

LOWDOWN ON LIMERICK'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Limerick's ambition is clear! To become a Green City Region on the Shannon Estuary by 2030 connected through people and places. This will be achieved through engagement, innovation, resilient urban development and self-sustaining rural communities, according to Dr Pat Daly, Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council.

Limerick's key ambitions are to become a Green Region with Limerick developing as an environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral economy – a pioneer in sustainable growth.

This is the strategic vision of the first ever consolidated Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 adopted by the elected members earlier this year.

The city will embrace the River Shannon, providing room for people to enjoy the River Shannon and Estuary, increasing public access and creating new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Limerick will create resilient, connected and inclusive communities making it easier to live sustainably and be well prepared for the future.

The region will be an inclusive, self-sustaining economy built on growth and innovation and which maximises its competitive edge by enhancing local enterprises, attracting international investment in a manner which guarantees quality of life.

The plan embraces inclusivity and promotes a high quality of life for all our citizens, which is underpinned by strategic objectives centred around the 10-minute neighbourhood concept.

The aim is to ensure that people can walk, cycle or use public transport to access their day-to-day needs and services such as schools, shops, parks and employment. The plan also ensures that there is enough land zoned to accommodate over 15,500 new homes over its lifetime.

This will encompass growth in the existing built-up areas, the greater Limerick City area, the key town of Newcastle West and throughout other towns and villages, supported by strong economic activity, coupled with adequate social and physical infrastructure.

LIMERICK TWENTY THIRTY

Since its launch in September 2016, Limerick City and County Council's 100 per cent-owned Special Purpose Vehicle, Limerick Twenty Thirty (LTT) has successfully delivered two key

developments – Troy Studios on the outskirts of the city and Gardens International, a multi award-winning office development designed and developed to top international standards in the heart of the city centre.

Its largest project to date – Opera Square – is now underway and will deliver transformational change to the city centre and significant impact across the region. One of the largest commercial programmes of its kind outside Dublin, work is already underway with enabling works nearing completion.

The next stage will involve construction of the campus-wide basement and the six storey LEED Platinum Office Building, known as One Opera Square, with construction to commence by the end of 2022.

Other key elements of the project will be a 14-storey landmark office building, the new state-of-the-art city library, an Aparthotel, and a vibrant public realm space activated by restaurants, bars and open entertainment spaces.



The project has ambitious sustainability goals exemplified by the conservation and restoration of 16 historic buildings on the site which have been carefully incorporated into the new design. The development will incorporate the highest international standards of building energy performance and will be completed by the end of 2025.

LTT is also working on the Cleaves Riverside Quarter, a strategic brownfield site, minutes from the city centre by foot and adjacent to one of the main access routes to the city and River Shannon. Stretching across 10 acres, this riverside site incorporates distinct character areas including the Cleaves factory site, the Shipyard site and the Salesian's site.

The site has the potential to provide a mixed-use scheme of residential, commercial, educational, and cultural accommodation alongside a new riverside public realm for locals and visitors to enjoy. The LTT Project Team is targeting the first quarter of 2023 for the completion of its masterplan.



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HOUSING DELIVERY ACTION PLANS

Limerick City and County Council is committed to delivering new social rental housing to meet identified needs and to increase the mix of housing available, including affordable housing.

Under our Housing Delivery Action Plan, Limerick City and County Council has been given a target of 2,693 social housing. This is primarily new-build for Limerick, as the leasing and acquisition targets are winding down. In addition, there is a target outlines for 264 affordable homes. However, we set ourselves a target of 325 for affordable homes.

In total, 5,583 households were assessed as part of this Housing Action Plan. These households include transfer households. One adult household remains the predominant household grouping in need of social housing support.

The employment status of most qualified households remains as unemployed, while 1 and 2 bed homes are the bed-type in highest demand throughout all settlements.

We are currently working on five Council-owned sites for assistance under the Serviced Sites Fund or Affordable Housing Fund. We also have three Expressions of Interest which we hope will deliver a mixture of affordable rental, social and private right sizing.

