



Comhairle Contae an Chláir
Clare County Council

Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012–2018

Written Statement



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Preface

Pursuant to Section 19(1)(d) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), Clare County Council has, by resolution on 12/6/2017, deferred the sending of a notice under Section 20(3)(a) (i) and the publishing of a notice under Section 20(3)(a)(ii) of the Act. The sending and publishing of notices has been deferred for a period not exceeding 5 years i.e. up to September 2022.

Therefore the **Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018** will remain in effect until a new local area plan is made in 2023.

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Published by:

Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir,
New Road, Ennis, County Clare.

Design: David Rice @ OpticNerve.ie

Printed in Ireland

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Please check with Clare County Council Planning Section for statutory amendments (if any) to this plan. Amendments will be contained on www.clarecoco.ie.

Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 may be inspected at the offices of Clare County Council, Area Offices and Branch Libraries.

**The Plan may be purchased from Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Telephone: 065-682 1616**

All documents may be viewed and downloaded online at www.clarecoco.ie

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 sets out the land use plan for the proper planning and sustainable development of the settlement of Shannon and its environs. Hereunder the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 shall be referred to as the Local Area Plan. The Local Area Plan was adopted on the 10th September 2012 by the Elected Members of Clare County Council and came into effect on the 8th October 2012.

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 is the 'parent' document for this Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan, and thus the Local Area Plan is made in accordance with the objectives as set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The Local Area Plan consists of a written statement and a land use zoning map (Map A – refer to back of this document). The Plan area is located within the administrative area of County Clare and the electoral area of Shannon.

In accordance with the requirements of Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan, and any subsequent amendments, will remain in force for a period of six years, unless otherwise revoked or the preparation of a new Local Area Plan is deferred under the provisions of the above mentioned section of the Act.

This Local Area Plan comprises of 3 volumes:

Volume 1: Written Statement & Maps (*this document*)
 Volume 2: Strategic Environmental Assessment: Environmental Report, Non-Technical Summary and Environmental Statement
 Volume 3: Habitats Directive Assessment

1.1 Shannon Town and Environs – Context

Shannon, the second largest town in County Clare, is located on the River Shannon, which forms part of the southern boundary of County Clare. Figure 1.1 shows its setting in a national context. The settlement is defined by a number of component parts, namely the town itself, Shannon Airport, Shannon Free Zone and Smithstown Industrial Estates and agricultural lands to the east, west and north. Shannon Town developed from the 1960s in response to the growth of Shannon International Airport and the Shannon Free Zone. Its strategic importance is recognised in its designation in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 as part of the Limerick / Shannon Gateway. Shannon Town and Environs are of critical importance to the future economic development of the Mid-West Region. Figure 1.2 shows its location in a regional context. It occupies a strategic position along the Atlantic corridor and has excellent road connectivity to the Gateway cities of Limerick, Cork and Galway. This designation, together with the significant population and employment base, has necessitated that Shannon town be subject to its own Local Area Plan and is therefore separated from the South Clare Local Area Plan 2012-2018, which deals with the other settlements in the South Clare area.

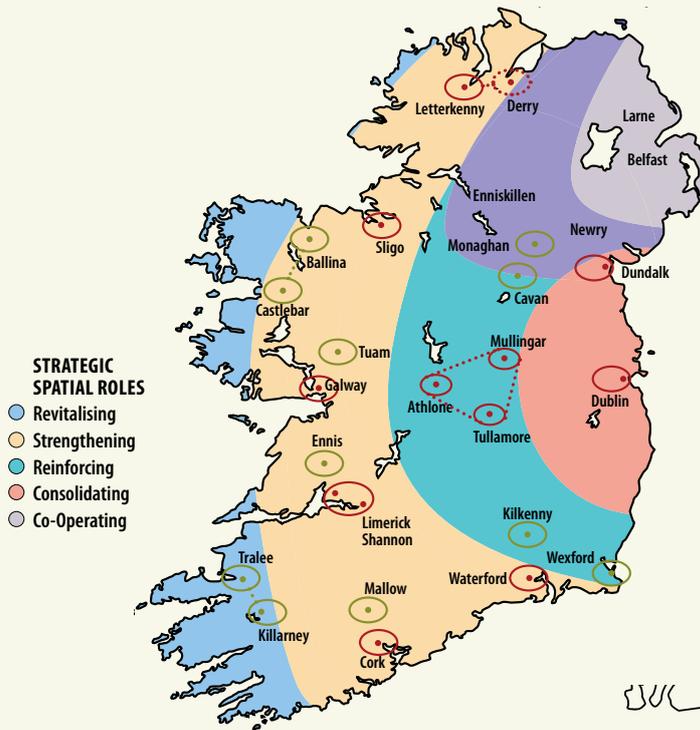
The population of the Plan area is 9,673 (Census 2011). The Plan area is illustrated in Figure 1.3 and covers the existing urban area, Shannon Airport, Shannon Free Zone, Westpark, Smithstown, Shannon Estuary and surrounding countryside to the west, east and north.

The preparation of this Local Area Plan is also in accordance with Section 19(1)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in that it has been prepared in respect of an area which:

- Is designated as a town in the most recent census of population, other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census;
- Has a population in excess of 5,000; and
- Is situated within the functional area of a planning authority which is a county council.

Figure 1.1 National Context

Source: National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020



Evidence of human habitation can be traced back to Tullyglass over 4,000 years ago. The townlands of Shannon: Rineanna, Drumgeely, Tullyglass, Ballymurtagh, Tullyvarraga and Smithstown are all easily accessible from the river and were most likely highly populated from earliest times.

The existing town of Shannon is characterised by a series of suburbs, each partly self-contained with local school and ancillary facilities which may include shops, a local church, post office, playing fields or other community facilities spreading east from the airport.

Housing ranges from the apartment blocks of Drumgeely, the oldest suburb of Shannon, to the dominant two-storey terraced housing, laid out in courtyard formation and defined by road boundaries of much of the early parts of the town, to the low density, detached houses on larger sites on the elevated areas of Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga.

More recent developments within suburbs such as Ballycasey have been characterised by medium density, semi-detached dwellings in large estates. Shannon is a very important industrial location as well as being the site of the world's first duty free airport.

Figure 1.2 Regional Context

Source: National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

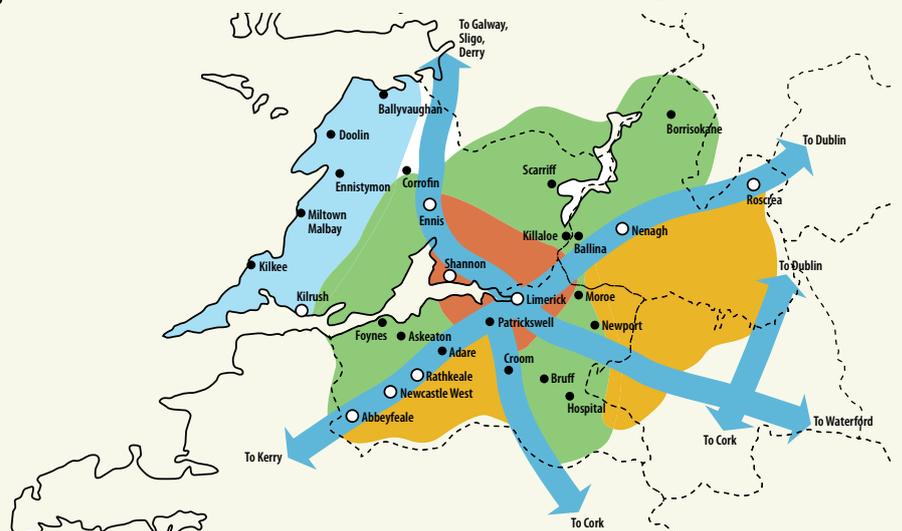
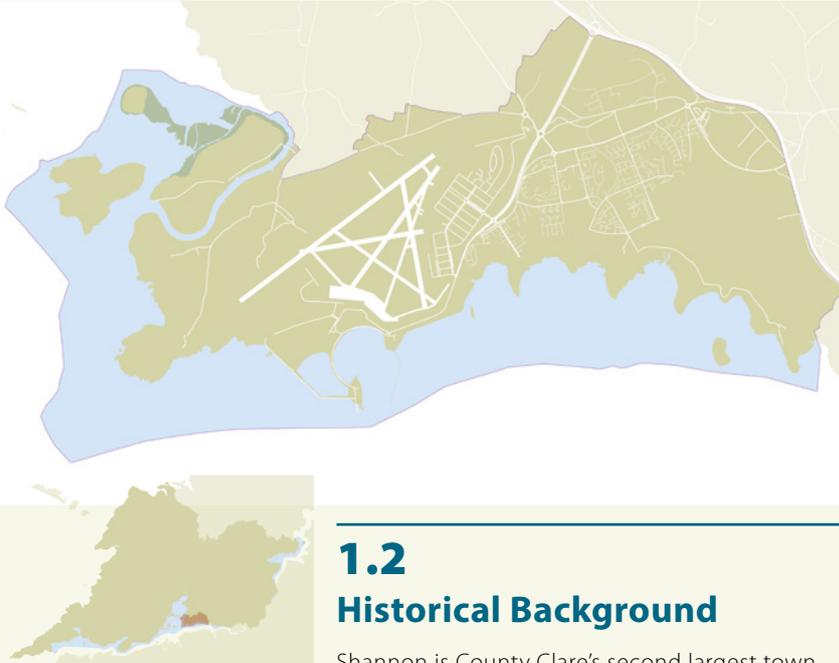


Figure 1.3 Plan area



1.2 Historical Background

Shannon is County Clare's second largest town. Much of Shannon was built in the 1960s as part of the development of the regional economy. The airport and the industrial estate were integral to the development of the town at this time. As such, the early Shannon was effectively a company town constructed to support industrial development in the environs of the airport.

Ireland's strategic position on the extreme western seaboard of Europe made it the ideal location for transatlantic air access to Europe. Its role as this aerial entrepot started in 1939 with the commencement of the first scheduled transatlantic flights by seaplane into Foynes, a medium sized industrial harbour in County Limerick on the south side of the Shannon Estuary.

Rineanna, on the north side of the estuary, had already been selected as the location for the creation of an international airport and was used during the Second World War for land based planes to connect with these early transatlantic flights. Selected initially because of its ability to cater for both types of aircraft, work had already commenced on the construction of hangar facilities. After the war, Rineanna – subsequently renamed Shannon Airport – replaced Foynes as the access point.

Blessing of St. John & Paul's church under construction
Seamus O' Donoghue

In 1947, the Irish Government, in an attempt to further strengthen the airport's position, enacted legislation to turn Shannon Airport into the world's first duty free airport, thereby allowing for the transhipment of goods through the airport without customs restrictions. It was this move that sowed the seed for the establishment of the Shannon Free Zone industrial estates.

In the late fifties, the introduction of long range aircraft meant that airlines could bypass Shannon Airport, eroding its main asset – its location on the Atlantic seaboard as an 'entry point' to Europe. This prompted the Customs Free Airport (Amendment) Act of 1958 to facilitate industrial development in the environs of the airport. Consequently, the Shannon Free Zone was established. In 1959, the Shannon Free Airport Development Company (SFADCo) was incorporated to replace the Industrial Development Authority, with a focus on industry, tourism and airfreight.

Shannon town developed with an initial house building programme to accommodate workers and executives adjacent to the new customs free zone, through a method of suburban planning known as the Radburn system. The town was never intended to cater for the overspill population of larger cities. However, because of Shannon's location fifteen miles away from the nearest commercial and residential centres of Limerick and Ennis and with a poor local public transport infrastructure, accommodation for any local workforce needed to be addressed. Thus, Shannon began with a limited amount of housing, in the form of apartments on Drumgeely Hill, followed by Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga, created to meet the demands for accommodation from new industrialists and workers. These houses were supplied by SFADCo.



This was rapidly followed in the early 1960s by the commissioning of an Outline Development Plan¹ which proposed the overall scheme for the development of a “town” at Shannon. An interdepartmental committee appointed by the government² concluded that a lower level of housing in Shannon should be provided. As a result, the initial Downes and Meehan Plan was revised in 1972³, with a less rigid layout than that employed under the Radburn phase of development and which accommodated a smaller population. The principle of new housing in Shannon had been accepted and approval followed for SFADCo to purchase a land bank equivalent to the provision of 6,000 population.

The population of the town is currently 9,673 (CSO 2011). Shannon has many competitive advantages and existing strengths. It has considerable potential to improve and reinvent itself as a place to live, work, recreate, visit and do business. This Local Area Plan will establish the framework to enable Shannon’s full potential to be realised. The following sections outline a vision and goals for Shannon Town and Environs. The chapters which follow outline a number of aims and objectives, the implementation of which will be pursued over the lifetime of this Local Area Plan.

1.3 Settlement Strategy

Chapter 3 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 provides the urban and rural settlement strategy for the County. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that future development is directed in a balanced plan-led manner to rural and urban areas throughout the County, as appropriate. This is achieved through the designation of a settlement hierarchy which is set out in Figure 1.4 below. The hierarchy is based not only on population, but on a variety of strategic long term planning and land use issues including – the capacity of individual areas

¹ *Downes and Meehan Outline Development Proposals - 1963*

² *Report and Advisory Outline Plan for the Limerick Region – Lichfield*

³ *Sheppard, Fidler and Associates Outline Development Proposals: Appraisal 1972*

to accommodate growth; availability of road, rail and air transport; availability of water and wastewater services; availability of education facilities; and the requirement to revitalise rural areas. In addition, the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process informed the preparation of the settlement hierarchy. The position of a settlement in the hierarchy provides an indication of the potential scale of population growth. The settlement strategy recognises the role of all towns, villages, clusters and the countryside as components of a balanced settlement strategy in County Clare.

The settlement hierarchy ranges from the County and Hub town of Ennis to the Gateway of Shannon, the service towns of Kilrush, Scarriff/Tuamgraney and Ennistymon/Lahinch and a network of smaller towns, including Sixmilebridge and Newmarket-on-Fergus as well as large villages, including Bunratty and Quin, down to the rural townlands.

Shannon is Clare’s second largest town and is part of a linked Gateway with Limerick. It occupies the position in the hierarchy between Ennis (hub town) and the service towns of Kilrush, Scarriff / Tuamgraney and Ennistymon / Lahinch. This is illustrated in Figure 1.4 below. The position of Shannon in the County hierarchy provides an indication of the potential scale of population growth in the Plan area over the Plan period. The settlement strategy therefore plays a key role in the appropriate delivery of the population target identified for Shannon (the population targets are discussed in the Core Strategy section below).

The Settlement Strategy in the County Development Plan sets out the following objective for Shannon–

CDP 3.2 Development Plan Objective:

It is an objective of the Development Plan:

To ensure that Shannon, as a linked gateway with Limerick in the NSS, is a driver of County and regional prosperity by harnessing its strategic location and access on the Atlantic corridor, in addition to its employment base, international airport and other competitive advantages⁴.

Figure 1.4 Urban and Rural Settlement hierarchy Diagram

Source: Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017



1.4 Vision

The Vision for Shannon is encapsulated in the following statement:

‘A town where people want to live and work sustainably and visit because of its strong identity and sense of place, high amenity value and quality of life. A sustainable, low carbon town which continues to be the regional leader for economic development and employment, maximising its strategic location, accessibility and Gateway status’.

1.5 Strategic Goals

The above Vision can be achieved through a number of strategic goals, as follows:

- To foster a strong identity and sense of place
- To proactively pursue the continued growth of Shannon as a centre of industrial and business excellence
- To enable the continued growth and development of Shannon International Airport
- To secure a vibrant and viable town centre
- To deliver quality housing and sustainable communities
- To facilitate community, social, cultural and recreational development
- To actively pursue a low carbon strategy
- To protect and enhance the natural and built environment
- To develop Shannon as a visitor destination
- To deliver an integrated and coherent green infrastructure strategy, encouraging walking, cycling and recreation
- To maximise infrastructural resources, including the Shannon Estuary

These goals will be discussed in turn in each of the following chapters and will be implemented through the delivery of a number of aims and objectives. The success or otherwise of this Local Area Plan will be determined by action and delivery on the ground, and the achievement of these aims and objectives will enable the overall vision to be realised.

1.6 Legislative Context

This Local Area Plan is made in accordance with the requirements for Local Area Plans as set out in the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010. The Act introduced a tiered and plan led system, setting out the framework for the provision of Local Area Plans to give more detailed and localised effect to the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan.

Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) sets out that: “a local area plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the development plan, its core strategy and any regional planning guidelines that apply to the area of the Plan and shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans which may include –

- a Objectives for the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purpose,
- OR**
- b Such other objectives in such detail as may be determined by the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies, including the objective of development of land on a phased basis and detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards for the design of developments and structures”.

This Shannon Local Area Plan 2012-2018 has also been informed by other relevant legislation which is in force or which comes into force during the lifetime of the Plan, in particular the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment.

In summary, this Local Area Plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- i** the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010,
- ii** the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 – 2011
- iii** Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive,
- iv** European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011,
- v** the Water Framework and Floods Directives.

LAP 1.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To require all planning applications for development within, adjacent to, or likely to impact on Natura 2000 sites, to carry out a Habitats Directive Assessment in accordance with the Habitats Directive (1992), including the following:

- Developments likely to give rise to downstream impacts on water sensitive Natura 2000 sites (including coastal sites).
- Developments likely to give rise to cumulative impacts on Natura 2000 sites, i.e. taking into account impacts from existing development and possible future development.
- Developments likely to give rise to in-combination / cumulative impacts on Natura 2000 sites, i.e. developments requiring master plans, ancillary developments
- Developments likely to fragment, destroy or encroach on Natura 2000 sites and their buffer zones.
- Developments likely to disrupt the flight paths, movements, feeding and breeding areas of annexed species.

Where there is a potential for further development, it must first be shown that the site can be suitably serviced, particularly relating to wastewater infrastructure and water supply.

1.7 Planning Framework

The Local Area Plan complies with the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022, as well as relevant national environmental legislation and planning guidelines with regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the Plan area. All development proposals must be consistent with the objectives of these higher-level plans, programmes, strategic plans and guidelines.

Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022

The Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 give effect, at a regional level, to the national planning framework put forward in the National Spatial Strategy and National Development Plan. The MWRPGs provide a regional framework for the formulation of the policies and strategy in the County Development Plan and seek to ensure the proper balance between the different settlements in the region with regard to development, population and services.

The Guidelines present an updated regional settlement strategy. They also set out 'Population Targets' for the region and for each County, including County Clare, which have been formulated having regard to the 2009 'population targets' issued by the former Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and supplementary guidance of August and October 2009.

Furthermore, the Guidelines outline a range of criteria for development plans in the context of population and settlement and identify strategic infrastructure investments for the region.

This regional guidance has influenced the development of the settlement strategy for County Clare. The MWRPGs 2010-2022 continue the 'Zone' based strategy (Zone 1 – Zone 9) that was employed in the 2004 Guidelines, outlining the development potential and needs of each zone in turn.

The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 is situated within Zone 1 as identified in the MWRPGs.

Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 is the 'parent' document which underpins the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018. Objective CDP 6.3(d) of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out the intention to prepare a Local Area Plan for Shannon Town and Environs –

'To facilitate and permit the economic development of Shannon town and environs including Shannon Airport in accordance with the strategic goals and detailed objectives of this Development Plan through the preparation of a Local Area Plan for Shannon Town and Environs'.

This Local Area Plan should be read in conjunction with the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 consists of the following volumes:

- Volume 1: Written Statement
- Volume 2: Maps
- Volume 3: Environmental Appraisal: Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Directive Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- Volume 4: Record of Protected Structures
- Volume 5: Wind Energy Strategy
- Volume 6: Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region
- Volume 7: Joint Housing Strategy for the Administrative Areas of Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Councils

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 incorporates national and regional policies and sets the strategic context for the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018. The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out the vision for the County as follows:

'A County where people want to live and work sustainably and visit because of its unique quality of life. An inclusive County of sustainable communities that each have respect for their environment, a sense of awareness of place, a sense of shared purpose and a sense of civic pride'.

In achieving this vision, the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 will govern the overall land use objectives for the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018. One of the key goals of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 is as follows:

'A County Clare where the overall strategic objectives of the County Development Plan are translated into Local Area Plans containing detailed land-use zonings and master-planning of neighbourhoods in an evidenced based, planned approach with a focus on ensuring a high quality of life'.

This Local Area Plan will therefore provide for the settlement plan and zonings pertaining to Shannon Town and will be consistent with the approach of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

Shannon Integrated Area Plan

The Shannon Integrated Area Plan was prepared under the 1998 DoELG Urban Renewable Scheme. Section 18(3)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that:

'When considering an application for permission, a planning authority, or the Board on appeal, shall also have regard to any integrated area plan (within the meaning of the Urban Renewal Act, 1998) for the area to which the application relates'.



The Plan's principal objectives are:

- To create a sense of place within the core commercial area of the town with which the local population and visitors alike can relate and which will assist in the creation of a sense of urban living.
- To promote population growth.
- To enhance the quality of the natural and built environment.
- To ensure that physical renewal contributes to social renewal.
- To enhance the quality of life of the natural and built environment.
- To assist in bringing new energy and growth to the economy of Shannon.
- To strengthen the social fabric of the town by enhancing capacities for community development.

The Plan sets out urban renewal measures for eight sub-areas within the overall Plan area. These are: existing centre of town, enterprise / workshop units on the Smithstown Road, community facilities space (east of leisure centre), infill housing east of central urban area, area to the north of central urban area across N19, Drumgeely shopping area, Drumgeely Hall and Tullyvarraga Hall.

The Shannon Integrated Area Plan has been taken into account, where appropriate, in the making of this Local Area Plan.

Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary

Clare County Council, together with Limerick City Council, Limerick and Kerry County Council, Shannon Development, Shannon Foynes Port Company, the Mid West Regional Authority and other stakeholders, has initiated the preparation of an inter-jurisdictional Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary and its immediate environs. The key objective is to research and develop an integrated approach to facilitating economic growth and promoting environmental management within and adjacent to the Shannon Estuary. Upon completion, it is envisaged that the Plan will be integrated into the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 by means of a variation.

Mid West Area Strategic Plan

This is a Planning, Land Use and Transportation Strategy for the Mid-West region and is at an advanced stage of preparation (Draft prepared January 2012). It includes the County Councils of Limerick, Clare, North Tipperary and Limerick City Council. MWASP will provide for a comprehensive integrated plan for land use planning and transportation in the Midwest region over the next 30 years.

Limerick and Clare Sports and Physical Recreation Strategy

This report has been prepared by Limerick Institute of Technology on behalf of the Local Authorities involved. The strategy includes the following:

- A set of goals and objectives for the provision and utilisation of sporting and physical recreation facilities in the area, which relate to sustainable development including linkages to smarter travel options
- An analysis of the existing provision within the focus area and adjacent areas
- An evaluation of the population and sporting interests necessary to support the viable development of different types of facilities
- An assessment of current and future population within the relevant area
- The identification of any gaps or excess in the provision of larger-scale facilities
- The identification of the resources available and gaps in provision for those with disabilities who wish to participate in sports and active recreation
- The identification of any opportunities for the provision of facilities that address a new sporting or active recreation area
- The development of an agreed set of policies that will guide Local Authorities in their land-use management and development functions and provide information to others who may wish to undertake the development of such a project
- The carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Screening as part of the process of carrying out the strategy development.

DoECLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning and Retail Design Manual April 2012

These Guidelines supersede the previous 2005 Retail Planning Guidelines. The aim of the Guidelines is to ensure that the planning system continues to play a key role in supporting competitiveness in the retail sector for the benefit of the consumer in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. The Guidelines set out five key policy objectives:

- Ensuring that retail development is plan-led;
- Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development;
- Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations;
- Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel Strategy; and
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

Aerial Photo Runways
Sean Ó Nuadain & Shannon Development



1.8 Core Strategy

Chapter 2 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out an overall Core Strategy in accordance with Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) that takes account of national and regional population targets. The identified population target for the County is 132,022 up to 2017. This figure was transposed into the County Development Plan from the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.

The Core Strategy included in the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 provides the policy framework for the Local Area Plans throughout the County particularly in relation to zoning for residential development.

