

**Limerick City and County Council**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Limerick  
City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure  
Strategy**  
**Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

September 2022



**Limerick City and County Council**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment of the  
Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue  
Infrastructure Strategy  
Screening for Strategic Environmental  
Assessment**

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Strategy  
September 2022

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### LUC was commissioned by Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening of the Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy.

1.1 The purpose of screening is to determine whether the Limerick City and Environs GBI Strategy would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. LCCC, as the competent body responsible for the GBI Strategy preparation, is also responsible for ensuring the GBI Strategy is prepared in compliance with Directive 2001/42/EC (i.e. the SEA Directive), as transposed into national legislation.

1.2 This Screening Report has been informed by the screening process as recommended by the EPA's Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening published in 2021.

### Limerick City and Environs GBI Strategy

#### Background and context of the GBI Strategy

6.1 LCCC adopted the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022<sup>1</sup>. The Limerick Development Plan (LDP) sets out objectives, policies, and land use zoning to guide future development within the city and county for the period 2022-2028. The Limerick City and Environs GBI Strategy will supplement and provide additional guidance on the implementation of and compliance with LDP policies in relation to GBI, in particular policy EH 013 (Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy) of the LDP which requires a GBI Strategy to be prepared / provide detailed guidance on the creation / maintenance / enhancement of GBI in Limerick City and Environs.

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<sup>1</sup> Limerick City and County Council (2022) Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 (online) Available at:

<https://www.limerick.ie/council/services/planning-and-property/limerick-development-plan/development-plan>

**6.2** The LDP must align with key legislation, plans and programmes set at the European, national, regional and local levels, including:

#### ■ European

- UN Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> such as Sustainable Cities and Communities, Climate Action, Good Health and Wellbeing.
- The UN Paris Climate Change Agreement<sup>3</sup> which aims to ensure that global temperatures below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C (based on pre-industrial levels).
- EU Directives including the Air Quality Directive, Water Framework Directive<sup>4</sup>, The Birds Directive<sup>5</sup>, The Habitats Directive<sup>6</sup>, and The European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)<sup>7</sup>.
- The EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure<sup>8</sup> which promotes the delivery of green infrastructure across urban and rural areas in all Member States.

#### ■ National

- The Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027 which recognise the value of planning for GBI, such as greenways and blueways, in the same way as other infrastructure, to provide long term benefits. National Policy Objective 58 of the NPF relates to planning for GBI and ecosystem services in the preparation of statutory land use plans, and highlights the importance of considering interrelationships between biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and green spaces.
- The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 which sets a target for Ireland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and to reach net-zero no later than 2050. How this will be achieved is set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021 which includes actions relating to expanding the cycling and walking network, including greenways, to enable a modal shift to more sustainable travel.

#### ■ Regional

- The Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which supports the growth and improvement of strategic scale GBI. Regional Policy

Objectives (RPOs) 124 and 125 seek co-ordination across local authority boundaries to protect and enhance GBI. RPOs 200 and 201 support the development of greenways, blueways and peatways throughout the region. The RSES also includes the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (LSMASP) (p.270-307) which supports the preparation of a GBI Strategy to guide the delivery of parks, active travel routes, and high quality public open spaces in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

- The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy which focuses on reducing car dependency by creating active travel routes through the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

#### ■ Local

- The Limerick Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 - 2024 which focuses on addressing the effects of climate change, including flooding and temperature change. One of the adaptation actions directly refers to the role of GBI in tackling climate change: *"Encourage the implementation of ecosystem and catchment-based approaches to protect against impacts of climate change. Green infrastructure is to be an integral part of this approach"*.
- The Limerick City Council Biodiversity Plan which supports the development and enhancement of wildlife corridors.
- Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Study which supports the development of a 'Green Route Network' by extending the existing greenway routes and creating new greenway routes.

