

# ABBEYFEALE LOCAL AREA PLAN



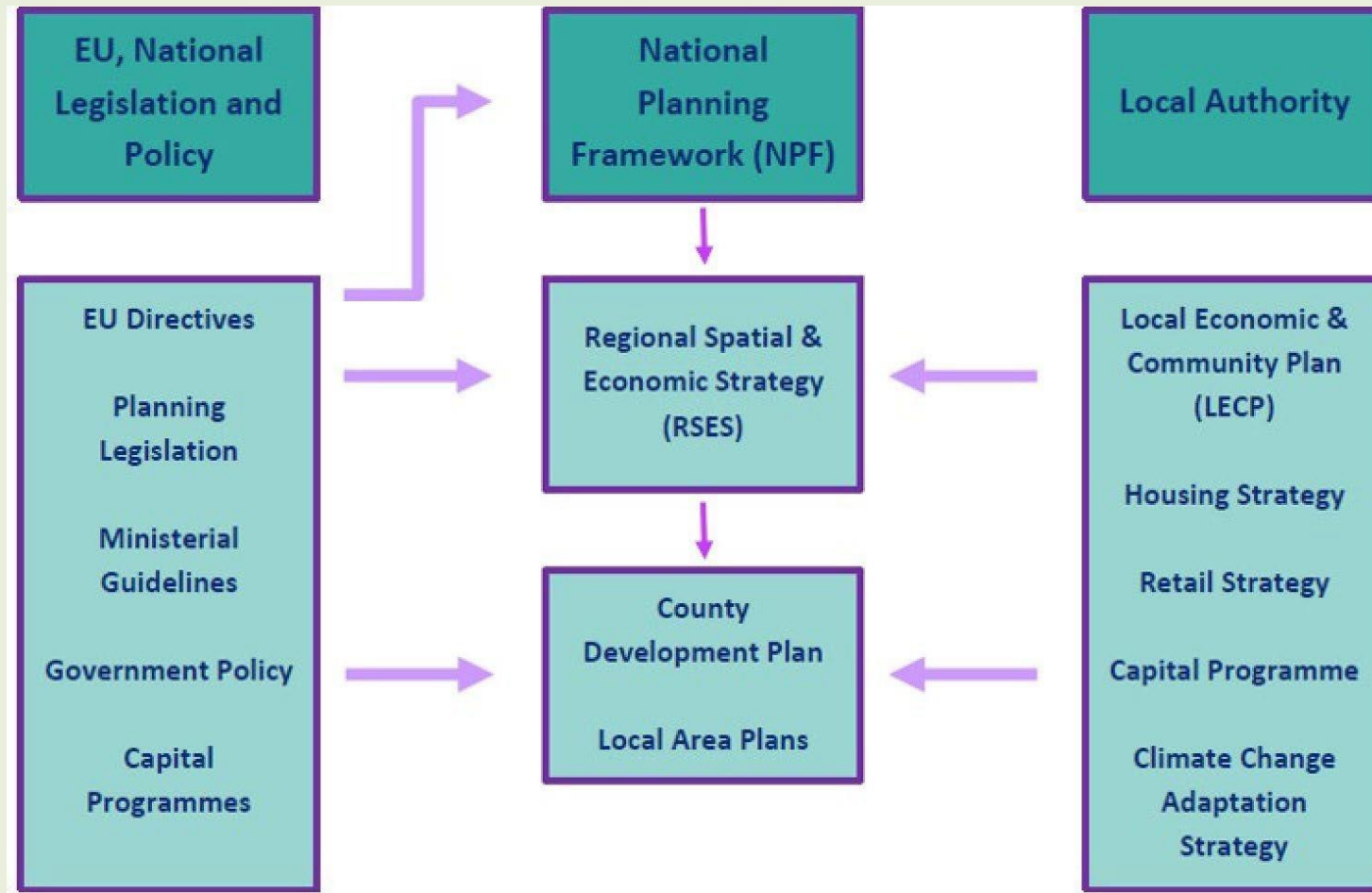
Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae **Luimnigh**

**Limerick City**  
& County Council

## Pre-Draft Issues Paper



## Context of Local Area Plan



# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan

## Introduction

Limerick City and County Council is commencing the preparation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Abbeyfeale. The purpose of this LAP is to set out a land use strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area incorporating a framework for the development of transportation, housing, retail, heritage, employment, social and community facilities.