With specific reference to Shannon, the key objectives of the NSS and MWRPGs which have influenced the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 and with which the Plan is consistent are as follows:

- To demonstrate that the Plan is consistent with and fundamentally linked to national and regional planning strategies, guidelines and policies including national and regional population targets.
- To provide a policy framework and ensure a strategic, evidence-based approach to zoning that allows an appropriate level of development throughout the plan area at the right time and in the right place.
- To provide sufficient zoned land to allow for population growth in compliance with the population targets for the gateway of Shannon as allocated by the MWRPGs 2010-2022 and transposed into the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017.
- To accommodate appropriately scaled development, in order to achieve a critical mass that will sustain a range of facilities and services to act as a driver for sub-regional growth throughout Clare and the Mid-West.
- To provide a framework within which the provision of sustainable infrastructure, amenities, economic investment and development can take place to maximise the

Figure 1.6
Population Targets by Zones, Co. Clare

Source: Mid-West Regional Authority (2010)

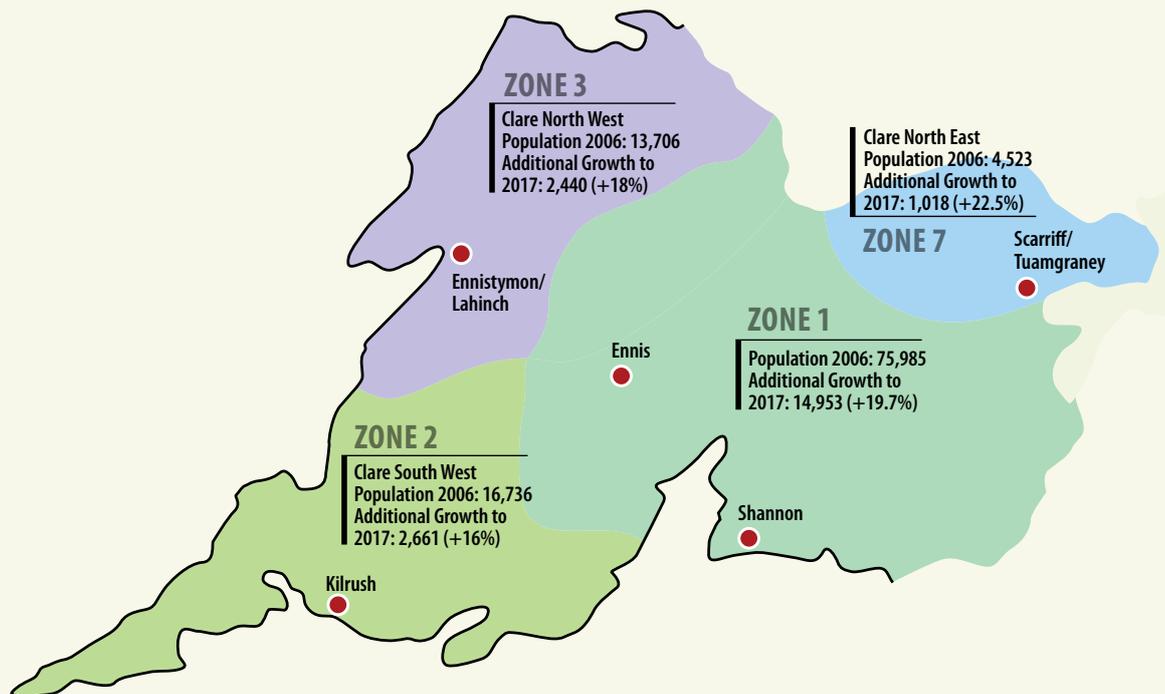


Table 1.1
Population Targets Breakdown 2017

	Population 2002	Population 2006	Service Towns 2017	Gateway 2017 1	Hub 2017 2	Remain-der of zone 6	Targets 2017
Zone 1	69,341	75,985		+1,753	+5,981	+7,219	90,938
SW Clare 3	16,230	16,736	+894 3			+1,767	19,397
NW Clare 4	13,200	13,706	+1,031 4			+1,409	16,146
NE Clare 8	4,506	4,523	+481 5			+537	5,541
Total	103,277	110,950	+2,406	+1,753	+5,981	+10,932	132,022

Source: Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017

- 1 Shannon
- 2 Ennis
- 3 Kilrush
- 4 Ennistymon/Lahinch
- 5 Scariff/Tuamgraney
- 6 Remainder of Zone includes total population for the remainder of settlements and rural area

Table 1.2 outlines the population targets for the Shannon / Limerick linked Gateway up to the year 2022. As noted above, the Plan area falls entirely within Zone 1. Table 1.3 shows a breakdown for the settlements within the Zone 1 area, with Shannon highlighted in bold as the relevant settlement for the purposes of this Local Area Plan.

Table 1.2
Gateway and Hub Targets

	2002	2006	2010	2016	2022
Limerick/ Shannon	95,559	99,979	104,600	118,000	132,700
Ennis	22,051	24,253	26,100	29,100	32,400
Total Gateway and Hub Population	117,610	124,232	130,700	147,100	165,100

Source: *Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines (2010)*

Table 1.3 also shows the population target for the Plan period, the required area of Residential zoned land and the available area of Residential zoned lands for Shannon. A total of 53.1ha of residential zoned land is required for Shannon to the end of the Plan period (2018). A total equivalent of 47.11ha are available through the provision of Residential and Low Density Residential zoned land in the Local Area Plan. The remainder of the balance is an allowance for housing which could potentially be facilitated in the town centre / mixed use zoned areas.

The Core Strategy has informed the preparation of this Local Area Plan, in particular the location and quantum of Residential lands within Shannon. The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 states that it is not intended that the population targets for individual settlements will be rigidly implemented without any flexibility. Regular monitoring will be carried out and consideration will be given to local factors such as:

- Availability of services
- Demand and land availability
- The need to accommodate those who qualify to build in the countryside but who alternatively may wish to locate in a settlement
- The need to support the retention of local services e.g. schools

The Council will also have regard to:

- Objective CDP 3.9 Monitoring and Implementation of Settlement Strategy
- Objective CDP 3.10 Planned Growth of Settlements
- DoEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.
- The overall performance of the relevant level of the settlement hierarchy e.g. small villages.

**Aerial photo of Shannon Buildings 1950's
Shannon Airport**

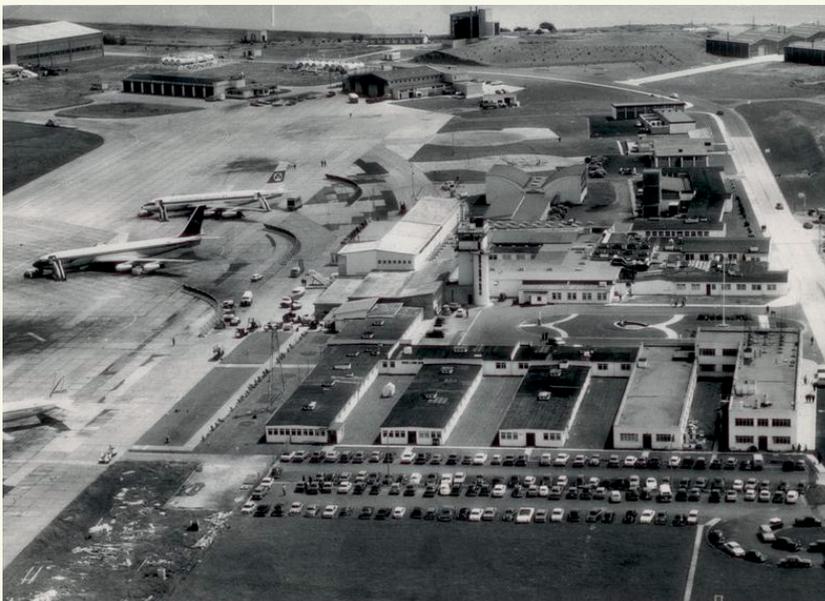


Table 1.3 Population Targets : Zone 1

	Local Plan Area	Population 2006	Population Target 2017	Population Increase 2006 - 2017	Required Area of Residentially Zoned Land (Ha) *1	Available Residentially Zoned Land (Ha)	Available Low Density Residentially Zoned Land (Ha)	Anticipated Services Available 2011-2017		
								Water	Wastewater	
Hub	Ennis	24,253	30,234	5981	115.5 88 ha (to end 2014)	376.0 (79ha available for Phase 1 – to end 2014)	N/A	Yes	Yes	
Gateway										
	Shannon ²	South	9,222	11,972	2750	53.1	32.06	30.11	Yes	Yes
Small Towns	Sixmilebridge	South	1,840	2,192	352	10.2	4.18	21.06	Yes	Yes
	Newmarket on Fergus	South	1,671	1,991	320	9.3	2.82	12.44	Yes	Yes
Large Villages	Killaloe	East	1,121	1,336	215	6.2	7.3	7.7	Yes	Yes
	Tulla	East	739	997	258	7.5	3.6	11.0	Yes	Yes
	Corofin	North	555	708	153	8.9	1.2	15.4	Yes	Yes
	Bridgetown	South	168	247	79	4.6	1.54	5.70	Yes	No
	Broadford	East	363	479	116	6.7	3.1	7.8	Yes	No
	Crusheen	North	441	572	131	7.6	0.0	15.6	Yes	Yes
	Cratloe	South	744	933	189	11.0	0.0	11.34	Yes	No
	Kilkishen	East	491	632	141	8.2	5.1	6.8	Yes	Yes
	Quin	South	623	789	166	9.6	6.58	1.18	Yes	Yes
	Bunratty	South	239	332	93	5.4	4.43	0.97	Yes	Yes
	Clonlara	South	536	686	150	8.7	3.96	11.88	Yes	Yes
	Kilmaley	North	167	246	79	4.6	0.0	11.5	Yes	No
	Kilmurry	East	377	496	119	6.9	4.8	3.9	Yes	No
	O'Briensbridge	South	425	553	128	7.4	4.69	4.10	Yes	No
	Ardnacrusha	South	1197	1,312	115	6.7	0.0	13.93	Yes	No
	Barefield	Ennis and Environs	158	235	77	4.5	12.55	3.2	Yes	No
	Ballycannon North (Meelick)	South	984	1,099	115	6.8	0.0	11.27	Yes	No
	Athlunkard	South	2,613	2,863	250	7.2	5.32	2.21	Yes	Yes
Parteen	South	1,075	1,281	206	6.0	0.0	6.20	Yes	Yes	
Small Villages	Ballinruan	East	32	65	33	3.8	0.0	3.3	Yes	No
	Ballynacally	West	120	170	50	5.8	0.0	5.06	Yes	No
	Ballyea	West	115	164	49	5.7	0.0	4.05	Yes	No
	Bodyke	East	56	94	38	4.4	0.0	3.4	Yes	No
	Kilbane	East	68	108	40	4.6	0.0	4.3	Yes	No
	Clooney	East	62	101	39	4.5	0.0	5.2	Yes	No
	Kilnamona	North	51	88	37	4.3	0.0	4.7	Yes	No
	O'Callaghans Mills	East	177	238	61	7.1	0.0	8.5	Yes	No
	Ogonelloe	East	151	207	56	6.5	0.0	7.5	Yes	No
	Ruan	North	245	319	74	8.6	0.0	9.4	Yes	No
	Toonagh	Ennis and Environs	67	107	40	4.6	0.0		Yes	No
	Tubber	North	71	112	41	4.7	0.0	8.8	Yes	No
Settlement Total		51,217	63,958	12,741	387.2	182.23	279.5			
							354.98 ^{*3}			
Rest of Zone 1 and 2 (Rural)		24,927	26,761	1,834						
Total Zone 1 and 2		76,144	90,719	14,575						

^{*1} *This calculation has been arrived at based on the following assumptions:*

A A density of 12 to the acre for residentially zoned land and 6 to the acre for low density residentially zoned land for Ennis and Shannon. A density of 8 to the acre and 4 to the acre respectively for both service towns and small towns. A density of 4 to the acre for residentially zoned land and 2 to the acre for low density residentially zoned land for large villages. A density of 2 to the acre for small villages. These are average figures for calculating supplies of zoned land. Individual planning applications on low density/residentially zoned land will be considered on their own merits.

B A household size of 2.62 persons

C 1 Ha residentially zoned land equates to 2 Ha of low density residential

D A headroom of an additional 50% to allow for choice and in anticipation of not all lands being made available.

^{*2} *In recognition of its Gateway status the population target for Shannon includes 1,375 extra persons. This has been added to the initial Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines target for Shannon from the population target available to Zone 1 and 2 as a whole.*

^{*3} *Please note that this total includes both residential and low density residential zoned land within the settlements listed and that 1ha residential zoned land equates to 2ha of low density residential land, except for small villages.*

Shannon's position near the top of the settlement hierarchy is a reflection of the settlement's strategic location, significant population base, international airport and industrial free zone.



Shannon Jets- c. 1965
Bernard Ryan



St. John & Paul's Church
Seamus O'Donoghue

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out the objective:

'To ensure that Shannon, as a linked gateway with Limerick in the NSS, is a driver of County and regional prosperity by harnessing its strategic location and access on the Atlantic corridor, in addition to its employment base, international airport and other competitive advantages'.(Objective CDP3.2)

The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 has provided sufficient zoned land for population growth in compliance with the population target set out above. The zoning of these lands has taken into account a range of factors including availability of services and infrastructure, flood risk, ground and surface water vulnerability, environmental impact, SEA and HDA requirements, market choice and consolidation of urban form.

Objectives relating to retail development in the town centre / SDA area have been reassessed to ensure compliance with the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016. The settlement plan for Shannon identifies the spatial extent of the Core Retail Area for Shannon as designated in the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016.

Policies for protection of areas at risk from flooding have been further strengthened by requiring compliance with the OPW / DoEHLG publication 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (November 2009).

The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, which accompany this Local Area Plan, have informed the preparation of the Plan and the recommendations made, particularly in relation to zoning.

Delivery of a plan-led Settlement Strategy in line with the integration of services, transport, infrastructure, economic activity, development of natural resources, while preserving the natural environment and amenities is a critical component of the Core Strategy. The Context Map presented in Chapter 2 outlines the component parts which make up Shannon Town and Environs. A key element of this Plan process is developing and understanding the relationship and linkages of all these key elements in the wider context of the Limerick/Shannon Gateway, and the wider Atlantic Corridor.

LAP 1.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

It is an objective of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 to ensure that sufficient lands are zoned at appropriate locations, in accordance with the assigned population target and to meet all envisaged land use requirements of the area over the lifetime of the local area Plan.

Chapter 2

Placemaking Framework

2.0 Introduction

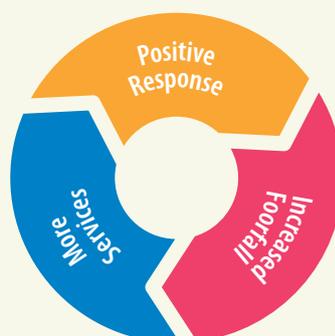
GOAL 1: To foster a strong identity and sense of place

Place can be an emotional location as in: 'home is where the heart is'. However, this chapter is primarily concerned with a physical place and the responses which it can generate in those who inhabit or visit that place. This kind of 'Place' can be defined as an external space which is delineated by natural or manmade objects. 'Sense of Place' refers to a personal experience of a location which, by its appearance, makes a strong impression and is recognisable. A Placemaking Framework is one which seeks to create or improve a positive 'sense of place.'

The human experience of 'place' comes through the sense of sight and people react quickly to visual signals; they can decide in seconds if the place they are in, or approaching, is attractive / off-putting, interesting / dull, safe / unsafe, accessible / confusing, full of character / soul-less.

While many of the above reactions may be subconscious, they nevertheless influence choices and behaviour. The actions arising from those choices can then have real impacts, positive or negative, on the place in question.

Figure 2.1
Virtuous Circle



A positive reaction to place is more likely to result in people choosing to return to that place whether to shop, attend community and cultural events or to do business. The outcome from this pattern of behaviour can then result in the formation of a virtuous circle in which increased vitality produces increased foot fall. The increased footfall in turn supports existing services.

2.1 Aims

- To create vibrant places for people that are safe, comfortable, attractive, distinctive, offer variety, provide opportunities for meeting people and offer a pleasing environment in which to spend time.
- To connect places, making them easy to get to and well integrated both physically and visually with their surroundings and accessible by a range of modal types – on foot, bicycle, public transport or by motor vehicle.
- To develop places that strike a balance between the natural and manmade environment and utilise each area's intrinsic resources – the climate, landform, landscape and ecology – to maximise energy conservation and amenity.

Increased vitality- increased footfall



2.2
Shannon Town and Environs
– Context

2.2.1
Shannon Town



Shannon town was planned and constructed in the 1960s as a New Town. Its initial purpose was to provide accommodation for workers in the industrial free zone. It is a low density, low rise settlement laid out on a grid of roads, on land bordering the estuary. Apart from two hills Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga, the land is flat with ground levels being low in relation to the estuary water. The town is protected from flood by mounded embankments running between the town and the Shannon Estuary. An open culvert, adjacent to the embankments, retains storm water from the town until release at low tide.



2.2.2
Shannon Town Centre

Shannon Town Centre, established in 1972, is bounded at present by Bothar Mor to the north, Bothar Na Rinne to the west, Bealach Bri to the east and the town park to the south. Its northwest corner is beside the road spur to the N19. It contains the principal shops, offices, post office and bank. Nearby, in the same block, are other services such as the health centre, garda station, credit union, business supports and service station.

2.2.3
Freezone and Industrial Areas



The Freezone was set up in 1959 to both avail of and support the airport as a transport hub. It consists of Freezone West (FZW), Westpark, Freezone East (FZE), and Smithstown.

FZW is lowlying and on level ground. Neighbouring Westpark is more elevated and is visible from the surrounding areas. While the Freezone sites are laid out on a grid pattern, the planned landscape design contributes to spatial definition and softens a potentially harsh environment. FZE is more recent and contains medium rise individually designed buildings. In its 2008 Master Plan for these areas, Shannon Development proposed to further enhance the landscaping design to improve spatial definition and character.



2.2.4 Airport

In the early years of air transport the waters of the Shannon Estuary were used by sea planes which had a base at Foynes in Co. Limerick. As air travel developed the flat open land Rineanna on the County Clare side of the Shannon Estuary offered better conditions for the development of an international airport. Construction began in the 1930s with commercial transatlantic flights commencing in 1945.

Today the airport, as a place, retains the unique combination of open, tranquil views and rich birdlife in close proximity to the facilities and infrastructure of an international airport.

2.2.5 Estuary

The Shannon Estuary, the largest estuary in Ireland, is a water body of some 31,500 ha covering a distance of 100km from Limerick city to Loop Head. It is a multifunctional zone supporting a range of uses and activities. It is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA).

The shoreline of the Shannon Estuary runs along the southern and western boundaries of the Plan area for a distance of approximately 25km. The length of the shore, the natural beauty, spacious character and the scale of the estuary all combine to form a place which is attractive, interesting and satisfying to those who access it.



2.3 Analysis – Placemaking in Shannon Town

It can be seen that both in the conception and early stages of the development of Shannon, i.e. the Airport, the Freezone and the Town, that there was an inherent inter-dependence which benefited each element and created an entity which was economically dynamic and was more than the sum of its parts.

In the intervening years, these linkages have weakened due to changing circumstances, to the detriment of Shannon. The challenges for Shannon into the future include the need to reform and recreate linkages between existing and new development, thus creating dynamic, vibrant places, ensuring interactions and relationships which reinforce Shannon Town and Environs as a place.

The sections below present an analysis of the appearance of Shannon town and town centre as physical places and the consequences of that appearance on the choices which people make. The many positive facilities and services in Shannon are not mentioned here unless they have a particular visual dimension. Only through an analysis of the current situation on the ground can objectives be set out to enable the creation of dynamic and vibrant places where a community can function and thrive.

2.3.1 Shannon Town

Shannon town has a number of existing strengths from a visual perspective. These include low rise buildings, wide streets, a pleasant character with an abundance of green spaces, many recreation areas and tree canopies. In addition it has low-density residential areas informally laid out among trees on two hills overlooking the town. There are views over the spacious and natural expanse of the Shannon Estuary and also views to some impressive buildings in the free zone.

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 improving the sense of place on arrival and on moving through the town in a way which would benefit residents but particularly visitors. Visitors can be workers from the free zone, attendees at sporting events, shoppers, people attending appointments, people using the airport and others who can support facilities, services and events. There is also an opportunity to improve sustainable travel patterns around the town and environs. The town park, located centrally between the town centre and the area containing schools, leisure centre, playgrounds, and Town Hall, presents an opportunity for greater outdoor amenity and recreation. There is further potential on land to the south of the playground which could support community/amenity uses and development on the two sites could be complementary.



Approach to Shannon Town at Ballycasey

At present, the network of principal roads and junctions both approaching and within the town and connecting to the Airport, Freezone and wider area, share a uniformity of views and spatial character. This road network does not create a clear sense of place, nor does it stimulate curiosity or create a welcoming feeling for a visitor. There is little sense of where the centre of the town is located. There is also an absence of suitable visual signals to traffic using the N19 with regard to the presence of the town.



Shannon Estuary



N19 as it approaches Shannon Town Centre

Way finding in Shannon can be confusing for the casual and business visitor or for emergency vehicles, due to an unclear hierarchy of streets and street junctions. The location of key buildings, out of the lines of sight on the main vistas, results in a scarcity of landmarks, which are normally an important element in way finding. Visual clutter and often inadequate signage at junctions can compound the problem.

In addition, the line of high poplar trees which fringe the coast form a visual barrier between the town and the Shannon Estuary. The existence of the Estuary area is not communicated to the visitor.

Furthermore, in spite of level topography, a wide road network and compact urban form, there is little evidence of sustainable travel options in use, i.e. walking and cycling.

.....

2.3.2 Shannon Town Centre

The town centre is characterised by six storey buildings, which create a landmark at the centre. The Skycourt building provides definition along the eastern boundary. Some attractive views and spaces are provided along Sli Carra and on the

forecourt of the library. Well-defined, pedestrian-friendly spaces are located within the Bruach na Sionna housing scheme. The original landscaping of grassed embankments between Bothar Mór and the town centre provides some spatial definition and partial screening of service areas and parked cars.



Shannon Town Centre

However, there is no sense of having arrived at the town centre. For visitors, views from the three principal approaches to the town centre – from the Shannon Town Roundabout, Bothar Mór and Bothar na Rinne – consist of undefined spaces and poor signage, which presents a confusing and unappealing image of the town.

Within the town centre the public spaces lack definition, with few three dimensional objects to enclose the spaces and which help to form a 'sense of place'. The visual dominance of parked vehicles so close to the town centre buildings is not visually appealing or welcoming to pedestrians.

The town square area, while physically defined on three sides, is open to more parked vehicles on the fourth (western) side. The facades on three sides are not animated by any opening or activities at street level thereby creating a space that lacks character and fails to stimulate interest.

Notwithstanding this, there are opportunities to improve the quality and sense of place in the town centre. This can be achieved by enhancing vitality in the town square, thus attracting people to the area. In addition, an expansion of the town centre will enable the capture of different scales and types of retail offer, attracting new customers and business. Moreover, there is potential to improve links to the Estuary, the Free





Approach to Town Centre at North West Corner

Zones and to traffic using the N18. The central location of the town centre should be reinforced by improving walkable links to the surrounding area into and out of the centre.

2.3.3 Building on Shannon's assets

There may be a belief that poor physical fabric or negative image in a place is a permanent feature but history has shown that decline can be reversed and that new environments can be created. Today, an international airport, an industrial zone (which is the largest employer in the county) and a residential area of some 9000 people exist in what only 75 years ago was an undeveloped isolated rural area. However, the relationships between the component parts of Shannon Town and Environs need to be reviewed and renewed continuously.



Town Centre Square

Placemaking / Urban Design is a multidisciplinary activity. All relevant professional disciplines and stakeholders need to 'buy in' to the vision and to work together around a realistic implementation strategy. Settlements with a new town's form / layout in particular need to make conscious and continuing efforts to make their town welcoming to visitors. The conditions thus created will enhance good sense of place and quality of life for all residents.

2.4 Placemaking Framework

2.4.1 Introduction

In order to build on the positives, deal with the weaknesses and avail of the opportunities outlined in section 2.3 above, the following section will detail a number of objectives to be implemented over the period of this Local Area Plan. This is seen as the necessary first stage of placemaking in Shannon which can then proceed to further initiatives. The essential elements of placemaking are set out in the Urban Design Manual, a best practice guide which accompanies the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (DoEHLG 2009).

