

# REGENERATION ON TRACK AT COLBERT STATION QUARTER

Limerick City and County Council and the Land Development Agency have come together to drive regeneration and affordable housing development as part of a mixed-use city quarter initiative in the area surrounding Colbert Station.

**L**imerick has moved one step closer to unlocking the transformational potential of a new vibrant and highly connected mixed-use city quarter in and around Colbert Station, with the transport hub to be at the centre of unlocking sustainable polycentric development

Limerick City and County Council aims to unlock the potential of under-utilised lands to enable the development of Colbert Station Quarter to become a highly sustainable and attractive destination for both business and the local community. The plan is to offer quality office and commercial space, in addition to an enhanced city living experience for potentially six to ten thousand people in a prime city centre location.

Commissioned by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) to undertake a Design Review for the Colbert Station area of Limerick, the Land Development Agency (LDA) is working with the Council to identify high level design ideas and concepts that could be considered for the future development of a new urban quarter.

John Moran, LDA Chairman and Limerick city resident, said: “These strategically important lands offer potential for the same transformative change as when the city expanded into Newtown Pery.”

“This new development can serve existing and new communities, creating significant new housing delivery, acting as a magnet for new public and private investment.”

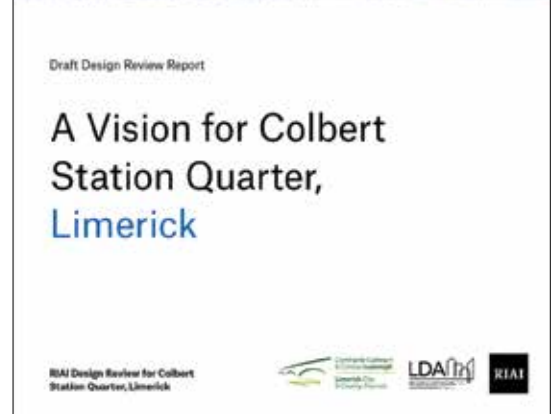
## POLYCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT

With a mandate to co-ordinate state lands, to optimise their potential and increase the supply of housing where most needed, Moran said that the LDA’s partnership with the local authority and various state agencies to redesign the future is “a model for what we are seeking to achieve across the country”.

He added that the Design Review process has confirmed the Agency’s belief that Colbert Station and the surrounding lands “fit neatly into our vision for a polycentric development of Limerick” to accommodate very significant population growth.

“This is the way to minimise the risk of the city centre or other overdeveloped areas becoming unaffordable to all who want to live or work there and to keep commuting times down and develop walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods all across the city’s footprint.

“The designs of the architects, to whom we are very grateful for their



work, show the pathway to transform underutilised brownfield areas into such vibrant, affordable compact, mixed-use urban quarters.”

## FEEDBACK ON THE FRAMEWORK

The Design Review provides a framework to build consensus about a single vision for the lands, and ideas were recently presented to metropolitan members of Limerick City and County Council. The transformational visions and concepts from five leading architects and urban designers have also been the subject of a public consultation process in recent weeks.

Feedback from stakeholders will inform the next stage of the project – the creation of a Spatial Framework for Limerick’s Colbert Station Quarter.

At this point there will be detailed engagement regarding the objectives and key opportunity sites, and this will give shape to the vision and types of development which could take place in the quarter.





It is intended that this Spatial Framework will help to inform key objectives for the future development of the area, including feeding into the Limerick City and County Development Plan for 2022-28, which is currently being developed.

This plan will provide the statutory basis for the future planning and development of Limerick City and County. The development of a final project and associated planning applications will follow to rejuvenate key parts of this new 'Gateway for Limerick' into a highly connected and vibrant mixed-use new city quarter. Plans for near-term development opportunities will be progressed in parallel during 2021.

**STATE AGENCY COLLABORATION**

The Colbert Station Quarter includes significant areas of state lands owned by the Council, CIE, the HSE, as well as other publicly-owned lands. These state organisations have come together to support and explore the future potential for this pivotal area, and to consider how underutilised parts of the lands could be rejuvenated to support and promote Limerick's ongoing growth and prosperity into the future.

"Working with the Land Development Agency and other stakeholders, this collaborative design review project offers an exciting opportunity to collectively reimagine and reinvent the Colbert Station Quarter. This has the potential to unlock a key city centre site that could result in the development of landmark projects to complement established city activity, according to Pat Daly, Chief Executive Limerick City and County Council.

"This will be a transformational and integrated project, drawing together a wide mix of land uses and activities that will promote innovation, collaboration and sustainable design," he added. The potential development area covers over 50 hectares, incorporating a key public transport hub as well as a range of educational, health, community, and

recreational uses. It has the potential to become a new 21st Century gateway for Limerick – the first vision of the once walled medieval city for all arriving to the city on public transport.

A public consultation prior to the Design Review received an excellent response from local community and stakeholders, keen to engage from the outset of the project. Almost all suggestions reinforced the importance of strong community and integrating the new community with existing communities.

**DESIGNS ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

There was an emphasis on providing a mix of accommodation for people of all ages, incomes, and all walks of life. Submissions called for inclusion of retail and premium office space to encourage job creation.

Additional facilities for the local community were seen as key, as well as facilities to encourage arts, culture and sporting activity. This feedback was incorporated into the designs by leading architects who recently presented a series of ambitious visions and concepts contained in the Design Review report to councillors.

Managed by the RIAI, the Design Review process has been chaired by architect David Browne, former RIAI President. The purpose the review is to

introduce architectural expertise early in an urban development process by working with architectural consultancies.

"The Design Review of the Colbert Station Quarter has been a great opportunity to explore the creation of a new city quarter which can be an inspirational model for urban regeneration in Limerick and other Irish cities," noted Browne.

He said that the vision for this Design Review has been to create a new sustainable vibrant, liveable city quarter, building on the strengths of the existing area. "When realised this quarter could play a central role in the future growth of Limerick city, benefiting all communities."

**EXPERTISE AND INNOVATION**

AccorKathryn Meghen, RIAI Chief Executive: "The Design Review introduces architectural expertise and innovation from the start of the project. Based on the initial consultations with community, five leading architects and urban designers have applied their skills to create an initial vision for an exciting development for the city and its people.

"All architects believe that Colbert Station Quarter can be an exemplary urban development, with a strong emphasis on affordable houses, built-in attractive urban spaces, with leisure, education and employment opportunities in close proximity. All designs incorporate sustainability at their core."

Members of the public can access the documents on the Land Development Agency website [www.lda.ie](http://www.lda.ie) while a copy of the document will also be available in Limerick City and County Council's head office on Merchant's Quay.

The LDA and the Council also invite views from the community and stakeholders on the Design Review visions via email to [limerick.colbert@lda.ie](mailto:limerick.colbert@lda.ie) on or before Wednesday 21 October.