The existing Abbeyfeale LAP was extended, until 2024 under Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); therefore, a new plan is now required to replace the existing LAP.

## What is a Local Area Plan?

The Local Area Plan (LAP) is a statutory document prepared by the Planning Authority in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

A Local Area Plan (LAP) is a land-use plan, which sets out the development strategy for an area within the lifetime of the plan. The plan contains an overall vision for the area and includes specific land use objectives to guide future development to achieve this vision.

The new LAP will consider the current context of Abbeyfeale in terms of population trends, socio economic factors, land use changes, the need for distribution of facilities and amenities, availability of services and infrastructure, along with heritage and environmental considerations.

The LAP must be consistent with the objectives of the higher order plans, including the Limerick Development Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region and the National Planning Framework.

The LAP will consist of a written statement and maps indicating objectives for zoning of land, residential development and delivery of

community infrastructure, heritage and culture, open space and recreation, transport. As part of the proposed plan, a new zoning map will be prepared to take account of current and future population projections for Abbeyfeale, subject to environmental and other planning considerations.

## Key issues

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### Population and Housing

Abbeyfeale has displayed negligible population growth since 2011 with a 0.8% increase to 2,023 (Census 2016). 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

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amenity. The Core Strategy of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 provides for a population projection of 566 (2,589-total) persons for Abbeyfeale over the plan period, which equates to approximately 211 new houses. The Council are required to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the correct locations to meet housing and population targets.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. What are the priorities for housing in Abbeyfeale, in terms of location, size and type of housing?

Q. Are more town centre apartments needed, family housing or specialist housing, for example older people?

## **Compact Growth, Key Development Area / Regeneration**

The sustainable growth of compact urban settlements is a top priority of the national planning policy, with emphasis on the

regeneration and repopulation of urban cores and built-up areas. This approach focuses on maximizing the use of infill, vacant and underutilized sites and of buildings that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, amenities, jobs and services.

The potential exists for regeneration within the town core particularly lands to rear of Main Street and Church Street and lands south of Main Street. The redevelopment of central brownfield sites have the potential to bring about transformative change in Abbeyfeale. The provisions of the new LAP must consider the cumulative impacts of regeneration and redevelopment of major sites in tandem and ensure that commensurate social, community and cultural facilities are provided to both facilitate and address projected population growth.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. Where in Abbeyfeale should additional population and economic growth be focused?

Q. Where are the key opportunity sites suitable for (re)development in Abbeyfeale?

Q. How can we encourage the reuse of vacant properties and address dereliction to revitalise the town centre, so that they are vibrant, welcoming, attractive places to live and work in, visit and shop?

## **Urban Design and Placemaking**

Urban Design involves examining all elements that contribute to a place (buildings, uses, streets, footpaths, open spaces) and ensuring that those elements create an attractive and distinct environment. Public realm is defined as all external spaces that are publicly accessible, including streets, parking areas, footpaths, squares and parks. A high-quality public realm enhances the character of any place and



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encourages people to utilise and enjoy public spaces, thereby contributing to placemaking and the overall vitality of an area. Measures to improve the public realm can include harmonising signage and reducing overall visual clutter by adopting a consistent approach in terms of street furniture, lighting and paving.

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is a key component of Project Ireland 2040. Abbeyfeale has been awarded funding for projects to address dereliction, provide housing and bring life back to the town.

Abbeyfeale was one of the towns selected for funding under the first phase of the Town Centre First Plan to develop its own unique masterplan. This initiative is a key part of Our Rural Future – the Government’s ambitious five year strategy designed to reimagine and revitalise Rural Ireland.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. What measures, in your opinion can be facilitated to address dereliction in Abbeyfeale?