Successful town centres function as distinct entities which are integrated with their wider urban area. Integration includes basic circulation and movement patterns for all modes of transport, including cycling and walking, together with connections to important services and features.

Shannon town centre sits within a central area/block (refer to context map 2.1) and contains many supporting functions. It is critical that the central area/block can attract people who then support the activities in the town centre. In order to draw people in, the circulation routes into the town need to be attractive, clear and well signposted. This is dealt with under the placemaking / way finding section below.

LAP
2.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To increase the appeal of the central areas, the town centre and the town park.

LAP
2.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To increase interaction between the N19, the town, the free zone, the airport and the estuary.

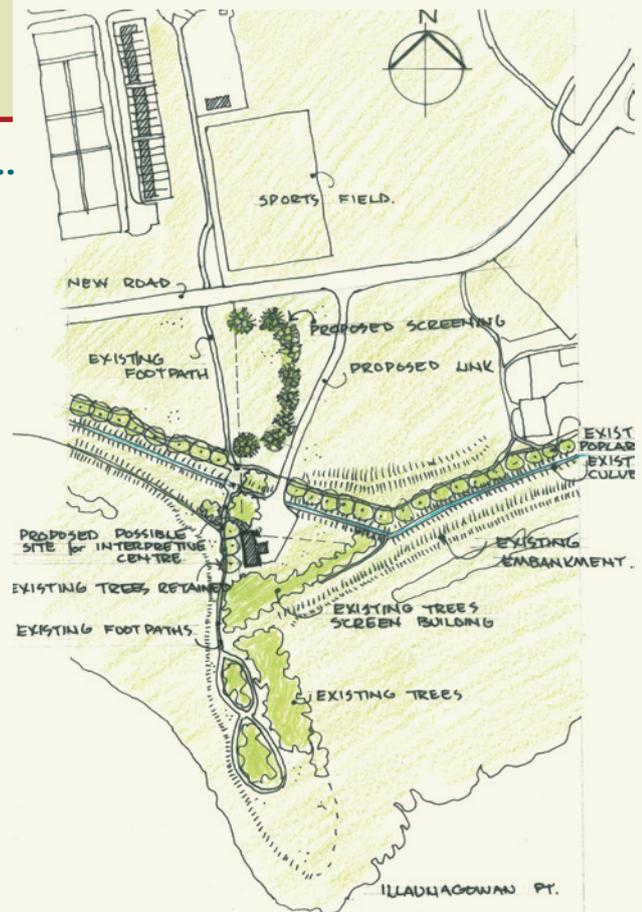
2.4.2
The Central Area

Figure 2.3 outlines the central area of the town. To the North of the central area, traffic passing on the N19 needs to have a visual signal of the presence of the town. A strong vertical shape to act as a landmark is required. This could be a building but could equally be, for example, a wind turbine. Such a structure in addition to being a landmark also conveys an image for the town which is progressive in terms of clean, renewable energy.

This Local Area Plan also includes mixed use site MU1 which adjoins the N19, allowing for appropriate 'edge of centre' retail functions north of the town centre. Suitably scaled, well designed buildings with integrated dual aspect signage in these locations could themselves form the landmarks required to attract passing traffic into the town centre. Development on this land needs to correspond with a cohesive placemaking framework which delivers attractive, well defined external spaces. Good pedestrian / cycle links to the town centre are essential. In this regard, reference is made to Chapter 11 which deals with Green Infrastructure and which outlines proposals for a comprehensive walking and cycling strategy throughout the Plan area.

The Shannon Estuary is a major amenity area for Shannon Town and Environs. The southern tip of Illaunagowan Point is less than 2km from the Shannon town centre roundabout on the N19. This is an area of natural beauty and environmental value. Although the town centre is located between the Shannon Estuary and the N19, there are few visual signals to announce this unique co-location to the wider public, passing commuters, workers in the Freezone or visitors to the town.

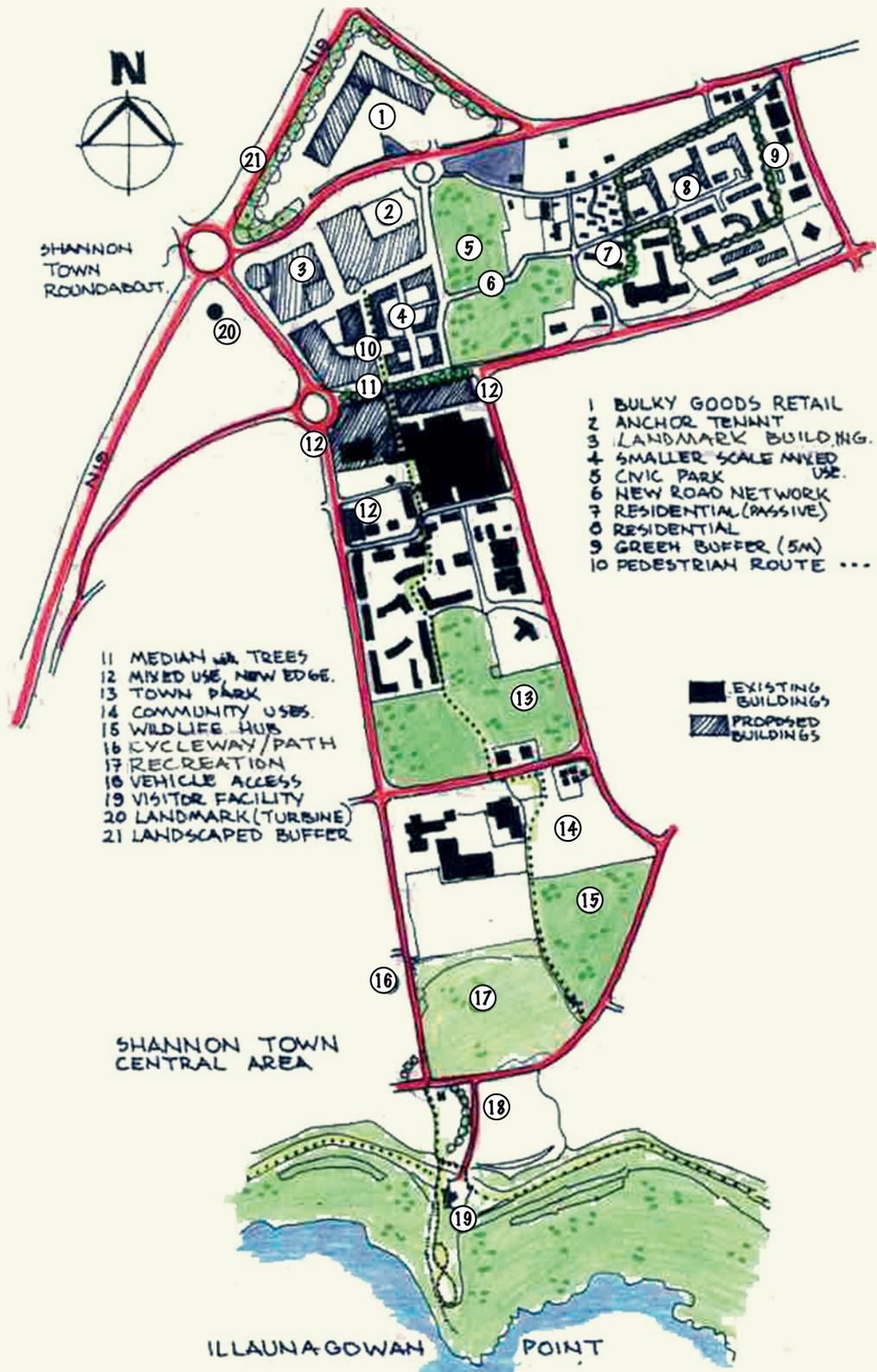
Figure 2.2
 Facility at Illaunagowan Point



The development of three walking trails from the town centre to Illaunagowan point and the estuary would be a positive promotion of this amenity.

The addition of a suitable facility at Illaunagowan point, giving views of the estuary, would create a focal point and an attraction based on one of the inherent assets in Shannon.

Figure 2.3
Indicative Sketch only showing possible
build out of extended town centre





Shannon Town Centre: North–West Corner

Chapter 11 deals in greater detail with the proposed looped walking trails within the Plan area. Signage both in the town centre and in the Free Zone would indicate distance, walking and jogging time. Among the walking trails proposed is a trail from the Free zone to Illaunagowan point, a round trip of 5km, which would increase linkages between the central area of Shannon Town and the employment centre. A visual signal would be required within the Free Zone at the start of the trail.

In relation to the town centre, developments of recent years have seen a significant expansion of retail floor space in the form of a building which, in size and footprint, gives strong definition to the southeast corner of the present town centre. The design of the Shannon Town Centre roundabout, including the acorn sculpture, creates an attractive element of townscape which adds to sense of place and aids way finding.

However, the most visually and geographically prominent part of the town centre is its northwest corner since this area interfaces with the approach from the N19 and with Bothar Mór and Rinne. While this area contains the principal retail and civic functions of the town, it is not expressed physically and visually as a clear, welcoming sense of place. The approach is anti-climatic featuring visual clutter and a sea of motor vehicles.

The lack of 'sense of place' on this site is key to the image issue of the town centre and Shannon town. Placemaking requires, firstly, a logical arrangement of uses which are then clearly defined along their edges by buildings, trees or other vertical element (see figure 2.6). These objects create enclosure of space and their design, colour and texture, along with the uses, determine the character of the place.



Estuary at Illaunagowan point

Figure 2.4
Two Focal Spines: Shannon MasterPlan2009

The proposals of the Shannon Masterplan have informed concepts in the present plan in respect of a) the two focal spines b) the unified and walkable core c) the 'green linkages' d) Retention and enhancement of tree canopies.

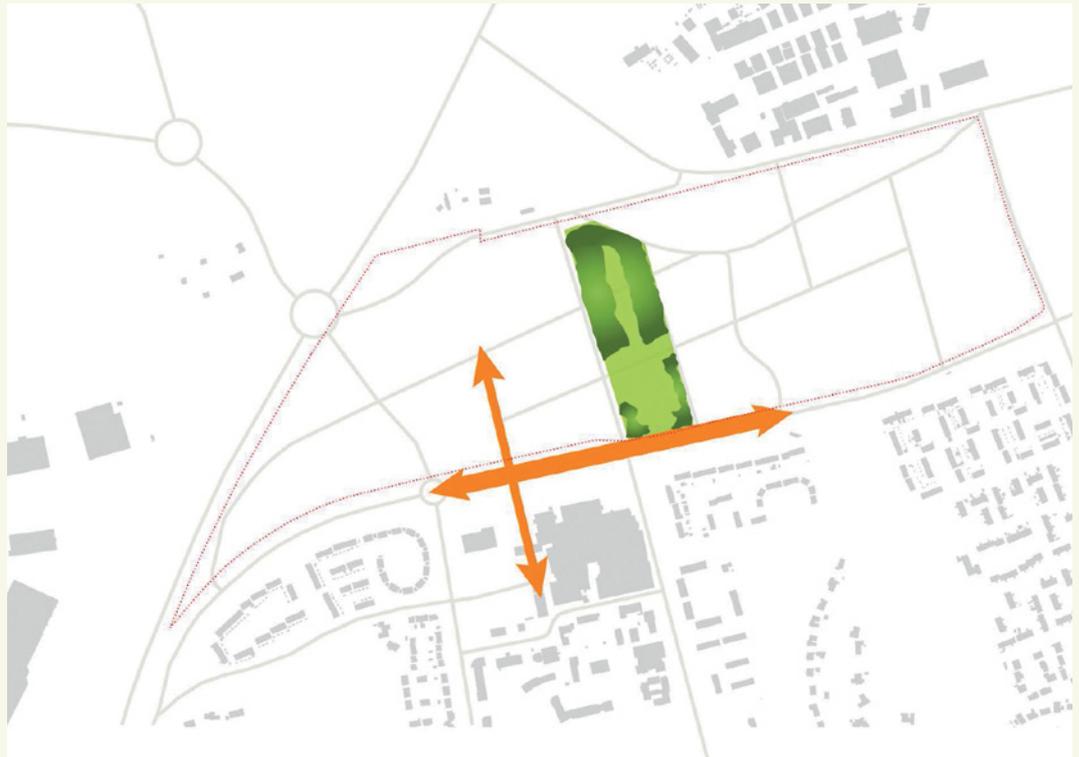


Figure 2.5
Unified and walkable core: Shannon MasterPlan 2009

Successful placemaking for the town centre needs to be formed around sound circulation patterns for both pedestrians, cyclists and cars as they access both North and South sides of the Town Centre.





Town Square Enlivened by Additional Natural and Built Elements

Consideration of the town centre as a place needs to incorporate the present developed area south of Bothar Mór and the future town centre area to the north of Bothar Mór. These both fall into the area defined as the core retail area (see Chapter 5) and have to be considered spatially as one entity.

The Shannon Master Plan 2009, whose brief was the area north of Bothar Mór, made co-ordinated proposals for both of these areas. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 illustrate proposals as set out in the adopted Shannon Master Plan 2009, incorporated as part of the previous Local Area Plan, which has informed the concepts in this Local Area Plan.

2.4.3 The Town Square

Enclosure and definition are also required on the western side of the town square so that it can become an attractive focus for public activity. Shop units need to enliven this space by opening out on to the square.

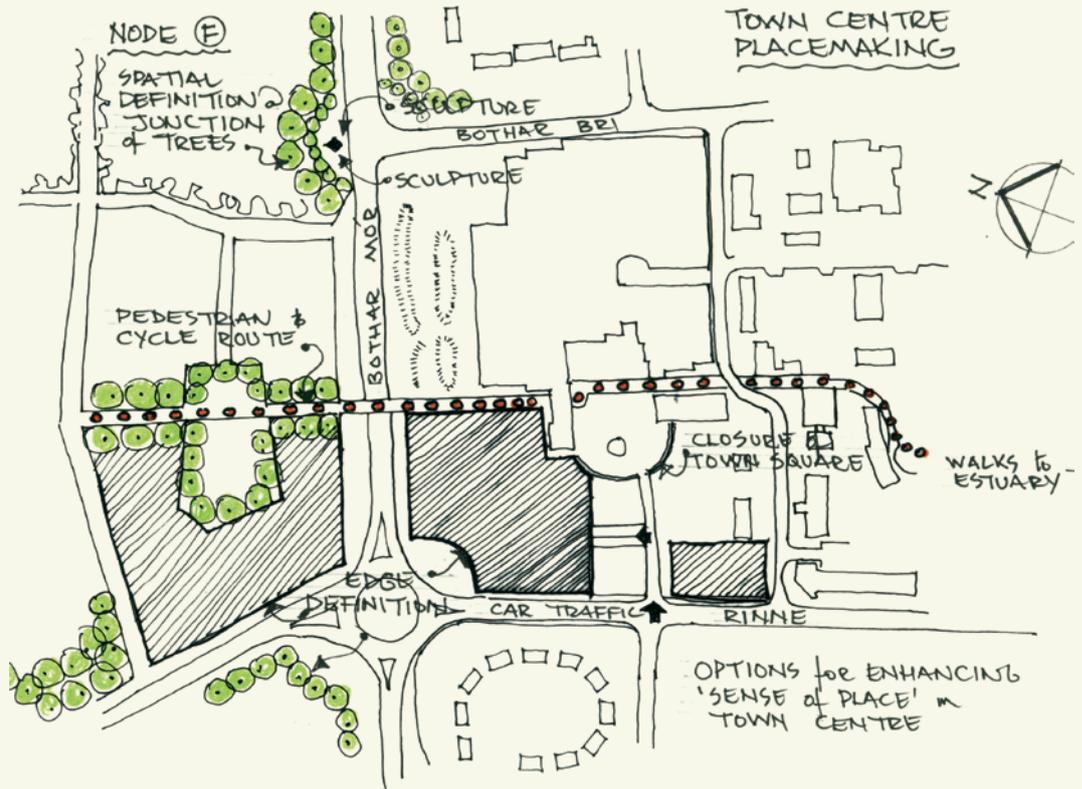
While the long term goal for the north-west corner is a building which gives definition to all sides i.e. both approach roads and the inner faces, there is a need for short/medium term actions which will enhance the sense of place. Such measures, even if temporary, should be fully considered and be of good quality in terms of design and implementation.

A scheme for the northwest corner needs to include screening of the parked vehicles and should also have vertical elements. The newly defined edge might incorporate the now unused road section while leaving space to the outer corner which could be landscaped to address the approach to the N19 link. The proposals could incorporate a review of public lighting along the newly defined edge, with removal of unnecessary motorway style lights. See Figure 2.11, node G (page 33).

The outline shape of a building on the site needs to give definition to the outer edges and also to the inner spaces of the town centre. Given the relationship between building height and density it may be necessary to consider car parking on upper levels as a way of achieving required height.



Figure 2.6
Illustration of Placemaking Principles at North-West Corner:
Edge Definition to outer edges and Pedestrian Circulation pattern across Mór.



2.4.4 The Town Park

The town park presents an opportunity for greater outdoor amenity and recreation. There is a need to maintain and enhance the 'walkability' of existing circulation routes which traverse the park with a view to developing future trails to the Shannon Estuary. It is an objective to bring forward design and management proposals for the town park, in the context of an overall integrated green infrastructure framework (objectives 11.3 and 11.6 refer) so that it can realise its full potential as a place of amenity and recreation for all. A linked scheme for lands south of the play ground is also an objective (refer objective 11.5).

2.4.5 Placemaking and Way Finding

To deal with the issue of way finding comprehensively, it is necessary to look at the layout of the town. Map 2.2 below identifies both the key circulation routes and the nodes (key junctions) on those routes.

Map 2.2 forms the framework for addressing way-finding throughout the town. Examples are then given for identified nodes and routes. The examples illustrate the principles, possible layouts and forms which will, if implemented, enhance way-finding and placemaking.

A review of signage is needed for Shannon Town, which takes account of 'Access for All' and which is an integral part of the design scheme for routes and nodes. Signage needs to be visible and clear but should be proportionate to the urban context i.e. not oversized.

2.4.6
Key circulation nodes

LAP
2.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To improve the sense of place and way-finding on key circulation nodes.

A node (an intersection or junction) is a place where a choice of routes is presented and a visitor has to make a quick decision on the basis of the visual signals available. The junction needs to be spatially different from the route.

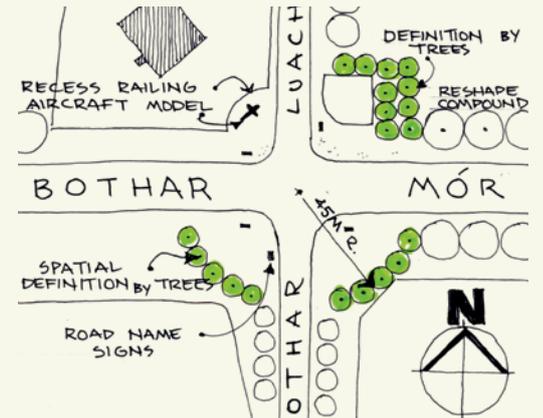
A landmark or unique feature will aid recognition and way finding. A clear distinction needs to be made between major and minor routes. Unnecessary visual clutter and infrastructure equipment should not appear within the radius of the junction. Figures 2.7 to 2.10 illustrate possible design layouts for nodes K, E, M and O respectively.

There may be benefits in supporting an identity for Shannon, by the sculptures/landmarks forming part of an agreed theme, such as air/ space travel and technological achievement.

Figure 2.7 Node K



Figure 2.8 – Node E



All examples shown include:
Using trees planted in a distinct pattern which defines the space around the junction.
Removal of visual clutter from the radius of the junction.
Erection of suitable signage on all approaches, designed and scaled to suit the urban environment.

Node K



Node E



Node E includes a suggestion for redesign of boundary railing at Atlantic Air Venture to allow for a landmark linked to the activity at this key node.

Figure 2.9 – Node M

Node M includes a possible landmark location which would terminate the vista along Bealach Bri, aiding wayfinding.

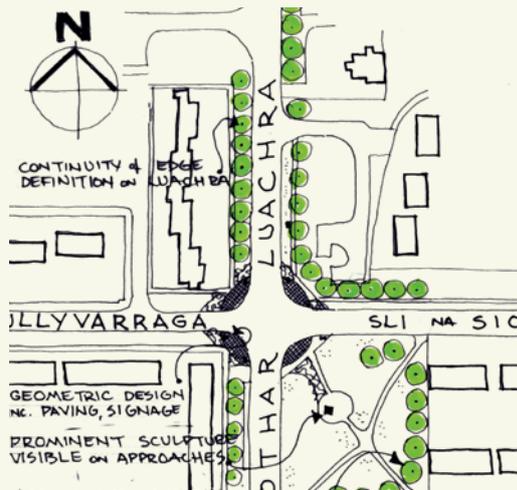
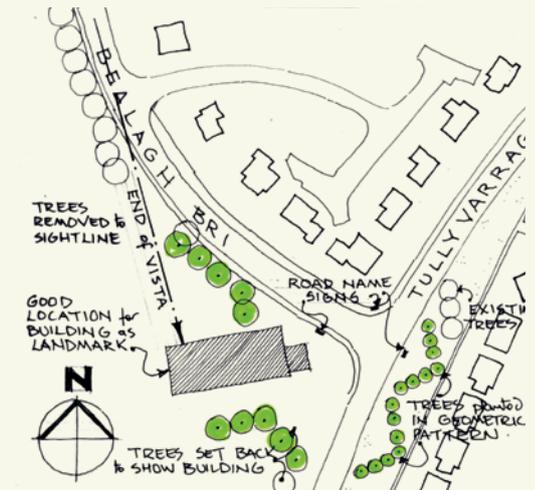


Figure 2.10 – Node O

Node O includes the use of paving to draw attention to the space restricted junction. Planting in the adjoining park defines the space, creating a backdrop for the proposed landmark sculpture. Drawing also shows improved placemaking by planting in a linear pattern to give enclosure and definition along the route of Bothar na Luachra.



Node O



Node M



2.4.7
Key circulation routes

LAP
2.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To improve the sense of place and way finding on key circulation routes.

Place is space defined along its edges by built or natural elements. Because of the dominance of low rise, low density buildings in Shannon, it is generally trees along the principal roads, as the larger element, which define the places. Grass mounding is used in some cases to reinforce the spatial definition and other elements such as lamp standards also contribute.

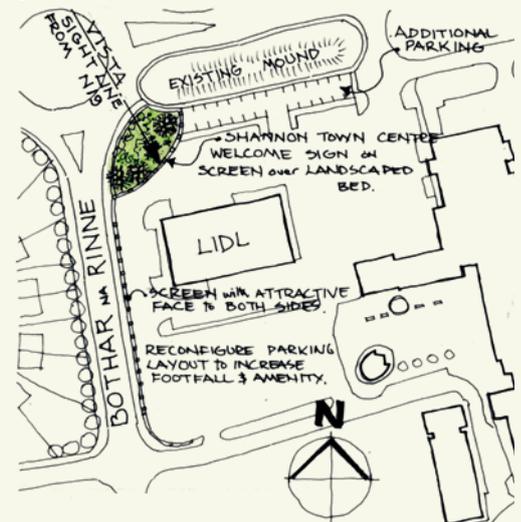
While trees can give effective definition, they can also create a uniformity which, in the absence of landmarks can be confusing (refer to the photographs below and also to section 2.4.8).

Figure 2.10 shows tree defined edges along Bothar na Luachra which open in a controlled manner at the junction. In a further example, Figure 2.12 shows additional landscaping in front of the buildings to give enclosure while creating an opening through existing trees gives a view to significant buildings in the Freezone as landmarks. To give a secure sense of place, the enclosure needs to be continuous, with breaks being used in a controlled manner to highlight special features, landmarks or junctions.



