

# LIMERICK SHOWCASES REGENERATION PROJECTS To Northern Ireland

Limerick's Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan – one of the largest capital programmes in the State and the country's largest regeneration programme – includes a €253m investment on physical infrastructure, €30m on social projects and €10m on economic programmes. Government officials from Northern Ireland and academics from Queen's University Belfast recently visited Limerick to study best practices across several regeneration-led projects in the city.

A delegation from Queen's University Belfast 'Placemaking Academy' and government officials from Northern Ireland's Department of Justice and the Department for Communities had an opportunity to see several projects and four regeneration areas of Moyross, Southill, St Mary's Park and Ballinacurra Weston in Limerick City during their recent visit.

Suzie Clifford, Administrative Officer from Limerick Regeneration Directorate, said it was "fantastic to be able to showcase the wonderful social initiatives happening across the four regeneration communities". She added that the Northern Ireland delegation were "hugely impressed by the social initiatives that are enabling children and families to maximise their life opportunities".

The 'Placemaking Academy' – a collaboration between Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the Department for Communities – brings together researchers, students and practitioners. Dr Neil Galway, QUB's Director of Postgraduate Studies in Planning, who has been working with staff in the Department for Communities (Northern Ireland's regeneration department), said that they were keen to look at how some informal training could be provided in relation to placemaking.

"It's largely about creating an informal space where staff working in central government, in councils, in housing executives, in heritage departments, within council regeneration teams can come together with students from Queen's. We look at best practices in terms of regeneration, placemaking and dealing with big issues, be that resilience, climate change, reuse of historic buildings, pedestrianisation, all the stuff about making places better essentially."

## POSITIVE IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

The four regeneration areas in Limerick City include Moyross, Southill, St Mary's Park and Ballinacurra Weston. One of the Economic & Social Intervention Fund projects visited by the delegation was the Predevelopment Equine Programme at The Bays Youth Academy in Moyross.

Limerick Regeneration Directorate's Suzie Clifford added that delegation was really impressed to learn that seven young people from the programme successfully graduated from the National RACE apprentice jockey programme. "The project has had a positive impact on the community, with several young people subsequently accessing further education or employment

opportunities in the racing industry," she added.

Gerard Murray, Director of the Regional Development Office in the Department for Communities, said he is "returning to Northern Ireland with fresh ideas". He added that it was "very interesting to hear about the innovative delivery approach being used for the strategic development schemes in Limerick's city centre" which will deliver a wide range of social and economic benefits for citizens.

Murray noted that it was also really inspiring to see at first-hand how the council is working in partnership with inspirational community leaders in Moyross to deliver programmes which are tackling complex social problems with strategic capital and resource investment.

"The testimonies from some of the participants of these programmes were inspirational and demonstrated what is possible when there is genuine partnership between statutory and community leaders. Limerick is definitely a place on the up. We learned a lot from the visit and will, of course, steal all of the best ideas!"

*\*For background information and to download a copy of the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan visit <https://bit.ly/3CZgam7>.*



*Pictured during a recent visit by Northern Ireland government officials and academics to study best practices across several regeneration-led projects in the city were (l-r): Vincent Murray and Joe Delaney, Limerick City and County Council Directors of Service; Suzie Clifford, Limerick Regeneration Directorate; Dr Neil Galway, Queen's University Belfast; and David Conway, CEO of Limerick 2030 DAC.*