

## Chapter 1 Introduction to the Local Area Plan

### 1.0 Introduction

Waterford County Council is the Planning Authority for Lismore Town and its environs. The Waterford County Development Plan was made by the Elected Members of Waterford County Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011 and it is in this context that the review of the Lismore Local Area Plan is being undertaken. The Lismore Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).



Lismore Castle

The Local Area Plan sets out the overall development strategy and framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of Lismore for the period 2014-2020.

This Chapter provides a brief review of the Lismore Local Area Plan 2007-2013, the legal context within which the Plan was formulated, the purpose of the Plan, the processes involved in its preparation, and also the structure, context and duration of the Plan.

### 1.1 Review of the Lismore Local Area Plan 2007-2013

#### 1.1.1 Residential Development

Whilst Lismore has seen construction and completion works within a number of housing estates during the last Plan period, at present there are no major proposals for further residential development within the Town.

The property market has seen a decline in demand for housing with an associated fall-off in the number of house completions. Whilst this can be viewed as an opportunity to allow infrastructural, social and community facilities to keep pace with the residential growth, there is also a need to ensure that residential development which commenced in this period is completed to a satisfactory standard. Works are ongoing by the Council in this regard.

### **1.1.2 Retail Development**

Lismore is designated as the District Service Centre in the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017. Main Street and West Street have a mix of restaurants, bars, speciality shops and professional services and remain the economic centre for Lismore. Permission for additional retail provision was recently approved by the Council on West Street and its decision was upheld by An Bord Pleanála.

To assist Lismore in achieving its retail potential, the roles and functions of the existing Town Centre were examined, and leading from this process the retail policies as set out in Chapter 4 and the land use zoning maps provide for the delivery on this issue and for the future planned sustainable development of the Town.

### **1.1.3 Economic Development**

The economy in Lismore is based primarily on retail and tourism related activities. Considerable additional scope exists within Lismore for small enterprises and light industry type development given the limited development which has taken place to date. Permission was granted during the last Plan period for additional office space on the Industrial lands in the south east of the Town and despite the challenging economic climate construction works have commenced on the site. Developments such as this will assist in broadening the employment base in Lismore and further developments will be facilitated through the policies and land use zonings as set out in this Plan.

### **1.1.4 Infrastructure**

The LCB water supply scheme services the towns of Lismore, Cappoquin and Ballyduff and the substantial hinterland in between. The LCB scheme is made up of interconnected sources and service storage comprising one surfacewater treatment plant (Lismore filters) and four groundwater sources (Ballyhane, Cappoquin Monument, Deerpark, AGLISH Glencairn).

The existing Lismore Sewerage Scheme consists of a combined collection network discharging to an extended aeration Wastewater Treatment Plant with discharge to the River Blackwater. The capacity of the treatment plant is nominally 3,000 p.e. at 3 DWF. However the secondary settlement tank can only accommodate 1800 p.e. at 6 DWF<sup>1</sup>, which is the hydraulic load to the plant. The hydraulic load to the plant is problematic as a result of the lack of separate storm water drainage in Lismore.

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<sup>1</sup> Dry Weather Flow

### **1.1.5 Tourism**

Lismore has long been associated with cultural and ecclesiastical development and has established itself successfully as a heritage town. The Castle and associated gardens continue to attract large numbers of visitors annually and the Tourist Information Office which is housed in the Heritage Centre provides a wealth of local information to these visitors.

A number of festivals are held in Lismore each year including the Lismore Music Festival and the Immrama Festival of travelling writers. The Robert Boyle Summer School also brings world-leading scientists and historians to Lismore annually to discuss a wide range of topics relating to Boyle, his works and times and his legacy. The festivals and summer school are now established on the festival calendar and attract a large number of visitors to the locality each year.

## **1.2 Legal Context**

The Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that the Lismore Local Area Plan 2014-2020 be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan. It states that the Plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of Lismore, including detail on community facilities and amenities, and also development management standards for the design of developments and structures.

In addition to the above requirements the Plan also has regard to the policies and provisions of National, Regional and local planning policy and planning guidance documents.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013 Circular Letter PL7/13 was issued by the Minister for Housing and Planning under Section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This letter was issued to remind planning authorities to take sufficient account of statutory submissions /observations of the Department in relation to Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Local Area Plan**

The purpose of this Local Area Plan is to establish physical development policies for Lismore up to the year 2019 and to identify specific objectives for the achievement of those policies.

The Plan is ultimately guided by the 2011-2017 County Development Plan but has a local focus and is a medium for fostering and guiding future developments and meeting local needs. The Plan sets out the general nature, location and extent of development and provides a framework for public and private sector investment relating to land use.

This written document with accompanying maps comprises the Lismore Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (hereinafter referred to as the Plan). The Plan will replace the Lismore Local Area Plan 2007-2013.

### **1.3.1 Preparation of the Local Area Plan**

With the enactment of the Planning & Development Act 2000, Local Area Plans (LAP's) were placed on a statutory footing. The Planning Act 2000 (as amended) states that:

*“A Planning Authority shall take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the public before preparing, amending or revoking a local area plan including consultations with any residents, public sector agencies, non governmental agencies, local community groups and business interest within the area”.*

Public notice was given by Waterford County Council on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013 that a new Local Area Plan was to be prepared for Lismore. Pre-draft submissions and observations from the general public including local residents, children or groups representing children, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups and local commercial / business interests within the Plan area were invited.

