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Environment, Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure

5.1 Introduction

There is huge variety in the natural, built and cultural heritage of Limerick. The purpose of the Draft Plan is to guide decision-making on what we choose to hand onto the next generation, through protection, management, sensitive enhancement or appropriate repurposing. It is recognised that the conservation and enhancement of and access to Limerick's heritage has the potential to contribute to individual well-being, shared community identities, social cohesion and the liveability of our towns and villages as well as our visitor economy.

This chapter presents various objectives for Environment, Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure having regard to the overall policies of the Council as follows:

Policy EH P1

Protection of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

It is a policy of the Council to:

- a) Protect and conserve Limerick's natural heritage and biodiversity, in particular, areas designated as part of the European Sites Natura 2000 network, such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservations (SACs), in accordance with relevant EU Directives and national legislation and guidelines.
- b) Maintain the conservation value of all Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) for the benefit of existing and future generations.

Policy EH P2

Sustainable Management and Conservation

It is a policy of the Council to ensure the sustainable management and conservation of areas of natural environmental and geological value within Limerick and to protect, enhance, create and connect, where ecologically suitable, natural heritage, green spaces and high quality amenity areas for the benefit of biodiversity.

Policy EH P3

Climate Action and the Natural Environment

It is a policy of the Council to take into account the contents of the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the Biodiversity Climate Adaptation Plan and any forthcoming guidance or legislation on climate action, whether adaptation or mitigation that will emerge during the course of the Draft Plan.

Policy EH P4

Compliance with Limerick's Heritage Plan

It is a policy of the Council to place ecological and environmental issues at the centre of planning policies and decisions and in doing so, will adhere to the objectives set out in Limerick's Heritage Plan 2017-2030.

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Policy EH P5**Protection of the Built Environment**

It is a policy of the Council to promote high standards for conserving and restoring the built environment and promote its value in improving living standards and its benefits to the economy.

Policy EH P6**Water and Air Quality**

It is a policy of the Council to ensure that water and air quality shall be of the highest standard, to ensure the long term economic, social and environmental well-being of Limerick's resources. The World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines will be the basis for the air quality guidance in Limerick.

Policy EH P7**Environmental Noise**

It is a policy of the Council to proactively manage environmental noise, where it may have a significant adverse impact on the health and quality of life of communities in Limerick and to support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations, through the development and implementation of Noise Action Plans.

In order to ensure compliance with the above policies, there are a number of objectives set out in this chapter under the following sections:

1. Natural Heritage and Environment – Biodiversity, protected sites/species, Blue Green Infrastructure, nature based solutions, invasive species, river basin management plan, wetlands and water/air quality and noise
2. Landscape and Visual Amenity
3. Archaeology and Built Heritage.

5.2 National and Regional Policy Context

At national level Ireland has recognised the importance of its natural and built heritage through becoming a signatory to international conventions. These include the *Florence Convention for the Protection of the European Landscape*, the *Valetta Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* and the *Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage*. These international commitments are backed by appropriate legislation, which has implications at local level and the Planning Authority has cognisance of this while implementing planning functions. European Union Directives also have implications in regard to how the Planning Authority and those developing and using land in Limerick, conduct their business. As legislation is enacted, or Directives are translated into domestic law, the Planning Authority will respond to the evolving situation.

The policies and objectives set out in this chapter were also prepared to ensure alignment with national and regional planning policy in the context of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

The National Policy Objectives (NPOs), which are of particular relevance to this chapter are:

- NPO 17: Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.
- NPO 60: Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The RSES also recognises that cultural heritage is the fabric of our lives and societies, that it surrounds us in the buildings of our towns and cities, our landscapes, natural sites, monuments and archaeological sites and that it brings communities together and builds shared understandings of the places we live in. It contains a number of relevant objectives relating to strengthening and protecting our region's diversity, language and culture, our recreational assets and our natural and built heritage.

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5.3 Natural Heritage and the Environment

5.3.1 Biodiversity

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious, long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems. It aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, with benefits for people, the climate and the planet.

The natural heritage of Limerick includes our flora, fauna, geology and the landscape that surrounds us. Biodiversity also forms part of the overall Blue Green Infrastructure of Limerick.

Within Limerick, there exists a wide range of habitats, some are natural but there are many others which have evolved and been maintained, as a result of management over long periods of time. An example of some of Limerick's rich and diverse natural ecosystems includes the Shannon Estuary, the riverine habitats of Limerick's rivers and their tributaries, including the Shannon, the Abbey, the Deel, the Feale, the Maigue and the Mulkear, the upland areas such as the Ballyhouras, Galtees, the hills of West Limerick, Sliabh Reagh and Sliabh Felim. The agricultural lowlands including the Golden Vale also contribute to the extensive biodiversity of Limerick, as do natural woodlands such as that found in Curragh Chase and the extensive natural hedgerows throughout Limerick.

The condition of these natural habitats and species, affects how they can provide ecosystem services, including providing us with resilience to climate change. It affects the quality of life of the residents and visitors to Limerick and is important in supporting local businesses such as tourism and recreation, highlighting the importance of protecting and enhancing our natural habitats and species. Therefore, there is a need for policies which will conserve what is best in Limerick's landscape, while at the same time successfully integrating suitable development.

5.3.2 Protected Sites and Species

The Habitats Directive is one of the important pieces of legislation that exists for the protection of habitats and by extension species in the EU. The Habitats Directive includes Article 6 which is designed to ensure that European designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas are adequately protected from the adverse effects of development.

The Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas in Limerick are identified in Maps in Volume 3. One of the habitat types that is under the greatest threat in Limerick is wetland habitat of various types. This includes bog and peat habitats, ponds and springs. These face a range of threats, from drainage, afforestation, agricultural improvement and also the development of wind farms.

In terms of protected species, one species in Limerick that is in danger of isolation is the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. Two regions populated by the lesser horseshoe bat, one in Clare and one in west Cork/ Kerry, are divided by a gap of marginally favourable habitat in Limerick and North Kerry. Although the land is currently marginally favourable for the species, its continued occurrence in this area could have important conservation implications for preventing further fragmentation of the larger populations in Cork, Kerry and Clare. In one sense it could be considered that Limerick could serve as a bridge between the populations of the different counties and to achieve this it would be necessary to ensure that there are sufficient corridors, along which the bat species can move. This concern could be broadened to many species, as developments can act as a barrier to wildlife movement, unless thought has been given at the design stage ensuring that they can allow species to pass through.

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Objective EH O1 **Designated Sites and Habitats Directive**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that projects/plans likely to have significant effects on European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) are subject to an appropriate assessment and will not be permitted under the Draft Plan unless they comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Objective EH O2 **Lesser Horseshoe Bat**

It is an objective of the Council to require all developments in areas where there may be Lesser Horseshoe Bats, to submit an ecological assessment of the effects of the development on the species. The assessment shall include mitigation measures to ensure that feeding, roosting or hibernation sites for the species are maintained. The assessment shall also include measures to ensure that landscape features are retained and that the development itself will not cause a barrier or deterrent effect on the species.

5.3.3 Conservation outside Protected Sites

In addition to the formal designations for nature conservation, much of Limerick's natural heritage resources lie outside such designated sites. Many areas that do not have formal protection under legislation still possess a level of natural heritage importance, which needs to be recognised and protected, where possible. These areas include woodlands, wetlands, semi-natural grasslands, hedgerows, trees, rivers, streams, private gardens and other urban green spaces. Other areas of important biodiversity in Limerick can include graveyards, cemeteries and the green spaces associated with institutional lands. The Council recognises the importance of these areas as buffer zones and 'linkages', between formally designated ecological sites.

Objective EH O3 **Ecological Impact Assessment**

It is an objective of the Council to require all developments where there are species of conservation concern, to submit an ecological assessment of the effects of the development on the site and nearby designated sites, suggesting appropriate mitigation measures and establishing, in particular, the presence or absence of the following species: Otter, badger, bats, lamprey and protected plant species such as the Triangular Club Rush, Opposite Leaved Pond Weed and Flora Protection Order Species generally.

Objective EH O4 **Creation of New Habitats**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Seek the creation of new habitats by encouraging wild green areas and new water features such as, pools and ponds in new developments.
- b) Encourage management plans for green areas to use the minimum of pesticides and herbicides.
- c) The creation of areas that are not subject to public access in order to promote wildlife use is strongly encouraged.

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Objective EH 05**New Infrastructure Projects**

It is an objective of the Council to require new infrastructure and linear developments in particular, to demonstrate at design stage sufficient measures to assist in the conservation of and dispersal of species and to demonstrate a high degree of permeability for wildlife, to allow the movement of species and to prevent the creation of barriers to wildlife and aquatic life in the wider countryside.

