

Submission: Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Regional Assembly

March 2019



#LiveableLimerick

The need for polycentric development

Summary

We welcome the broad thrust of the RSES in calling for growth of compact urban and the implementation of the Ireland 2040 recommendation to have a counter balance to Dublin's

However we find that the document is not clear enough about how this counter balance will be achieved. At times it seems to propose that the counterbalance will be the metropolitan area of Cork. At other times it acknowledges the collective strength of all three cities (working with Galway).

The unhealthy dominance of Dublin and the need for a counterbalance will not be easy to implement.

Although following an impressive growth path, Cork is subscale to achieve this alone as recognised in fact by Ireland 2040.

As a result, we would support the conclusion of Ireland 2040 that the necessary path to create a counterbalance of scale requires the collective strength of all four cities together in close collaboration.

It is an error for the RSES to suggest that Cork is "the" national counterbalance.

True polycentric development of the Southern Regional so as to create the necessary scale to stand shoulder to shoulder with Dublin will require a much clearer direction by the RSES. We would also recommend a new governance to oblige and facilitate collaboration. Without same, the natural tendency for each city to only look after its own interests and not the collective whole will as it has done in recent decades dominate the decision making to the detriment not just of the cities which will continue as in recent years to lose ground to Dublin but also to the detriment of the entire region.

1916 Proclamation

In 1916, beneath the pillars of the GPO in Dublin, Padraic Pearse declared a Republic which "would guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities to all of its citizens" and declared the resolve of this Republic to "pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all of its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally and oblivious of the differences...which have divided a minority from the majority in the past".

KEY TAKEAWAY

"True polycentric development of the Southern Regional so as to create the necessary scale to stand shoulder to shoulder with Dublin will require a much clearer direction by the RSES. We would also recommend a new governance to oblige and facilitate collaboration. Without same, the natural tendency for each city to only look after its own interests....will dominate."

How well have we done?

For 100 years, the keepers of our Republic have made decisions which have served us well to position Ireland as a force of diversity, of tolerance and of economic success which has bettered the lives of so many.

But Ireland remains the OECD country with the highest percentage of native born population living abroad in 2016.

At home, major disparities of opportunity remain for the children of our nation, depending on whether they live East or West, whether they own or they rent the roof which offers them shelter or how long they have lived on our shores.

As we have left behind the minorities and majorities of our past, we have created new minorities and majorities which once more divide our country. Decisive steps are required to eliminate these divisions.

Need for a counterbalance

We all need Dublin to succeed on the international stage. Recently, it has done well as the cranes on its skyline will show. But disproportionately so compared to other parts of our island.

The solution to this problem ignored by government since the 1960's still remains the right solution. The creation of an effective counterbalance to give regional parity. As the NPF put it, "the potential of other locations must be harnessed".

We would argue that more must be done by the RSES in setting out a path to do that. S

Selecting which counterbalance

The NPF set out two key variables to selecting a counter-balance. These are "the relative distance or ease of accessibility to larger centres of population" and "the scale of concentration of activity".

The choice for the Southern region in applying these is to (a) back Cork as the counterbalance and rapidly grow it to scale, (b) choose another city, such as Waterford or Limerick and have it grow even faster to catch up, or (c) back a new broader regional area whose four cities packaged and working together have the scale and diversity to immediately stand shoulder to shoulder with Dublin.

The key to choosing is whether the tests should be applied to each city on its own – an approach destined to favour the largest at any time and which has served Dublin well to date – or to a region incorporating a combination of mutually accessible cities.

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Strategies cannot be vague on such an important issue. The RSES must call it

Advantages of a Southern Tri-city Area

Cork is home to just over 200,000 people and nearly 29,000 enterprises. It is already so far behind Dublin on its own in terms of scale, it would be very difficult for it to be viewed as a credible alternative to Dublin. Without being viewed as part of an area of scale, it will continue as has been the case in the last couple of decades fall further and further behind.

A triangle of three interconnected southern cities would instead include nearly twice as many 366,365 (22%) of the Region's total population. This tri-city area would provide more proximate opportunity than coastally located Cork for most of the region's 78,000 active enterprises and almost 1.6 million inhabitants who could continue to live at home in a more prosperous region. This concept has been recognised in submissions on the RSES by the South East Chambers, Waterford Chamber and Limerick Chambers ^{as} the right way forward and the RSES should act to encourage such widespread willingness to collaborate.