**1.3** The GBI Strategy will also sit alongside other local plans such as the Mungret Masterplan, Cleaves Riverside Masterplan, and the Shannon Tourism Masterplan. The GBI Strategy may inform future plans such as Local Area Plans, masterplans, climate action plans, transport plans or biodiversity plans, however, these will be subject to separate SEA. As the GBI Strategy is a guidance document, any new development relating to or incorporating GBI will be assessed for compliance against the LDP policies and may be subject to site-specific EIA and AA.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2015) *Sustainable Development Goals*

<sup>3</sup> United Nations (2015) *Paris Climate Change Agreement*

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2000) *Water Framework Directive*

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2009) *The Birds Directive*

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (1992) *The Habitats Directive*

<sup>7</sup> Council of Europe (1979) *European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)*

<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2020) *Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital*

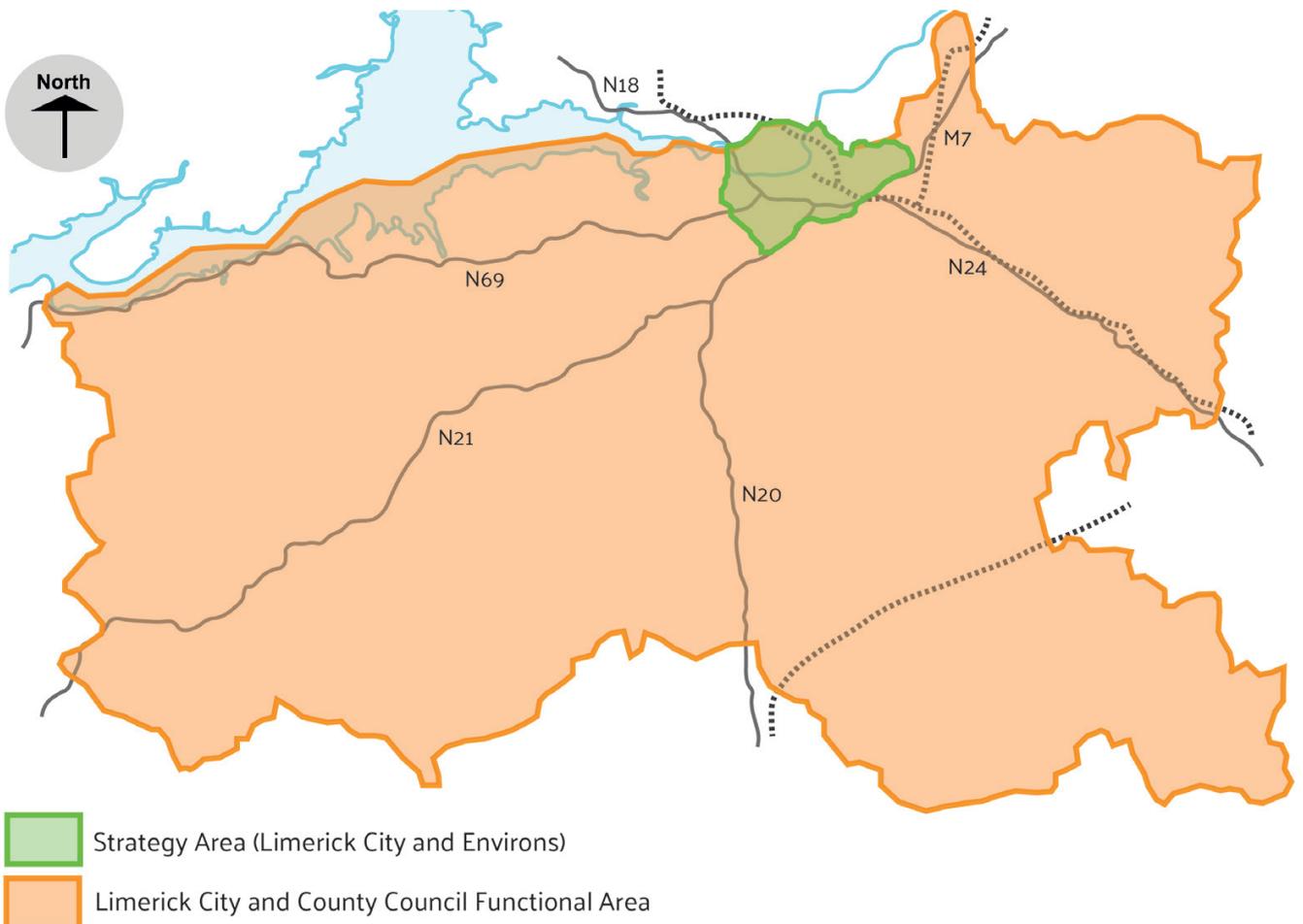
### Geographical area covered by the GBI Strategy

**1.4** Limerick City is the largest urban centre in Ireland's Mid-West and the country's third largest city. Limerick City and Environs has a population of 94,194 people and the entire City and County is home to 194,899 people, which is anticipated to increase to 246,000-256,500 people by 2031. Limerick City and Environs covers an area of approximately 63km<sup>2</sup>. The study area of the GBI Strategy in relation to Limerick City and County is shown on **Figure 1.1**.