Objective EH 07**All Ireland Pollinator Plan**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Continue to actively support the aims and objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 – 2025, by encouraging measures to protect and increase the population of bees and other pollinating insects in Limerick.
- b) Support the aims of the National Bio-Diversity Action Plan and succeeding plans, in emphasising the importance of ecological issues in planning.

Objective EH 06**Barn Owl Conservation**

It is an objective of the Council to require road developments to incorporate from the design stage, elements that will assist in the conservation of the Barn owl.

Objective EH 08**Roosting Habitats**

It is an objective of the Council to require the provision of alternative roosting or settlement facilities for species, such as bird or bat boxes, swift boxes, artificial holts (for otters), or other artificially created habitats in proposed developments, where considered appropriate.



5.3.4 Areas of Geological Interest

There are several areas of geological interest within Limerick, such as Barrigone, which is located in the northern part of County Limerick, close to the estuary and shows some of the same characteristics as the Burren. A karst base layer is present in much of this part of Limerick and drainage features such as turloughs are also present. Individual sites such as Linfield Quarry, close to Pallasgrea in the east of the County, are also important parts of Limerick's geological heritage. Linfield is noted for its basalt formations, which may well be unique in the region.

Objective EH O9 Geological Sites

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Seek the conservation and protection of features of geological interest within Limerick, particularly those that would have been recognised in the past as Areas of Scientific Interest or by the Geological Survey of Ireland as being of particular value.
- b) Undertake a survey of such sites during the lifetime of the Draft Plan.

5.3.5 Trees, Tree Preservation Orders and Hedgerows

Trees, particularly native species, hedgerows and woodlands make an important contribution to the landscape of Limerick. They provide shelter and visual screening in addition to supporting a wide range of wildlife. Trees and in particular groups of trees can be locally important landscape features and when properly incorporated into development, can help to integrate them into the surrounding landscape.

The retention of existing tree cover is a priority for the Council, not just for the amenity and ecological value, but also because of the carbon storage capacity of older trees. While planting trees can serve as part of climate mitigation, it should be noted that it is in its mature stage that a tree plays its greatest role in carbon storage.

Where trees and groups of trees are of particular importance in a local area and may be at risk from surrounding activities, consideration will be given to the making of tree preservation orders.

It is important that in making decisions concerning the planting of new trees, that the effect of these decisions should be to contribute both to tree regeneration generally and also to ensure there is sufficient stock at differing stages of growth. Trees at different stages of growth also provide different kinds of habitats for those creatures which depend on them.

Landscaping plans often include elements for visual and ecological purposes. These needs may be fulfilled by different species, but any landscape plan submitted should outline the different purposes of its various elements e.g. such as a ground layer for pollinators and a tree or shrub layer for amenity or ecological purposes. The Council will promote Limerick's hedgerows by increasing coverage, where possible, using native species and to develop an appropriate code of practice for road hedgerow maintenance.

Refer to Chapter 11: Development Management Standards for further information on requirements relating to trees.

Objective EH O10 Trees and Hedgerows

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Require the planting of native trees, hedgerows and vegetation and the creation of new habitats in all new developments and public realm projects. The Council will avail of tree planting schemes administered by the Forest Service, in ecologically suitable locations, where this is considered desirable.
- b) Require, in the event that mature trees or extensive mature hedgerow is proposed to be removed, that a comprehensive tree and hedgerow survey be carried out by a suitably qualified individual, demonstrating that the subject trees/hedgerow are of no ecological or amenity value

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5.3.6 Invasive species

Invasive alien species can represent a major threat to national, regional and local biodiversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy.

Objective EH O11

Invasive Species

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Work with and facilitate the work of agencies addressing the issue of terrestrial and aquatic invasive alien species (IAS), by implementing biosecurity measures, selected control measures and surveys, where appropriate.
- b) Address the presence of Invasive alien Species on derelict sites under the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act through the preparation of a management and eradication plan for these species.
- c) Require the submission of a control and management program for the particular invasive species as part of the planning process, if developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are present.
- d) Employ biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of invasive alien species and disease and to insist that all such measures are employed on all development sites.

5.3.7 Blue Green Infrastructure

Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) can be broadly defined as a strategically planned network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity, in both rural and urban settings. It should be noted that while blue green infrastructure is mentioned in this chapter it is, similar to Climate Change, a cross cutting theme which will be mentioned throughout the Draft Plan, addressing topics ranging from open space to sustainable urban drainage.

BGI serves a wide variety of important functions, including but not limited to provision of habitat, increased biodiversity, provision of ecological corridors, climate change adaptation and mitigation, water treatment, water retention, local amenity provision, air quality improvement, cultural and heritage preservation, provision of a mentally restorative environment and flood mitigation.

Within Limerick, BGI offers an opportunity to develop integrated strategies around economic development, urban place-making and rural policy. Linking strategic natural assets with cultural and heritage assets further enhances the opportunities for BGI strategies to drive recreation and tourism benefits. This should be done with care where it is considered appropriate, in order to avoid any ecological damage or disturbance.

The BGI approach for Limerick also guides and assists in developing a wide blue/green infrastructure network, to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystems, including the protection of European Sites. The Draft Plan recognises the necessity of protecting such corridors and the necessity to encourage the management of features of the landscape, that support both the Natura 2000 network and other areas of ecological interest.

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Objective EH O12**Blue Green Infrastructure**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote a network of Green and Blue infrastructure throughout Limerick.
- b) Promote connecting corridors for the movement of species and encourage the retention and creation of features of biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas of high conservation value such as woodlands, hedgerows, earth banks, watercourses, wetlands and designated sites. In this regard, new infrastructural projects and linear developments in particular, will have to demonstrate at design stage, sufficient measures to assist in the conservation of and dispersal of species.
- c) Ensure the integration and strengthening of green infrastructure into the preparation of Local Area Plans.
- d) Where possible remove barriers to species movement, such as the removal of in-stream barriers to fish passage for example.

The Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy which is currently being prepared will inform the provision of green and blue infrastructure within the City and Environs. This document when completed will inform and guide the planning and management of a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and identify opportunities to employ nature based solutions (NBS) within Limerick City and Environs and help deliver a range of environmental, economic and societal benefits.

The strategy will be cross-cutting and will provide strategic guidance, recommendations and priority actions for GBI in Limerick City and Environs, based on the wide variety of areas, including the following:

- Protection of important GBI assets;
- Conservation of European designated sites and their catchments;
- Conservation of other ecologically important sites and networks;
- Increasing the provision and improving management of wildlife habitats and biodiversity areas;
- Interconnecting GBI, including, but not limited to, sustainable transport, active travel corridors and ecological corridors;
- Nature-based solutions to address a range of issues for example: heat stress, air quality, surface water drainage (SuDS), flood alleviation etc.;
- Parks and greenspace provision;
- Integrating an Ecosystem services approach, including providing for no net loss of biodiversity, into GBI delivery, decision making and the planning process;
- Climate action mitigation and adaptation;
- GBI and NBS in public realm design;
- Local food production areas for example urban farming, community gardens, allotments etc.

Based on the above, the strategy will also outline a prioritised set of GBI projects and investments for the City and Environs such as: protection and enhancement of biodiversity-rich areas; safeguarding valuable GBI assets; the delivery of a metropolitan park system; key sustainable urban drainage schemes and green and blue linkages associated with all of the above.

Objective EH O13**Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy**

It is an objective of the Council to prepare and implement a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Limerick City and Environs.

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5.3.8 Nature based solutions

Nature Based Solutions (NBS) have a role not only to meet certain infrastructure related needs (e.g. flooding management) and development needs, but also to maintain or benefit the quality of ecosystems, habitats and species. Examples of NBS solutions include landscaping, SuDs, creating permeable green areas and providing green roofs, restoring habitats such as wetlands, woodlands and hedgerows. Creating and restoring wetlands also functions to protect against flooding and creating green and blue spaces in urban areas, can also combat urban heating and enhance human health.

Objective EH O14

Nature Based Solutions

It is an objective of the Council to increase the use of Nature Based Solutions (NBS) throughout Limerick.

5.3.9 Water Quality

European directives such as the Water Framework Directive and the Nitrates Directive have implications for Limerick in dealing with issues associated with preserving water quality. The water framework directive deals with water quality in relation to all water bodies, including rivers, lakes, ground waters, coastal and estuarine waters and wetlands.

Ireland is required to produce a River Basin Management Plan under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The current River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2018-21 differs from previous River Basin Management Plans, given that Ireland is now defined as a single River Basin District. The plan sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in water bodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027.

One of the most effective ways of ensuring the protection of ground water is to use ground water protection schemes as part of land use planning. The Groundwater Protection Scheme is an essential tool in enabling Planning Authorities to take into account both geological and hydro-geological factors, in locating potentially polluting developments, so that the chances of ground water contamination is reduced to a minimum.