To assist in this public consultation process an Issues Paper was prepared which sought to identify the key planning issues that the Local Area Plan could address. The Issues Paper was made available at the Library and Council Offices in Lismore and was also available online. A public information open day was held in the Lismore Council Offices on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013. In conjunction with the Issues Paper public consultation period, two further periods of public consultation took place between 10<sup>th</sup> June to 23<sup>rd</sup> July (draft Plan) and 04<sup>th</sup> November to 02<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 (amended draft Plan). Manager's Reports were prepared on the submissions received and all submissions received were material considerations in the formulating of the Plan.

### **1.3.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment)(Amendment) Regulations 2011, the Planning Authority is obliged to prepare a determination as to the need for an environmental assessment of a local area plan with a target population greater than 5,000 persons or where the area covered by the local area plan is more than 50 square kilometres. An SEA Screening was carried out on the potential for significant environmental effects arising from the Lismore Local Area Plan based on the criteria in Schedule 2A to the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004. Following the screening process, whereby the specific context of the Local Area Plan has been assessed against the

environmental significance criteria as contained in Schedule 2A of the Regulations, it was concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required for the Lismore Area Plan.

### 1.3.3 Habitats Directive Assessment

The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 as amended. Under this Directive, the Planning Authority is obliged to carry out an appropriate assessment screening of the ecological implications of the Plan on the Natura 2000 sites within the Plan area as part of the Local Area Plan process. Natura 2000 sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and provide for the protection of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. The strategic nature of many of the policies and objectives contained in this Plan will require an Appropriate Assessment screening to be carried out at individual plan and project level to ensure there is no negative impact on the integrity and conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Support of policies contained in other policy/strategy and guideline documents shall be subject to AA screening where required, prior to implementation by the Local Authority.

### 1.3.4 Vision

The Vision Statement of the County as set out in the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 is as follows:

*“To develop Waterford as a County, where the wellbeing of the community is enhanced through balanced economic development, the creation of attractive places to live and work and through the sustainable management of our natural assets as we strive to become a Green County.”*

*In achieving this vision, the following goals have been set:*

- *Support and facilitate the development of **sustainable vibrant communities** and the provision of necessary supporting services and amenities;*
- *Promote sustainable economic development through the development of **key strategic sites**, supporting and fostering **entrepreneurship** and building the foundations for a **knowledge based economy**;*
- *Sustain rural communities by supporting **rural diversification** and sustainable tourism development;*

- *Protect, enhance and promote access to the County's **Built, Natural and Linguistic heritage**;*
- *Manage the challenges of **climate change** and increased **flood risk**;*
- *Develop County Waterford as the leader of the **green economy** by facilitating renewable energy infrastructure and promoting use of renewable energy among businesses and households throughout the County; and*
- *Create an inclusive society by encouraging a **partnership approach** between statutory bodies, community groups and all other relevant stakeholders.*

Lismore as the District Service Centre has a significant role to play in the achievement of this vision. The vision is at the forefront of how Lismore should develop over the Plan period and to achieve this, a number of goals which are specific to Lismore have been formulated and are as follows:

- To provide high quality residential development with a mixture of house types and sizes to provide for the current and future population of Lismore.
- To encourage light industrial development and enterprise in Lismore through a plan led approach.
- To provide for services and infrastructure in a coherent and strategic manner that will compliment and aid future development and growth.
- To ensure that Community facilities are provided in conjunction with new residential development.

#### 1.4 Historical Context

Lismore as a settlement has its origins in very early historical times and derives its name from a large earthen fort called Lios Mor, (The Great Fort) that is in townland of Ballylea approximately 2 kilometres east of the Town. The historical significance of the Town essentially extends from the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. In 653 A.D, St Carthage or otherwise known as Mochuda founded a monastery in Lismore. The Town was an established seat of learning, and for almost eight centuries was considered the leading monastic city in Ireland. At the time of the successive Viking raids it contained up to twenty churches that stretched along the Blackwater. As a University Town Lismore had a reputation as a European seat of learning on a par with Oxford, Cambridge or the Sorbonne.

The modern Town was planned and built during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was designated as a Heritage Town in 1991 by the then Bord Fáilte which has assisted in the promotion of the Lismore both nationally and internationally.

## 1.5 Plan Period

The Plan relates to the development of the defined area over the period 2014-2020, and shall be taken as 6 years from the date the Plan was made, or until it is subsequently reviewed or another Plan is made.

## 1.6 Structure and Format

This Plan consists of a written statement containing policies, objectives and development standards, and accompanying maps and appendices. Each chapter deals with a topic and the Council's policy in respect of each topic is clearly identified.

The zoning maps provide a graphic representation of the proposals of the Plan illustrating the various landuses for Lismore. Should a discrepancy arise between the maps and the statement, the statement shall prevail.

The supporting documents are set out in the appendices and include the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report and Chapter 10 of the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 (Development Standards).

The format and content of each Chapter is outlined as follows:

**Chapter 1** highlights the legal context of the Local Area Plan, and outlines its format.

**Chapter 2** outlines the development context of the Town and the framing documents which have informed the Plan.

**Chapter 3** sets out the statistics relating to population and demographics, and in the Core Strategy illustrates how the Plan is consistent with National and Regional policies and strategies.

**Chapter 4** consists of the policies and objectives with respect to economic development and tourism for Lismore.

**Chapter 5** relates to infrastructure, and includes information on future Council investment proposals and schemes.

**Chapter 6** examines the issues relating to the built and natural heritage of Lismore and outlines the policies and objectives for the preservation and enhancement of these resources during the Plan period.

**Chapter 7** looks at Social and Community Development, examines issues relating to social exclusion and the provision of community facilities.

**Chapter 8** provides information relating to development management and outlines the definitions and permitted uses classes across the various land use zonings.