A broader 4 cities cluster

Integrated with the Galway city region, less than 1 hour away from the southern tri-city area, this new agglomeration would encompass

- two million people,
- three (soon to be four) universities,
- two international and two regional airports,
- all tier 1 and tier 2 ports of national significance outside of Dublin,
- a veritable green playground of the Burren, Connemara, Dingle, Cashel, West Cork, all three National Tourism Corridors,
- companies the likes of Medtronic, J&J, Pfizer, Apple and Uber,
- Ireland's largest film studio Troy
- one of Europe's richest agricultural heartlands, and
- some of the best quality of life locations in the country for homes.

It would still be based on a dynamic and successful Cork but would also generate significant divestment of public and private investment from Dublin across each of the interconnected city regions to sustainably develop medieval, Georgian and traditional historical urban fabric, cultural facilities and services like health and education and more intimate rural towns and villages within easy commuting distance of one or more of the four cities, none more than an hour away from the centre of the cluster.

This is the opportunity for real change with immediate effect.

TAKEAWAY

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And so, it would also improve the lives of the inhabitants of Dublin by reducing demand on scarce services and infrastructure.

But it would require four currently sub-scale cities putting aside their differences, no longer battling with each other but coming and working together to become relevant in scale to take on the concentration of activity in and natural magnetic force of Dublin!

Governance

The RSES must mandate a new governance to make this possible involving primarily councillors drawn from the urban areas only so as to facilitate decision making to focus just on issues for the urban areas. We would recommend an equal number of councillors from each of the three cities along with a similar number from Galway become a taskforce for implementation which will aid the respective assemblies to make funding or other decisions for the benefit of the cluster of cities as a whole or to collectively make recommendations to central government about same.

Budget

The RESE should contain more complete assessments of the capital investment required to achieve the objective above. Given the infrastructure deficits in the region already and the rapid population growth, it is to be expected that the amount of private and public capital expenditure required will be very significant and could exceed not just 10's of billions but much more.

To accommodate the necessary rapid growth of population the RSES should dictate that either such expenditure be allocated quickly to the local authorities to catalyse the necessary private sector investment or that the Land Development Agency is facilitated and encouraged to intervene rapidly.

While brownfield development of cities presents challenges outweighing greenfield expansion of these cities, the savings in terms of the delivery of services arising from compact growth should dictate that allocations of funding and support via the RSES are prioritised for compact growth.

Ireland 2040's approach

The NPF agreed polycentric development was the way to proceed. It acknowledged Cork might be well placed to "complement Dublin" but noted it "requires significantly accelerated and urban focussed growth".

As a result, it pointed out "however, it will require **the combined potential of ALL four cities** to be realised at an unprecedented rate, to create viable alternatives to Dublin (emphasis added)".

The RSES document must not abandon indeed it must mandate more explicitly and explain the implications of that multi-city focused idea in a new section dedicated to that analysis and the respective MASPs should be rewritten to reflect that.

Consequences of not providing for radical change

The RSES choice to designate Cork alone as the principle complement to Dublin is not an attractive vision for anyone but Cork. As Dublin has discovered today perhaps not even so for Cork as it might struggle on a coastal site to accommodate an increasing population and commuters from an ever larger hinterland.

Other towns and cities in the Southern and Western regions risk becoming commuter dormitories no longer for Dublin but henceforth for Cork.

It leaves even more isolated the cities and towns all the way from Cahir to Sligo. It conditions the fate of towns from Wexford to Carlow to Portlaoise to Nenagh and even Tralee and Mallow. Become a commuter location to a strong Cork, rather than a vibrant town equi-distant from and serving two or more equally vibrant cities. While brownfield development of cities presents challenges outweighing greenfield expansion of these cities, the savings in terms of the delivery of services arising from compact growth should dictate that allocations of funding and support via the RSES are prioritised for compact growth.

As for the regional cities, Waterford retreats to being a regional city on the South East.

The potential of Limerick-Shannon is talked up but the role it could and should play as the most centrally located city of all of the four and acting together with the other 3 cities is ignored. Not one new shared regional service to be provided to the region as a whole from a more centrally located Limerick is identified for investment.

Galway and areas north of Galway no longer seem to play a role in the future stories of Waterford and Cork or vice versa.

The Atlantic Economic Corridor becomes something to which Cork should be “connected” and “integrated”, not a key corridor of which Cork is a valuable and inseparable part.