LIMERICK GREENWAY REOPENED

The impact of the Limerick Greenway has been immense. Since it reopened on 1 July 2021, the Greenway is already a catalyst for the revitalisation of these towns and villages, and is major attraction, improving the tourism offering of Limerick and the mid-west region.

The tourism and hospitality sector has begun to blossom since the Greenway reopened, with many businesspeople seeing the benefit of leveraging the Limerick Greenway to help their business.

This, in turn, is supporting the local economies along the 40km route. Testimonials from people working and living along the route note that there has been a significant increase in the number of bed nights in local hotels and B&Bs. Furthermore cafés, restaurants and shops have also become much busier due to 'Greenway Traffic' particularly during the holiday season, while bike rental has also seen a boom.

With its own marketing campaign plan, the Greenway has also featured heavily in the summer tourism campaigns of the Council's Marketing & Communications Department. The Council is now working on a variety of capital projects on the Greenway

including developing hubs at each of the five towns and villages along the route. The 40km route passes through the lush open countryside of West Limerick with Victorian era railway infrastructure along it, including Fergusson's Viaduct and Barnagh Tunnel.

The surrounding area has a rich culture and heritage with plenty of local history and stories. With rich biodiversity along its length, the Council is committed to enhancing and protecting the ecology of the Greenway while developing the amenity in the coming years.

The Greenway is of great benefit to locals also by improving access to a safe and secure off-road route for walking, cycling, commuting, exercising, immersing in nature and socialising. It is widely used by all ages. Our initial indicator of success has been its use by over 500,000 people in the first 10 months of re-opening.

IRELAND'S FIRST INNOVATION CENTRE
Limerick has long been recognised as the home of Ireland's first innovation centre



The Cleeves Riverside Quarter, a strategic brownfield 10-acre site, incorporates distinct character areas including the Cleeves Factory site, the Shipyard site and the Salesian's site.



Sycamore Avenue in Rathbane – a new development of 43 homes by Limerick City & County Council was officially launched recently.

and national technological park, where over 80 global multinational subsidiaries and Irish technology companies continue to focus on research and development.

IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland are responsible for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and indigenous businesses, respectively. Limerick and the mid-west region have worked very hard over the past number of years in attracting some of the world's most recognised names to establish a base here. Their experience here has led them to expand and develop their offering, thus appealing to a broader base of suitably qualified potential employees.

Innovation, communication and co-operation are the keys to ensuring that companies remain here while utilising the talents and expertise with the third level

sector, while at the same time ensuring a steady and suitably qualified stream of graduates to take up employment.

With work/life balance becoming more and more a selling point across the industry, Limerick must ensure interesting and innovative public realm, cycle lanes, public transport infrastructure, ease of access to sporting amenities, seaside etc.

Limerick City and County Council plays a pivotal role in future proofing and forward planning. To continue to be a region of choice for investment, the Council must ensure there is adequate infrastructure, be it roads, schools and housing for people coming to Limerick to live and work. However, it also must provide the amenities which make living in Limerick all the more attractive.



FACTFILE – DR PAT DALY

A native of Limerick city, Dr Pat Daly succeeded Conn Murray as Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council, in August 2019. He had previously held the position of Deputy Chief Executive since 2016 along with Director of Services for Economic Development and Planning, a portfolio that he held since 2014.

Prior to joining Limerick City and County Council Dr Daly had a 25-year career with Shannon Development Company both at management and directorship level across several divisions within enterprise/investment, regional development and tourism.

He was the founding CEO of Limerick 2030 Development Company and of Innovate Limerick. These two special purpose vehicles are changing how Limerick develops public interest projects.

Pat is an industrial engineer by profession, and holds a Master's Degree in Management from the University of Sheffield and a PhD in Strategy Management from University College Cork.



The 40km Limerick Greenway passes through the lush countryside of West Limerick, including the 115-metre Barnagh Tunnel.