

**From:** [John Hardiman](#)  
**To:** [Forward Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Submission on Castleconnell Local Area Plan  
**Date:** Monday 28 March 2022 19:53:16  
**Importance:** High

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Hello folks

[REDACTED]

I'm sending this email both as chair of Castleconnell Tidy Towns and as a Castleconnell resident for all my 59 + years

**Population and Housing** *The population of the Castleconnell was 2107 in the 2016 Census. The population growth target for the village is a population of 2697 people by 2028 as proposed in the Draft Limerick Development Plan 2022—2028. This additional growth requires 206 residential units. To encourage compact growth and to strengthen the core of Castleconnell, residential development should be encouraged within the existing settlement on brownfield sites, infill sites and re-use of existing housing stock/vacant buildings as a preference to greenfield sites. New residential areas should be connected, attractive and well designed with a range of adaptable dwelling types and densities, creating a sense of place and a high quality public realm. Continued population growth will create pressure on the housing market and on certain services and infrastructure, including childcare, schools, transport, water, wastewater, recreation and amenity.*

**Input:** Prior to adding additional housing units/estates, can we ensure that any expansions or new housing include mandatory and adequate green spaces for children to play. Castlerock is an excellent example of green spaces, but it does lack a playground which should ideally be added before the latest phase in Castlerock is completed. Bruach Na Sionna is to our untrained eye, a perfect example of how not to design a housing estate. Its complete lack of amenity might be ok, if the houses and apartments were high end stock like that seen in the Dublin Docklands, but unfortunately that is not the case. Even at this late stage, could council owned land adjacent to Bruach Na Sionna be used to provide some areas for children to play and pass the time. If we don't act now, we are creating a ghetto for the next generation, which would be an appalling outcome.

**Retail, Commercial, Employment and Enterprise** *Castleconnell is a service centre for its own community with a mix of retail and services. In recent years, the village has served as home to many commuters to Limerick City. The location of the village on the banks of the Shannon has long made Castleconnell an attractive area for tourism and tourist accommodation is available in the Castle Oaks House Hotel, Holiday Village and Country Club and in a number of Bed and Breakfast establishments located throughout the village and surrounding area. The*

*development of business, enterprise and employment in the village and any expansion of existing facilities needs to be planned and managed to ensure an appropriate mix of facilities to sustain a vibrant community. The proposed plan will need to examine and identify any shortfalls in the provision of services and allow for the adequate zoning of lands to support this type of development.*

**Input:** The highly visible failure of the Castle Center retail outlet opportunity, could be seen to indicate that there is not demand in Castleconnell Village for additional commercial units. However, we feel that having at least a handful of commercial properties available for rent would likely lead to increased commercial activity. There are opportunities for repurposing of the former Worrals Inn and Castleconnell Railway station as two such possibilities. A wonderful example of real vision can be seen with the creation of a terrific Enable Ireland facility on a long perceived piece of waste ground. We need commercial properties and shops, or our community will be at risk of the decline impacting a high percentage of rural Ireland. The inclusion of Castleconnell as a primary or spur stop on a planned Greenway emanating from UL could add some necessary footfall to make small business viable. A perfect example of this could be the two coffee shops that have opened in the last few years.

**Community, Amenity and Recreation** *Community infrastructure plays a vital role in contributing to the quality of life for all. The physical environment should develop in such a way that it facilitates and does not obstruct the healthy functioning of the community and cultural life. Services and amenities including crèches, schools, amenities, recreation and other community facilities should be provided in tandem with residential development.*

**Input:** Castleconnell needs funding such a Town and Village Renewal or Leader to allow it to refurbish and enhance our historic village hall, so that it could facilitate a variety of activities, particularly in the Winter and Spring months. Our village needs a basketball court as this is a sport that is active in all local secondary schools. More amenities should be added on the Shannon river to allow boating access (in all its guises) to people of all abilities. See previous section on comment in relation to the proposed greenway.