This key takeaway is intended to inform the RSES and is not to be used in any other way. It is not a policy statement and should not be used to inform any other policy or strategy. It is not a policy statement and should not be used to inform any other policy or strategy.

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And what about Limerick-Shannon?

While the implications of this change are significant for the other cities, for the purposes of this submission we are concentrating on the city we know best.

- It should mean a heavy responsibility to act with generosity to all cities when new regional public services are for efficiency located in this centrally located city.
- It should mean not just looking for everything for itself but playing its part to support a holistic plan for services for both regions
- It should mean playing its part too in a non-Dublin political force to create a dynamic to reverse the default business as usual “only in Dublin” position.
- It should mean rejecting locally any of the NIMBYism which continues to hold Dublin back and allowing local planners to lead with best in class 21st Century planning.
- It should mean a transport oriented development plan beyond 2040 for a city of 300,000 or more with the rapid implementation before 2040 of a first stage with homes for 50,000-60,000 and the jobs for many more ideally located within Limerick’s underdeveloped walkable historic inner city not around its perimeter.
- It should mean the continued growth of an exciting riverside city region with strong community spirit and sporting and historical traditions dating back to medieval times and before
- It should create an internationally reputed European creative, edgy, innovative, green and liveable city region with a UNESCO heritage Georgian living core and protected medieval quarter and castle.
- It should mean even greater numbers of people sharing in the success of Ireland’s most affordable city with the highest disposal income and above average diversity but more importantly that Limerick-Shannon plays its part in generating such a shared prosperity for all who live outside of Dublin.

By way of illustration of what should happen for Limerick we attach in Annex A, a proposed new section for Housing for the RSES. The existing RSES did not place enough emphasis on the development of housing within the potential of the walkable city centre.

On other matters, we have contributed more generally to the submission of Limerick Chamber and would agree with all of their proposals.

We would specifically point out a couple of additional items which should be recognised in the RSES:-

- We propose that an alternative location be chosen close to or at the centre of the cluster of the 4 cities for services to serve all the cities and their hinterlands. This would ease pressure on Dublin’s already stretched transport and housing infrastructure. Additional national services and agencies can also be located in whole or in part to that city or the

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others based taking into account their geographical location or existing clusters of activities. For example, it should be possible for further activity to be relocated from the port of Dublin to Cork harbour facilitating the relocation of national distribution activities to a corridor between Cork and Cahir/Limerick Junction.

- We have noted the recommendations of Waterford Chamber to also develop the cluster of cities and the role that an enhanced M24 might play to connect all of the cities and develop a new centre close to Cahir/Limerick Junction. We would recommend this route might be considered in advance of the M20 in particular if that would free up resources for much needed public transport infrastructure in the 3 cities.
- To that end, we would also recommend, in tandem with the development of walkable accommodation for some 50,000 in Limerick centre, significant investment over the term of the RSES in rail infrastructure, including the upgrading of the facilities in Limerick Junction, the speeding up of inter-city train connections between the cities and to Dublin and work not just to protect the rail corridor land from Shannon to Sixmilebridge but advancement of feasibility and design works for the installation of a rail connection from Shannon airport to the mainline rail system and providing efficient rail transport between Shannon Industrial Zone and Limerick or Ennis.
- We also believe that decisions to locate additional third level places outside of Dublin rather than in the capital should be recommended by the RSES in order to contribute to the balancing of economic activity in the country. The RSES should prepare the three Southern region cities to accommodate same, along with other facilities and accommodation for students and workers and their families. We understand that trebling the number of third level places was a key ingredient in the development of Aarhus as a counterbalance to Copenhagen and could easily be adopted as a similar policy for Ireland 2040 given the tremendous pressure put on the infrastructure of Dublin by the concentration of third level places there, even for students not from Dublin.
- For Limerick, the location there of a National Centre for Apprenticeship Studies as an important part of such places would particularly suit the demographics and educational needs of the city and we believe the RSES should recommend this as a way of reversing poor educational advancement among certain neighbourhoods in the city.

KEY TAKEAWAY

“Can Limerick-Shannon do all of that? The answer is undeniably yes.

Decades of insufficient investment in the city fabric leave low barriers to, and indeed rather a hunger for, the necessary change to build on recent success and re-engineer the city quickly to become an Irish 21st Century walkable city of scale.”

Can Limerick-Shannon do it?