**1.5** The GBI Strategy area is characterised by a wealth of green and blue assets, including a network of vibrant and diverse landscapes, a wide range of ecosystems and a unique built, natural and archaeological heritage. The River Shannon forms the principal blue infrastructure asset in the area, supplemented by a network of streams / rivers, canals, flood plains and wetlands which characterise the wider landscape.

Rivers and waterways form an important aspect of Limerick culture, adding to amenity value and biodiversity whilst also proving to be a source of flood risk. Limerick also contains a range of parks, woodlands and open spaces, semi natural open space, hedgerows and agricultural lands. The GBI Strategy area has a network of sites designated for their conservation importance, including the eastern extents of the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA). Additional designated sites include Fergus Estuary and Inner Shannon, North Shore, Inner Shannon Estuary, South Shore, Knockalisheen Marsh and Loughmore Common Turlough Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs).

Figure 1.1: Geographical area covered by the GBI Strategy



## Purpose of the GBI Strategy

**1.6** The purpose of the GBI Strategy is to supplement and provide additional guidance on the implementation of and compliance with LDP policies in relation to creating / enhancing / maintaining GBI. The GBI Strategy does not set out policies, projects, plans or specific measures for GBI delivery.

## Content of the GBI Strategy

**1.7** The GBI Strategy is underpinned by the strategic vision outlined in the LDP:

### Limerick – A Green City Region on the Waterfront

“By 2030, Limerick will become a green City region on the Shannon Estuary connected through people and places. This will be achieved through engagement, innovation and resilient urban development and self-sustaining rural communities”.

**1.8** The aim of the GBI Strategy is to inform and guide the planning and management of a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces within Limerick City and its Environs, helping to drive the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. The GBI Strategy provides cross-cutting, strategic guidance and identifies ten ‘Priority Actions’ for GBI in Limerick City and Environs during the LDP period:

1. Embed GBI in the implementation of public and private projects.
2. Enhance existing open space provision with the Strategy Area.
3. Create new formal parks and natural & semi-natural parks to address green space deficiencies.
4. Protect, value and enhance amenity green space by applying an appropriate management approach.
5. Enhance, protect and develop the network of blueways.
6. Integrate GBI in the delivery of the network of active travel routes.
7. Enhance recreational access to the River Shannon and tributaries.
8. Develop Tree and Biodiversity Strategies for the Strategy Area.
9. Promote community engagement and raise public awareness of the development of GBI.

10. Incorporate smart mechanisms of connecting GBI initiatives with the public.

## Stage of the GBI Strategy

**1.9** The Draft GBI Strategy, and this associated SEA Screening Report, will be published for consultation from 17<sup>th</sup> September to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The Final GBI Strategy is anticipated to be prepared by Q4 2022.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

**1.10** The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is a requirement of the SEA [Directive 2001/42/EC](#) which requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes (P/P)<sup>9</sup> which are likely to have significant positive or negative effects on the environment.

The purpose of SEA, as defined in Article 1 of the SEA Directive, “is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”

**1.11** In Ireland, the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation through:

- [S.I. No. 435 of 2004](#) (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by [S.I. No. 200 of 2011](#) (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).
- [S.I. No. 436 of 2004](#) (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended by [S.I. No. 201 of 2011](#) (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

**1.12** [S.I. No. 436 of 2004](#), as amended, provides a clear hierarchy of land use plans requiring mandatory SEA including County and City Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Planning Schemes for Strategic Development Zones. [S.I. No. 435 of 2004](#), as amended, encapsulates all other types of plans and programmes in the land use planning sector, and as such the GBI Strategy, will be assessed under the

<sup>9</sup> Plans and Programmes should also be read to include the full range of strategies, frameworks and studies.

requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended (hereafter referred to as the 'SEA Regulations').

