing, Repair to Lease, Private Rental (RAS and HAP) and the Buy and Renew Scheme. The Council will promote the provision of public (including social and affordable) housing by prioritising sites for servicing that have a potential for public (including social and affordable) housing.

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3.7.16 Homeless Accommodation

The Council will continue to work in conjunction with voluntary housing bodies and other agencies to provide emergency accommodation for the homeless and those who find themselves in need of crisis facilities.

Objective HO O14

Homeless Accommodation

It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of homeless accommodation and/or support services throughout Limerick. In this regard, proposals for such facilities should not result in an overconcentration in one area and should not unduly impact upon existing amenities.

3.7.17 Traveller Accommodation

Limerick City and County Council has an adopted *Traveller Accommodation Programme*, which outlines the accommodation needs, policy and implementation measures to address the accommodation needs of the Traveller Community. The accommodation programme for the period 2019-2024 has been prepared in accordance with the provisions set out in the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The Council's *Traveller Accommodation Programme* sets out the range of social housing supports for Travellers, including standard Local Authority Housing, Approved Housing Body Housing, Group Housing and Halting Site Bays.

Objective HO O15

Traveller Accommodation

It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of housing suited to the need of the travelling community and implement the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019- 2024* and any subsequent updates.

3.7.18 Accommodation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The Council will continue to liaise and work with the relevant agencies and stakeholders in securing appropriate accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers in appropriate locations throughout Limerick.

Objective HO O16

Accommodation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

It is an objective of the Council to implement government policy in relation to the provision of accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers.

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