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Decades of insufficient investment in the city fabric leave low barriers to, and indeed rather a hunger for, the necessary change to build on recent success and re-engineer the city quickly to become an Irish 21st Century walkable city of scale.

A resilient Limerick has emerged from decades of struggling with under-investment, localised crime and overly concentrated economy with a new confidence and reinvigorated community spirit. A strong coalition of business, NGO's and public and private sector leaders now work closely together with a new purpose to deliver a better future for the city and the region. The diverse basis of industrial mix has been much understated in the RSES and this should be corrected. Limerick is now home to pharma, Medical Devices, aviation MRO and leasing, electronics, semiconductors, software, autonomous vehicles, financial services, film, fashion, insurance, education, government services, agriculture and food and become an exciting start up incubator. Rather than prior concentrations, it has become a mirror of the broader Irish economy.

Far from struggling with the objectives of the NPF, Limerick has existing potential to far exceed the NPF target for at least 50% of all new homes to be created within its existing built-up footprint. Areas close to the central train station and in the old docklands short walking distance from the city centre could easily house 60,000 people in new sustainable urban living.

As the only Irish metropole within 2 hours of each and all of the other cities and direct flights east and west, it scores best among regional cities on accessibility and even more so once distance times to Waterford and Cork are improved.

So much so that the "centre of scale" test makes it as, if not more, relevant to apply the test the new quad-city area with Limerick at its centre as to test Limerick itself.

KEY TAKEAWAY

"The prize for the country is great. It is not a zero sum gain. Along with Dublin, four other cities forging ahead not just one can become a reality. A rising tide can raise all boats.

When we have a new cluster of regional cities and their rural hinterlands working together to a shared vision with a shared voice, together standing shoulder to shoulder with Dublin, only then will the aspirations of our leaders of 1916 be realised by a real pursuit of "the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all of its parts"."

ANNEX B

5.0 HOUSING AND REGENERATION

[Existing retained text set out in green]

With housing remaining more affordable in Limerick than in other Irish cities and with an underdeveloped city core, Limerick has very low barriers to building sustainable accommodation and offices for related services and employment for in excess of 100,000 people in a redeveloped walkable central core.

Housing remains significantly more affordable in Limerick City than in other cities. The cost of living is a strong advantage of the city, with Limerick identified as the most affordable urban area in Ireland in which to both rent and buy residential property. When coupled with the fact that disposable incomes are higher than the national average, this is the key ingredient for successful urban living and a competitive advantage for attracting people and investment.

Key to the MASP is triggering sufficient high density development in well considered sequential stages upon an existing urban fabric well suited to such development to ensure that housing remains affordable through the transition.

Limerick has enormous potential for this to happen in the scale required to make Ireland 2040 a success. A MASP drafted to identify and specify pathways to growth to a population of 300,000 can take advantage of the lack of development in recent decades in key city centre areas often viewed as a negative in Limerick. Additionally, the fact that much of the land within the city perimeter houses large low density almost exclusively social housing built in the 1950's, now in great need of renewal presents a unique opportunity to both develop a world-class Irish 21st Century sustainable city but achieve the mixed demographic neighbourhoods recommended by the NPF. By focussing investment in the inner city areas, a modern city can be rebuilt within an urban fabric boasting centuries of tradition and historical architecture and neighbourhoods from medieval through to 19th Century Georgian.

The MASP is not just about housing though. It will require parallel and significant investment so that housing, public services such as health, education and cultural and infrastructure can run ahead of (not behind) population growth. This should prevent infrastructure blockages or excessive cost increases so often typical of such quick population increases. This infrastructure should be scaled to also serve the much wider Southern and Western Regions given Limerick-Shannon's central role as a bridge between the two regions removing any risk of redundancy of services waiting until local population growth catches up.

With improved public transport, people working in neighbourhood key towns and even beyond, should even begin to choose to live in the renewed city zones for proximity to world-class public services and culture reversing the normal commuting practices of Irish cities and making public transport more efficient.

The Limerick-Shannon MASP recognise the ongoing regeneration programmes but as the new local area development plan is developed the potential to do more in light of the exigencies of the NPF will be recognised.

The MASP supports a sequential approach to development with a primary focus on the consolidation of sites within [NOTE TO EDITOR – the words "or contiguous" were deleted to confirm with Ireland 2040 - NPF Objective 3b] the existing built up

and zoned areas of Limerick, supported by further development in Shannon town and in contiguous sites already well advanced for development such as Mungret College.