There is a balance to be struck between ensuring that normal development needs are facilitated, while the water resource base upon which all land uses and habitats depend is protected. This balance is under strain in many places, posing a special challenge if the State is to meet the terms of the Water Framework Directive. Specifically with reference to Limerick, much of the north of the County's plain is of poor status. This coincides with a regional aquifer where the bedrock is limestone and there are generally shallow soils. Extensive areas of surface water in Limerick are either of moderate or poor 'ecological status', suffering in particular from eutrophication, principally, but not exclusively, from diffuse sources of nitrate enrichment.

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5.3.10 Wetlands

Wetlands are an important part of the ecology of Limerick and play a part in the regulation of flood waters as well as providing a natural amenity, such as the following within Limerick City: Westfields, Park Canal, Lucas Lough Shannon Fields, Monabraher Longpavement and Ballinacurra Creek.

Where wetlands or environmentally designated sites are located within zoned lands they will be protected and remain unaltered. It may be necessary to incorporate a suitable buffer zone in order to safeguard these sites.

Objective EH O15 **Ground Water, Surface Water Protection and River Basin Management Plans**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Protect ground and surface water resources and to take into account the requirement of the Water Framework Directive when dealing with planning and land use issues.
- b) Implement the provisions of the River Basin Management Plan 2018 - 2021 and any succeeding plan. The filling of wetlands, surface water features and modifications and drainage of peatlands shall generally be prohibited.
- c) Implement the measures put forward in the Limerick Groundwater Protection Plan, in assessing planning applications and their consequences for ground water.

Objective EH O16 **Septic Tanks and Proprietary Systems**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that septic tanks/proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems which are required as part of a development, comply with the standards set out under EPA 2021 etc. and that they are constructed only where site conditions are appropriate. In respect of groundwater, it is a requirement that as part of the required site assessments the local groundwater conditions as identified in the groundwater protection scheme and the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 are properly assessed in informing the Groundwater Protection Response.

Objective EH O17 **Water Quality**

It is an objective of the Council to support commitments to achieve and maintain 'At Least Good' status, except where more stringent obligations are required. There shall be no deterioration of status for all water bodies under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and its programme of measures, the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan. Key challenges include, inter alia, the need to address significant deficits in urban waste-water treatment and water supply, addressing flooding and increased flood risks from extreme weather events and increased intense rainfall because of climate change.

Objective EH O18 **Riparian Buffers**

It is an objective of the Council to maintain riverbank vegetation along watercourses and ensure protection of a 20m riparian buffer zone on greenfield sites and sites are maintained free from development. Proposals shall have cognisance to the contents of the Inland Fisheries Ireland document 'Planning for Watercourses in Urban Environments'.

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5.3.11 Noise Emissions

Noise can impact on the quality of life enjoyed by individuals and communities. The National Planning Framework supports the proactive management of environmental noise under National Policy Objective 65:

NPO 65: Promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans.

The dominant source of noise in Limerick is traffic related. Policy and objectives related specifically to traffic and transport is dealt with in Section 6.11 in Chapter 6: Sustainable Mobility and Transport. Additional noise emissions, including from construction, open extraction sites, events or commercial activities need to be managed. Quiet Areas, that offer a sense of tranquillity within communities, should be protected.

Objective EH O19

Quiet Areas

It is an objective of the Council to protect areas which are considered to be desirably quiet or which offer a sense of tranquillity through a process of identification and validation followed by formal designation of 'Quiet Areas' in accordance with the Environmental Noise Regulations 2018.

5.3.11.1 Noise and Vibration from Construction and Open Sites

Noise from construction and demolition activities has the potential to cause significant nuisance for communities and individuals, living and working in the vicinity of a construction site. The effects of noise can include interference with speech communication, disturbance of work or leisure activities, disturbance of sleep, annoyance and possible effects on mental and physical health. Additionally, significant vibration levels arising from construction work activities/operations has the potential to effect buildings or structures. Noise and vibration from open sites (e.g. quarries, mines) can cause similar significant nuisance.

Objective EH O20

Noise and Vibration during Construction and at Open Sites

It is an objective of the Council to protect the quality of the environment against the effects of noise and vibration, by implementing site appropriate mitigation measures during the construction and demolition phases of development.

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5.3.11.2 Commercial and Industrial Noise

Commercial and industrial noise has the potential to have adverse impacts on the health and well-being of occupants of noise sensitive properties. The likelihood of adverse effects occurring due to such noise, depends on many factors including the margin by which it exceeds the background noise and the character of the noise (e.g. tones, impulsive nature).

Objective EH O21

Commercial and Industrial Noise

It is an objective of the Council to prevent members of the public being significantly adversely effected by environmental noise from commercial and industrial noise activities.



5.3.11.3 Entertainment Noise

Noise from entertainment venues (e.g. recorded music, live bands) can be particularly annoying for local residents and businesses, if it is not adequately contained within the venue.

There is a lack of consensus on an assessment method for noise levels within habitable rooms of noise sensitive properties with regard to entertainment noise. The design aim however, should be to design entertainment noise to be inaudible (not recognisable as emanating from the source in question).

Planning applications for new entertainment venues shall demonstrate that music noise from the venue will be unlikely to cause an adverse effect for occupants of nearby residential properties.

Where music events (e.g. concerts) are proposed, an appropriate balance should be achieved between the organiser(s) objectives, the participants' enjoyment and the interests of the community at large, who may be effected by such functions. The applicant should actively engage with the planning authority at the earliest possible stage to ensure that the potential for noise disturbance is minimised.

Objective EH O22

Entertainment Noise

It is an objective of the Council to manage entertainment noise from venues and music events, so as not to have an adverse effect on the public.

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5.3.12 Light Emission

In today's modern world, particularly with the pace of development the nuisance factors associated with light have increased. In part, these can be minimised through appropriate design and by ensuring that developments are not making use of unnecessary lighting.

Objective EH O23

Light Pollution

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the design of external lighting schemes minimise the incidence of light spillage or pollution in the immediate surrounding environment. In this regard, developers shall submit lighting elements as part of any design, with an emphasis on ensuring that any lighting is carefully directed, not excessive for its purpose and avoids lights spill outside the development and where necessary will be wildlife friendly in design.

5.3.13 Dark Sky Initiatives

Closely related to the issue of light emission is the idea of Dark Skies. To date there is one in the region, located in Kerry and such initiatives have much to offer not just as amenity but also as a specialist attraction in their own right. In essence it involves selection of areas that fall within certain thresholds of darkness. The International Dark-Sky Association works to protect the night skies for present and future generations. 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves are focused on areas 'possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage and/or public enjoyment'.

Objective EH O24

'Dark Sky' Parks and Reserves

It is an objective of the Council to encourage measures to support Dark-Sky Reserve proposals and the establishment of 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves in Limerick, where appropriate.

5.3.14 Air Quality

5.3.14.1 Improvement of Air Quality

Clean air is essential for our health and well-being. High levels of air pollution are known to effect cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Long-term exposure to particulate matter is highlighted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as one of the primary environmental risk factors contributing to cause of death in Europe.

The air quality in Limerick is good and generally meets European Union and World Health limit values. However, localised problems occur with the burning of smoky fuels which can cause elevated levels of particulates. Another potentially significant source of air pollution is emissions from vehicles.

The National Planning Framework supports measures that will improve air quality and the measures included within the Draft Plan are aligned with national policy.

Objective EH O25

Air Pollution

It is an objective of the Council to implement the provisions of national and EU Directives on air pollution and other relevant legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate.

Objective EH O26

Improvement of Air Quality

It is an objective of the Council to improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in Limerick, through the support of sustainable modes of transport, renewable energy, promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes and urban greening.

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5.3.14.2 Air Quality Monitoring

The Environmental Protection Agency manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network. The pollutants of most concern to the EPA are those associated with traffic such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. The Council carries out its own indicative monitoring in Limerick City to assess emissions from traffic and industry, the pollutants assessed being particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone.

Objective EH O27

Air Quality Monitoring

It is an objective of the Council to monitor and provide access to the public on the air quality in Limerick and support the EPA in the expansion and management of the national air quality monitoring network.

5.3.14.3 Air Quality during Construction

Construction and demolition activities can have a significant adverse impact on air quality. Dust and particle generation can be substantially reduced through carefully selected mitigation techniques and effective management.

Objective EH O28

Air Quality during Construction

It is an objective of the Council to protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures during construction and demolition phases of a development, with respect to air quality, including dust.

5.3.14.4 Odour

Many activities may generate odours that can cause odour nuisance or more serious health issues for the public and air quality. Odour generating activities include intensive agriculture (e.g. piggeries, poultry units, rendering), industrial/manufacturing processes, waste disposal, renewable energies such as anaerobic digestion, intensive composting, bio-gas processes, odours from food preparation (e.g. restaurants, cafes) and use of solvent materials in the course of business.