Trees: spatial definition but not distinction

Figure 2.11 – Node G
options for treatment of northwest corner



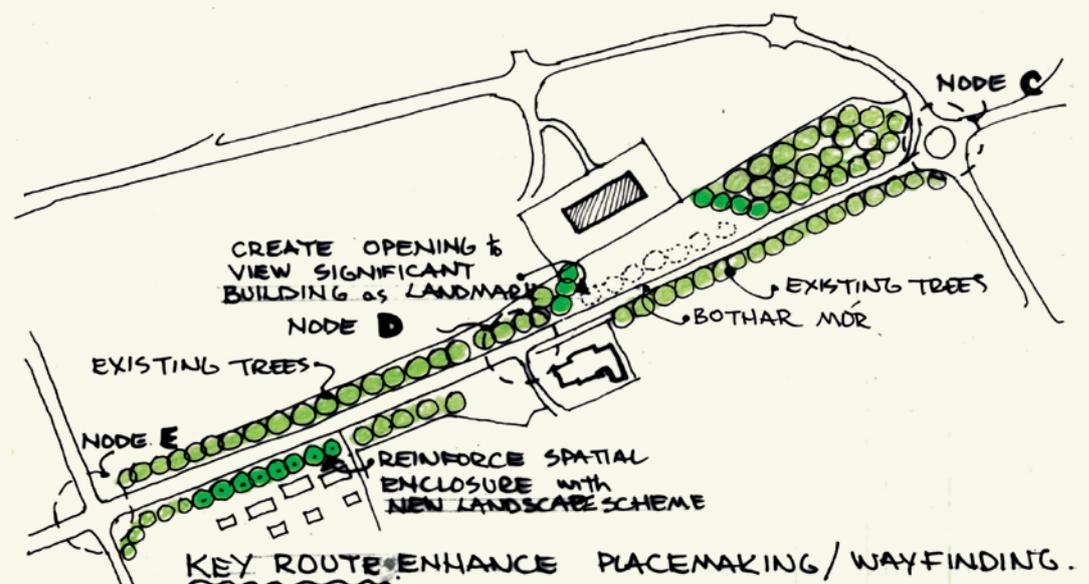
Node G



Figure 2.11 shows enhanced placemaking / way finding on the key routes as they intersect at Node G. Ideas presented for Node G include-

- Reconfigure the boundary to spatially define the edge and screen the car park.
- Reallocate space to create a new area in the direct line of sight / vista of the approach from N19 which can present a landscaped area with Welcome to Town Centre signage.
- Use newly enclosed space on disused roadway to provide additional car parking spaces.

Figure 2.12
Enhanced Placemaking / Wayfinding on
Bothar Mór



Landmarks are a key element of way-finding. In an urban area lines of sight, or vistas, are available along streets or roads. The end point of the line of sight, the focal point, is an ideal location for a landmark and in traditional settlements key buildings were usually placed there. In settlements with a new town layout, key buildings were more often located to the side of the line of sight rather than at the focal point, as is the case in Shannon.

In the case of Shannon, it is possible to plan for the introduction of a key building by zoning land appropriately at a focal point. Where the line of sight terminates at a roundabout, the centre can be designed to accommodate a suitably-scaled piece of public art, as has been done at the Shannon town centre roundabout. The principles outlined above need to be taken into account when planning developments adjacent to any key node or route.



Modern urban Landmark

Traditional settlements, generally, develop organically over centuries around circulation patterns formed by people moving in and out of the area. Recognisable landmarks and spaces emerge gradually allowing 'sense of place' and ease of way finding to develop naturally. This is one of the reasons why new towns, lacking this relationship with their hinterland, can often lack 'sense of place' and can be difficult to navigate.

2.4.8

Natural Elements

LAP 2.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To ensure a central role for natural elements in placemaking process and design.

Shannon has the benefit of an attractive green setting. In the course of the development of the town, extensive planting schemes were undertaken along the coast of the Shannon Estuary, on parts of the principal roads, on Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga hills and other open space areas. A landscaping scheme involving tree planting and earth-mounding was implemented along Bothar Mór on the approach to the town centre and the airport.

The maturing of these schemes today is largely responsible for the green setting and considerable green infrastructure which benefits the town. As noted earlier, most of the spatial definition along the public spaces of the roads is formed by the strong three dimensional shape of the trees.

As acknowledged above, this greenery and abundance of trees are important in the context of placemaking. However, trees as the main defining features, without distinctive landmarks, can produce an environment which, although pleasant, is uniform, limited in interest and potentially disorientating. A sense of place would be improved by ensuring:

- that enclosure is continuous where required,
- that breaks in enclosure are used in a controlled manner to highlight distinctive landmarks,



- that new landscaping schemes create unique environments, using particular species or planting patterns, at key locations to enhance sense of place by introducing variety which would also assist way-finding.

An example would be using distinctive planting patterns at junctions. This has been proposed in the illustrations in section 2.4.6. It is also an objective to improve 'sense of place' on the N19 as it approaches Shannon by designing and implementing a planting scheme which gives definition and some enclosure along the edges.



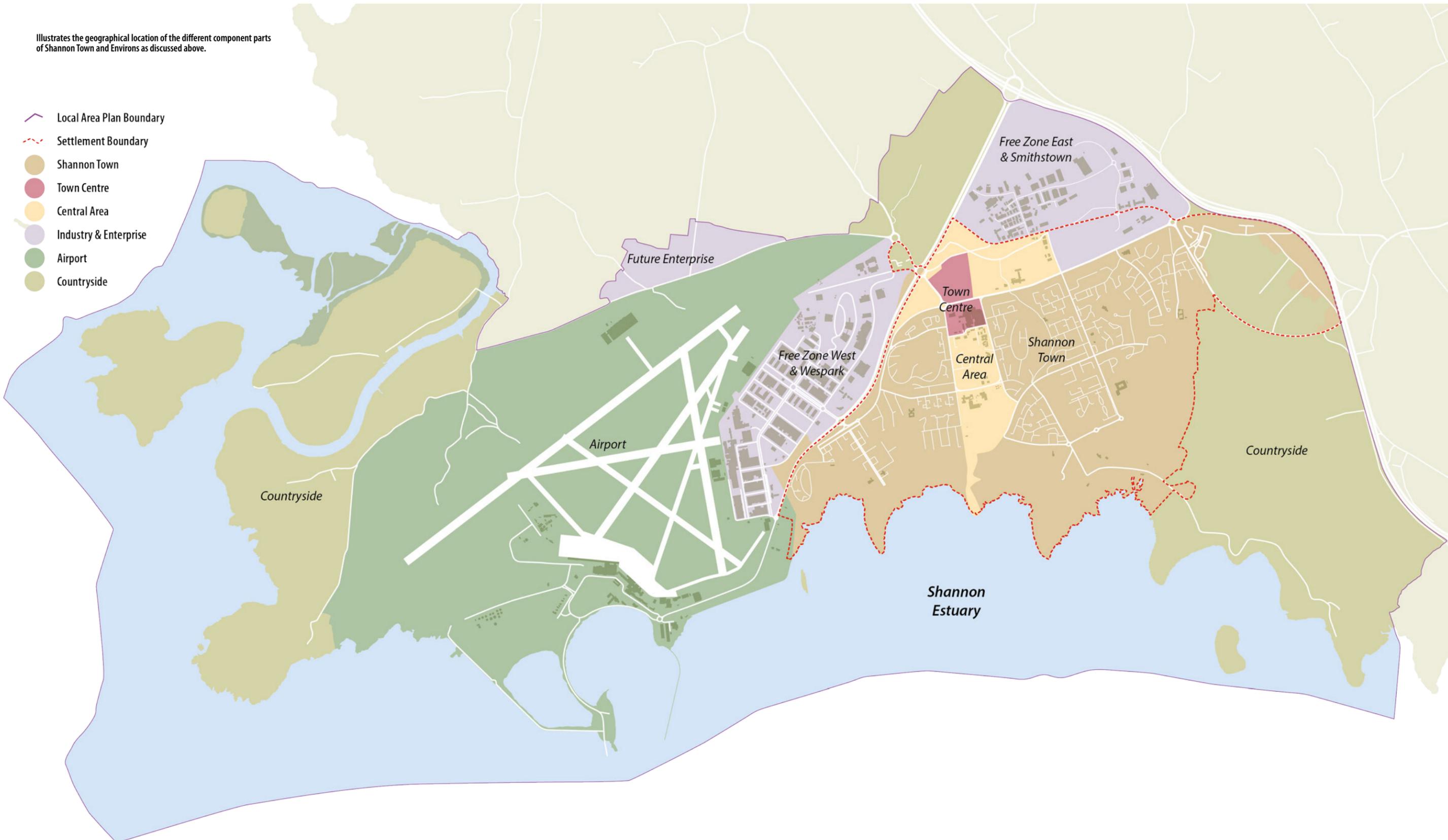
Green Infrastructure, for the purposes of this Local Area plan, is defined as the integration of walking, cycling and recreation with biodiversity, creating interconnected networks of land and water that sustain environmental quality and enrich our quality of life. A successful Green Infrastructure Framework for Shannon will ensure that all these elements are provided and that they work in harmony with each other.

It is both logical and necessary that the placemaking framework for Shannon town incorporates, and is entirely integrated with, the concept of a Green Infrastructure Framework and a Cycling and Walking Strategy for Shannon Town and Environs. These principles are explored in greater detail in Chapter 11.

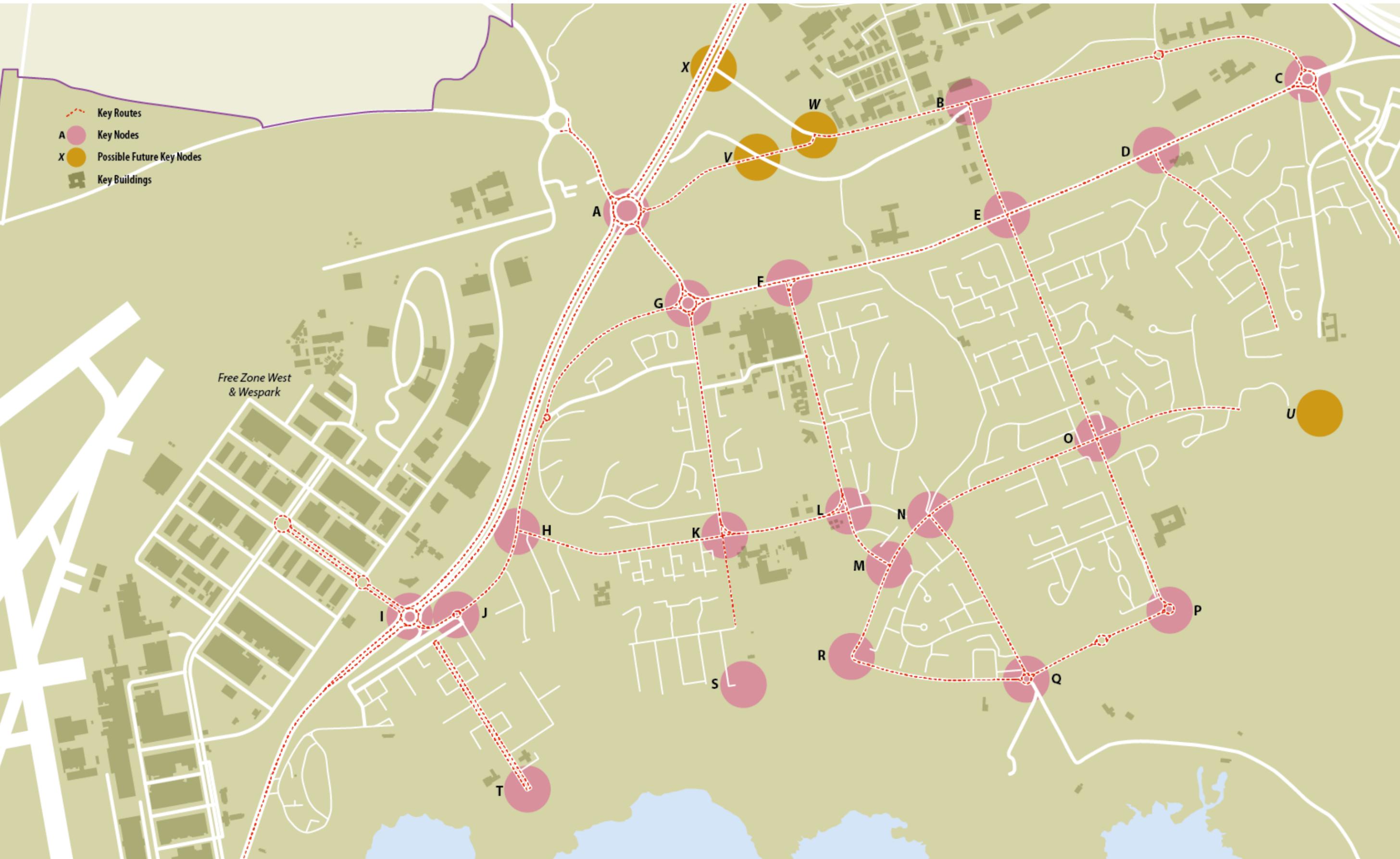
Map 2.1: Context Map

Illustrates the geographical location of the different component parts of Shannon Town and Environs as discussed above.

- Local Area Plan Boundary
- Settlement Boundary
- Shannon Town
- Town Centre
- Central Area
- Industry & Enterprise
- Airport
- Countryside



Map 2.2: Key Nodes and Routes Map



Chapter 3

Employment, Economy and Enterprise

3.0 Introduction

GOAL 2:

To proactively pursue the continued growth of Shannon as a centre of industrial and business excellence

New Town development in Shannon was driven by the pursuit of industrial development. There are five main industrial areas within the environs of the town – Shannon Free Zone West, West Park, Free Zone East, Smithstown and lands related to Shannon airport. In addition, there is the Shannon Business Centre located within the town centre and Shannon House, which is located within, and enjoying the benefits of, the Shannon Free Zone. The Shannon Free Zone is home to the largest agglomeration of American companies in Ireland outside of Dublin. The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 seeks to ensure that Shannon continues to act as a driver of county and regional prosperity, harnessing its existing resources and strategic location.

This chapter focuses on future economic development and employment-generating activities in respect of Shannon Free Zone and adjacent industrial parks, while Chapter 4 deals with Shannon International Airport.

The preparation of this Local Area Plan secures an objective set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 under the Employment, Economy and Enterprise chapter. In particular Objective CDP6.3 states:–

‘It is an objective of Clare County Council

- To protect and promote the Shannon Gateway as a primary location for industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and transport operating centres, and facilitate, where required, the adaptation of industrial areas to other employment generators.
- To facilitate the development and expansion of Shannon Airport, to include an International Air Freight cargo hub and encourage collaboration with global logistics companies.
- To support the development of innovative initiatives that harness the potential of the airport including, but not exclusive to, a residential flight school, global logistics centre for humanitarian aid, unmanned aerospace systems (UAS) and a centre for space collaboration and research cooperation.
- To facilitate and permit the economic development of Shannon town and environs including Shannon Airport in accordance with the strategic goals and detailed objectives of this Development Plan through the preparation of a Local Area Plan for Shannon town and environs.
- In collaboration with other agencies, to prepare a high level Strategic Plan, to identify key priority projects and developments capable of being accommodated at the Shannon Airport lands, Shannon Free Zone and Westpark.’

The Council recognises the importance of the Shannon industrial zone to the existing and future economic prosperity of County Clare and the Mid-West Region. This statutory Local Area Plan builds on the policy framework set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 upon which the existing industrial zone can be consolidated, enhanced and expanded. Of equal importance is that future economic development and prosperity delivers local benefits for Shannon town and its resident community.

3.1 Aims

- To ensure that the Shannon gateway continues to develop as a driver of economic growth in County Clare and the Mid-West Region.
- To encourage, support and facilitate research, technology, development and innovation as well as start up business with high potential.
- To encourage, support and facilitate enterprise development at appropriate locations.
- To maintain, adapt and promote the industrial areas in Shannon as a driver of economic and industrial growth throughout County Clare the Mid-West Region.
- To ensure that local community benefits are derived in line with continued economic development and investment in the industrial areas of the town.

3.2 Shannon Free Zone and Smithstown

Shannon Free Zone (SFZ) is a 243 hectare (600 acres) industrial area with more than 7,000 people working in over 100 companies, including many premier multinational firms and generates exports in excess of €3.3 billion per annum⁴. It has the largest concentration of North American companies in Ireland outside of Dublin. As a customs free zone, a deferral system is in operation whereby duty payable on imports from non-EU countries is deferred until goods leave Shannon for another EU location. SFZ is also zero rated for Value Added Tax (VAT).

The Zone is made up of two areas. Shannon Free Zone West (FZW), lying between the airport and the airport road (N19), covers an area of approximately 120 hectares (50% of which is built out), with a building footprint of approximately 400,000m² – 50% of which is owned by Shannon Development and the other 50% by the private sector. FZW also includes Westpark, a private sector joint venture with Shannon Development, involving the creation of approximately 100,000m² of high quality office and data centre space in a business campus environment – a total of seven separate 3rd generation office buildings are planned, with three completed at the commencement of the Plan period.

Shannon Free Zone East (FZE) also forms part of the Free Zone. It is bounded by the N18 and N19 and also covers an area of around 120 hectares, with approximately 25% of the land utilised for stand-alone office and advanced manufacturing premises. Around 90 hectares remain available for strategic Greenfield development.



⁴ *Masterplan for the Future Development of Shannon Free Zone, 2008*

Adjoining FZE is the separate mixed-use industrial estate of Smithstown. It was originally developed by Shannon Development as a location for subcontract and service activities supporting companies located within the Shannon Free Zone. Smithstown now houses around 150 firms across a diverse range of sectors. Practically all of the estate is developed, with a building footprint of approximately 75,000m² – 90% of which is owned by the private sector and the other 10% by Shannon Development.

The future Shannon town centre extension area lies between Shannon Free Zone East and Shannon Free Zone West.

3.3 Shannon Free Zone Masterplan

Shannon Development, the regional development agency and the largest landowner in the Shannon Free Zone (SFZ), has prepared a Masterplan for the area, which covers Free Zone West, Free Zone East, Westpark and Smithstown. The South Clare Economic Corridor Local Area Plan 2003-2009, recommended that Shannon Development prepare a comprehensive management strategy for parts of the SFZ. The Council endorses the Masterplan as fulfilling that requirement.

The aim of the Shannon Free Zone Masterplan, which contains strategies for access and movement, building, architecture and landscape, is to guide the development of the SFZ over the next 30 years. Its Strategic Vision is the revitalisation of the SFZ as a premier 21st Century Business and Technology Zone and the reaffirmation of its international market leader reputation for innovation and excellence. Underpinning the SFZ Masterplan are a number of integrated key elements including inter alia revitalisation, physical regeneration, enhanced image, competitiveness, design and quality, accessibility, people-centred and environmental sustainability. A sustainable approach to development is an overarching objective of the Masterplan.

A range of design opportunities and constraints have been identified in the SFZ. The opportunities include sites for landmark, iconic buildings and a site for a significant amenity park. The constraints identified include design restrictions in relation to the operation of the airport, zones around Seveso plants and archaeological monuments. The development constraints illustrated in the SFZ master plan will be taken into account when individual development proposals are assessed.

One specific area which will require careful attention over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan is the Masterplan's intention to provide shops and services for workers and businesses in the SFZ to be located in 4 designated Business Amenity Centres. It is stated that these centres will serve to enhance sense of place, convenience and the general impression of the SFZ as an attractive place to work and do business.

The Council acknowledge that there is a need to provide a level of facilities and services within the SFZ and adjoining industrial areas, but the nature, type and extent of such provision must be carefully considered and balanced against the need to protect and enhance the town centre and to promote increased interaction between the two areas. In this context, the provision of retail units and other service uses in the industrial areas, which are considered more appropriately located within the town centre, will not be permitted.

The Council recognises the importance of the Shannon Free Zone Masterplan to the sustainable future economic development of the SFZ. This Local Area Plan will facilitate implementation of the Masterplan where it is consistent with, and does not prejudice the achievement of, the other goals and objectives of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

LAP
3.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To provide a basis for the regeneration of Shannon Free Zone (and the adjoining Smithstown business park) and the further enhancement of Shannon as one of Ireland's premier locations for modern internationally traded manufacturing and international services.

LAP
3.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To support and facilitate Shannon Development in the implementation of their Shannon Free Zone Master Plan, where its objectives are consistent with those of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

LAP
3.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To develop a new or enhanced brand / image for Shannon Free Zone.

LAP
3.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage a primary focus on phased brown field redevelopment in Free Zone West in preference to Greenfield development in Free Zone East.

LAP
3.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To carefully monitor ancillary retail and service provision within the Shannon Free Zone in the context of ensuring the vitality and viability of the town centre core retail area.

LAP
3.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote environmental sustainability and a low carbon approach across all sectors of the Shannon Free Zone to the highest international standards.

LAP
3.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote the continuous sustainable improvement of the competitiveness of Shannon Free Zone in the short, medium and long term through cost effective improvement in infrastructure and in the design and quality of existing and new buildings and of infrastructure.

LAP
3.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To recognise the role of widescale networking in the creation of a learning environment in Shannon Free Zone.

LAP
3.9 Local Area Plan Objective:

To require the principles of universal accessibility to be employed, ensuring equality and inclusiveness for everyone.

LAP
3.10 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage the practice of Smarter Travel by all workers.

3.4 Driving economic development

The sections below outline the individual site development briefs and zoning objectives for the industrial and enterprise zoned lands within Shannon Free Zone West, Shannon Free Zone East and Smithstown.

3.4.1 I1 Shannon Free Zone (East and West) Business and Technology

I1 Free Zone East

The greater part of this site is undeveloped. The existing developed area has a mix of large-scale offices, logistics and advanced manufacturing businesses. The plan envisages a continuation of this range of business, with large new office-based businesses directed to “greenfield” sites adjoining the Smithstown Road and the remainder of the area developed as a Science and Technology Park, characterised by low site coverage and a parkland setting. The largest part of this area is currently in agricultural use, bounded to the north and east by the N18 and N19 roads and the N18/N19 interchange. Development of this area shall have the following characteristics:

- Landmark buildings facing the N18 and N19
- New large scale Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) opportunities
- A new vehicular access from the N19 as well as existing access from Smithstown via Shannon Town Roundabout
- Parking provision in the form of surface and multi-storey car parking
- Parkland type business park with buildings designed having regard to the concepts set out in the Shannon Free Zone Master Plan.

Development in this area must take cognisance of the Health and Safety Authority’s (HSA) SEVESO site development requirements and any existing and future air safety corridor constraints that may affect development in this zone.

I1 Free Zone West

This area contains a mix of established businesses in a low density layout with opportunities for infill development and / or refurbishment. Development of this area shall provide for business and technology based employment and complementary uses in a high quality designed parkland environment.

3.4.2 I2 Shannon Free Zone West Industrial

This zone adjoining Shannon Airport will facilitate opportunities for employment in advanced manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, storage and logistics businesses. The area will be redeveloped with a high quality built environment and may contain limited complementary small-scale local facilities i.e. café, restaurant etc. to serve the local employees. Development in this zone must be in compliance with any HSA directives for the area due to existing SEVESO plants in the immediate vicinity of this zone.

The location of I2 beside the Airport lands provides the opportunity for future airside aviation service facilities with access to / from Shannon Free Zone.



3.4.3

I3 Smithstown

Smithstown comprises nearly 33 hectares (80 acres) of land, the greater part of which is fully developed as a mixed, commercial area with a large range of commercial uses, including retailing. The mix of development that has evolved gives rise to a number of issues. Chief amongst these are conflicts arising from the mixing of heavy commercial and private traffic in Smithstown and the extent to which the growth of retailing activity at Smithstown adversely affects the commercial viability of the town centre. The plan therefore designates Smithstown for light industry uses only and proposals for site redevelopment and new uses shall be considered in the context of this objective. This designation does not affect existing established retail and heavy industry uses, which will be subject to consideration under policy concerning non-conforming uses (contained in Appendix 2 of this Plan). The Plan provides for some expansion of Smithstown in terms of greenfield light industry development on both the east and west sides of the existing estate. It is also an objective to facilitate the upgrade and enhancement of the quality of the streetscapes and general environmental quality throughout Smithstown.

In relation to retail uses within Smithstown, as noted above, established retail uses will be subject to consideration under policy concerning non-conforming uses. However, it is considered that further retail activity in Smithstown may have the potential to conflict with the objectives for Shannon town centre. The Council will carefully consider any future retail proposals in this context taking account of objectives cited elsewhere in this Local Area Plan to consolidate the retail offer within the town centre core retail area.

3.4.4

E1 Shannon Free Zone West and East (Large Office based business and technology)

E1 Free Zone West

A large part of Shannon Free Zone West is made up of 'northlight' factory units, which appear to be no longer fit for purpose and are likely to need replacement. The Council will support the redevelopment of Shannon Free Zone West and East on a phased basis over the next 25 years.