Q. What urban design standards should apply in Abbeyfeale?

Q. Is there adequate provision of street furniture in the town? e.g. public seating, planters?

Q. What are the unique features of Abbeyfeale urban environment that should inform future policy and the TCF masterplan?

## **Economic and Employment**

Historically a market town, core employment in Abbeyfeale is concentrated in a small number of manufacturing enterprises, the largest being Kostal, a German owned car components company. Other businesses located in the Abbeyfeale Business Park include Component Inter-Technologies Ireland Ltd, Gerard Daniels Worldwide Cloth Wire, and Feale Fit Health and Fitness.

The RSES seeks to support and grow the role of Abbeyfeale in terms of the strong sub-regional interdependencies between Newcastle West, Listowel, Rathkeale and Abbeyfeale, which provides a strategic opportunity for further collaboration and enhanced economic growth, such as opportunities for joint projects across the region.

A key focus of the Local Area Plan is to unlock new opportunities for employment and support enterprise and innovation through collaboration and the development of supporting infrastructure.

The Atlantic Economic Corridor (Kerry to Donegal) has the potential to act as a key enabler for the regional growth objectives of the National Planning Framework. The improvement of regional connectivity, linking together the major urban areas to allow the Atlantic Economic Corridor to achieve its potential, is a major priority.

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## *Questions to consider*

Q. Is there sufficiently zoned Enterprise and Employment land in the current zoning plans and how can the Local Area Plan promote economic development within Abbeyfeale?

Q. What, in your opinion, are the economic strengths and competitive advantages of Abbeyfeale?

Q. How can planning policy support and enhance synergies with adjoining settlements?

Q. How can the Local Area Plan support and facilitate new business and employment? e.g. identify opportunity sites and specific objectives for underutilised areas of the town, identification of opportunities for investment in incubation and innovation, remote working etc.

## **Town Centre and Retail**

A successful town centre includes a retail sector, which plays a crucial role in terms of

economic growth and development, in stimulating regeneration and renewal of the town centres thereby contributing to their overall economic viability and delivery of high-quality public realms and built environment.

Abbeyfeale is home to a mix of retail and commercial developments. The development of retail and commercial services in the area and any expansion of existing facilities needs to be planned and managed to ensure the appropriate mix and location of facilities while continuing to enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

The new plan will need to examine and identify any shortfalls in the provision of services and allow for the adequate zoning of lands to facilitate this type of development.

## *Questions to consider*

Q. How can we revitalise our town centres so that they are vibrant, welcoming, attractive places to live and work in, visit and shop?

Q. Are there deficiencies in the existing retail provision within the Town?

## **Tourism and Recreation**

Abbeyfeale has significant tourism potential; the town and community of Abbeyfeale derives its name from the Irish wording; Mainistir na Féile, meaning "Abbey of the Feale" which has long been recognised as a bustling market town steeped in history and heritage situated on the River Feale in the foothills of the Mullaghareirk Mountains recognised as a great spot for fishing. Abbeyfeale is the westernmost town in the county and is around 900 years old.

The town heritage trail is waymarked by a series of plaques that have been erected throughout the town in The Square, Main Street, Church

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Street and at the site of the old railway station on the Limerick Greenway. Following the old Limerick to Kerry railway line, the Greenway seamlessly links the West Limerick landscape with Abbeyfeale and some of the country's most historic sites. Abbeyfeale has a broad range of public amenity, sports and recreational facilities and is home to annual traditional Irish music and singing festivals, and a voluntary run theatre, which hosts plays, children's workshops, youth theatre, and many other community events all year round.

The new Local Area Plan has a key role in the protection of tourism assets and landscape whilst enabling appropriate tourism development. 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 community and cultural life.

## *Questions to consider*

Q. What can the Plan do to support tourism in Abbeyfeale?

Q. Are there areas that have the potential to be developed for tourism and recreational purposes?

Q. Are there specific areas of tourism that should be targeted e.g. heritage, leisure, activity tourism, and how can the Local Area Plan facilitate these?