### Stages in SEA process

**1.13** SEA comprises the following principal stages:

- 1. Screening (current stage):** Determine whether the P/P is likely to result in significant environmental effects.
  - a.** If the P/P falls within the remit of the SEA Regulations and/or there is uncertainty about whether the P/P may give rise to significant effects, SEA Scoping will be required.
  - b.** If the P/P does not fall within the remit of the SEA Regulations, SEA will not be required.
- 2. Scoping:** Consultation with the Environmental Authorities on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment.
- 3. Environmental Report:** An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the P/P.
- 4. Consultation** on the draft Environmental Report.
- 5. Evaluation** of the submissions and observations made on the draft Environmental Report prior to finalising the P/P.
- 6.** Issuing of an **SEA Statement** identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the final P/P.

#### Stage 1: Screening

**1.14** In deciding whether a P/P is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, as also set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. The Screening process comprises three principal stages – applicability, screening and determination:

- **Stage 1: Applicability:** To determine if the GBI Strategy falls within the scope of the SEA Directive and transposing legislation, and to confirm if it constitutes a P/P that requires mandatory SEA (see **Chapter 2**).
- **Stage 2: Screening:** To determine the characteristics of the GBI Strategy and to identify whether the P/P may give rise to significant effects (see **Chapter 3**).
- **Stage 3: Determination:** As soon as practicable after making the final determination as to whether SEA is required or not, the decision should be made available on the Council's website for public inspection and a copy of the final determination sent to the SEA Environmental

Authorities notified during screening (requirement to be met at a later stage).

### Appropriate Assessment

**1.15** SEA does not stand alone in environmental assessments of P/P. The Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening stage is particularly important as a determination on the need for AA is required before SEA screening can be completed. There is a high level of overlap between the SEA process and the AA process, in particular relating to biodiversity, human health, water, etc.

**1.16** Screening for AA was undertaken in September 2022 which concluded that there is potential for Likely Significant Effects on the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA and Lower River Shannon SAC. A full AA was also undertaken in September 2022 with the findings reported in a Natura Impact Statement (the Screening and AA findings are reported in a single document). The AA concluded that, providing that the avoidance and mitigation safeguards outlined in Chapter 4 of the Natura Impact Statement are implemented successfully, adverse effects on the integrity of the River Fergus Estuaries SPA and Lower River Shannon SAC will be avoided, both alone and in-combination with other P/P.

**1.17** The Screening and Appropriate Assessment Report accompanies the GBI Strategy and this SEA Screening Report.

### Structure of the Screening Report

**1.18** This chapter has described the background, purpose, and content of the GBI Strategy, and the requirement to undertake SEA screening. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections (in line with the three principal stages in the Screening process):

- **Chapter 2** sets out the applicability assessment to determine whether the GBI Strategy falls within the scope of the SEA Directive and transposing legislation.
- **Chapter 3** outlines the Screening assessment undertaken to identify whether the GBI Strategy is likely to have any significant environmental effects.
- **Chapter 4** describes the next steps to be undertaken in the SEA Screening of the GBI Strategy.

## Chapter 2

### Stage 1: Applicability

This chapter sets out the applicability assessment to determine whether the GBI Strategy falls within the scope of the SEA Directive and transposing legislation.

Table 2.1: Applicability of GBI Strategy for SEA

Applicability of GBI Strategy for SEA		
<b>Section 1: General details</b>		
Type and title of P/P	Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy	
Name of P/P maker	Limerick City and County Council (LCCC)	
Date	July 2022	
<b>Section 2: Status of the P/P maker</b>		
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	Yes	The GBI Strategy has been prepared by LUC on behalf of Limerick City and County Council.
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	Yes	The GBI Strategy has been prepared to fulfil the Council's objective outlined in the LDP policy EH 013 (Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy) which requires a GBI Strategy to be prepared to provide detailed guidance on the creation / maintenance of GBI.
<b>Section 3: Nature of the P/P</b>		
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	Yes	The GBI Strategy falls within the town and country planning category covered by the SEA Directive and transposing legislation.
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	No	The purpose of the Strategy is to provide further detail and guidance for the creation / maintenance of the GBI network as supported by the policies in the LDP, principally policies EH 012 (Blue Green Infrastructure) and EH 013 (Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy). The GBI Strategy also outlines the key