The plan provides for the redevelopment and regeneration of Shannon Free Zone West as three distinct areas; the west side beside the airport (I2), the east side beside the N19 (I1), and a Central Area including Westpark (E1). Phased redevelopment of existing north light blocks in this area (183,000m³) as strategic sites for new enterprise, primarily office type activity, including advanced manufacturing, labs and Research and Development. Development of E1 (Free Zone West) shall:

- Support the creation of strategic opportunities for linkages between the area and the airport.
- Promote the development of an established mix of high quality offices and advanced manufacturing facilities in a landscaped parkland setting. It is envisaged that the central area of Shannon Free Zone West will be almost entirely redeveloped, the existing 'northlight' factory units to be replaced by a relatively dense development of business and technology units.
- Promote the development of large office based e-commerce, call centres, data storage, international traded services, advanced technology business and related industrial activities.
- Include associated ancillary business uses comprising café, restaurant, crèche and leisure facilities for the sole use of the employees employed on the Westpark campus may be considered.



E1 Free Zone East

Promote the development of large business and technology-based offices in Shannon Free Zone East adjoining An Bothar Mór road. This site is to provide quality buildings set in parkland settings. Emphasis shall be on providing high quality, well designed frontages onto the surrounding road network, particularly Bothar Na Luachra and Bothar Mór.

.....
3.4.5
E2 Adjoining N18 - Enterprise Development

This site adjoins the N18 and is designated for future enterprise development. The site has a strategic and prominent location directly adjoining the Shannon Free Zone East, adjacent to the Ballycasey roundabout and visible from the main M18 / N18 Ennis – Limerick national primary route. This site has potential to accommodate a building of appropriate scale and height, and a high standard of design, in order to provide a prominent landmark.

.....
3.4.6
E3 Stonehall – Enterprise Site

This large site is located at Stonehall, north of Shannon Aerospace, and is zoned to facilitate the development of a large scale green / renewable energy development. The site has excellent road access off the N19 via the Ballymurtagh roundabout and the existing road serving Shannon Aerospace. The site also has a strategic location in close proximity to the Airport lands and Shannon Free Zone. Securing a renewable energy / green user for this site would reinforce the overall objective for Shannon as a low carbon zone and could stimulate further investment in the area. An example of a development which would be appropriate for this site is a high efficiency combined heat and power plant, running on biomass / timber. Such a facility would have the potential to produce, in a highly efficient process, green electricity, thermal heat and cooling, which could be distributed throughout Shannon through a District Heating

and Cooling Network, in turn attracting a dynamic mix of other related uses, such as green energy development, industry / green energy generation, Research and Development, bio-refining etc. thereby creating a vibrant green / renewable energy cluster. This further economic development potential has informed the size of the zoned lands at the subject location. The development of the subject site shall be subject to satisfactorily addressing all environmental and amenity considerations.

LAP
3.11 **Local Area Plan Objective:**

To support and facilitate the development of site E3 for a large-scale, strategic Green Energy development and Distribution Network, where appropriate, to assist in the delivery of a low carbon industrial, commercial and business environment, meeting the existing energy requirements of the town and business and enhancing the capacity to attract further industry / employment to the town.

.....
3.4.7
E4 Airport Enterprise Site

This site occupies a prominent gateway position on the approach to Shannon International Airport, has convenient road access, with a high amenity location overlooking the Shannon Estuary. It is considered to have the potential to accommodate business park use, subject to all environmental considerations. Any development proposals shall be required to undertake Habitats Directive Assessment.

A key element of any future proposals shall be the development of a building(s) on the site which is of sufficient scale, height and of a suitably high design standard, so as to provide an appropriate landmark at a strategic location adjoining the entry point to the Airport lands. A detailed design brief for this site shall accompany all future development proposals.

3.5 The Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary is Ireland's largest deepwater estuary and covers a distance of 100km from Limerick City to Loop Head with 500 square kilometres of navigable waters. Its waters which are up to 37m in depth, combined with its geographic location and on-shore connectivity (road, rail, air) create potential for employment-generating development.

The Shannon Estuary is a place of many component parts, communities, functions and cultural and physical dimensions. The Estuary has capacity to further develop in terms of industrial, marine-related and renewable energy development, in addition to opportunities for tourism and recreation. The critical aspect in terms of future development is the adoption of an integrated management approach to the potential of the estuary. A key objective of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 is to lead the development of an Inter-Jurisdictional Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary, in collaboration with other local authorities and agencies. This process is underway, a multi-agency steering group has been set up and consultants appointed to carry out the Plan.

Shannon's location adjacent to the Estuary, together with its existing infrastructural resources and other competitive advantages, means that it is ideally placed to capitalise on future development potential. It is imperative that this Local Area Plan and the SIFP, when prepared, relate positively to one another, ensuring that opportunities for benefits to be derived for Shannon Town and Environs can be delivered. These include inter alia economic, social, recreational and tourism benefits.

The future development of the Shannon Estuary as a resource will need to be reconciled with the need to protect the sensitive estuarine habitats and species and the scenic amenity of the area. The Shannon Estuary is designated as an SAC and an SPA, which are EU designated NATURA 2000 sites under the Habitats and Birds Directives respectively.

LAP 3.12 Local Area Plan Objective:

To maximise the opportunities for economic and employment generating development as a result of Shannon Town and Environs' strategic location adjacent to the Shannon Estuary.



Chapter 4

Shannon International Airport

4.0 Introduction

GOAL 3:
To enable the continued growth and development of Shannon International Airport

The history of Shannon International Airport dates back to the 1930s when the Irish Government decided to capitalise upon the emerging developments in trans-Atlantic air travel. The first test flights at Shannon Airport (then called Rineanna) landed in May 1939. World War II brought commercial aviation almost to a standstill but the development work at Shannon Airport continued. After the war, flights resumed and the Airport was officially opened in 1945. This year also saw the first commercial trans-Atlantic flight landing at Shannon Airport. During the first decade Shannon Airport gained an enviable reputation among the world's air travellers. In 1947, Shannon Airport gained status as the world's first duty free airport.

The Airport boasts the longest runway in Ireland, at 3,199 metres in length, 45 metres wide and in operation 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The Airport has both scheduled and chartered flights to a range of destinations and has 30 aircraft stands. In 2000, the new terminal building at Shannon Airport was opened.

Shannon Airport has faced a number of challenges over the years, including the introduction of the 'Open Skies' policy, the rationalisation of air services by various carriers and the economic downturn. However, it has risen to all of these challenges and will continue to do so in the future. Shannon Airport retains a critical role as a gateway to Ireland's primary tourist locations and a driver for County and regional economic development. Through the years, it has always been innovative in maximising its strategic location – this has been evidenced most recently with the first Customs and Border Protection pre-clearance facilities located outside the USA, which was established in 2009. This offers a distinct competitive advantage over other airports providing services to the USA, both in Ireland and abroad. Clare County Council also fully recognises the opportunities that Shannon Airport provides as an international gateway, the large number of global logistic companies located in close proximity and 24 hour unrestricted aircraft landing and take-off operations.

The Airport must continue to maximise its competitive advantages and must remain innovative and forward thinking. The Shannon Local Area Plan 2012-2018 seeks to ensure the growth and development of Shannon Airport and to harness its full potential, in line with National, Regional and County development policy.



4.1 Aims

- To encourage and support the achievement of autonomy of Shannon International Airport from the Dublin Airport Authority and the full implementation of the State Airports Act, 2004.
- To support the development of Shannon Airport as an inter-modal international transport hub.
- To prepare, in collaboration with other agencies, a High Level Strategic Plan to identify key priority projects capable of being accommodated at the Shannon Airport lands (also including Shannon Free Zone and Westpark).
- To facilitate the economic development, diversification and expansion of Shannon International Airport to include an International Air Freight Cargo Hub and other innovative initiatives such as a global logistics centre for humanitarian aid.
- To investigate the feasibility of the continuation of the existing Aerospace Road to serve future Airport related development lands north of the existing runway.

4.2 Airport Lands – Strategic Development Area

As noted above, Clare County Council is fully aware of the continued need for Shannon Airport to maximise its strategic location in the region. The designation of a Strategic Development Area (as defined in Appendix 1) encompassing the Airport zoned lands reinforces this commitment. The Council will support the development and expansion of Shannon Airport. Appropriate potential uses for the Airport Zoned Lands include airport operational activities and uses complementary to the operation of the airport, aircraft maintenance/cargo handling facilities, business park use primarily related to airport servicing, management and maintenance activities, long-term aircraft maintenance, air-freight cargo handling facilities and other innovative initiatives.

Clare County Council also fully acknowledges the importance of key infrastructural resources within the Airport lands, including the treatment plant at Duglish Island, the airport lands water supply, storm water network and fuel terminal, which are all critical to the existing and future needs of the Airport. Within the operational area of the airport, the Council will facilitate development related to airport activity subject to consideration of issues of public safety, amenity and all environmental constraints.

LAP 4.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development and expansion of Shannon International Airport within the designated Strategic Development Area, subject to the requirements of Habitats Directive Assessment, to include –

- airport operational activities and uses complementary to the operation of the airport
- aircraft maintenance/cargo handling facilities related to airport activities
- business park use, primarily related to airport servicing, management and maintenance activities
- long-term aircraft maintenance, air-freight cargo handling facilities
- future runway / taxiway(s)
- innovative initiatives, such as a residential flight school, global logistics centre for humanitarian aid, unmanned aerospace systems (UAS), centre for space collaboration and research

LAP 4.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To safeguard and facilitate the improvement/upgrade of (as necessary), the key infrastructural resources within the Airport lands, including the wastewater treatment plant, airport lands water supply, storm water network and fuel depot, subject to the requirements of a Habitats Directive Assessment.





LAP 4.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the improvement of the overall customer experience and interaction with Shannon Airport through inter alia, the improvement of airport terminal retail offer, enhanced airport layout and design, a user friendly website and the creation of a dedicated visitor park and aircraft viewing facility.

4.3 Airport Access and Connectivity

The Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 recognise the importance of Shannon International Airport as a key hub both for national and international air travel. Aviation is vital to the future business of the county in terms of tourism and trade and connectivity between airports and public transport is a key element of this. In this context, the Council supports the achievement of a future rail link to Shannon Airport from the main Ennis-Limerick line, as outlined in objective CDP 11.11 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017. It is recognised that this route may not be delivered in the near future, however there are important interim measures which can assist in improving public transport connections to the Airport via improved bus linkages.

In addition to the above, it is considered that the existing Aerospace Road to the north of the airport will need to be extended to facilitate future development of and access to the Airport lands located north and north-west of the existing runway.

LAP 4.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To reserve a corridor that will facilitate the future provision of a rail link to serve Shannon Airport.

LAP 4.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

In the absence of the above rail link, to facilitate and encourage the provision of a direct Shuttle Bus service from Sixmilebridge railway station, via Bunratty, to Shannon Airport, as an immediate priority.

LAP 4.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage a dedicated airport flyer service between Limerick City and Shannon International Airport.

LAP 4.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the continuation of the existing Aerospace Road to serve future Airport related development lands, subject to all environmental considerations.

4.4 Shannon Airport Lagoon

The Airport SDA includes the area known as the Shannon Airport Lagoon. The area can be subdivided into three distinct habitats, namely the brackish lagoon, the reed-beds, marsh and willow scrub which surround the lagoon and extend to the boundaries of the golf course, fuel depot and airport car parks, and the tidal mudflats enclosed between the breakwater and causeway to Dernish Island. The area forms part of the designated Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon and Fergus Estuaries SPA Natura 2000 sites.

The creation of the Shannon Airport Lagoon is entirely linked to the historical development of the airport, created when two embankments were built between the mainland and Dernish Island. It remains an important component in the existing drainage arrangements of the airport complex. In the 1940's, when the airstrip at Rineanna was first built, it was necessary to build a seawall out into the estuary to protect the new airport from flooding. Rainwater drained from the airport area into the space between the seawall and the shore. When necessary, this runoff was released into the estuary via a sluice gate in the seawall, however, over time, the area of the Estuary adjacent to the sluice gate silted up, and it became ineffective. As a result, the level of drainage water in the lagoon rose to the point that the airfield drainage system was flooded. As the Lagoon had become part of the designated Natura 2000 site, approval to lower the water level in the drainage lagoon through mechanical over-pumping was sought and granted in 2002.



It is in this context that Clare County Council will endeavour to ensure that a balanced and sustainable approach to this issue is taken, and shall support and facilitate the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department and Dublin Airport Authority (or relevant successor) in continuing to strike a careful balance between the conservation objectives of the lagoon, whilst facilitating the continued growth and expansion of Shannon International Airport. Clare County Council supports the future development of a management plan for the Lower River Shannon SAC, with particular reference to the Shannon Airport Lagoon. Objectives CDP 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 9.1 and 9.2 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, which relate to water quality and monitoring, are also relevant in this regard.

LAP 4.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate and support the continued safe operation and future growth and expansion of Shannon International Airport and the appropriate management of Shannon Airport Lagoon as an Annex 1 priority habitat, ensuring that both can co-exist and are sustainable in the long term.

In this regard, the following is required:

- All planning applications for developments within the catchment of the Shannon Airport Lagoon must undertake Habitats Directive Assessment with specific reference to drainage and hydrology, water quality, and impacts to birds and lagoon flora. It must also pay particular attention to 'in combination' impacts with existing development within the catchment.
- All planning applications for developments within the airport lands, and their accompanying Habitats Directive Assessment must be referred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service within the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

4.5 Shannon Airport Public Safety Zones and Red Zones

Proposals for development within the public safety zones (as identified on Map B attached to this Plan) will not normally be permitted with the exception of the following:

- a An extension of a single residential dwelling for the benefit of the residential household, or which is for the sole purpose of accommodation for an elderly family member (e.g. granny flat).
- b An extension to a property (not being a single dwelling house or other residential building) which could not otherwise reasonably be expected to increase the number of people working or congregating in or at the property;
- c A change of use of a building or of land which could not otherwise reasonably be expected to increase the number of people living, working or congregating in or at the property or land;
- d The provision of an opportunity designed rail transport corridor, excluding the location of fixed elements of transport infrastructure such as a station or siding.

Proposals for development within the Red Zones (as identified on Map B, attached to this Plan) will not be permitted for intensive forms of development. Exceptions include the following:

- a Single dwellings;
- b Light industrial development;
- c Other land uses not requiring intensive development, which will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that there is not an unacceptable risk to public safety.

Clare County Council will have regard to the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority and the Dublin Airport Authority (or relevant successor) when assessing development proposals in the vicinity of Shannon Airport. In addition, the ERM Public Safety Zone Study of Cork, Dublin and Shannon Airports shall be taken into account, in the assessment of any planning applications in the vicinity of the Airport.

LAP 4.9 Local Area Plan Objective:

To ensure that all future development which has the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of Shannon International Airport be referred to the Irish Aviation Authority and/or Dublin Airport Authority (or relevant successor) for comment.





Chapter 5

Shannon Town Centre and Retail

5.0 Introduction

GOAL 4:
To secure a vibrant and viable town centre

Shannon is located approximately midway between Limerick and Ennis, the two largest shopping destinations in the region. In terms of the Mid-West Retail Hierarchy, as defined in the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016, Shannon is designated as a Tier 2 Level 2 major town centre and sits beneath Limerick and Ennis. It is therefore recognised as the second largest retailing centre in the County.

The existing Shannon town centre contains a number of mixed businesses, retail and community uses including the offices of Shannon Development, Skycourt Shopping Centre, the town library, Garda Station and an assortment of office space. The shopping centre, which opened in 1972, provides the primary retail floor space within the town. While it serves the local population for convenience shopping, there is little to attract visitors to the town in respect of comparison goods.

There are current plans for a major redevelopment of this area, which aims to attract significant new businesses to Shannon, namely the redevelopment and expansion of the existing Skycourt shopping precinct, including the relocation of Lidl supermarket and a potential new anchor store in the future. In this regard, it is noted that there are two existing planning permissions for significant retail development in the area adjoining An Bothar Mór. The existing economic climate has resulted in this project being put on hold and works have yet to commence.

Other key aspects which are addressed in this Local Area Plan are the need to improve the physical appearance of the town centre, to encourage the increased use of the town centre for social and evening use, and to create an attractive place in which to shop, dine and recreate. The provision of a variety of retail and other services will attract new customers and redress the extent of existing customer leakage to Ennis and Limerick. In addition it is important to create / enhance linkages between residential areas, community facilities and retail / services in the area. Shannon town needs a new heart and focus that will make it an attractive destination, increasing footfall and thereby driving continued future development and assisting in supporting sustainable communities.

The proposals for Shannon town centre reflect the need to plan ahead, taking into account the proposed future Shannon rail link and central station, together with the existing N19 road link and the planned redevelopment of the existing retail space. Within this context, this plan outlines the future expansion of the town centre north of Bothar Mór in order to provide for a new extended and integrated town centre development node for Shannon. The Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region 2010-2016 supports the proposal to expand the town centre and also acknowledges the benefits of making some degree of provision for bulky comparison goods in the context of an expanded town centre area.



This chapter focuses on the town centre area and other commercial / mixed use areas within Shannon Town and environs. However, the town centre cannot be looked at in isolation as it forms part of a central block that includes the future town centre expansion area, residential and commercial zoned lands to the east, the mixed use area south of the town centre, the town park, St. Patrick's school and grounds, leisure centre, playground, Shannon Wetlands area and stretches as far south as the estuary (refer to central area as defined on Map A). How this block works, and future land use, development, interactions and circulation patterns within it, will be of critical importance to its future viability and success. In this context, reference is made to Chapter 2 which needs to be read in conjunction with this chapter, and which outlines in more detail a placemaking strategy that encompasses the town centre and the remainder of the central block.

5.1 Aims

- To facilitate the implementation of the Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region 2010-2016 and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Retail Planning, April 2012.
- To deliver a vibrant and viable town centre for Shannon, with a range of retail and service facilities that will attract an increased number of visitors to the town.
- To encourage the growth of retail floor space, ensuring that the retail needs of Shannon's local resident community are met within Shannon town centre in so far as possible.
- To fully examine mechanisms that will assist in bringing forward and delivering the development of town centre sites as well as the redevelopment / rejuvenation of underutilised or derelict sites for appropriate town centre use.
- To improve the physical appearance of Shannon town, ensuring that it is sufficiently pleasant, safe, accessible and vibrant to attract the public for shopping and social purposes.
- To explore opportunities which seek to address the lack of community ownership and responsibility for the future development of Shannon town centre.

5.2 Shannon Town Centre

Opportunities exist for redevelopment of the existing town centre. A mixed-use approach to all proposals will be encouraged throughout the town centre with emphasis placed on increasing the quantity and quality of retail offer – both convenience and comparison – the development of a night-time economy and developing cultural and entertainment facilities for the community. It is proposed that development frontage along An Bothar Mór will contribute to the formation of a new street in Shannon town centre and that an appropriate density of development shall take place, with strong pedestrian access links between the existing town centre and lands to the north. Given the quantum, variety and attraction of the established retail offer in Limerick and Ennis, Shannon must seek to find a niche or unique retail offer that can allow it to compete as a destination in itself, attracting both local residents along with an increased number of workers and visitors / tourists.

The relevant land owners will be encouraged to collaborate and submit joint, integrated proposals that enable a comprehensive planned approach to the future development and servicing of the town centre lands. Considerable emphasis will be placed on extending the retail offer (both convenience and comparison), providing additional facilities and services to encourage great social use of the town centre, improving the public realm and overall 'town centre feel', and the use of best practice in sustainable development and energy conservation.

The central area as defined on Map A relates to an overall urban design / place making strategy for Shannon as set out in detail in chapter 2, and is not for the purposes of retail or guiding location of future retail development. Future retail development in the town will be assessed in terms of the sequential approach, as cited in the Retail Planning Guidelines, and in the first instance directed into the designated town centre, as indicated on Map A.

LAP
5.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To consolidate the existing core retail area through the continuing improvement of the quality and range of retail offer, aesthetic improvements, the development of a streetscape onto Bothar Mór, improved access arrangements and by facilitating a growth in retail floor space that enhances the quality of service for the surrounding areas.

LAP
5.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To develop a viable and vibrant town centre area with a distinctive and unique shopping character, achieved through a growth in retail floor space, evening uses, an improved consumer choice and range of services for the inhabitants of the Shannon Town and Environs Plan area, the local workforce and visitors to the region.

LAP
5.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote an environmentally sustainable town centre which will provide a balance between the built and natural environments and facilitate improved work/life balance opportunities for the residents and workers of Shannon.

LAP
5.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

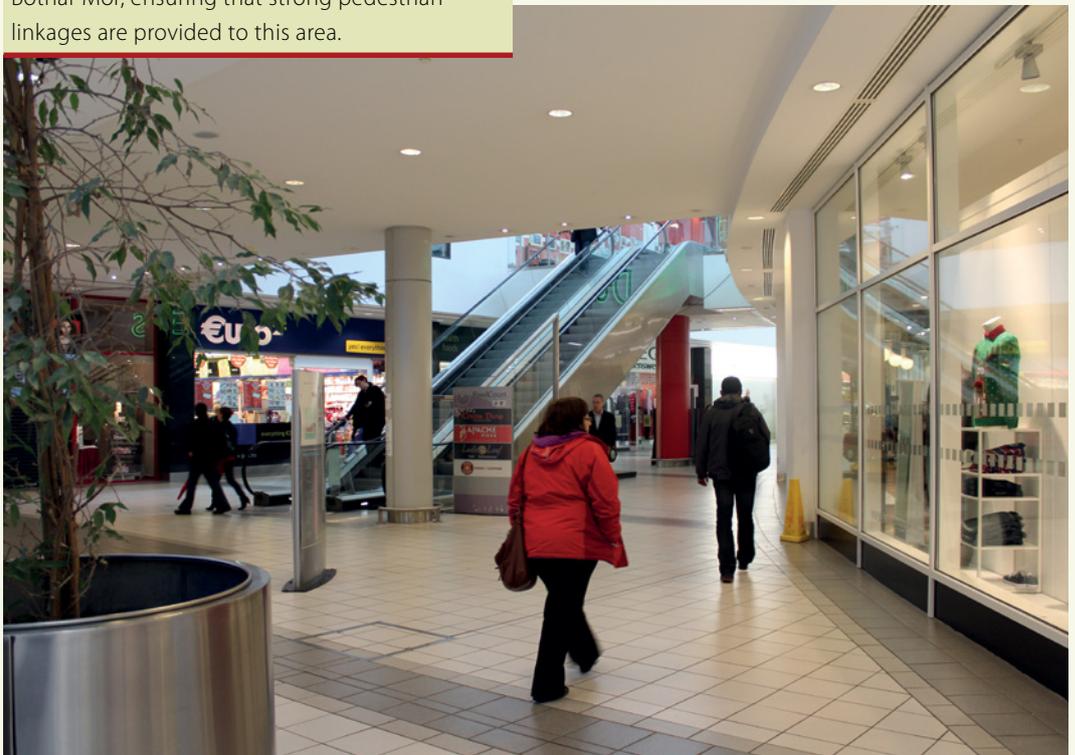
To facilitate the provision of a civic / arts centre at an appropriate location within the defined central area of the town.

LAP
5.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To support and facilitate the sustainable expansion of the town centre to the north of Bothar Mór, ensuring that strong pedestrian linkages are provided to this area.

LAP
5.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

In tandem with an improved retail offer, to support and facilitate increased linkages and connectivity between the Shannon Free Zone / Smithstown and the town centre.



5.3 Masterplan for the Special Development Area (Shannon Town North) 2009

The masterplan for the Special Development Area (SDA) – Shannon Town North, which was prepared as part of the South Clare Local Area Plan 2009-2015, has been reappraised as part of this Local Area Plan process.

The masterplan assumed a high density core retail area of 3-6 storeys in height, with key edges of 5 storeys and higher. This Local Area Plan concurs with the overall objective to create a 'street' feel and give improved definition and focus within a rejuvenated and strengthened town centre. However, the masterplan was prepared in different times and the fine grained, high density approach with 3-6 storey core retail area is not now considered achievable. It is noted in this context that two existing planning permissions for retail development within the existing town centre have yet to commence.