Local Authorities in their land use plans will identify metropolitan settlements that have the capacity to achieve higher residential densities in tandem with the provision of public transport, infrastructure and services. This should be consistent with the RSES and the guiding principles objectives and goals of the MASP. [NOTE TO EDITOR, WE TOOK OUT “OR CONTIGUOUS TO” as this is not consistent with NPF Objective 3b]

Housing diversity

The existing nature of housing in Limerick City is well suited to the creation of a new mix of rental and ownership, social and private such as is desirable under Ireland 2040 but difficult to reintroduce in more developed city centres.

With a core urban Georgian core and existing buildings along the river of much greater height, already built for density and both surrounded by much undeveloped or underdeveloped brownfield sites, the city is poised for transport oriented development around best sustainable principles. The riverside location and good allowance of parklands presents the opportunity to combine new multi-family housing with best in class public transport and public realm.

The percentage of households in Private Rental in Limerick City (25.5%) and Shannon (22%) are well above the State (18%) and SRA (16%) averages.

The demographics of the city also suggest a less “closed” established communities with above average percentages of non-Irish communities [.....], reflecting its attractiveness as a place to live to people discovering the advantages of the city and region.

However, the below average percentages of [24-44] quartile suggests that too many young adults who grow up in Limerick leave for education or jobs to other cities.

Both factors suggest an unfulfilled potential for rapid growth in excess of existing levels.

According to Census 2016, Social Rented (Local Authority and Voluntary Sector) households in Limerick City accounts for 12% of its total households while in Shannon this figure is 10%. Both are above the State (9.5%) and SRA (10%) averages.

Housing Vacancy (ex Holiday Homes) in Limerick City and Shannon (7.5% each) are lower than the State (9%) and SRA (9.5%) averages which suggest that housing development needs to commence rapidly to prevent rapid reductions in affordability.

5.1 City Centre Consolidation

THE NDP sets out that strategic investment priority no 1 is Housing and Sustainable Development and that National Policy Objective 3b of the NPF requires that “at least half (50%) of all new homes in [Limerick] will be within [its] existing built-up footprint”.

The RSES sets out the framework to increase residential density in our cities and larger towns through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill and site-based regenerations.

Given the already well advanced Limerick 2030 plans to add substantial office accommodation in the city centre, the Limerick Shannon MASP supports the densification of the city centre and the assembly of brownfield sites for development and the regeneration and redevelopment of Georgian Limerick for residential use.

Housing cannot be provided in a vacuum especially in higher density areas. It is important therefore that a holistic approach be taken to the redevelopment of the city centre areas to accommodate substantial increases in population.

To this end, the MASP will prioritise a number of ongoing initiatives to provide capacity to accommodate in excess of 60,000 people within the existing built-up area easily attaining the objective of 50% of all new housing being within that area:

Georgian Newtown Pery: Housing stock and quality in the historical Georgian area is generally neglected and poorly maintained, not in line with best safety standards and likely to not have been upgraded for better sustainability. Many buildings are vacant especially in upper floors. Significant investment will be required to bring buildings back into use or upgrade the existing buildings. That said, the Georgian townhouses have the potential to provide innovative and high quality housing with restoration and upgrade of fire safety standards. The often underdeveloped gardens could provide cost-rental and social housing accommodation to ensure that existing communities are not displaced by “gentrification” of the district. Projects are already started in the district showing the potential in those buildings for modern co-living for people working nearby. The MASP will prioritise supportive actions to be coordinated by the dedicated team at Limerick City and Council to support homeowners wanting to upgrade properties with priority given to projects designed to provide modern sustainable living rather than office accommodation. Public funding will be prioritised for public realm and cultural projects which both increase the amenities available to inhabitants of the district and creating more attractive streetscapes and desirable neighbourhoods. These will be carried out in tandem with mobility strategies designed to remove unnecessary traffic from the streets of Newtown Pery and strategies to improve retail offerings and other amenities for occupants of the district. Upgrading of largely abandoned buildings along laneways within Georgian blocks in line with a new masterplan to be developed by LCCC provides considerable potential to increase the number of occupants of the district within the timetable of Limerick 2040 but will require installation of services, lighting.

Docklands and Greenpark Racecourse: Very significant land underutilised land banks beside Limerick port and Mary Immaculate College, including Greenpark Racecourse provide very significant additional potential for large scale housing and mixed use transport orientated development. The MASP will provide for the master-planning of this area in conjunction with the Land Development Agency as a new city centre high density urban neighbourhood housing some 30,000 and a basis for rapid transport services to this area and future development in Mungret/Raheen/Ballykeefe.