Applicability of GBI Strategy for SEA		
		<p>principles developers should have regard to when integrating GBI in new developments to ensure compliance with relevant policies in the LDP.</p> <p>The GBI Strategy includes ten 'Priority Actions' (see <b>Chapter 1</b>) which outline potential proposals and projects for enhancing GBI, identifying the spatial scale (from site to landscape), life stage and delivery partners. However, the Priority Actions are designed to support the delivery of GBI through the LDP and to act as an initial reference point for further detailed feasibility and masterplanning work. The proposals and projects outlined under the Priority Actions are indicative of the type of initiatives and developments that could be undertaken to enhance the GBI network and do not set a framework for the future development of projects or other activities. Development proposals for GBI will be assessed for compliance with the LDP policies and may be required to undertake site-specific EIA and AA, depending on the scale and nature of the proposal. Furthermore, the GBI Strategy does not set out policies, plans, targets / goals, legal requirements, or a consenting regime for GBI delivery nor does it allocate resources for GBI delivery.</p> <p>Therefore, the GBI Strategy does not set the framework for future development consents for projects listed in Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive.</p>
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	Yes	<p>Screening for Appropriate Assessment was undertaken in September 2022 which concluded that there is potential for Likely Significant Effects on the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA and Lower River Shannon SAC. A full Appropriate Assessment was also undertaken in September 2022 with the findings reported in a Natura Impact Statement (the Screening and Appropriate Assessment findings are reported in a single document). The AA concluded that, providing that the avoidance and mitigation safeguards outlined in Chapter 4 of the Natura Impact Statement are implemented successfully, adverse effects on the integrity of the River Fergus Estuaries SPA and Lower River Shannon SAC will be avoided, both alone and in-combination with other P/P.</p>
Section 4: Exemptions		
Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?	No	The GBI Strategy is not a P/P of a type exempted from SEA.
Section 5: Conclusion		
Summarise the relevant information informing the assessment and the main reasons the P/P <b>does or does not fall within the scope of the SEA Directive.</b>		<p>Although it falls within the town and country planning category in the SEA Directive, it does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA. However, the GBI Strategy is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site leading to a requirement for Article 6 assessment.</p> <p><b>The GBI Strategy therefore falls within the scope of the SEA Directive and is deemed to require SEA Screening.</b></p>

## Chapter 3

### Stage 2: Screening

This chapter sets out the screening assessment to determine the characteristics of the GBI Strategy and to identify whether the GBI Strategy may give rise to significant environmental effects.

**3.1** This section of the report includes consideration of the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, transposed into national legislation. These qualitative criteria are used to assist in the determination as to whether the GBI Strategy is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

#### Consideration of the SEA screening criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive

**Criteria 1 - The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:**

**The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources**

**3.2** The GBI Strategy provides guidance on the provision of GBI giving more detail to the policies contained in the LDP. These policies have been subject to SEA. The GBI Strategy identifies ten Priority Actions (see **Chapter 1**) which outline potential proposals and projects for enhancing GBI, identifying the spatial scale (from site to landscape), life stage and delivery partners. However, the Priority Actions are designed to support the delivery of GBI through the LDP and to act as an initial reference point for further detailed feasibility and masterplanning work. The proposals and projects outlined under the Priority Actions are indicative of the type of initiatives and developments that could be undertaken to enhance the GBI network and do not set a framework for the future development of projects or other activities. Development proposals for GBI will be assessed for compliance with the LDP policies and may be required to

undertake site-specific EIA and AA, depending on the scale and nature of the proposal. Furthermore, the GBI Strategy does not set out policies, plans, targets / goals, legal requirements, or a consenting regime for GBI delivery nor does it allocate resources for GBI delivery.

### **The degree to which the plan influences other plans including those in a hierarchy**

**3.3** The guidance in the GBI Strategy supplements the policies in the LDP 2022-2028. Therefore, it is likely to inform the preparation of Local Area Plans, masterplans and development briefs prepared by the Council. The GBI Strategy may also inform other future plans prepared by LCCC such as climate action plans, transport plans or biodiversity plans, which will be subject to SEA and AA.