It is also important that one consolidated plan drives the future development of Shannon Town and Environs. In this regard, the masterplan for Shannon Town North cannot remain a standalone document. However, its overriding principles remain valid and are reinforced in this Local Area Plan, namely the need for a strengthened viable and vibrant town centre supporting a quality, varied retail offer with improved physical appearance, connectivity and the development of a 'streetscape'.

This Local Area Plan has taken full account of the Masterplan for Shannon Town North in its preparation. The specific proposals for the town centre have also been informed by the core retail area for Shannon Town Centre, as designated in the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016.

5.4 Future Town Centre Area – North of An Bothar Mór

The development of the N19 link, the downgrading of the old N19, and the identification of a potential rail corridor to serve Shannon Airport have created opportunities to expand the town centre to the north of An Bothar Mór. Clare County Council will consider comprehensive development proposals for this area which are consistent with the objectives of the Local Area Plan, taking account of the Shannon Placemaking Strategy as outlined in chapter 2.

The Masterplan for Special Development Area (Shannon Town North) 2009 contained a number of important key objectives, which are considered to be applicable to this Local Area Plan. In addition, a key element of the overall strategy for the town centre is to increase footfall within the existing town centre and any future expanded town centre area by attracting a higher percentage of the existing local workforce in the Airport and Free Zone, together with the tourist / visitor market.

Chapter 2, Figure 2.3 illustrates a possible expanded town centre core retail area to the north of Bothar Mór with excellent pedestrian connectivity. The northern section of the town centre lands shows a major anchor facility / outlet centre or retail mall. It is considered that a building of large scale is required here in order to ensure visibility from the N19 and to provide an important landmark and reference point for the town centre. It is also envisaged that an appropriate tenant(s) for this large building would generate a significant volume of footfall to and from it and the existing town centre to the south of An Bothar Mór, thereby making the successful build out of the remainder of the town centre lands a more viable and realistic proposition.



LAP
5.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development of an expanded town centre to provide inter alia, a new street plaza, high street retail uses, restaurant /café cluster, outlet centre(s), public open spaces, small office units, cinema / theatre, and a major anchor store facility / outlet or discount centre or retail mall in the northern section of the town centre lands.

LAP
5.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To ensure that new development north of An Bothar Mór links to the existing town centre through strong pedestrian and road linkages, giving a unified and walkable core area, together with the development of the public realm along An Bothar Mór and the new civic park.

LAP
5.9 Local Area Plan Objective:

To enable the creation of a distinct character area, of exemplar design, with a strong relationship and linkages to its site context and to adjoining areas, including lands zoned at MU1, MU2 and the adjacent future civic park at OS1.

LAP
5.10 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development of a landmark building of suitable height, scale and design standard, at the extreme north / north western portion of the town centre lands.

LAP
5.11 Local Area Plan Objective:

To ensure that the development of the lands north of An Bothar Mór focuses on 'walk to' and 'daily' shopping, enhancing the range of convenience and comparison goods traders within Shannon.

LAP
5.12 Local Area Plan Objective:

To integrate communal services, roads, pedestrian, drainage services and public transport.

LAP
5.13 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote reduced carbon energy use and high energy conservation.

LAP
5.14 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote and facilitate improved access, parking and circulation arrangements within Shannon town centre, taking account of both vehicular, cycling and pedestrian movements.

5.4.1 Shannon Integrated Area Plan

The Integrated Area Plan (IAP) for Shannon was prepared under the 1998 DoELG Urban Renewable Scheme and includes a number of key development sites, with a number of initiatives and programmes proposed for each. One of these development sites, referenced 'sub area 2' in the IAP, is proposed for new industrial or enterprise units. The subject 2.35ha site encroaches onto the Town Centre North area as delineated in this Local Area Plan. This plan zones the site for Mixed Use development.

It is considered that the current mixed use zoning is more appropriate having regard to the following factors:

- The inclusion of the subject site within the Core Retail Area as defined in the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016.
- The objectives to facilitate the expansion northwards of the existing town centre, provide additional retail floor space and enhance the variety of retail offer provided in the town.
- The significant quantum of alternative industrial and enterprise zoned lands available within the Plan area.
- The achievement of proper planning and sustainable development, and in particular ensuring the development of sustainable communities.

Taking account of all of the above, it is considered that the zoning of mixed use in this Local Area Plan will enable the realisation of the above objectives for the town centre, and which are in accordance with the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016.

The IAP also identifies another site – sub area 5 – which is 5.32ha in size and stretches from the Shannon Town roundabout, along the old N19, as far as the Slí Na Mara Way. The IAP states that the site's size and proximity to the centre make it the obvious direction for future extension of the town centre. This Local Area Plan is consistent with the IAP in respect of the section of the site between Shannon Town Roundabout and the wooded area, proposed for zoning as town centre / mixed use. However, the eastern section of the IAP is proposed as open space in this plan to accommodate a future civic park. The open space zoning is considered to be appropriate having regard to the following factors:

- The mature woodland resource on the site and the recommendations of the Strategic Environmental Assessment report.
- The availability of additional future town centre expansion lands to the north, which are in accordance with the designated core retail area for Shannon, as per the Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region.
- The opportunities presented by the existing wooded area to provide a high amenity link between the town centre and future residential development to the east.



5.5 Other Mixed Use / Commercial Areas

5.5.1 MU1 Adjoining N19 (5.34ha)

This triangular site is located north of the delineated town centre area (as per Map A). It is bound by Smithstown to the east and the N19 to the west.

The site lies outside of the Shannon Free Zone Industrial Estate and is not an area dealt with in Shannon Development's Masterplan. It is a highly prominent site located directly adjoining the N19 dual carriageway, which serves as the main access into and out of Shannon town, Free Zone and Airport.

The Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region (MWRS) 2010-2016 states that Shannon has little representation of 'bulky comparison goods' outlets and that there would be sustainable advantages to establishing some provision to meet local needs so as to reduce the need for residents to travel to either Ennis or Limerick.

However, the MWRS also states that the expanded town centre area should focus on 'walk to' and 'daily' shopping. It is therefore considered that MU1, being prominently located and within easy walking distance of the town centre, may have potential to accommodate bulky goods retail warehousing. Convenience and comparison goods, including non-bulky durable goods, which are more appropriately located in the town centre core retail area, will not be permitted on MU1.

In respect of future bulky goods retail warehousing on this site, and in line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Retail Planning (April 2012) floor space developed within MU1 shall not exceed 15,000 square metres. Individual units within MU1 shall not be less than 700 square metres and shall not exceed 6,000 square metres.

Other development proposals which are suitable in principle for this site will also be considered. The development of the site affords the opportunity to provide a building(s) which will create an appropriate landmark and reference point for vehicles entering Shannon along the main N19 link. In this context, a number of key design elements are set out below to guide future development proposals on MU1:

- **Scale** – The site shall be developed as a whole and shall accommodate a single, purpose-designed structure, orientated to address the N19.
- **Height** – To serve as a landmark, the building(s) shall be of a suitable height to ensure that it is a visible landmark above the tree line and on approach from the existing Shannon Rotary Interchange.
- **Layout** – Customer parking and service / delivery areas shall be located in the eastern section of the site, providing appropriate landscaping and screening from the N19.
- **Access** – Access shall not be permitted onto the N19 link. Vehicular access to the site shall be taken from the existing roads to the east or south serving Smithstown. There shall be ease of permeability for all users.
- **Materials / design detail** – The design shall be such that a continuous horizontal emphasis is avoided and the scale and bulk of the building is effectively broken up. This could be achieved by changes in height, staggering of front building lines and introducing vertical detailing at the proposed signage locations. A range of materials and colours shall be included.
- **Signage** – The design of the building(s) shall make provision for dual aspect signage onto the N19 and onto the Smithstown road.
- **Demarcation of entrance** – The entrance to the development shall be effectively highlighted by the provision of a suitable structure(s) that gives height and definition, for example flagpoles or a suitable sculpture that relates to Shannon as a place. The western and southern sections of MU1 contain watercourses and vegetation indicative of wet conditions. All proposals for development will be required to submit a hydrological assessment, together with detailed drainage plans for the entire site.

5.5.2 MU2 South of Town Centre (3.94ha)

This site is located between the existing town centre and the town park and forms an important intermediate space and active circulation route between the two spaces. It also lies adjacent to the Bruach Na Sionna apartment development.

It contains a mix of uses including Shannon library, health centre, Garda Station, vehicle registration office, business premises, car parks and a petrol filling station and shop.

A key element of future development on this site shall be a focus on preserving and enhancing the range of uses within this area, and retaining the function of this area as an important link between the town centre and the town park. As with the town centre, there are opportunities for improvement of the physical appearance of this area through the redevelopment of certain key sites, such as in the vicinity of the library and at the bandstand.

5.5.3 COM1 East of Town Centre

These commercial zoned lands are located east of the town centre and south of Smithstown. The southern part of these lands (fronting onto Bothar Mór) comprise the Oakwood Arms Hotel, Topaz filling station and McDonalds DriveThru. Along the eastern boundary are a number of individual businesses including children's play centre, car sales / service and restaurant. The Atlantic Air Venture premises occupies a prominent corner site at the junction of An Bothar Mór and Bothar Na Luachra.

A planned approach shall be taken to the development of the remaining area of COM1. This shall avoid piecemeal development like that which exists along the eastern boundary. It is an objective to facilitate development / redevelopment proposals for appropriate commercial developments in the context of:

- Maintaining the vitality and viability of Shannon town centre
- Achieving an attractive frontage onto Smithstown Road, An Bothar Mór and the eastern access road
- Ensuring the residential amenities of any future residential development on adjoining R1 lands are safeguarded

5.5.4 COM2 Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre

The Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre is located at Ballycasey House. It consists of two attractive courtyards containing various craft and design shops and small businesses, including a restaurant. It has an attractive setting, accessed via a long tree-lined laneway and nestled in a mature woodland setting. The old walled garden immediately east of Ballycasey House has potential to be developed as an amenity area associated with the centre, or for expansion of the existing business premises, subject to issues of access and preservation of the woodland area being satisfactorily addressed.



5.5.5 NC1 Drumgeely Neighbourhood Centre

The Council shall support the retention of this centre for the benefit of the local community and facilitate new developments / changes of use which are appropriate to its zoning for neighbourhood centre use, subject to consideration of all site suitability issues, including noise and visual amenity.

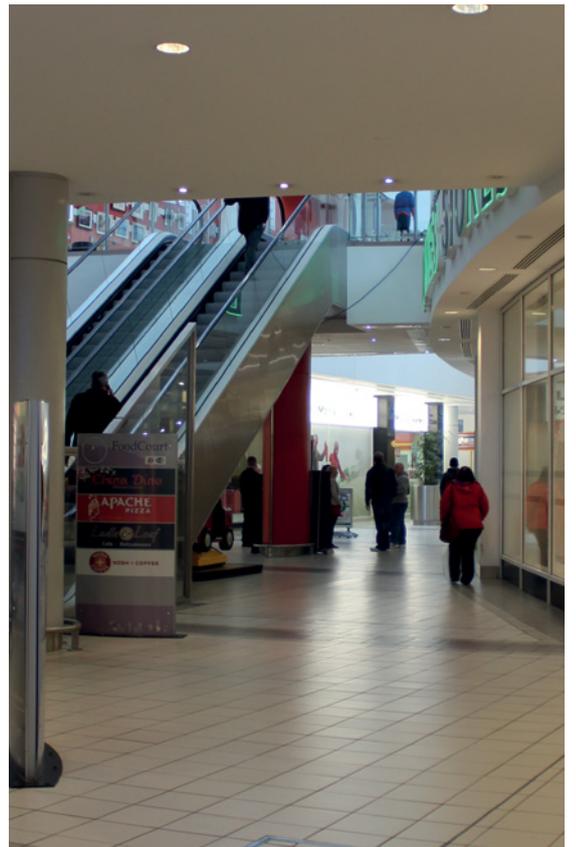
The design of the neighbourhood centre shall be of high quality to act as a focal point for the community. Building heights shall also be required to 'step up' higher than surrounding areas to emphasise their nodal and civic importance. The layout, type of facilities proposed and boundary treatment shall take account of the need to preserve the amenities of future adjacent residential areas in R4. In this regard, a detailed design brief shall accompany all future development proposals.

5.5.6 NC2 Future neighbourhood centre serving residential zoned lands

Taking account of the quantum of proposed residential zoned lands in the surrounding area, it is considered appropriate to zone the subject lands to enable the development of a small neighbourhood centre that will serve the future local resident population. Only developments which are considered compatible with the zoning for neighbourhood centre use will be permitted on this site.

5.5.7 NC3 Ballycasey Neighbourhood Centre

The Council shall support the retention of this centre for the benefit of the local community and facilitate new developments / changes of use which are appropriate to its zoning for neighbourhood centre use, subject to consideration of all site suitability issues, including noise and visual amenity.



Chapter 6

Housing & Sustainable Communities

6.0 Introduction

GOAL 5: To deliver quality housing and sustainable communities

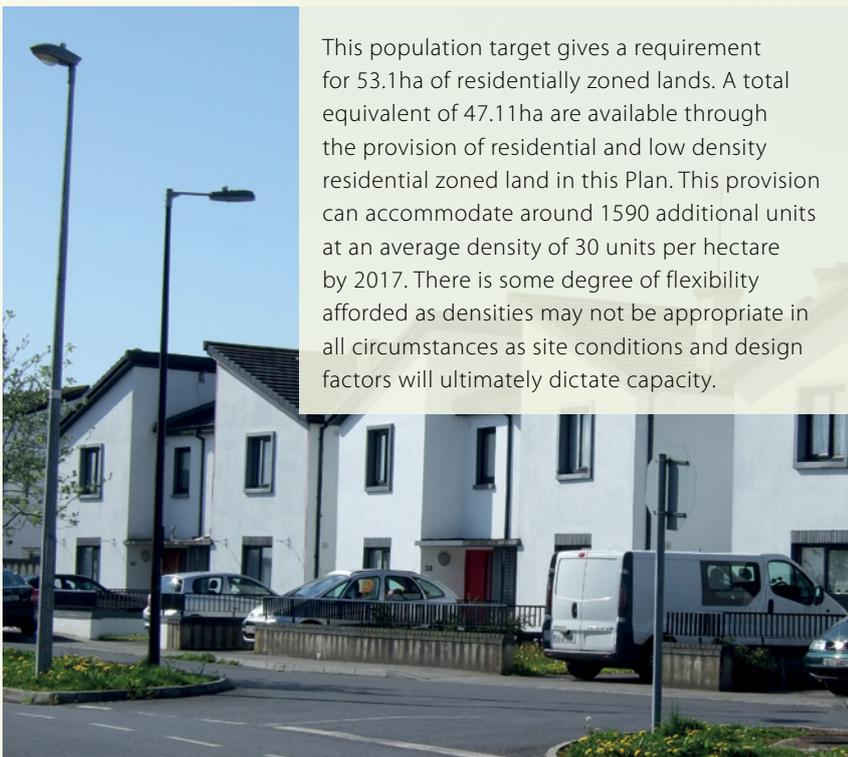
Whilst Shannon gives the overall appearance of having been fully developed, there are still opportunities for new greenfield developments supplemented by new housing infill and backland sites within the older parts of the town. Taking into consideration the additional sites considered suitable in principle to accommodate residential development, a sizable land supply emerges. The population in Shannon in 2006 was 9,673 persons (CSO 2011). The population target for Shannon is 11,972 by 2017, an increase of 2,750 persons.

This population target gives a requirement for 53.1ha of residentially zoned lands. A total equivalent of 47.11ha are available through the provision of residential and low density residential zoned land in this Plan. This provision can accommodate around 1590 additional units at an average density of 30 units per hectare by 2017. There is some degree of flexibility afforded as densities may not be appropriate in all circumstances as site conditions and design factors will ultimately dictate capacity.

Whilst the above population target and associated land requirements may seem to be aspirational in the context of past population trends in Shannon, it is important to note that Shannon is a linked Gateway with Limerick. The Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 outline the importance of developing potential and critical mass around the designated gateways and hubs. Although this Local Area Plan is in place for only 6 years, it is important to plan for the longer term growth and development of Shannon Town and Environs.

The residential zoned lands proposed for zoning in Shannon are concentrated in the south-east of the town and these future sites are supported by a network of planned new road infrastructure, also shown on Map A of this Plan. Clare County Council must take a long term, integrated view of residential development to ensure that improvements to the appropriate community and environmental infrastructure keep pace with town development.

It is recognised that these lands are some distance from the existing town centre and identified area for town centre expansion, and in this context, it is imperative that appropriate provision be made for connection to the core area, e.g. through the provision of a regular shuttle bus service and improvement of existing pedestrian and cycle networks.





There are lands zoned for residential development which have the potential to be developed in the shorter term as they do not rely on new road infrastructure and will contribute to the development of sustainable communities in so far as they are in closer proximity to the main town centre block. Reference is made to site R1 which is located just east of the town centre and to sites R2 and LDR4, located to the south of the school and leisure centre.

The development of identified lands in Shannon will be strictly contingent on the provision of appropriate wastewater treatment facilities which can fully demonstrate that no adverse effects will result on the adjacent SAC/SPA and ensuring that all future development is sustainable in the long term.

All sites zoned for residential development shall incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems and shall include detailed proposals for landscaping / tree retention.

6.1 Aims

- To ensure that sufficient residential land is zoned to meet the assigned population target for Shannon over the Plan period.
- To provide for all existing and future housing needs by ensuring that sufficient land is zoned at appropriate locations to enable a range of house types and sizes.
- To implement the Joint Housing Strategy for Clare Local Authorities and Limerick City and County Councils 2010-2017 in so far as it relates to Shannon.
- To actively participate in the housing sector through the provision of public services, infrastructure and other services for social, voluntary and private housing.
- To facilitate the provision of serviced sites at appropriate locations in Shannon to ensure the availability of a range of house types and sizes that meet all housing needs.

- To facilitate and promote the concept of passive housing / eco-friendly housing in Shannon as part of an overall low carbon strategy and to further the development of sustainable communities.
- To encourage the innovative refurbishment of the older housing stock in Shannon, including the provision of energy efficiency measures.
- To encourage and facilitate modern and contemporary designs.
- To ensure that all new housing contributes to the development of sustainable communities.

6.2 New Housing in Shannon

The sections below outline the site development briefs for each of the residential and low density residential zoned sites within Shannon Town and Environs.

6.2.1 R1 – East of Town Centre (5.71 ha)

This site is located behind the Shannon Oaks Hotel and has a rural countryside feel, despite being located centrally in the town. It is currently in agricultural use. A master plan shall be prepared for the development of this site. This shall ensure that a coordinated approach is taken and that this important, centrally-located site maximises its full potential, subject to site suitability and environmental constraints. In order to maximise its location adjacent to the town centre, the site shall be developed for a high density scheme of residential units, which, by their central location, have the potential to be served by a future renewable energy network (for example district heating), that may be developed in the future on site E3.

Layout shall be to a very high standard that maximises the opportunities for energy efficiency through, for example, solar gain. A suitable appropriate buffer shall be maintained to the commercial zoning along the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries, to be agreed at detailed project level prior to commencement of any development on R1.



Access to these lands shall be to the satisfaction of the Council. Development contributions, along with other contributions as appropriate, shall be sought towards the upgrade of the existing local road network, together with the junction near the north-west corner.

The density, massing and height of development on the site and the provision of open space and landscaping shall be appropriate to reflect the surrounding existing built environment and protect established residential amenities. It shall also take account of views into the site from adjoining residential development and the approach road.

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6.2.2

R2 –Tullyglass Lowlands (1.54 ha)

This is an area of relatively flat land that relates to the existing terraced housing at Cluain Airne. Development will extend and improve the existing built fabric as far as the new road. The site is well located in terms of its proximity to schools, open space, sports and other community facilities and to the Shannon Estuary. Clare County Council has permission to develop 60 housing units on this site (54 affordable units and 6 ‘step down’ units). 16 affordable units and the 6 step down units have been constructed to date.

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6.2.4

R4 – SouthEast of Wolfe Tones (8.82 ha)

The western part of this site is elevated with an extensive stand of mature vegetation. The eastern portion of the site consists of wet grassland of relatively flat topography. The site is surrounded by recreational facilities: Wolfe Tones GAA club and pitches to the northwest and the Shannon Diamond and Carbide Sports and Social Club to the south. To the west are recreation areas and predominantly medium-low density residential development to the north-west.

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6.2.3

R3 – Cronan Extension (1.70 ha)

This Greenfield site is bounded by existing housing to the north and east and playing fields to the west. There is an existing planning permission on the site for a scheme of housing and apartments (totalling 64 units). A new service road (Shannon Primary Road) bounds the site to the south and has been constructed to service this and the neighbouring sites.

The southern relief road bounds the northern site boundary and vehicular access to the site shall be taken from a new roundabout on this road. A new neighbourhood park shall be provided within the central part of the site. Design shall include a mix of housing types. The density, massing and height of development on the site and the provision of open space and landscaping shall be reflective of the surrounding built and natural environment and have regard to views into the site from adjoining residential development and the approach road.

R3 is bounded to the South by R5, Wolfe Tones GAA grounds, existing residential units and St. Caiman’s Community School. In the event that the permitted development is not carried out, future proposals shall include a mix of housing types.

A new local neighbourhood centre is identified in the northern section of the site.

6.2.5

R5 – Adjoining St. Caimin’s School (12.9 ha)

This site is wet grassland, currently used for grazing, and is bounded by St Caimin’s Community School to the north and open pasture to the south and east. A new service road i.e. the Shannon Phase 2 extension to the ring road, bounding the southern and eastern site boundary, shall be constructed prior to development of this site. Vehicular access to the site shall be taken from this road.

A watercourse traverses the site, which feeds ultimately into the Shannon Estuary SAC. All development proposals shall be required to retain a 10 metre open space buffer along either side of this watercourse.

Design shall include a mix of housing types. The density, massing and height of development on the site and the provision of open space and landscaping shall be appropriate to reflect the surrounding built and natural environment and views into the site from adjoining residential development and from the approach road. The layout shall be such that houses address Bothar Luachra to the west and the relief road to the south and east.

A hydrological assessment shall be carried out in respect of all development proposals.

6.2.6

R6 – Ballycasey North (1.35 ha)

A small area of residential land remains here, abutting the N18. Development of this area will be subject to a 30 metre buffer between the building line and the new N18, in the interests of residential amenity.

6.2.7

LDR1 – East End (16.91 ha)

This large tract of land running along the future relief road, on the eastern edge of the settlement

boundary, has been zoned to assist in meeting identified population targets set out in the Core Strategy. However, other residential sites shall be developed before consideration will be given to development on this site. These lands are earmarked to meet housing need further into the future, possibly at a time outside this plan period. Development of these lands shall be for low density housing and shall be strictly dependent on an identified and specific housing need, together with the prior completion of R5, R6, R7 and the Shannon Phase 2 Road development ring road. In addition, proposals for development shall be subject to an overall agreed master plan for the comprehensive development of the subject lands – a piecemeal / ad hoc approach to development shall not be permitted.

A watercourse traverses the site, which feeds ultimately into the Shannon Estuary SAC. All development proposals shall be required to retain a 10 metre open space buffer along either side of this watercourse.

A hydrological assessment shall be carried out in respect of all development proposals.

6.2.8

LDR2 – Adjacent to Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre (4.40 ha)

This greenfield site, located adjacent to Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre, has a mature landscape setting and is considered to have the potential to accommodate a high quality scheme of serviced sites within a mature landscape setting. The lands shall be accessed via the existing lane serving the craft centre. An appropriate buffer shall be retained to the existing craft centre development and to the adjacent road.

The development of the site, including layout, services, open space, landscaping, lamp standards, footpaths, boundaries etc. shall be to a high standard. The diagram below (figure 6.1) presents an indicative example layout for a scheme of 14 units on the site.

A hydrological assessment and tree retention / management plan shall be carried out in respect of all development proposals.

Figure 6.1
Indicative Layout for Site LDR2

The layout of the scheme is designed to break down the overall development into small high quality niches of six or less houses.