Objective EH O29

Odour

It is an objective of the Council to protect the public from odour nuisance issues through odour abatement solutions.



5.4 Landscape and Visual Amenity

5.4.1 Landscape Assessment and Landscape Character Areas

Limerick possesses a varied landscape which is important not just for its intrinsic value and beauty, but also because it provides for local residents and visitors, both in terms of a place to live and for recreational and tourism purposes.

The importance of landscape and visual amenity in the role of planning is recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Act require that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and prospects. It requires objectives for Landscape Conservation Areas, Areas of Special Amenity and also for the assessment of landscape character. This approach towards landscape issues (based on the Draft Landscape Character Assessment stresses the distinctiveness of differing kinds of landscape and how differing kinds of development can best be integrated within them.

The landscape character areas have incorporated the scenic views and prospects of Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016 (as extended), which will ensure continuity between and further development of, landscape policies for rural Limerick. For Limerick City, there are a number of Urban Character areas identified. (UCA)M

Policy EH P8

Landscape Character Areas

It is a policy of the Council to promote the distinctiveness and where necessary safeguard the sensitivity of Limerick's landscape types, through the landscape characterisation process in accordance with the 'Draft Guidelines for Landscape and Landscape Assessment' (2000) as issued by the Department of Environment and Local Government, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention) and with 'A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland - 2015-2025'. The Council shall implement any relevant recommendations contained in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Landscape Strategy for Ireland, 2015 - 2025.

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Table 5.1:
Urban Character Areas: Limerick City and Environs

Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
UCA 01 City	Within the city area there are number of distinguishing features, the Georgian part of Limerick is justly famous and has its own attractive character. The River Shannon also lends character to this area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development to take into account the existing Architectural Conservation Areas and protected structures as set out under Volume 3 Infill and brown field development patterns to be favoured. b) Regard to be had to the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan. c) Create a pedestrian friendly river focused City Centre environment. d) Building Height Strategy to guide development of taller structures.
UCA 02 Castletroy	This area lies to the east of the city and contains the University of Limerick and the National Technology Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Infill and brown field development patterns to be favoured. b) Building Height Strategy to inform design of higher buildings. c) River Groody Green Wedge to be retained. d) Existing green spaces to be retained.
UCA 03 Southern Environs	This area lies to the south and west of the city and contains the Regional Hospital, Raheen business Park and many modern housing developments dating in large part from the 1960s. Currently major housing initiatives are under way in this area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Infill and brown field development patterns to be favoured. b) Special Control Area in Mungret College Area to be retained, together with protected views. c) Mungret masterplan to guide development in this location. d) Existing green spaces to be retained.
UCA 04 Caherdavin	This area contains many housing development from the 1960s city, but also contains the Limerick Institute of Technology and Thomond Park, an important sporting focal point in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Infill and brown field development patterns to be favoured. b) Building Height Strategy to inform design of higher buildings. c) Existing green spaces to be retained.

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Table 5.2
Rural Landscape Character Areas

Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
LCA01 Agricultural Lowlands	This is the largest of the Landscape Character Areas in Limerick and comprises almost the entire central plain. This landscape is a farming landscape and is defined by a series of regular field boundaries, often allowed to grow to maturity. This well-developed hedgerow system is one of its main characteristics. In terms of topography, the landscape is generally rather flat with some locally prominent hills and ridges. The pastoral nature of the landscape is reinforced by the presence of farmyards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Encourage, where housing is permitted, design that reflects existing housing stock, such as the two-storey farmhouses which are a feature in the area. b) Encourage retention of existing landscape features such as hedgerows and trees and their incorporation into landscaping for new developments. c) Discourage development of locally prominent sites. d) Encourage the regular arrangement of turbines with equal spacing in proposed wind farm developments, which take field boundaries into account. e) Encourage development within existing settlements.
LCA02 Ballyhoura / Slieve Reagh	This is a locally dominant range of hills running along the Cork boundary. The lowland component of this landscape character area is generally a farmed landscape, but the range of hills provides an upland backdrop. The lower reaches of Ballyhoura are pastoral in character, but this changes as altitude increases and the vegetation cover changes to commercial forestry, interspersed with upland grassland and the remnants of peat bogs. Much of the Ballyhoura's are within a Special Area of Conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where housing is permitted, encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area, combined with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites. b) Strongly encourage retention of earth bank field boundaries, particularly in the more upland parts of this area, as the screening abilities of landscape features in this area are limited. c) Encourage use of species native to this particular area in landscaping proposals. Species native to the upland parts of this area could be used, such as mountain ash and birch. d) Ensure that forestry applications subject to planning are confined to infill and below 300m above sea level, as much of the Ballyhouras is a Special Area of Conservation. e) Encourage development within existing settlements.

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Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
LCA O3 Galtee Uplands	This is the most visually striking of all Limerick's uplands. The foothills are generally a farmed landscape with an enclosed field pattern and scattered farmsteads, but as altitude increases open heath-land replaces the closed fields and forestry. The open upland terrain of the higher reaches of the Galtees, combined with with starker colours caused by the vegetation cover of heather, provides a strong visual contrast to the enclosed pastoral landscape below. Much of the Galtees are within a Special Area of Conservation. This is designated for upland habitats such as heath and upland bog amongst others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Only permit housing development above the 230m contour line in exceptional circumstances. Where housing is permitted, encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area, combined with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites. b) Ensure that forestry developments, which are subject to planning, are confined to below 300m above sea level, following consultation with the Wildlife Service and National Parks. c) Encourage development within existing settlements.
LCA O4 Knockfierna	This is one of the most dominant hills in the centre of Limerick. The vegetation cover of the hill is generally upland grassland with a well-developed field boundary system. The hill is important not just for its scenic value, but also because of the variety of archaeological and historical sites that exist on it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Housing development shall be confined to below 150m sea level in order to protect the scenic amenity of the area, except in exceptional circumstances. b) The use of high quality site-specific designs, incorporating materials that assist the integration of the development into the landscape is encouraged. c) The breaking of ridgelines or selection of locally prominent sites, within the Knockfierna Landscape Character area is strongly discouraged. d) This area shall not be considered for forestry applications that are subject to planning requirements. e) This area is considered unsuitable for wind energy development.

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Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
<p>LCA05 Lough Gur</p>	<p>Lough Gur is one of the most significant archaeological sites in Limerick. Topographically it is made up of a series of rolling hills surrounding the lake, which is the centre point of the area. The landscape is pastoral with a long history of human habitation. The presence of a wide variety of archaeological monuments is one of the characteristic features of the area. The area around Lough Gur, with its pleasant rural setting and views of the lake and its well-developed hedgerows, is also an attractive amenity and is widely used by locals and visitors alike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Safeguard the visual amenity of the area and to have regard to the views and prospects in and out of Lough Gur. b) Restrict development including residential development in the area of Special Development Control, shown on Map 5.3 except in exceptional circumstances. Appropriate tourism development and extensions to existing properties, which respect the special character of Lough Gur will be considered. c) To have regard to the archaeological importance and richness of the area indicated in Map 5.3 as a zone of archaeological amenity. Any developments within the zone will be required to provide for an archaeological examination during the course of excavations, or other ground disturbance. d) To safeguard the existence of Natural Heritage Areas and the Wildfowl sanctuary when assessing applications for development in the area. e) Any structures in a ruinous condition will not be allowed to be re-developed or adapted for housing.



Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
LCA06 Shannon Coastal Zone	<p>This zone comprises a large area of northern Limerick and is bounded on one side by the Shannon Estuary, while its southern boundary is defined by the gradually rising ground, which leads onto the agricultural zone and the western hills to the south west. The presence of the estuary is the defining characteristic of the region. The landscape itself is generally that of an enclosed agricultural type, essentially that of a hedgerow dominant landscape. This differs from the other agricultural landscapes of the County, in that the field patterns, particularly close to the estuary, tend to be less regular than those elsewhere in Limerick.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where housing is permitted, encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area, combined with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale, particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites. b) To protect the views and prospects along the N69 (see Map 5.2), as a priority for the Planning Authority. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. domestic extensions and/or a suitably screened dwelling for an individual who is engaged in full time farming or other exceptional circumstances) will development be allowed between the road and the estuary. c) To encourage the use of site-specific designs with careful attention to landscaping. Finishes such as plaster finish, which will assist in integrating the development into the landscape, are encouraged. d) All of the above (a to c) does not apply within the settlements of the Shannon Coastal zone. e) To permit holiday homes only within existing settlements. f) To rigidly adhere to best practice in the installation and use of wastewater treatment systems, given the proximity of the Shannon and the importance of water-based habitats in the area, to ensure that no deterioration in water quality takes place. g) Where wind farms are permitted, it is recommended that single lines of equally spaced turbines shall be considered, in order to limit the visual and landscape impact. h) Development shall be encouraged within existing settlements. i) Development identified under the SIFP will adhere to the mitigation measures for landscape management as appropriate.