Q. How can Abbeyfeale benefit from the success of the Limerick Greenway?

## **Movement and Transport**

Abbeyfeale town is located in the south west of Ireland close to the Kerry border, some 21 km from Newcastle West on the N21 – the main road from Limerick to Tralee, 16km from Listowel, 38 km north east of Tralee.

The potential for growth in Abbeyfeale 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.

The implementation of the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan will play a significant part in traffic management in the town, in addition to movement and accessibility and quality public realm.

Future, co-ordination of transport and land use planning plays a pivotal role in the sustainable development of the local economy. Where and how we build our residential and work environments and supporting transport infrastructure including roads, active travel measures such as footpaths and cycle ways, buses and rail infrastructure impacts, is fundamental for sustainable communities, climate action and quality of life considerations. It is essential that the proposed Local Area Plan

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will promote a more efficient strategic transport system integrated with appropriate use of land to support the sustainable economic, social and physical development of Abbeyfeale as an attractive location for enterprise, investment and a place to live, work and visit.

Limerick City and County Council is working in partnership with Kerry County Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport to develop the Abbeyfeale Road Scheme to relieve congestion on the N21 Limerick to Tralee Road through Abbeyfeale. This is an important project to enhance regional connectivity and to improve road safety.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. How can the Local Area Plan help to improve and promote sustainable forms of transport in Abbeyfeale?

Q. Are there areas where new or improved footpaths, cycle ways, parking, roadways and links to public transport services should be provided?

Q. What measures can be included in the LAP to make the town more accessible for older people and people with disabilities?

## **Infrastructure Services /Utilities**

Infrastructure includes a wide variety of services and functions, essential for the delivery of sustainable development in the Abbeyfeale. These include Water Supply and Drainage, Waste Management, Pollution Management (Air, Noise, Light, Water, Litter, and Major Hazards), Electricity Supply and Broadband / Telecommunications Services. There is a need to plan for all these elements so as to ensure that there is adequate availability to support future sustainable development of the town.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. What, if any are the main infrastructural deficiencies affecting the future sustainable development of the town?

Q. What measures can be introduced to protect and safeguard the water quality of our rivers and groundwater?

Q. Are there adequate recycling facilities in the town and if not, where should they be located?

Q. How can we encourage energy conservation and alternative sources of renewable energy?

## **Open Space and Amenity - Green Infrastructure**

High-quality open spaces and amenity areas are essential for a good quality of life and are key components of sustainable communities. Blue-Green infrastructure includes nature conservation areas, parks, open space, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland and town greenways, which support and



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improve environmental conditions in a way that facilitates environmental, economic and societal benefits.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. Are there sufficient play areas, open spaces, public parks, sports, amenity and recreation facilities in Abbeyfeale?

Q. How can the Plan utilise and enhance existing amenity areas such as the Limerick Greenway to provide for both passive and active recreation?

Q. How best can we integrate a Blue-Green Infrastructure approach to the lands incorporating the themes of open space, biodiversity, landscape, water and archaeology?

## **Biodiversity and Nature Conservation**

The plan area contains several significant elements of the natural environment. The River Feale runs to the west of Abbeyfeale, flowing to the north. Two large tributaries of

the Feale meet the river in the vicinity of Abbeyfeale - the Allaghaun at the northern edge of Abbeyfeale and the Oolagh to the northwest.

The Riverside Community Park (Pairc Cois Féile) located to the southwest of the town provides both active and passive recreation. Apart from their intrinsic ecological value as habitats for a variety of plant and animal species, these elements of the environment provide direct and indirect benefits to the population of the town and its surrounds.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. How can the Local Area Plan best support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity?

Q. Are there local parks or green areas, which you feel could benefit from enhancement or works to improve their biodiversity?

Q. What objectives are required to protect and enhance our natural heritage?

## **Built Heritage**

Abbeyfeale benefits from a legacy of 18th, 19th and 20th century buildings/Streetscapes. The main feature of the square in Abbeyfeale is the statue of Fr William Casey. Fr Casey was parish priest from 1883 to 1907 who helped the tenants farmers fight against their landlords.