### **The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development**

**3.4** GBI plays a vital role in improving people's quality of life. The GBI network is a multi-functional resource that includes a range of natural and semi-natural open spaces such as parks and gardens, but also allotments, woodlands, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing fields, coastal habitats, footpaths, cycle routes and water courses. It links places within and beyond the City and Environs area and encourages active travel and improved accessibility to nature, whilst also providing benefits to biodiversity. In particular, promoting active travel is a vital component of sustainable development as it encourages a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions derived from vehicles. Furthermore, the development of GBI contributes towards minimising the effects of climate change, by sequestering carbon and providing adaptation measures such as cooling, reducing flood risk etc.

**3.5** The GBI Strategy is aligned with the environmental and sustainability objectives set out in the LDP 2022-2028 which seeks to provide GBI as part of sustainable development across the City and Environs area. The GBI Strategy provides guidance on the implementation of and compliance with LDP policies which will help ensure that new developments provide the appropriate level and type of GBI needed.

### **Environmental problems relevant to the plan**

**3.6** The delivery of the aims of the GBI Strategy through the LDP policies is likely to have a positive impact helping to address environmental problems and GBI deficiencies within Limerick City and Environs. However, existing environmental problems, such as disturbance of biodiversity may be further exacerbated due to more people visiting wildlife and natural areas as a result of improved connectivity and accessibility. These effects are not directly attributable to the GBI Strategy

as it is supplementary guidance to the LDP. These effects have been considered and assessed as part of the SEA of the LDP.

### **The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)**

**3.7** The GBI Strategy will help support the implementation of plans and programmes related to EU environmental legislation through the delivery of the LDP policies, including the Air Quality Directive, Water Framework Directive, The Birds Directive, The Habitats Directive, the European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), UN Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Criteria 2 - Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:**

#### **The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects**

**3.8** The delivery of the aims of the GBI Strategy through the LDP policies is likely to deliver positive effects including:

- improving residents and visitors physical and mental health;
- providing aesthetic value and reinforcing sense of place;
- providing recreational, leisure and educational opportunities;
- improving air quality;
- reducing noise pollution;
- improving water quality;
- reducing flood risk;
- enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience;
- providing opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion;
- climate change mitigation such as carbon sequestration;
- climate change adaptation such as providing cooling.

**3.9** It is likely that these effects will be permanent in nature and experienced in the short-term (e.g. from maintaining existing open spaces; protecting flood plains from inappropriate development), medium-term (e.g. from integrating GBI into new development; creating new accessible green space and active travel routes; restoring riparian areas), and in the long-term (e.g. from the delivery of a district level park within the Groody Valley). There may also

be negative effects from the development of new active travel routes, however, these are likely to be experienced in the short-term.

**3.10** These effects are not directly attributable to the GBI Strategy as it is supplementary guidance to the LDP. Therefore, the potential effects of creating / enhancing / maintaining GBI have been considered and assessed as part of the SEA of the LDP. Development proposals for GBI will be assessed for compliance with the LDP policies and may be required to undertake site-specific EIA and AA, depending on the scale and nature of the proposal.

#### **The cumulative nature of the effects**

**3.11** The GBI Strategy has a City and Environs-wide application, providing guidance to support the implementation of the LDP policies. The cumulative effect of creating / enhancing / maintaining GBI will generally be positive, e.g. reduced transport-related emissions, improved air quality, reduced risk of flooding, and enhanced biodiversity resilience. As the GBI Strategy supplements the LDP, the potential cumulative effects of creating / enhancing / maintaining GBI have been fully assessed in the SEA of the LDP policies.

#### **The transboundary nature of the effects**

**3.12** The effects of the GBI Strategy are most likely to be experienced within Limerick City and Environs but may also be felt more widely in the county.

#### **The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)**

**3.13** It is not envisaged that there will be any risks to human health or the environment arising from the GBI Strategy. Rather, the delivery of GBI through the LDP as supported by the GBI Strategy will improve levels of human health by increasing activity levels, reducing air pollution and providing space for recreation and leisure.

#### **The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)**

**3.14** The GBI Strategy provides additional guidance to the policies in the LDP for developments in Limerick City and Environs. The size of population that may potentially be affected by the GBI Strategy would be the population of the City and Environs. GBI provision could have positive effects on communities in specific parts of the City and Environs, as well as being felt more widely in the county. The GBI Strategy outlines various opportunities to incorporate or enhance GBI within Limerick City and Environs. These opportunities vary in scale from site to landscape scale. However, as the GBI Strategy is a guidance document, any new development

relating to or incorporating GBI will be assessed for compliance against the LDP policies and may be subject to site-specific EIA and AA.