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Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
LCA07 Southern Uplands	<p>The Mullaghareirk range of hills, which straddles the County Limerick, Cork and Kerry boundaries, is the principal defining feature of this landscape character area. This is a gently undulating range of hills, which rises to almost a plateau near the Cork border. Vegetation cover ranges from improved hill grassland, which tends to be wet in nature to disturbed peatland habitats, such as blanket bog, dry and wet heath. Few of these habitats are intact, occurring only in patches interrupted by commercial forestry and improved grassland. Commercial forestry, most of which is nearing maturity, is a dominant feature of this area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where housing is permitted, encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area, combined with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites. b) Strongly encourage use of landscaping plans, taking into account existing topography and landforms, in efforts to blend developments into the surrounding landscape. Retention of existing landscape features and their integration and use in helping development to blend into the landscape, is of great importance in any upland area. c) Not permit further forestry developments that are subject to planning permissions over 280m above sea level. d) Encourage development within existing settlements. e) This area is open to consideration for wind energy development. f) Where wind farms are permitted, a random spacing with random layout shall be considered in proposed wind farm developments, to limit the visual and landscape impact.
LCA08 Slieve Felim Uplands	<p>The Slieve Felim Hills located in the north east of the County are the most dominant feature in this part of Limerick. Though not particularly high (the most important peak is 395m), it is because of the low-lying surrounding landscape that they appear such a dominant feature. The hills themselves are rounded in shape, lacking the starkness that some of the Galtee range to the south possess and are generally pastoral in character, in that almost all the hills show evidence of enclosure for agricultural purposes, with a well-developed field boundary system in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not normally permit housing development at or above 220m elevation, in order to protect the scenic amenity of the hills, except in exceptional circumstances. b) Strongly encourage the use of designs based on the existing housing stock of the area and reuse of existing structures. c) Encourage the construction of new agricultural developments as part of existing agricultural complexes where possible.

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Character Area	Description	Specific Objective
LCA 09 Tory Hill	<p>Tory Hill is an isolated, locally prominent hill, which is within 2km of the town of Croom and is visible from the Cork/Limerick road. It is an important feature in the surrounding countryside and is of geologic importance as it is a limestone hill with deposits of gravel, which have been left since the last ice age. The hill supports areas of scrub and woodland as well as limestone grassland. The dominant nature of the hill, which rises from the surrounding flat landscape, magnifies the effect of potential development in this location.</p>	<p>a) It is an objective of the Council that there is a presumption against development in this location.</p>
LCA 010 Western Uplands (Western Hills/ Barnagh Gap/ Sugar Hill)	<p>This is an upland area, which begins approximately 5km to the south west of Newcastle West with the Barnagh Hill area, which already has been designated as a scenic route in previous Development Plans. This hill range dominates the lower landscape to the east and is clearly visible from Newcastle West. Because of this and the extensive traffic through the region on the N21, any visual disturbance would be very obvious. The Barnagh Gap/ Sugar Hill area in particular, deserves separate treatment within this region. The area generally has an upland character with isolated farmsteads and improved grassland punctuated by blocks of forestry, which is one of the characteristics of the area.</p>	<p>a) Where housing is permitted, encourage appropriate scale and high quality design for this landscape area, combined with sensitive site location and landscaping. Respect traditional scale particularly on elevated or locally prominent sites.</p> <p>b) Discourage the selection of locally prominent sites.</p> <p>c) Encourage the use of local landform and landscape features, combined with sensitive landscaping in order to screen development.</p> <p>d) Ensure that forestry that is subject to planning permission, is confined to below 280m above sea level to protect intact remnants of peatland habitat.</p> <p>e) This area is open to consideration for wind energy development.</p> <p>f) Where wind farm development is permitted, a random spacing layout shall be considered to limit the visual and landscape impact.</p>

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5.4.2 Views and Prospects

Limerick contains many sites and vantage points from which scenic views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, Shannon Estuary and adjoining Counties, may be obtained. Due to the topography of Limerick City, its quality townscapes, riverscapes and landscapes, as well as its visual landmarks, there are many views of significance within the city. The city has a number of linear views consisting of landmark buildings, such as King John's castle, the city walls and city skyline. River prospects are also important and usually, though not exclusively, experienced while crossing a bridge. River prospects in this instance refer to the ability to see landmark building(s) from bridges.

In addition, the County also contains important prospects i.e. prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value, or special interest, which are widely visible from the surrounding area. While views and prospects can be an attraction in their own right, they can also serve to complement other nearby attractions. Examples include the routes in the south east of the County, such as those close to Galbally, Ardpatrick and Ballylanders which provide an additional attraction for the area, to complement the Ballyhoura Mountain bike trail. New recreational cycle routes, with Kilmallock as a hub, have also been developed in this area. The Lough Gur and Tory hill views and prospects further complement the attractions of these areas. In the east of the County, the Slieve Felim way route close to Murroe, makes an attractive walking route to complement the attractions of the Clare Glens.

The views and prospects within Limerick are shown on the Views and Prospects Map 5.2 on Page 5-31 below, while further details on the city views and prospects are set out in the Building Height Strategy in Volume 6.

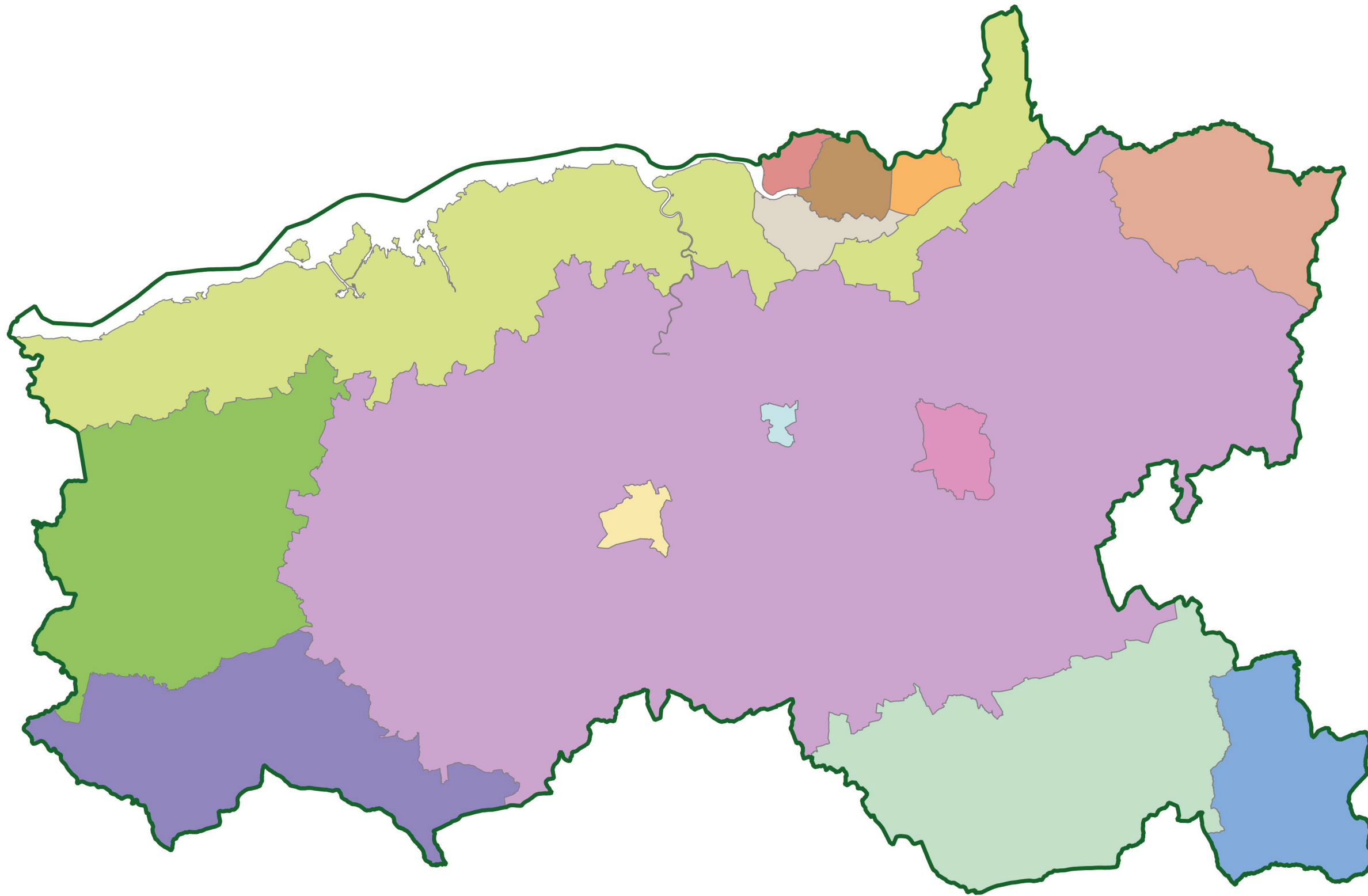
Objective EH O30 Views and Prospects

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Preserve, protect and encourage the enjoyment of views and prospects of special amenity value or special interests and to prevent development, which would block or otherwise interfere with views and/or prospects.
- b) In areas where scenic views and prospects are listed in the Draft Plan, there will be a presumption against development, except that required to facilitate farming and appropriate tourism and related activities. The development must be appropriately designed so that it can be integrated into the landscape.