Under the existing Local Area Plan, the town has 61 Protected Structures. There are two Recorded Monuments (LI042-12001/002) within the Local Area Plan zoned area. They are the church and graveyard in the town square on the site of the original Cistercian foundation, which gave the town its name. A further Recorded Monument, a ringfort LI042-006, lies on the northern perimeter in the townland of Knockbrack.

## ***Questions to consider***

Q. How can key features of the town's heritage be integrated into new developments?

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Q. How can the LAP encourage the reuse and regeneration of protected structures and older vacant structures located in the town centre area?

Q. What objectives are required to protect and enhance our archaeological and built heritage?

## Climate Action and Flooding

Central to environmental management is the issue of climate change, which is one of the most significant global challenges for the planet. Climate change can result from natural processes and factors and more recently due to human activities, through emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). Climate change will have diverse and wide-ranging impacts on our environment, society, economic sectors and natural resources. Management of areas prone to flooding must be addressed in the proposed LAP, along with measures to adapt to climate change by transitioning to a low carbon and

climate resilient town, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions.

Three flood records are listed on floodmaps.ie – all of which are recurring flood event. Flood risk is a key consideration in preparing a Local Area Plan.

### *Questions to consider*

Q. How can the plan support our transition to a low carbon climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy?

Q. What methods should be encouraged to maximise renewable energy provision for commercial/industrial and residential developments?

Q. How can the Plan address flood risk and build resilience to better cope with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events?

## Social and Community Facilities

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 the healthy functioning of sustainable community and cultural life. Services and amenities including crèches, schools, amenities, recreation and other community facilities should be provided in tandem with residential development. The provision of an adequate level and distribution of community facilities and amenities in Abbeyfeale that meet the current and future needs of the local community will be a priority in the new Local Area Plan.

### *Questions to consider*

Q. What type of new community facilities should be provided and where should these be located?

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Q. Are there enough facilities for younger and older residents of the town, and people with disabilities?

Q. Does the level and range of community facilities and amenities adequately cater for the existing and future residents of the town?

## Submissions

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Public participation is essential to help deliver an effective Local Area Plan. Your submissions on the Issues Paper will assist Limerick City and County Council in identifying the local issues that will inform the preparation of the proposed draft Abbeyfeale LAP 2023-2029, the first stage in the plan making process.

This Issues Paper and the current Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan can be viewed on the Council's website [www.limerick.ie](http://www.limerick.ie) You can make written observation or submission between 22<sup>nd</sup> October - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 titled "Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan" through:

· **Mypoint:** <https://mypoint.limerick.ie>

· **Email:** [forwardplanning@limerick.ie](mailto:forwardplanning@limerick.ie)

· **Writing to:** Forward Planning, Economic Development and Enterprise Directorate, Limerick City and County Council, Merchants Quay, Limerick.

A public consultation evening will take place on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in the Abbeyfeale Workbase, Main Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick between 3pm and 7 pm.

Submissions and observations should state the name, address and where relevant, the body represented.

All submissions received during this period will be considered by the Council, in the drafting of the proposed Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan. Submissions will form part of reports associated with the making of the LAP, which will be available online.

**Please note that by giving your contact details you are agreeing to the Council GDPR policy.**

For queries please contact Forward Planning at (061) 556508 or via [forwardplanning@limerick.ie](mailto:forwardplanning@limerick.ie)

## What happens next?

Following completion of the pre-draft stage of public consultation, Limerick City and County Council will commence the preparation of the Draft LAP informed by the submissions received as part of the pre-draft consultation/ stakeholder engagement. When the Draft LAP has been prepared, the statutory process will begin and the Draft Plan will go on public display for a period of 6 weeks, during which time you may make submissions and attend a public consultation event to view and discuss the Draft Plan.

## Who Makes the Local Area Plan?

The responsibility for making the LAP rests with the Elected Members of the Newcastle West Municipal District of Limerick City and County Council, in accordance with planning legislation.

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