Regeneration: As set out below, regeneration areas within walking distance of Limerick’s central inter-city train station could provide accommodation fully in line with Ireland 2040 objectives for in excess of 30,000 transforming previously deprived areas of the inner city.

Mobility Strategy: As set out in more detail in 4.1, a new Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Transport Strategy will be prepared with as a guiding principle the facilitation of carfree living in the built-up areas of Limerick city making inner city areas more affordable and attractive choices and reversing previous preferences to live in suburban areas in Limerick city.

Public Facilities and Services: Further investment will be made to continue to fill gaps in the retail and entertainment facilities available to residents of inner-city districts to make the city centre one of the most desirable place to live in the Limerick-Shannon MASP and encourage compact development of the area. Recognising the importance of cultural, heritage and sports and life-long learning facilities and public parks to the quality of life of residents of higher density areas continued investment in such facilities will be prioritised including the World Class Waterfront Project. Given Limerick’s role as a centrally located city in the broader Southern and Northern and Western Region and a significant growth in its own population, a number of new flagship cultural facilities of scale, including a new Library project in the Opera Centre will be established within the city centre area.

Education: Recognising the importance of good quality educational facilities to residents of an area, the MASP will prioritise the upgrading of facilities and buildings for primary and secondary schools which are housed in older buildings and constrained sites in the inner city areas. Particular focus will be paid during the term of the MASP to the establishment of additional international schools to cater for the growing international population of the city. The MASP will also identify suitable inner city sites for development to accommodate facilities for UL operations moving to the city centre. Given Limerick's centrally located position as a bridge between the Southern and Western and Northern Regions, plans will be advanced for the procurement of sites for the establishment of additional third level institutions to accommodate substantial numbers of the third level and apprenticeship training places required nationally.

5.2 Regeneration

The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation centres on three key pillars – Economic, Physical and Social – that will revitalise the communities of Moyross and St Mary's Park on the city's northside and Southill and Ballinacura Weston on the southside by raising standards of living, opportunity and health and wellbeing for all residents of the regeneration areas.

New housing construction with mixed unit sizes and types to promote diverse occupancy and renewal and retrofitting of existing housing stock are key elements of the Limerick Regeneration Framework which will lead to the delivery of some 400 new homes and the upgrading of 900 homes across the areas of Moyross, Southill, Ballinacura Weston and St Mary's Park.

As Limerick's population targets have become more ambitious than at the time of the original regeneration plans, the MASP will now assess the potential for one or more of these areas to serve as a national pilot for re-densification of inner city areas of scale and will produce a masterplan and implementation plan for such a redevelopment while at the same time identifying broader range of regional public services and job opportunities to be housed in the same neighbourhood to reverse the singular use of such areas when they were built in the 1950s.

5.3 Further Growth

Given the potential for Limerick to easily continue to grow sustainably to exceed the Ireland 2040 targets shortly after the completion of that plan, it is important to plan for growth beyond that identified for city centre areas above.

Progressing the sustainable development areas for housing in Mungret and Castletroy is recognised in the MASP. Limerick Twenty Thirty Designated Activity Company (DAC) are preparing a Masterplan of a 42-hectare residential site at Mungret Park. [NOTE TO EDITOR – we would delete the rest of this detail] [the site comprises 26 hectares of lands owned by Limerick City and County Council in Mungret, including the former Mungret College and associated buildings. Mungret is zoned urban extension of Limerick City under the Southern Environs Local Area Plan. The site has obtained funding through the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) for a distributor road, which will unlock substantial lands within public and private ownership and trigger the development of additional residential sites, supporting community and employment uses.] The Masterplan will prioritise the provision of non-car and public transport options to and from the city centre and nearby amenities and employment.

5.4 Shannon

Shannon attracts a working population of 9,000 people per day however its population growth rate remains stagnant. The inter-dependence between Shannon as a living area and its employment assets- Shannon Free-Zone and Shannon International Airport linkages have weakened due to changing circumstances, to the detriment of Shannon. The challenges

for Shannon is transform into a dynamic, vibrant place to live. Opportunities exist to create a new image that is fresh and welcoming and capitalises on the existing strengths and assets of Shannon. This could be pursued through an emphasis on placement including improving the quality and sense of place in the town centre.