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Map 5.1: Landscape Character Assessment



**Draft Limerick
Development Plan
2022 -2028**

Landscape Character Areas

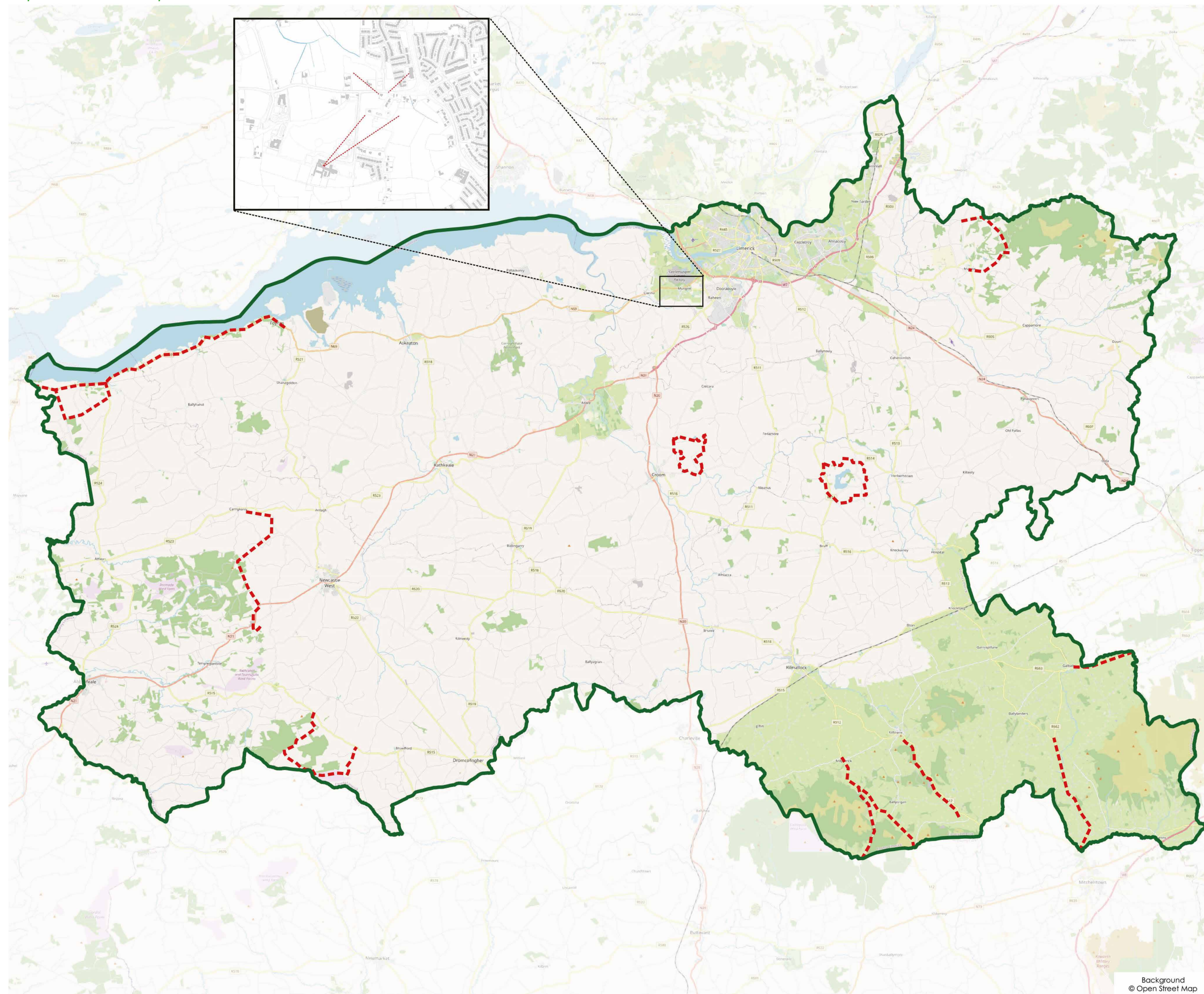
- LEGEND**
- Agricultural Lowlands
 - Ballyhoura/Slieve Reagh
 - Galtee Uplands
 - Knockfierna
 - Lough Gur
 - Shannon ICZM
 - Slieve Felim
 - Southern Uplands
 - Tory Hill
 - Western Uplands
 - Caherdavin
 - Southern Environs
 - Castletroy
 - City
 - Limerick County Boundary

DATE	DWG. No.
June '21	CDP-C5-LCA
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Background
© Open Street Map

Map 5.2: Views and Prospects



**Draft Limerick
Development Plan
2022 -2028**

Views & Prospects

LEGEND

- - - Views & Prospects
- Limerick County Boundary

NOTE: For Views and Prospects in Limerick City & Environs please refer to Volume 6: Building Height Strategy

DATE June '21	DWG. No. CDP-C5-VP
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Background
© Open Street Map

5.4.3 Historical Landscapes

The pace of landscape change in Ireland has until recent years been gradual, which has ensured the survival of a rich upstanding archaeological heritage, in addition to the survival of features such as field boundaries and old demesnes. All these features play their part in telling the story of Limerick's past. Historical landscapes can be defined as the archaeological and historical elements that survive in the current landscape. Limerick is rich in such areas. Lough Gur is a well-established archaeological landscape and public amenity. Other areas, such as Limerick City and surrounding areas, Kilmallock, Adare and Knockainey, are also important from an archaeological and historical perspective.

Apart from their historical interest, such landscapes can form the basis of specialist tourist attractions. The environs of Kilmallock, combined with the historic town itself, is one instance where part of County Limerick could, through its historical interest, provide the basis for a specialist tourist attraction. This could also be true of urban areas such as Limerick, where parts of the city core have intrinsic historical value.

The carrying out of a historic landscape assessment would be a valuable step towards documenting the past landscapes of Limerick and a valuable tool in heritage promotion and awareness.

Objective EH O31 Historical Landscapes

It is an objective of the Council to, during the lifetime of the Draft Plan, develop an historical landscape assessment process, which will identify key historical landscapes within Limerick.

5.4.4 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

The DEHLG have undertaken a 'Survey of Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes' where this inventory includes over 6000 records of historic gardens and designed landscapes throughout Ireland. Phase One and Two (Historic Ordinance Surveys and Aerial Photography) desktop surveys are complete for Limerick City with Phase three (field surveys) yet to be complete. Within Limerick City, some of these historic gardens include:

- Castlepark House (Moyross) Reference: LI-65-R-561597, Grid Reference : 561597;
- Corbally House (Corbally) forming grounds of St Munchin's College, Reference: LI-65-R584590;
- Clonmacken House: LI-65-R-548568. Grid Reference : 548568.

Policy EH P9

It is a policy of the Council to protect and maintain surviving remnants of Historic Gardens, Designed Landscapes and surrounding Parklands including form and patterns of hard and soft landscaping and all mature trees and vegetation as highlighted in the DEHLG 'Survey Of Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes' Inventory.

Objective EH O32 Castlepark

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the parkland characteristics and mature trees in the area surrounding Castle Park House which is zoned for Enterprise and Employment shall be retained as part of any new development.

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5.5 Archaeology and Built Heritage

5.5.1 Archaeological Heritage

Limerick is extremely rich in the diversity and quality of the archaeological monuments and landscapes within the city and county. There is a high rate of survival of rural monuments, which is largely due to the pastoral nature of farming. To date there are over 7,000 sites and individual monuments recorded in Limerick. These range from isolated pits to the inspiring ruins of the friary at Askeaton and the majestic King John's Castle in the city. They include the graves, homes, farmsteads and towns of our ancestors. They are an intrinsic part of the landscape, they form our immediate environment and shape our experience and outlook and they are part of what makes Limerick unique. They are also, however, a fragile and irreplaceable resource. Limerick City and County Council is dedicated to safeguarding the archaeological heritage of Limerick.