#### **The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, (b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, (c) intensive land-use**

**3.15** The GBI Strategy is applicable to the Limerick City and Environs which contains several internationally, nationally and locally protected areas for biodiversity and heritage. Policies in the LDP seek to ensure the sustainable development of Limerick City and County through the provision of GBI, and the protection and enhancement of natural and heritage assets. The GBI Strategy supports these policies however, it does not set a framework for future development, and as such will not result in changes to the landscape, land-use or exceed environmental parameters.

#### **The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status**

**3.16** Policies in the LDP seek to protect areas and landscapes with recognised protection status (e.g., heritage assets, designated wildlife sites). The GBI Strategy supports these policies however, it does not set out the policy framework for protecting and enhancing these areas. It provides guidance on ensuring their integrity is maintained and enhanced as part of GBI projects through appropriate delivery mechanisms.

### **Draft determination**

The draft determination on the need for SEA, based on the review against the environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, **is that SEA is not required** as the purpose of the GBI Strategy is to supplement and provide additional guidance to inform the LDP policies on creating / enhancing / maintaining GBI, which have already been assessed as part of the SEA of the LDP. Furthermore, the GBI Strategy does not set out policies, plans, targets / goals, legal requirements, or a consenting regime for GBI delivery nor does it allocate resources for GBI delivery. The GBI Strategy may inform other future plans prepared by LCCC such as Local Area Plans, climate action plans, transport plans or biodiversity plans, however, these will be subject to separate SEA and AA. As the GBI Strategy is a guidance document, any new development relating to or incorporating GBI will be assessed for

compliance against the LDP policies and may be subject to site-specific EIA and AA.

## Statutory consultation

**3.17** Prior to finalising the determination on the need for SEA, it is a statutory requirement to consult with the SEA Environmental Authorities:

- Environmental Protection Agency.
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications.

**3.18** In addition to the above the following adjoining local authorities will also be notified:

- Clare County Council;
- Tipperary County Council; and
- Cork County Council.

**3.19** Notice of this draft Screening Report will be issued to the Environmental Authorities and adjoining local authorities for their consideration for a four-week period from 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Following the consultation period, any submissions or observations will be considered prior to making the final determination.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion and next steps

**This chapter presents the conclusion to the SEA screening assessment and outlines the next steps for consultation on the SEA Screening Report.**

**4.1** This Screening Report was prepared in order to determine the need for a SEA of the GBI Strategy. The draft determination on the need for SEA review, based on the review against the environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, **is that SEA is not required** as the purpose of the GBI Strategy is to supplement and provide additional guidance to inform the LDP policies on creating / enhancing / maintaining GBI, which have already been assessed as part of the SEA of the LDP.

**4.2** Furthermore, the GBI Strategy does not set out policies, plans, targets / goals, legal requirements, or a consenting regime for GBI delivery nor does it allocate resources for GBI delivery. The GBI Strategy may inform other future plans prepared by LCCC such as Local Area Plans, climate action plans, transport plans or biodiversity plans, however, these will be subject to separate SEA and AA. As the GBI Strategy is a guidance document, any new development relating to or incorporating GBI will be assessed for compliance against the LDP policies and may be subject to site-specific EIA and AA.

## Statutory consultation

**4.3** In accordance with the SEA Directive and transposing legislation, submissions or observations in relation to whether or not the GBI Strategy requires SEA may be made to LCCC by:

- submitting your response through the dedicated website: <https://mypoint.limerick.ie>
- emailing [gbi@limerick.ie](mailto:gbi@limerick.ie)
- writing to the following address:
  - Mr. David Ryan, Staff Officer, Planning,  
Environment and Place-Making Directorate,  
Limerick City and County Council, County Hall,  
Dooradoyle, Limerick.

This SEA Screening Report is being issued to the Environmental Authorities and adjoining local authorities for a four-week period from 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

## Next steps

**4.4** The submissions or observations received as part of the consultation process will be included and addressed in the final Screening Report and a final determination as to whether the GBI Strategy requires SEA will be issued by LCCC.

LUC

September 2022