**Built and Natural Heritage** *Castleconnell has many fine buildings/ structures, monuments and the River Shannon contributes to the heritage and distinctiveness of village in terms of place-making and the identity of the area. There are 37 Protected Structures in the village and 30 of these are also listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. There are numerous sites listed on the Record of Monuments and Places for their archaeological significance. Castleconnell's heritage is an important consideration to be incorporated in new developments in order to conserve the area's character and to create a 'sense of place'. Conservation and enhancement of the area's heritage assets including green/blue infrastructure and biodiversity will contribute to the attractiveness of Castleconnell as a desirable place to live, shop and work and for communities to take pride in.*

**Input:** It would be helpful if the existing Nature Trail from the Playground in a loop to the left of the footbridge could be surfaced with materials that were free draining and of a sufficient quality that they can be used for children's buggies, wheelchairs etc. If sufficient funding could be found, it would be terrific to see the 3 existing towers of the >1000 year old Castleconnell Castle could be secured for future generations (similar to the work carried out at the Adare Desmond

Castle or the Desmond Castle in Askeaton)

**Climate Adaptation and Mitigation** *The effects of climate change pose a serious threat to quality of life, communities, businesses, the environment and biodiversity. Limerick City and County Council's Climate Change Adaption Strategy.*

**Input:** As communities hear more and more about the need to change how we heat and insulate our homes, it would be most helpful if the 3 National Schools, locals creches and the community Hall were given significant funding to retrofit their buildings with the latest SEAI recommendations on same. If our community could see the success of such measures for the benefit of our children (warm classrooms), it might encourage locals to take the big step themselves. In turn this could lead to a construction/retrofit/plumbing boom in the locality

**Active Travel, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities** *National and Regional Transport Policy seeks to support the transition to a low carbon society and emphasises the need to reduce the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, car-pooling, cycling and walking. Travel trends for Castleconnell identify a dependency on car travel. The village experiences traffic congestion at times. The potential for growth in Castleconnell will lead to additional demands on roads, water supply and sewerage treatment, energy supplies and telecommunication networks. The increased demand for services must be considered in the content of reducing carbon emissions and promoting a more sustainable way of living, travelling and working.*

**Input:** In the 60s and 70s Castleconnell had a cycling culture for all age groups. This is something that should be very actively encouraged as a means of going to school, attending training sessions at Ahane GAA, Lisnagry FC, Castleconnell Boat Club etc. Amenity to securely lock bikes should be provided at all clubhouses and National Schools. We need to see additional support of improvements to the Limerick to Ballybrophy line, so that an evening service can be provided that would work for commuters. Instal solar panels on all 3 national schools as a visible encouragement of a go forward energy source. We need to consider the possibility of a one-way system of traffic in the village triangle of roads and we most certainly need to provide parking off the streets to allow increased pedestrianisation. We also need to aspire to have Castleconnell as a community for all abilities. Today families with buggies, the elderly and those of limited mobility cannot move safely even withing a 100 meters radius of the village centre. Follow through on stuff. We saw the erection of 4 garish CCTV poles that would provide increased security. Apparently only 2 are connected and none of the feeds are being monitored real-time, thus eliminating the primary aim of CCTV, to prevent crime / antisocial behaviour in the first place.

**Surface Water Drainage and Flooding** *Flood risk is a key consideration in preparing a LAP. The Flood Risk Guidelines seek to ensure that development avoids flood risk, substitute less vulnerable uses when avoidance is not possible, and mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible. The National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) mapping, published by the Office of Public Works, has identified Flood Zones in Castleconnell. Limerick City and County Council is currently at the initial stage of advancing a flood relief scheme for the village.*

**Input:** Those of us impacted severely for the 2009 and 2015 (once in a generation!) floods, would like to see the CFRAM proposals moved forward at a more urgent pace that what appears to be the case today.

**Regards**

*John Hardiman*

Chair of Castleconnell Tidy Towns and Meadowbrook resident