The location of each archaeological monument is provided in the Record of Monuments and Places, which is maintained and up-dated by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. Hard copies are available for public consultation in the Council's Planning Department and in all the libraries. Under the provisions of Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments Act Amendment, any person proposing any works (this includes exempted development) 'at or in relation to such a monument' has to give two months' notice to the National Monuments Service. Sites continue to be discovered, some of those found subsequent to 1997 have been included in the Site and Monuments Database which is available on the website archaeology.ie

There is a stated preference under National Policy for preservation in situ. Consequently, the Planning Authority recommends that issues of archaeological heritage be addressed as early as possible by potential developers, through consultation with the relevant agencies, the Planning Department and the Local Authority Archaeologist. The Planning Authority will request potential developers to carry out archaeological assessments, in areas adjacent or in the vicinity of Recorded Monuments. Proposed developments can have a visual as well as a physical impact on the archaeological remains and developers are advised to respect the setting of the monuments in the wider landscape, when considering areas for development potential. The Planning Authority will refer all proposed developments likely to impact on the archaeological heritage to the National Monuments Service.

Archaeological remains are also to be found in riverine, lacustrine and in estuarine and marine- foreshore, inter-tidal and underwater environments. There is the potential for previously unknown and unrecorded underwater archaeological sites and artefacts to exist. Where there is potential impact to Underwater Archaeology, the Council will require a licensed Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment. The results are to be amalgamated with the terrestrial assessment to provide the overall archaeological heritage of the particular study area. Section 3 of The National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987 provides for the protection of sites of historic wrecks and lists of known wrecks are available on the website data.gov.ie/dataset/national-monuments-service-shipwreck-inventory-of-ireland

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There are certain sites in Limerick in State ownership or guardianship or that have been served with temporary preservation orders. These sites are included in Volume 5. Under the 2004 Amendment to the National Monuments Act, any of these sites or sites deemed National Monuments in the care or guardianship of the Local Authority, will require Ministerial Consent for works in their vicinity. The main Recorded Monuments in Local Authority ownership are the older churches and graveyards. The Local Authority is committed to the preserving these heritage assets as funding permits. The effect of climate change on masonry structures has made the need for consolidation works even more urgent.

Industrial Archaeology is an important facet of our shared past, particularly but not exclusively in our urban centres where it advanced development. The Council will expect proper recording of such buildings and associated infrastructure and will encourage incorporation of remains in future developments.

Archaeological objectives are also included in the Heritage Plan 2017-2030 and the Council is committed to supporting these actions. The Council is also committed to working with local communities to enhance understanding of, access to and protection of locally important sites.



5.5.2 Special Control Areas

The Planning Authority is fully committed to preserving the site and setting of our archaeological heritage. Since the adoption of the first Development Plan in 1967, the then Limerick County Council recognised the archaeological landscape at Lough Gur, creating an area of Special Development Control around the archaeological landscape. Other areas of Special Development Control have been established at archaeologically important settings around the county and further areas may be proposed during the lifetime of the Draft Plan. Special Control Areas are applied to preserve and enhance the setting of these landscapes and sites. In the land-use zoning matrix, generally no use is permitted.

The Special Control Areas within Limerick are as follows:

- Special Control Area at Mungret Monastic Complex, (See City and Environs Zoning Map, Volume 2) incorporating all national monuments and protected views, including:
 - (1) View from Mungret College northeast to the Monastic Complex and;
 - (2) Views northwest across the Monastic Complex (See Map 5.2);
- School House Road, Castletroy (See City and Environs Zoning Map, Volume 2);
- Lough Gur (See Map 5.3);
- Abbey in Askeaton (area identified in the Local Area Plan);
- Collegiate Church and Priory, Kilmallock (area identified in the Local Area Plan);
- Croom Castle (area identified in the Local Area Plan);
- The Motte in Kilfinane (See Map in Volume 2 – Kilfinane Zoning Map);
- Special Control Area in Ballingarry (See Map in Volume 2 – Ballingarry Zoning Map).

Objective EH O33

Special Control Areas

It is an objective of the Council to protect and maintain the integrity of the Special Control Areas. Continue to zone important archaeological areas as appropriate as Special Control Areas where no development is permitted, other than possibly sensitively designed access.

Objective EH O34

Special Control Areas Mungret

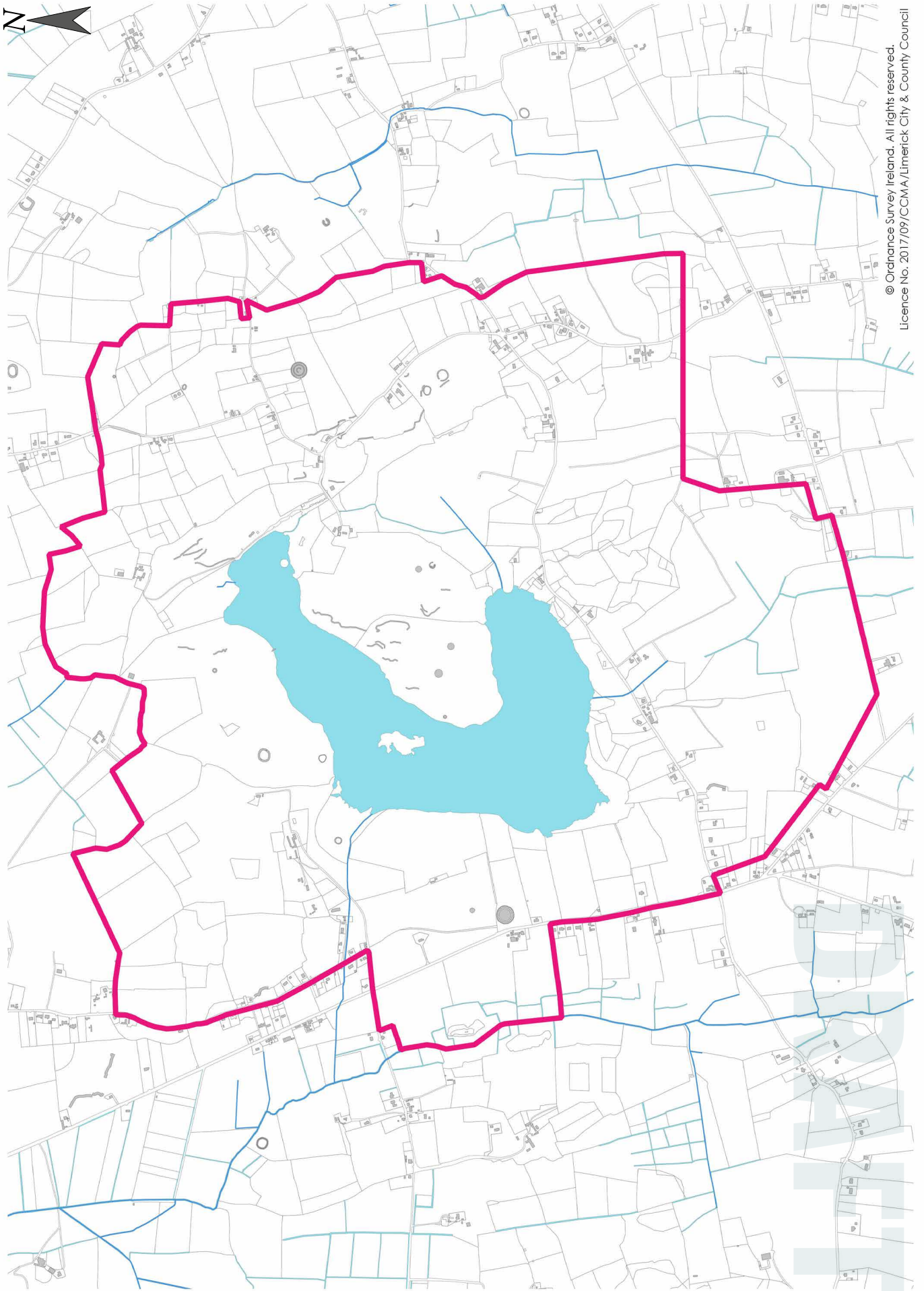
It is an objective of the Council to protect and maintain the integrity of the Special Control Areas at Mungret Monastic Complex incorporating all national monuments and protected views including:

- (1) View from Mungret College northeast to the Monastic Complex and;
- (2) Views northwest across the Monastic Complex.

Development within this area will be prohibited with the exception of leisure facilities and moderate extensions to existing dwellings, which will not adversely impact on the character or setting of the complex. The Council will facilitate the provision of interpretative panels and directional signage for Mungret Monastic Complex and park, will be considered in consultation with local community groups.

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Map 5.3 Lough Gur Special Control Area



5.5.3 Conservation and Management Plans

Conservation and Management Plans are a fundamental step in the preservation and enhancement of important complex sites. Currently the City Walls and Kilmallock Walls, both deemed National Monuments, have these plans in place. These plans also address issues such as medieval street and plot layout and the importance of preserving these urban remnants. There is increasing evidence that there is much more medieval and historic fabric contained within our standing buildings. The Planning Authority recognises the significance of these remains. In historic urban cores, detailed building surveys by experienced professional will be required. Within urban environments the best method of preservation of both, the existing built environment and any buried remains is the reuse of existing structures, or through light buildings or appropriately designed foundations.