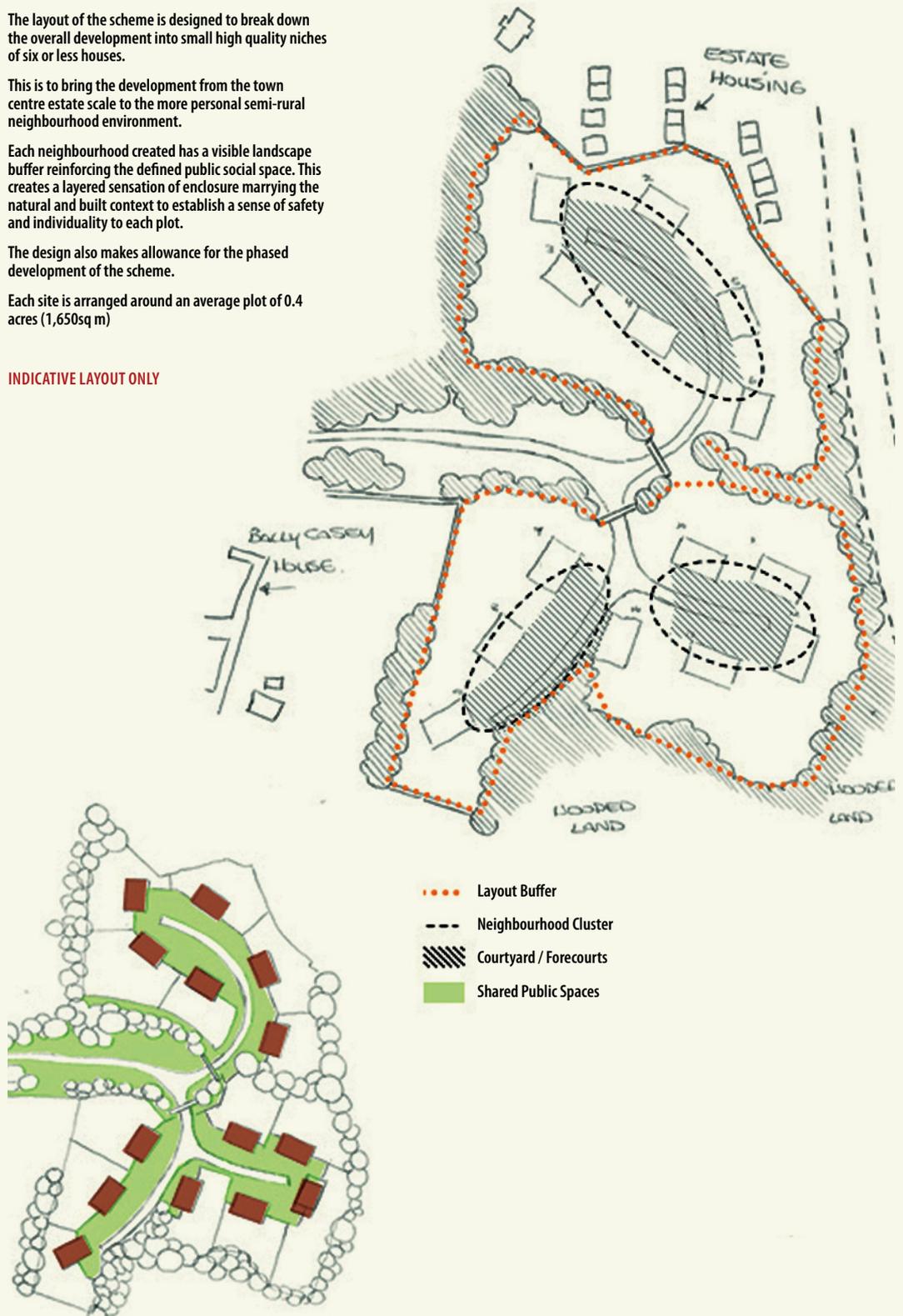
This is to bring the development from the town centre estate scale to the more personal semi-rural neighbourhood environment.

Each neighbourhood created has a visible landscape buffer reinforcing the defined public social space. This creates a layered sensation of enclosure marrying the natural and built context to establish a sense of safety and individuality to each plot.

The design also makes allowance for the phased development of the scheme.

Each site is arranged around an average plot of 0.4 acres (1,650sq m)

INDICATIVE LAYOUT ONLY



6.2.9

LDR3 – Adjoining Shannon Newtown (1.96 ha)

As for nearby LDR2, this site is considered to have potential for a scheme of developer-led serviced sites accessed by extending either of the existing roads to the north or west. The layout of dwellings shall form a crescent shape overlooking the future relief road. The development of the site, including layout, services, open space, landscaping, lamp standards, footpaths, boundaries etc. shall be to a high standard. Development of this site also provides the opportunity to provide a focal point / sculpture on an open space area to the front of the units adjacent to the future new road.

LAP 6.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development of each of the residential zoned sites as outlined above in order to comply with the Core Strategy requirements, ensuring that assigned population targets are delivered for the Shannon Gateway and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

6.3

Passive / Low - Energy Housing

In the current climate of rising energy costs and uncertain future energy supplies, there is a need to embrace the principles of energy efficiency more than ever before. In the interests of furthering the concept of sustainable communities and in support of a low carbon strategy for the town, Shannon is considered to have the potential to facilitate the development of passive or low carbon homes which save energy and money, thereby marketing itself as a contemporary, affordable and energy conscious place in which to live.

The concept behind the passive house is relatively simple – it is a building where heat losses are reduced to such a degree that no separate heating is necessary, in other words that energy attained from the sun (solar gain), internal appliances and other activities is kept within the house. The emphasis is on energy-efficiency and the key components of a passive / low carbon house are:

- the shape and orientation of the building
- performance of windows and doors
- high levels of insulation
- air tightness
- ventilation heat recovery systems
- cold-bridge elimination.

A cost-efficient approach to building must be taken and in this regard low energy home design must follow rules of simplicity. Features of dwelling design that can increase energy costs include dormers, roof windows, bay windows, long and narrow extensions to the main house and the incorporation of split levels.

The benefits of the passive house include very low energy bills, reduced CO₂ emissions, improved air quality, increased natural light, overall health benefits, added value to home and prolonged building life.

LAP 6.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate and actively promote the development of passive / low carbon housing within Shannon Town and Environs.

LAP 6.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To require all applications for housing development to demonstrate how they contribute to the development of a low carbon town and how they have incorporated the principles of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Chapter 7

Community, Social & Recreational Development

7.0 Introduction

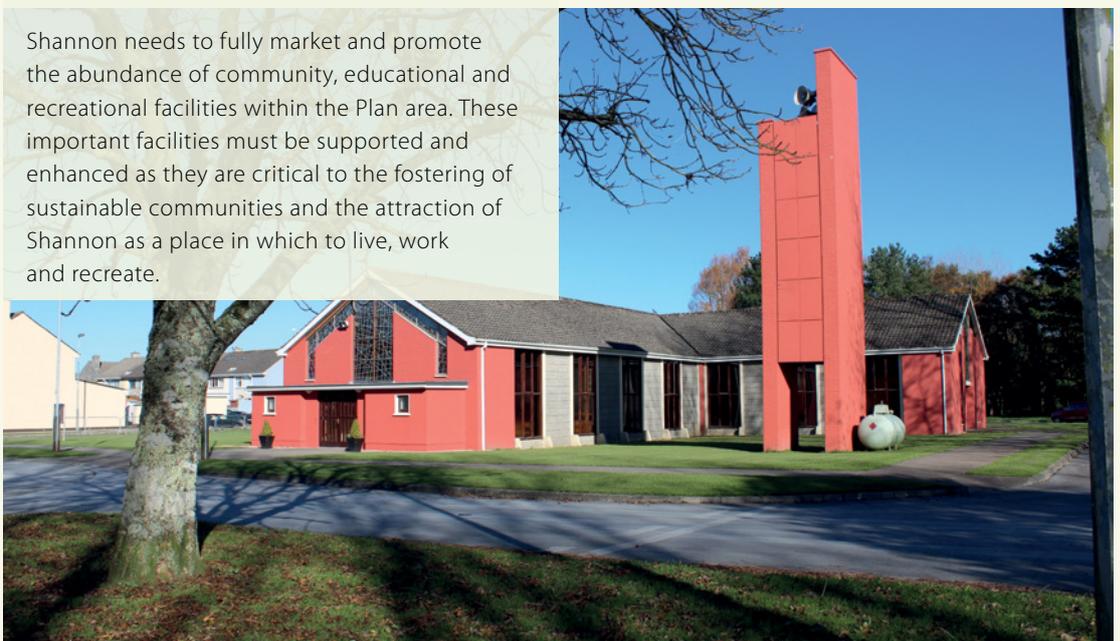
GOAL 6: To facilitate community, social, cultural and recreational development

One of Shannon's many advantages is its abundance of community facilities, community groups, clubs and recreational / amenity facilities. An important driver in the provision of such facilities is the vibrant local community themselves and Clare County Council recognises that this will continue over the Plan period and beyond. There is a long-standing and sustained activity amongst the community and interest groups in providing facilities in Shannon. The Council will support and engage with the local community in relation to the development of existing or new facilities within Shannon Town and Environs.

Shannon needs to fully market and promote the abundance of community, educational and recreational facilities within the Plan area. These important facilities must be supported and enhanced as they are critical to the fostering of sustainable communities and the attraction of Shannon as a place in which to live, work and recreate.

7.1 **Aims**

- To support, enhance and promote the range of educational and community facilities within the Plan area.
- To promote and support improved social, community and cultural facilities and services within the Plan area.
- To ensure that all new development proposals, including new residential development take full account of existing school provisions / capacities in the area.
- To support, enhance and promote the broad range of existing recreational facilities available within the Plan area.
- To encourage, promote and facilitate active and inclusive participation in physical, social, cultural and community activities within Shannon Town and Environs.





7.2 Community Facilities

Shannon possesses a wealth of community facilities, located throughout the Plan area. These include library, health centre, garda station (all within MU2 mixed use area south of the town centre) town hall and fire station (C8), graveyard (C11), convent (C1), Mary Immaculate Church (C4), Handball alley (C5), Shannon Community Hall (C12), Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall (C14) and St. John and Paul Church / Funeral Home (C15). "Land Use Zoning Map A contains the zoning map for Shannon which identify lands zoned for community facilities.

Within sites zoned for community use, only developments compatible with their continued community use shall be considered acceptable to the Council.

Clare County Council are aware of local community interest in, and discussions surrounding, the potential future redevelopment of Hastings Cottage for appropriate community use. This building is a Protected Structure and any future development must therefore take cognisance of same. The Council will engage with the local community in discussing preferred options to bring this site back into active use. Any new use must be complementary to the proposed development at TOU1 and must not to prejudice the delivery of a tourist related facility at Illaunagowan Point.

There is an existing planning permission for a crematorium east of Hastings Cottage. The Council will facilitate and encourage development of a crematorium facility at Illaunamanagh that will assist in providing an additional important community facility for the town and the wider area, subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive and all other environmental considerations.

The C17 Community Site has the potential to accommodate support structures for community activity. Having regard to the nature of established uses in the vicinity of the site, the subject site or part thereof, shall if required, be considered for airport security, subject to all site suitability considerations and the requirements of HDA, in the event that such proposals come forward within the lifetime of the Plan.

LAP 7.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To support the consolidation and enhancement of existing community facilities within the Plan area and to facilitate the sustainable development of new community and cultural facilities at appropriate locations.

LAP 7.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To require all future proposals for development on site C10 to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment.

7.3 Education

Shannon is well served by educational facilities with five National Schools, a Gaelscoil and two secondary schools, the latter being the only secondary schools within the wider South Clare area. The schools are St. John's National School (C2), St. Senan's National School (C3), St. Tolas National School (C6), St. Patrick's Comprehensive School and grounds and Gaelscoil (C7), St. Conaire's National School (C9), St. Aidan's Community School (C13) and St. Caimin's Community School (C16).

Clare County Council has made suitable provision in this Plan by zoning appropriate lands to facilitate the development and potential future expansion of this school and will continue to work with the Department of Education and Skills and other local schools to facilitate all future educational requirements as necessary. Particular account needs to be taken of the Core Strategy population target, the extent of housing lands zoned within the Plan area and the future effects that this will have on school capacities and education demands.

Shannon also has a children’s playground and leisure centre just south of the existing town park. The leisure centre was the subject of a redevelopment, which opened to the public in July 2010. It is a significant amenity for the town, boasting an array of facilities including a 25m swimming pool, fitness suite, tennis courts, climbing wall, studios and a skate park. It occupies a strategic location within the main central area of the town, just south of the town park and town centre and within walking distance of the estuary trails to the south.

LAP
7.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage and promote the implementation of the Green Schools Initiative throughout Shannon.

LAP
7.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To continue to work with the Department of Education and Science in assisting the delivery of future educational requirements within Shannon Town and Environs.

There are many walking trails throughout the town which are actively used by the local community. Many of these amenities are located in the south of the plan area adjacent to the Shannon Estuary.

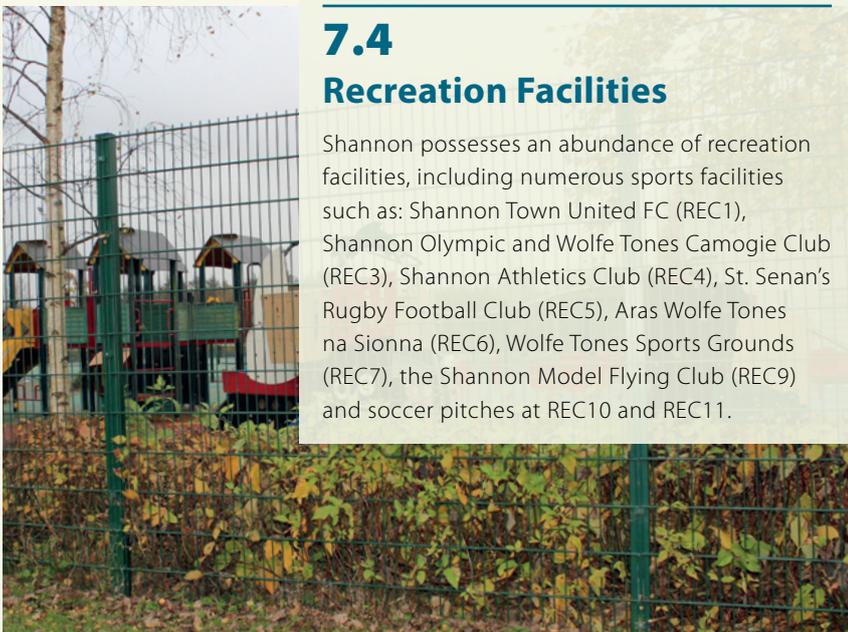
On sites zoned for recreation use, only developments compatible with their continued community use shall be considered acceptable to the Council.

Site REC2 is at a highly sensitive location adjoining the existing footpath which affords access to Illaunagowan Point and the existing walks along the estuary shore. The site is bounded to the north by the southern relief road. It is proposed that a future vehicular access from this road will be constructed across REC2 to serve the TOU1 zoning at Illaunagowan Point for a future interpretative centre facility. The site has potential to accommodate recreational activities that could complement any future development on TOU1.

The former DeBeers amenity grounds (REC8) was previously occupied by sports pitches and tennis courts. It has an attractive setting near the estuary and is surrounded by mature trees, which separate it from residential zoned lands to the north. It is in private ownership and is considered suitable to accommodate new recreational activities or relocation / expansion of existing recreational facilities in the town.

7.4 Recreation Facilities

Shannon possesses an abundance of recreation facilities, including numerous sports facilities such as: Shannon Town United FC (REC1), Shannon Olympic and Wolfe Tones Camogie Club (REC3), Shannon Athletics Club (REC4), St. Senan’s Rugby Football Club (REC5), Aras Wolfe Tones na Sionna (REC6), Wolfe Tones Sports Grounds (REC7), the Shannon Model Flying Club (REC9) and soccer pitches at REC10 and REC11.



Chapter 11 of this Local Area Plan seeks to build on and maximise the existing recreational facilities and amenity areas through the delivery of an integrated and coherent green infrastructure strategy for Shannon Town and Environs.

The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 will facilitate the implementation in the Plan area, where appropriate, of recommendations emanating from the Limerick and Clare Sports and Physical Recreation Strategy and associated SEA and HDA Reports.

7.4.1 Recreation Potential of the Shannon Estuary

Shannon's location directly adjoining the Shannon Estuary affords the opportunity to improve the recreational potential offered by the water through the provision of a slipway access at an appropriate location, provided it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on existing Natura 2000 sites.

Map A outlines two indicative potential locations which may be suitable to accommodate a slipway. There are stream outlets at both these locations which flow through an area of salt marsh before entering mudflats in the wider bay area. The intention is to build a slipway through the saltmarsh to allow small crafts enter these streams at high tide. The use of the slipway will be determined by tides.

Any future development proposals must be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment. Consultation will be required with NPWS to ensure design, materials used, and the timing of works will minimise any disturbance to the Natura 2000 site, and particularly its bird population. Land take from the Natura 2000 site shall be minimal and must be fully addressed in project level HDA. It must be ensured that there are no works to the channel of the stream such as dredging, and that the natural rise and fall of water levels are not interfered with.

The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 will facilitate the implementation in the Plan area, where appropriate, of recommendations emanating from the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary and associated SEA and HDA Reports.

LAP 7.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To support the consolidation and enhancement of existing recreation facilities within the Plan area.

LAP 7.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To integrate existing recreational facilities into an overall Green Infrastructure Strategy for Shannon Town and Environs.

LAP 7.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development of sites REC2 and REC8 for appropriate new recreational development that will reinforce and complement the range of existing recreational facilities in the Plan area.

LAP 7.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the provision of a slipway access to the Shannon Estuary at an appropriate location within the Plan area, subject to reconciling all environmental considerations and ensuring that any such development shall not adversely affect species and habitat protected by the Habitats Directive or the Birds Directive.

Chapter 8

A Low Carbon Strategy

8.0 Introduction

GOAL 7: To actively pursue a low carbon strategy

The Government's white paper on energy Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 sets out the Government's strategic approach to delivering a sustainable energy future for Ireland. At present, 90% of Irish energy requirements are imported. By 2020, the Government aims to meet 20% of energy requirements from renewable sources. The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 sets out targets by sector to achieve Kyoto target reductions in CO₂ generation. The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 sets out Ireland's intention to reduce energy demand by 20% across the whole economy by 2020 through energy efficiency measures.

It is in this context that the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 puts the development of a low carbon county high on the agenda. This is reinforced by objective CDP 10.1 which states that:

'It is an objective of the Development Plan:

- a** To promote County Clare as a low carbon county by 2017 as a means of attracting inward investment to the County and the Mid-West region;
- b** To facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon outputs.'

The Clare County Development Plan, (Section 10.3.1), also states:

'The aim is to identify areas that can become low carbon centres for commerce, thus enabling the County to attract high value businesses that are actively seeking to establish where sustainable low carbon energy security can be guaranteed.'

Moreover, the County Development Plan commits to preparing a County Renewable Energy Strategy that will build on and support the County Wind Energy Strategy and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan.

Shannon is ideally placed to establish a centre for low carbon commerce and community. Establishing such a centre is supported by objectives in various local development strategies. All of the strategies have identified the need to:-

- Improve the energy efficiency of all activities
- Reduce the carbon intensity of all activities
- Establish a low carbon source(s) of electricity from indigenous local resources
- Establish a low carbon source(s) of heat from indigenous local resources
- Establish efficient means of electrical and thermal energy generation, storage and distribution
- Promotion and certification of the low carbon credentials

Successfully establishing Shannon as a centre for low carbon commerce and community will greatly assist in underpinning the presence of existing activities and attracting future investment.

The Shannon Free Zone and adjacent industrial parks, together with Shannon International Airport, provide an agglomeration of companies and business interests that could avail of a future energy network that can provide them with sustainable low carbon energy security.

Shannon's road layout and abundance of open spaces also lends itself to the furthering of Smarter Travel, whereby existing travel behaviours can be challenged through the provision of efficient, safe and high amenity walking and cycling routes.

This chapter sets out objectives in relation to the pursuit of a low carbon strategy for Shannon town and environs, which has real potential to be a leader in renewable energy generation, environmental sustainability and energy efficiency and conservation.

8.1 Aims

- To fully exploit the existing strengths and competitive advantages of Shannon Town and Environs in developing and implementing a low carbon strategy.
- To assist in meeting County and national renewable energy targets by driving a low carbon strategy for Shannon Town and Environs.
- To promote Shannon Town and Environs as an environmentally sustainable place in which to invest and do business, offering an efficient and secure energy supply within a high quality environment.

8.2 The Strategy

8.2.1 Future development embracing energy conservation and environmental sustainability

In order to reinforce the strategic goal of pursuing a low carbon strategy, it is imperative that a comprehensive approach is taken in terms of affecting changes in future development in Shannon which can set it apart as an exemplar in how to further the low carbon concept and to achieve buy in and support at a Local Area Plan level.

In this context, it is considered appropriate that the objective below be included, which requires development proposals to demonstrate how they contribute to the goal of a low carbon town and how they have incorporated the principles of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability into their design and layout.

In the context of a low carbon strategy, small changes made in terms of individual proposals, when taken together cumulatively, can effect greater returns in respect of low carbon generation and provide 'best case' examples to inform and guide future development within Shannon Town and Environs.

LAP 8.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To require all future planning applications within the Shannon Town and Environs Plan area to demonstrate how they contribute to the development of a low carbon town and how they have incorporated the principles of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

LAP
8.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate and actively promote the development of energy infrastructure such as:-

- Smart meters for electricity, gas and thermal energy
- Smart Grid development for micro electricity generation
- District Heating and Cooling Networks
- Gas and Electric Infrastructure for vehicles

that will facilitate increased energy efficiency in buildings, the use of indigenous low carbon electric and thermal energy resources and assist in establishing low carbon commerce and communities.

The provision of such a facility would also enable the creation of a strategic green energy infrastructure network for Shannon, with the potential to deliver sustainable electricity, thermal energy, in line with a low carbon regional economy, delivering low carbon energy to industry, commerce and the local community, sustained through an integrated program of supply and delivery utilising available natural resources in the region and the further development of such natural resources.

This further economic development potential has informed the size of the zoned lands at the subject location. The development of this site into the future will reinforce one of the high level plan objectives – to promote and develop a low carbon strategy for Shannon town through support for renewable technologies that will ensure future security and efficiency of energy supply.

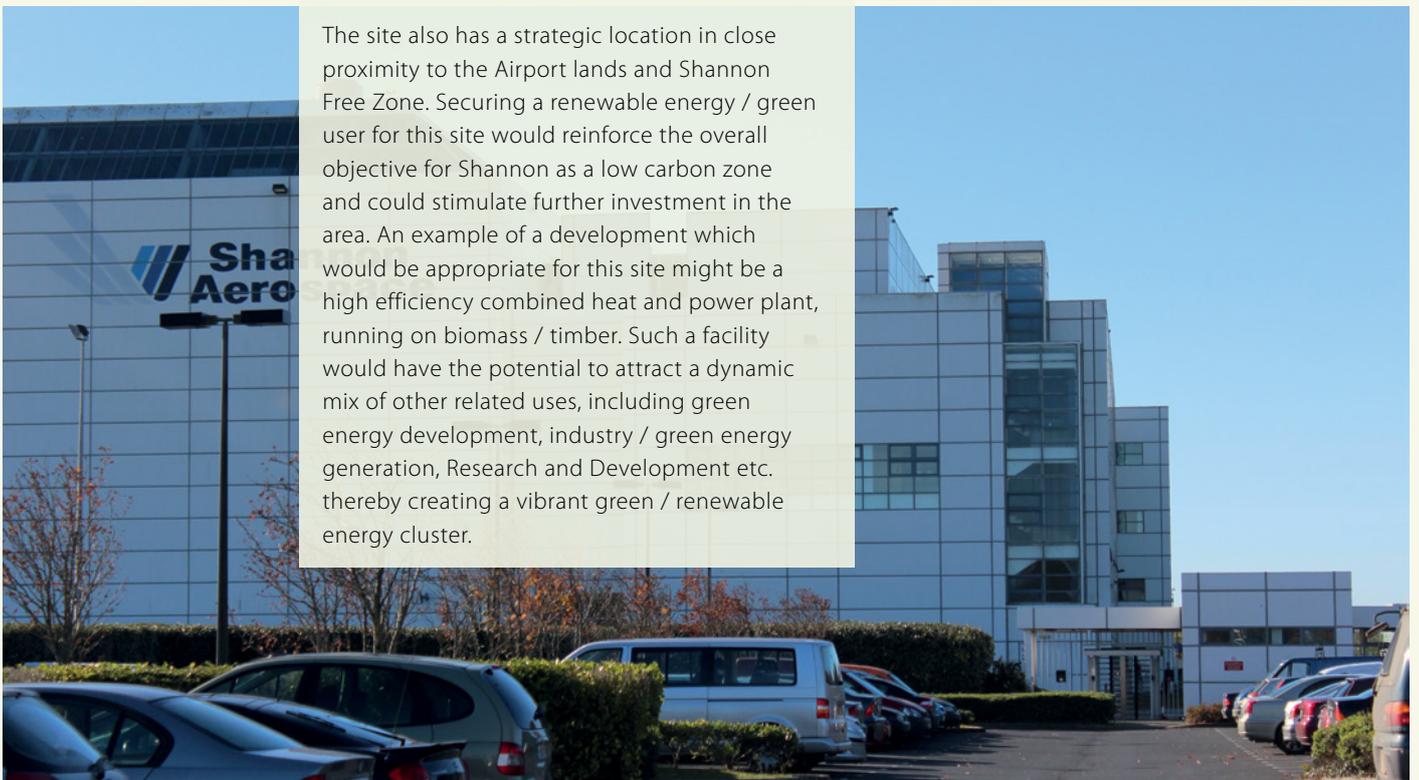
8.2.2
E3 Stonehall – Enterprise Site

This large site is located at Stonehall, north of Shannon Aerospace, and is zoned to facilitate the development of a large scale green / renewable energy development. The site has excellent road access off the N19 via Ballymurtagh roundabout and the existing road serving Shannon Aerospace.

