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**Submission on behalf of the Elected Members of Limerick City and  
County Council**

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**Ireland 2040 – National Planning  
Framework**

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

## **1.0 Introduction**

This submission is made on behalf of the Elected Members of Limerick City and County Council, who attended a workshop on the National Planning Framework (NPF) on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017, to discuss the issues relevant to Limerick.

While the Elected Members acknowledge the submission being made jointly by Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Clare County Council, Shannon Group, Shannon Foynes Port Company, University of Limerick (incl. Mary Immaculate College), Limerick Institute of Technology and the Mid West Region Action Plan for Jobs, we feel that having regard to the significance of the NPF for Limerick City and County in terms of driving the strategic development of Limerick, it is important to make this submission. The opportunity to make a submission is strongly welcomed by the Members as the NPF is seen as a key driver in shaping the future of the City and County.

The NPF Issues and Choices Documents were presented to the Economic Development and Strategic Planning, Strategic Policy Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2017. An additional workshop facilitated by the Forward Planning Section was held for the Elected Members on the 08<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The 14 Members in attendance outlined the main issues that are considered relevant to Limerick City and County Council going forward and agreed to make a submission to this stage of the process. The main recommendations are set out in Section 3.0 of this submission below.

## **2.0 Overview of Limerick**

Limerick City and County covers a geographical area of 2755km<sup>2</sup> with a population of over 191,000 people. It has plenty of capacity to grow, is affordable and has an excellent offer in terms of quality of life. As well as a City at its heart that has initiated innovative development initiatives such as Limerick Twenty Thirty, which is a special purpose vehicle established by Limerick City and County Council to build over 1.4 million square foot of commercial space across four strategic sites in the City and is quoted to be the biggest single investment programme in commercial real estate ever undertaken by an Irish Local Authority, it has:

- Experienced dramatic economic resurgence over the last number of years. Limerick and the Mid-West is considered the fastest growing region outside of Dublin with the creation of 9,000 jobs in the Limerick region over the past three years. This is reflected in Limerick's Live Register which has fallen significantly by 42% between 2013 and 2016;
- Strong governance, unified decision making, certainty and an ability to deliver. For example, the amalgamation of Limerick City and County Council has changed the parameters in terms of local governance. In addition, there has been the incorporation of the Local Enterprise Office into the Local Authority, as well as the creation of Limerick Twenty Thirty and Innovate Limerick. Innovate Limerick was established by Limerick City and County Council to help drive innovation and act as the delivery mechanism for the projects developed by the Local Authority. It is a

public private partnership company, whose Board is made up of key partners from the private sector together with elected members and representatives from various key stakeholders. Initiatives such as Limerick for IT and Limerick for Engineering also display the collaborative networks that are enhancing the economic prosperity of the region. Further and Higher Education institutes, with stakeholders including the local authority, IDA and EI are delivering talent solutions to meet business needs and support economic potential.

- 3 third level colleges, including a world class university with a total of 21,000 students studying in the metropolitan area;
- An uncongested International Airport with daily services to the US, UK and mainland Europe within a 25 minute drive time;
- Has Ireland's largest bulk port, which is designated as a European TEN T Core port, managing some of the deepest waters in Europe on the Shannon Estuary and currently facilitating €7.6bn of trade annually;
- Has a long history of public and private stakeholders across the Mid West Region, working together for the betterment of its citizens; the Shannon consortium is another example of collaboration between the three 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutes, University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College and Limerick Institute of Technology as a zone of excellence in teaching, learning and learner support.
- An excellent quality of life offer. Located on the doorstep of the Wild Atlantic Way, it is a feature attraction on Ireland's Ancient East, and was designated as Ireland's National City of Culture in 2014 and in 2011 was designed European City of Sport.

Limerick has been very successful in the last few years in attracting investment, both foreign and domestic investment and is quickly becoming the desired location to do business. We have the highest disposable income per capita outside the greater Dublin region, with house prices 30% lower than the national average and a young population with almost 50% under the age of 35.

We are strategically positioned nationally to develop and expand as an urban engine for growth and to become a global centre of economic activity, acting as a counterpoint to Dublin and contributing significantly to the international competitiveness of the Country.

### **3.0 Main Recommendations:**

- The NPF must seek to provide effective regional development by developing city regions like Limerick and providing the necessary investment to provide much needed infrastructure to allow this growth. The NPF should promote the significant growth of Limerick, particular having regard to it strategic central location relative to

Dublin, Galway and Cork and also recognising the strong governance structures that exist to make this growth happen.

- Recognise Newcastle West and Kilmallock as key service towns in Limerick.
- The key to unlocking the potential of Limerick City and County is investment in infrastructure, not only will this make the City and County more competitive, but it will also allow the region to grow. The key areas of investment include:
  - Develop a motorway from Limerick to Cork;
  - Upgrade the N24 up to and including motorway standard;
  - Development of a Limerick Northern Distributor Road – this would improve interconnectivity in the region, with improved access to the University of Limerick and the IDA national technology park, which would also facilitate significant expansion of both areas;
  - Develop the Foynes to Limerick connection;
  - To improve the attractiveness and functionality of our key towns as places to live and work in, bypasses/distributor roads are required for the following towns: Adare, Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale.
- Examine mechanisms to rejuvenate our City Centre and encourage residential redevelopment of “Georgian Limerick”.
- There is a need to rejuvenate our towns and villages. Therefore the NPF should support investment in physical and social infrastructure, including upgrade of wastewater and water services, retention of schools within rural areas, public transport and a roll out of rural broadband.
- Support the continued expansion of the third level Institutes in Limerick.
- We need to become a smart region, to allow for the increase in use of technology and consider the impact that this will have on lifestyle and jobs. Limerick City and County Council are currently implementing a digital strategy and should therefore be recognised as leading the way on this initiative.
- Ensure universal access in all future developments, so that it allows integration of all members of society.
- Develop and promote the food production industry, particularly indigenous producers and growers.
- Promote Limerick City and County as a sporting and leisure destination, harnessing the River Shannon as the key jewel in the Region.
- Continue to support the implementation of the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan and recognise the importance of the Shannon Estuary to the region.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Noel Gleeson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**Cllr. Noel Gleeson**  
**Chair of Strategic Policy Committee**  
**Economic Development & Strategic Planning**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Members in attendance at Workshop on the 08/03/17**

- Cllr. Noel Gleeson
- Cllr. James Collins
- Cllr. Séan Lynch
- Cllr. Joe Pond
- Cllr. Seamus Browne
- Cllr. John Costello
- Cllr. Séighin O'Ceallaigh
- Cllr. Malachy Mc Creesh
- Cllr. Joe Leddin
- Cllr. Stephen Keary
- Cllr. Marian Hurley
- Cllr. Gerald Mitchell
- Cllr. Eddie Ryan
- Cllr. Eleanora Hogan