Objective EH O35

Preservation of the Archaeological Heritage

It is an objective of the Council to seek the preservation of all known sites and features of historical and archaeological interest. This is to include all the sites listed in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The preferred option is preservation in situ, or at a minimum preservation by record.

Objective EH O36

Preservation of unrecorded/newly discovered Archaeological Heritage

It is an objective of the Council to protect and preserve the preservation in situ (or at a minimum by record) of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest, discovered subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.

Objective EH O37

Preservation of the Underwater Archaeological Heritage

It is an objective of the Council to seek the preservation (in situ, or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all known and all previously unrecorded sites and features of historical and archaeological record in wetland, riverine, lacustrine, estuarine and or marine environments.

Objective EH O38

Protection of the setting of Archaeological Monuments

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that no development shall have a negative impact on the character or setting of an archaeological monument.

Objective EH O39

Proper procedures during the planning process

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure early engagement at pre-planning stage in undertaken with the Local Authority Archaeologist to promote the 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings in development.
- b) Adopt a policy of archaeological monitoring on developments where the scale and nature of such developments may, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, have a negative impact on previously unknown archaeological features/artefacts.
- c) Require the preparation of an Archaeological Heritage Assessment in cases where it is deemed that Archaeological Heritage would be affected by a proposed development (due to their location, size or nature). The report shall be prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist on the archaeological implications, if any, of the proposed development either prior to a decision on a planning application or prior to commencement of development on site.

Objective EH O40

Archaeological Monuments in Local Authority ownership/guardianship

It is an objective of the Council to preserve and enhance as appropriate and as funding allows monuments vested in the Local Authority.

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Objective EH O41**Town Defences and Layout**

It is an objective of the Council to protect town defences and plot layout, carry out the objectives of the Conservation and Management Plans for Limerick City and Kilmallock and support the work of the Irish Walled Towns Network. Review the potential for surviving medieval and historic fabric within the standing buildings in our medieval urban cores.

Objective EH O42**Industrial Archaeology**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Seek the preservation of buildings and infrastructure associated with former industrial sites;
- b) Ensure detailed recording of these remains; promote knowledge and interpretation of these sites among the general public;
- c) Support the work of the Interreg Atlantic Coast Area project, (MMIAH) *The recovery and valorisation of Maritime Military and Industrial Heritage*.

Objective EH O43**Lough Gur**

It is an objective of the Council to protect the unique archaeological landscape at Lough Gur and to support the archaeological objectives in the Lough Gur Environment and Management Study 2009.

Objective EH O44**Raise public awareness and encourage active participation**

It is an objective of the Council to generally raise public awareness of the archaeological and historic heritage and to assist and encourage active participation by the public, following consultation with National Monuments Service, in the conservation, consolidation and presentation of landmark sites, where this is appropriate and subject to available resources.

Objective EH O45**Heritage Plan 2017-2030**

It is an objective of the Council to support the archaeological objectives in the Heritage Plan.

Objective EH O46**Increase access to Archaeological Monuments**

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate public access to National Monuments in State or Local Authority care.

Objective EH O47**Assessment and Recognition of Archaeological Landscapes**

It is an objective of the Council to designate archaeological landscapes as part of an ongoing appraisal for Historic Landscape Characterisation of Limerick.

5.5.4 Architectural Heritage

Limerick has diverse architectural heritage that is reflected in the significant number of areas of special character, which are defined as Architectural Conservation Areas - and the very high number of Protected Structures. Limerick's built environment legacy stretches back over 5,000 years and more. Scattered throughout the landscape are the remains of deserted medieval settlements, as at Abington and Tomdeeley, near Askeaton. However, it is in towns such as Kilmallock and Newcastle West, Adare and Askeaton, as well as Limerick City itself that the richest physical remains of the medieval past can be found. These range from town walls through to religious foundations, to castles and more modest houses.

Other features, such as the pigeon house at Adare, can be found in both urban and rural locations. The historic built environment makes a significant contribution to the economic prosperity of an area by attracting investment, providing direct and indirect employment, as well as sustaining a traditional skills base.

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides the legislative basis for the protection of architectural heritage. To complement this, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht issued 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2011). These offer assistance and advice to owners and occupiers of Protected Structures and buildings within Architectural Conservation Areas, in addition to offering guidance to Planning Authorities.

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The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires each Planning Authority to include in their Development Plan objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of, special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical or social interest. These buildings and structures are compiled on a register referred to as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The RPS for Limerick City and County currently as listed in Volume 3 includes over 2,000 structures, with a further 345 structures proposed for addition.

A Protected Structure, unless otherwise stated, includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interior and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of that structure. The protection also extends to any features specified as being in the attendant grounds including boundary treatments.

Objective EH O48

Work to Protected Structures

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Protect structures included on the RPS from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- b) Ensure that any development proposals to Protected Structures, their curtilage and setting, shall have regard to the 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' published by the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- c) Ensure that all works are carried out under the supervision of a qualified professional with specialised conservation expertise.
- d) Ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure and/or its setting, is sensitively sited and designed and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout and materials.
- e) Ensure that the form and structural integrity of the Protected Structure is retained in any redevelopment and that the relationship between the Protected Structure and any complex

- of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, or views and vistas from within the grounds of the structure are respected.
- f) Respect the special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials.
 - g) Support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc.) previously existed.
 - h) Ensure that new and adapted uses are compatible with the character and special interest of the Protected Structure.
 - i) Protect the curtilage of protected structures and to refuse planning permission for inappropriate development within the curtilage and attendant grounds, that would adversely impact on the special character of the Protected Structure.
 - j) Protect and retain important elements of built heritage including historic gardens, stone walls, entrance gates and piers and any other associated curtilage features.
 - k) Ensure historic landscapes and gardens associated with Protected Structures are protected from inappropriate development.

Objective EH O49

Energy Efficiency of Protected Structures

It is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's publication on Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings (2010) and the Irish Standard IS EN 16883:2017 Conservation of Cultural Heritage – Guidelines for Improving the Energy Performance of Historic Buildings (2017) and any future advisory documents in assessing proposed works on Protected Structures.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is responsible for carrying out surveys of the architectural heritage on a county by county basis. Following the publication of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) of Limerick and any subsequent Ministerial recommendations, the Council will consider

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further amendments to the Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH survey may be consulted online at buildingsofireland.ie

Objective EH O50

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

It is an objective of the Council to review and update the RPS on foot of any Ministerial recommendations including the NIAH and any future updates. The Ministerial Recommendations, made under Section 53 of the Planning Act, will be taken into account when the Planning Authority is considering proposals for development that would affect the historic or architectural interest of these structures.

5.5.5 Architectural Conservation Areas

Limerick City and many of the towns and villages of Limerick contain areas which exhibit a distinct character and intrinsic qualities based on their historic built form and layout. These are afforded special protection given their contribution collectively to the historical streetscape in areas designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). A full list Limerick's ACAs can be found in Volume 3. Whether an individual building, or a constituent part in an assemblage, each element contributes enormously to our understanding of past society and our knowledge of past building practices. This is a valuable contributor to the character of the places where we live and work and providing areas of atmosphere and ambience for visitors to Limerick. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) defines an ACA as a place, area, group of structures or townscape, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical, social interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of Protected Structures. An ACA may consist of groupings of buildings and streetscapes and associated open spaces.

The protected status afforded by inclusion in an ACA only applies to the exteriors of structures and features of the streetscape. It does not prevent internal changes or rearrangements, provided that these changes do not impact on the external

appearance of the structure. These areas do not preclude development, but the development permitted must be of a high standard and complement the surviving architectural styles.

Objective EH O51

Architectural Conservation Areas

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Protect the character and special interest of an area, which has been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as set out in Volume 3.
- b) Ensure that all development proposals within an ACA be appropriate to the character of the area having regard to the Character briefs for each area.
- c) Ensure that any new development or alteration of a building within an ACA or immediately adjoining an ACA, is appropriate in terms of the proposed design, including scale, height, mass, density, building lines and materials.
- d) Seek a high quality, sensitive design for any new development(s) that are complementary and/or sympathetic to their context and scale, whilst simultaneously encouraging contemporary design which is in harmony with the area. Direction can also be taken from using traditional forms that are then expressed in a contemporary manner, rather than a replica of a historic building style.
- e) Seek the retention of all features that contribute to the character of an ACA, including boundary walls, railings, soft landscaping, traditional paving and street furniture.
- f) Seek to safeguard the Georgian heritage of Limerick.

Objective EH O52

Shopfronts within an ACA

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that all original and traditional shopfronts, which contribute positively to the appearance and character of a streetscape, within an ACA are retained and restored.
- b) Ensure that new shopfronts are well-designed, through the sympathetic use of scale, proportion and materials

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