LAP
8.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development of this accessible, strategically located site (E3) for appropriate renewable / green energy development, including generation, research and collaboration.

The site also has a strategic location in close proximity to the Airport lands and Shannon Free Zone. Securing a renewable energy / green user for this site would reinforce the overall objective for Shannon as a low carbon zone and could stimulate further investment in the area. An example of a development which would be appropriate for this site might be a high efficiency combined heat and power plant, running on biomass / timber. Such a facility would have the potential to attract a dynamic mix of other related uses, including green energy development, industry / green energy generation, Research and Development etc. thereby creating a vibrant green / renewable energy cluster.



8.2.3

IS4 – Infrastructure Zoning - Airport Road

This triangular shaped site is located west of the town centre and is bounded by the N19 to the north, the town centre link to the east and Drumgeely road to the south. It is extensively covered by trees and has a network of drainage ditches indicative of wet conditions.

Central to the future development of this site is the need to promote environmental sustainability / low carbon generation within Shannon town by facilitating appropriate green infrastructural development, for example:

- Maximising the existing wetland conditions by using the site for SUDS / drainage of surface/storm waters;
- Wind turbine(s);
- Solar power;
- Opportunities for enhanced local benefit as a high quality amenity space.

Its central location would enable it to serve neighbouring MU1, the existing Town Centre, Free Zone and residential areas. Its strategic and prominent location on the N19, being the main artery into the town, would provide visual prominence for such uses in the context of an overall green / low carbon strategy for the town.

This site has an abundance of trees that are important in the context of an overall green infrastructure strategy for Shannon Town and Environs. This site is an important component of an overall green network of spaces and corridors, as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 11.

Development of this site shall provide for the maximum area of woodland to be preserved.

LAP 8.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To pursue the development of this highly prominent, strategically located site (IS4) for appropriate infrastructural development that will reinforce the town's commitment to low carbon generation and environmental sustainability.



8.2.4

Smarter Travel

The Government document – Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 aims to ensure that transport policies underpin sustainable development. This document, together with The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 highlight the need to change people's travel behaviour in terms of choosing alternative transport modes to the private vehicle.

Shannon town has the potential to develop a Strategy for Smarter Travel, which would reinforce the overall objective to promote Shannon as an environmentally sustainable / low carbon settlement. The existing population and employment base, together with the road layout and compact urban form, lends itself to furthering this concept.

Specific Smarter Travel objectives for Shannon town, which will be facilitated and implemented as part of the Smarter Travel Plan, include inter alia:

- Smarter Workplaces – car-pooling/car-sharing, cycling, bus use, location of car parks etc.
- Public bus service
- Electric Vehicle Charging points
- Shuttle Bus service from SFZ to the town centre
- Cycling Strategy – signage, parking, network of interconnected lanes
- Walking and Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Smarter Travel events – Smarter Travel Day, e.g., Kilkenny Model, cycling, running events; awareness raising

An important element of the Smarter Travel Plan will be to introduce a public bus service for Shannon Town. The only public bus system currently operating to and from the town is the Bus Eireann service that enters and exits from either Limerick or Ennis. However this only serves the in-line locations such as the town centre, industrial estate and airport. A more extensive service for Shannon should be fully explored. The use of solar powered display bus stops and electric (or bio-diesel powered) buses is supported as part of an overall low carbon strategy.

There are two secondary schools and five national schools in Shannon. The greener schools initiative is active in a number of these schools at different stages of the programmes development. Promoting bike travel in schools, especially amongst girls who do not cycle as much as boys, is considered to be an important step in delivering a future change in travel behaviour. Clare County Council fully supports these initiatives and aims to supplement them further by encouraging parents to cycle with their children to school.

A Cycling Strategy, Green Infrastructure Strategy and proposed walking routes for Shannon are outlined in Chapter 11.

LAP
8.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To formalise and implement a Smarter Travel Plan for Shannon Town and Environs.

LAP
8.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate and support proposals to improve public transport provision and associated facilities, including enhanced bus services, within the Plan area.

8.2.5
Shannon – Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

In April 2010, an agreement was signed between the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), ESB and a number of motor manufacturers to provide incentives, infrastructure and Electric Vehicles (EV's) to the Irish market. ESB, as the distribution system owner, has committed under this Agreement to the rolling out of a pilot national charging infrastructure. In reinforcing the objective for a low carbon / green image for the town, Shannon has the potential to facilitate charging stations at key locations to encourage and support future electric vehicle use. The town has a compact layout and a significant employment base. It is also home to an international airport with a significant annual passenger turnover.

In consultation with ESB and the relevant landowners, it is an objective of the Local Area Plan to reserve a number of sites within Shannon at publicly accessible key locations for EV charging stations. A charging point will be located at Shannon town centre is currently at engineering design stage. A public charging point like this will be connected to a local three phase electricity supply and charging will take between two and six hours, depending on vehicle type and battery size.

LAP
8.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

In consultation with ESB and the relevant landowners, to reserve a number of sites within Shannon at publicly accessible key locations for Electric Vehicle charging stations.



8.2.6 Shannon Free Zone Masterplan – ‘GreenPrint’ Sustainability Assessment

The Green Print methodology which was employed in the preparation of the 2008 Shannon Free Zone Masterplan is a new sustainability assessment process developed by BRE Ireland in collaboration with Shannon Development, PM Group and RKD Architects, which takes full account of local planning policy and sustainability guidance, as well as other issues relevant to the Shannon Free Zone site. A series of overarching sustainability objectives and benchmarks were established to steer the Masterplan process. The SFZ Masterplan is discussed in greater detail in section 3.3 of this document.

The completed SFZ Masterplan has been independently audited by BRE Ireland using the Green Print assessment procedure. A final Green Print rating of 85% has been awarded thus achieving a Green Print ‘Exemplar’ rating which is the highest rating available.

LAP 8.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the implementation of the Shannon Free Zone Masterplan where it is consistent with, and does not prejudice the achievement of, the other goals and objectives of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

8.2.7 Shannon as a high amenity town adjoining the Shannon Estuary

The term ‘Green’ not only refers to the potential for low carbon generation, renewable energy and green technology, but also acknowledges the abundance of green spaces, woodland areas and the significant resource presented by the Shannon Estuary. This gives Shannon a unique selling point.

Chapter 11 outlines a Green Infrastructure plan for the town which seeks to ensure connectivity and biodiversity linkages between these areas.

The compact layout of the town, together with this high amenity setting and quantum of open spaces, maximises the opportunities for cycling and walking as smarter travel options which, when formalised as part of a clear strategy, and accompanied by proposals for clear signage, way finding and road marking, can effect a change in travel behaviour and modal shift away from the use of the private vehicle. Such a strategy would make a very positive contribution to the overall goal of a low carbon generating town.

LAP 8.9 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the implementation of the Green Infrastructure plan incorporating a Cycling and Walking Strategy for Shannon Town and Environs, that will encourage modal shift away from the use of the private vehicle.

8.2.8 Passive / low carbon housing

This topic is dealt with in greater detail in section 6.3. Shannon is considered to have potential to facilitate the development of passive or low carbon homes, thereby marketing itself as a contemporary, affordable and energy conscious place in which to live and reinforcing the goal to actively pursue a low carbon strategy. In this regard, it is important that the benefits of this energy efficient approach, which include low energy bills, improved air quality, increased natural light and overall health benefits, are fully promoted in order to maximise the opportunities to incorporate these house types within Shannon.

Chapter 9

The Natural and Built Environment

9.0 Introduction

GOAL 8: To protect and enhance the natural and built environment

The environment is a valuable but vulnerable resource. The quality and integrity of the natural and built environment is retained when it is managed, protected and where necessary, enhanced.

Clare County Council has responsibility for a range of activities within the Shannon Town and Environs Plan area associated with the environment. In addition, is the need to regulate, in conjunction with other agencies, pollution control and waste management.

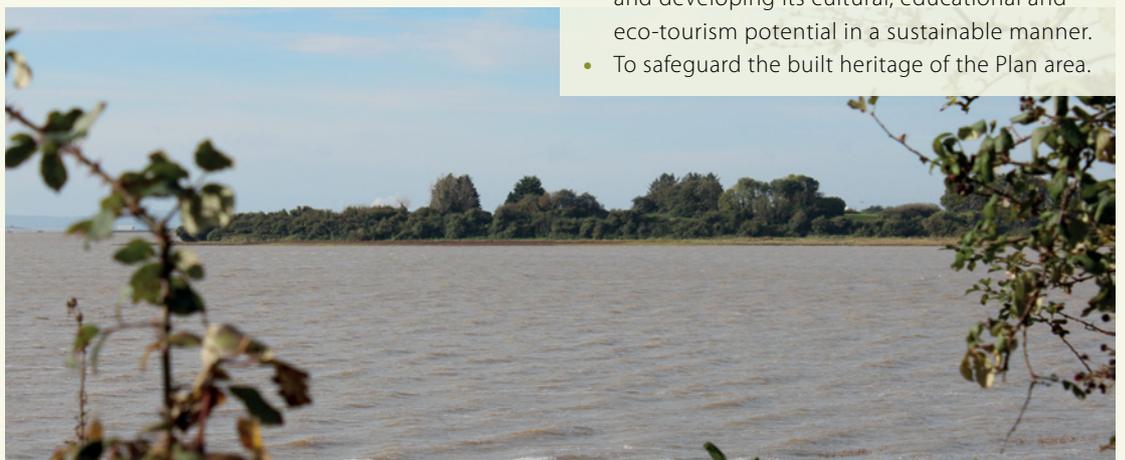
The environment incorporates both the natural and built heritage. The Plan area is located within and adjoining an area of important natural heritage which will be detailed in section 9.2 below. It is a requirement under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives to protect EU Designated Sites - SACs and SPAs respectively. Shannon has a high amenity and attractive green setting, with areas of important natural heritage encompassing woodland, wetlands, grassed areas, wildlife corridors and wildlife hubs.

Chapter 11 explores these areas further in the context of developing a Green Infrastructure network for Shannon Town and Environs where walking, cycling, recreation and nature/ biodiversity are integrated and can work in harmony with each other.

The built environment is a key element in ensuring that Shannon Town and Environs is an attractive place in which to live, work, recreate and visit. This chapter needs to be read in conjunction with Chapter 2, which outlines a placemaking strategy. Existing buildings and the future built environment are a key component of this. There are also some buildings of important heritage value in Shannon, and these should be protected and enhanced where possible.

9.1 Aims

- To protect the environment by ensuring the highest possible standards with regard to water supply, wastewater treatment facilities, storm water management, water quality and air quality.
- To protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of Shannon, while promoting and developing its cultural, educational and eco-tourism potential in a sustainable manner.
- To safeguard the built heritage of the Plan area.



9.2 Natural Heritage

Shannon has a rich and varied natural heritage which supports an abundance of wildlife, including birds such as robins, wrens, blackbirds, finches, chaffinches, blue tits and house sparrows; animals such as hedgehogs, pygmy shrews, frogs and foxes; wild flowers such as violets, primroses, and bluebells, and insects such as butterflies, dragonflies, bumblebees, beetles, snails and spiders. This wildlife is regularly encountered in the many schoolyards, gardens, walking trails, parks and wooded areas within Shannon and its environs, as well as those areas commonly viewed as waste grounds such as roadside verges and undisturbed ground on development sites. However, there is also an abundance of wildlife in Shannon which is rarely encountered due to the timid and secretive nature of animals such as otters, or the fleeting movements of small birds and insects. There are also an abundance of plants, mosses, fungi and lichens within Shannon which are inconspicuous or which would require ecological knowledge to tell them apart.

In addition to the above, the Shannon Estuary, which is directly adjacent to Shannon town, is a haven for over-wintering wildfowl and waders which are attracted by the rich food source (macro – invertebrates) offered by the extensive intertidal mudflats, fringed with saltmarsh vegetation. Indeed, the Shannon Estuary is the most important site in Ireland for over-wintering wildfowl and waders, and is an important breeding site for birds in the summer season. This includes Annex 1 species (protected under the Birds Directive) such as Whooper Swan, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit, internationally important numbers of Light-bellied Brent Geese, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit and Redshank, and nationally important numbers of 17 wintering species.

9.2.1 Shannon Estuary

The Lower River Shannon SAC lies partly within, and adjacent to the Shannon Local Area Plan area. There are extensive intertidal mudflats adjacent to the Plan area, fringed with saltmarsh vegetation, which provide important habitat for overwintering wildfowl and waders. Other habitats for which the Natura 2000 is designated, and which occur in close proximity to the Plan area include, estuaries, lagoons, salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows, and Mediterranean salt meadows. In addition, species likely to be found adjacent to the Plan area include all three species of lamprey found in Ireland, Atlantic Salmon and Otters.

The River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA overlaps with the Lower River Shannon SAC. Clare County Council recognises the quality of the Shannon Estuary as a wildlife area which provides exceptional opportunities for education and leisure. There are several headlands within the Plan area, including Illaunmanagh Point, Illaunagowan Point and Illaunaconeen Point, where wildfowl and waders can be viewed year round in huge numbers. In addition, there are spectacular views afforded from all these headlands which are designated as Heritage Landscapes in the Clare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017. It is an objective of Clare County Council to promote activities which increase awareness and appreciation, and subsequently the protection of the Shannon Estuary.

Map 9.1 includes the SPA, SAC and pNHA designations within the Plan area.



LAP
9.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To protect and conserve the Shannon Estuary, and its habitats and species, which have been designated as a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area, and a Proposed Natural Heritage Area under the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive and Wildlife Acts respectively.

LAP
9.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote educational and leisure activities such as bird watching, guided wildlife walks, photography, art etc. which increase awareness and appreciation of the Shannon Estuary but which will not result in significant disturbance to wildfowl and waders and will not have a negative impact on water quality, or on the condition of the protected habitats and species.

Large parts of the Plan area are naturally wet, and as such, tree species which would be most suitable to these conditions include Alder, Ash, Aspen, Blackthorn, Purging Buckthorn, Dog Rose, Hawthorn, Hazel, Spindle and Willow. It is acknowledged that trees are central to placemaking in Shannon and that this may require species which are not on the native list. This is acceptable provided they are suited to and sustainable in the local environment.

LAP
9.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

- a** To facilitate the carrying out of a full survey of the trees in Shannon, recording location, species and condition, which shall inform future developments and works to the townscape and proposals for replanting.
- b** To promote the planting of tree species which are suited to the Shannon landscape as part of any public landscaping projects, or planting associated with developments.

.....
9.2.2 Tree planting

In the course of the development of the town, extensive planting schemes were undertaken along the coast of the estuary, on parts of the principal roads, on Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga Hills and other open space areas. The maturing of these schemes today is largely responsible for the green setting and considerable green infrastructure which benefits the town. However, it is recognised that some trees are nearing the end of their life and pose a health hazard, in particular some of the Poplar trees. It is a requirement of the Clare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 to replace felled trees with native species. The publication, 'Buds of the Banner: A guide to growing native trees and shrubs in Clare' is a very useful reference guide in this respect.

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9.2.3 Wildlife in Shannon

There is an abundance of wildlife areas within Shannon including the estuary, woodlands, scrub, wetlands, parks, streams, hedgerows, tree lines, roadside verges, housing estate open spaces and gardens. Gardens and housing estate open spaces in particular provide shelter and food supply for many species, and particularly small birds.

Where open space is required as part of developments, and particularly residential developments, there is an opportunity at the planning stage to link these open spaces to the existing wildlife corridors which surround the sites, including roadside verges and hedgerows.

Undisturbed ground within development sites will still support the original species and ecosystems found on the site, and the careful management of these areas will provide a quicker 'bounce-back' of wildlife to open spaces following completion of the development.

There is a heavy reliance on tree planting in relation to many landscaping plans, however, in Shannon, there are extensive opportunities to develop wetland habitats due to the natural wet conditions of the landscape. An example of this can be seen in Chapter 11 – Green Infrastructure.

Where rocks or small boulders are laid out flat on the ground, as opposed to piled up high, they can provide crevices for small animals and insects, and opportunities for mosses, lichens and ferns, as well as providing a landscape feature and natural play areas for children.

LAP 9.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To require development proposals to take cognisance of the surrounding wildlife corridors when considering boundary treatment, landscaping schemes and planting as part of the development, and where possible to extend the network of wildlife areas within Shannon.

9.3 Built Environment and Heritage

There are a number of buildings / structures in Shannon which are considered to be important in the context of the overall built heritage of Shannon town and environs. These are outlined in the sections below. In addition to these buildings, there are also a number of Recorded Monuments throughout the Plan area. These are outlined on the Designations Map – Map 9.1.

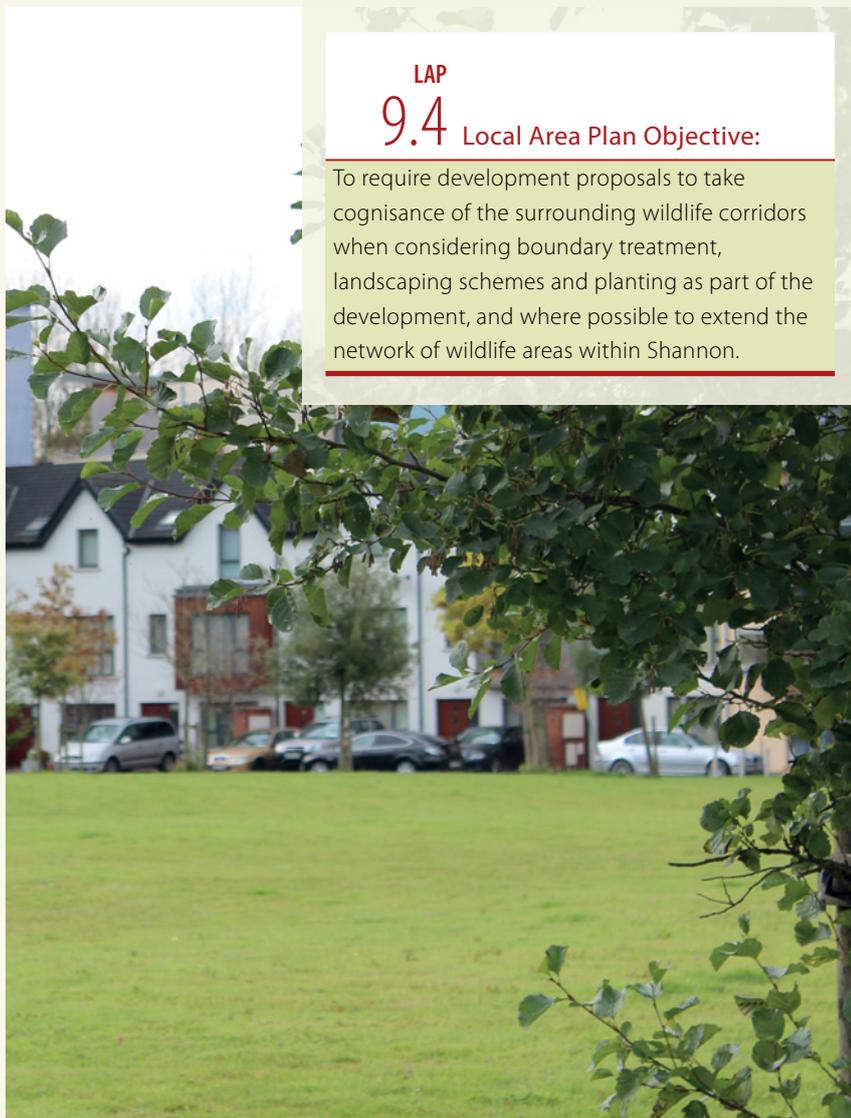
9.3.1 Hastings Cottage

Hastings Cottage dates back to circa 1820. It is the remains of a former, detached, four-bay, single-storey cob-built, thatched cottage at Illaunamanagh Point, Shannon. The house was used during the war of independence as the prison of British Brigadier General Lucas, captured by the IRA and later released. The structure is now almost completely ruined and overgrown and lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of Shannon Graveyard. It is listed on the Record of Protected Structures. The Council will facilitate the sensitive restoration of this important historical building and site, subject to consideration of all environmental constraints.



9.3.2 Murphy's Cottage

This is an existing, detached, four bay single-storey thatched cottage, built circa 1850 and located on the Sli Na Mara Way. The building was renovated circa 1950 and is now in use as a café. The building has traditional eaves and coped gable, painted rubble walls with evidence of two building phases. The building is listed on the Record of Protected Structures.





9.3.3 Shannon Airport Complex

The Airport lands include a complex of buildings / structures which are listed on the Record of Protected Structures, namely – the exterior of the semi-detached, four bay, two storey flat roofed departures building, circa 1960, the circa 1945 T-shaped oratory, now in use as a storage depot. In addition, the Air Traffic Control centre, circa 1964, incorporating single-bay six-storey control tower, circa 1970 and, the multi-bay, single-storey, flat roofed building, circa 1945 known as 'The social club' or the 'Camp Bar'.

In addition to the above, there are other buildings considered to be of important heritage value within the Shannon Airport complex.

The Council will ensure that the future development and expansion of Shannon Airport does not prejudice the integrity of Protected Structures or other buildings considered to be of important heritage value.

9.3.4 Other buildings of note

Shannon contains many fine modern buildings with the Shannon Airport Terminal Building (designed by MOLA) winning 'Best Commercial Building 2002'. The concept statement for the building states: The architectural expression and materials attempt to convey the special and unique character of the historic location as the gateway to the West of Ireland.

In the industrial /commercial sector, the Shannon Aerospace building (designed by NMA) won highly commended 'Plan' Building of the Year Award 1993. At the time of its construction it was the biggest single building in Ireland being 240m x 92m. The building accommodates heavy frame overhaul and a range of maintenance services for aircraft.

The Tellabs Facility (designed by Healy Partners Associates) won the RIAI Regional Award 1999. This building of 125,000m² provided a new R&D/ Production facility. The identity of the building is strong in order to attract highly qualified staff and to convey the required corporate image.

Within Shannon, there are a number of other buildings which, whilst not listed on the Record of Protected Structures, make a positive contribution their surroundings and are valuable as part of the built heritage of the town. Such buildings include the Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre, which is a pleasant arrangement of buildings with a central garden space. The Airport, Industrial Estates and Business Parks have modern buildings with exemplary features, such as Tellabs, Intel and the offices at Westpark in the industrial zone.

9.3.5 Sean Lemass public library

The Sean Lemass public library is the principal library for the south of the county. It is located just south of the core retail area in Shannon and has a stock of 35,000 volumes. The Shannon, Ennis, Ennistymon, Kilrush, and Newmarket-on-Fergus libraries were all built in the 1970s and early 1980s and were designed by the Architects Anthony M. O'Neill and Barbara O'Neill who specialised in libraries at that time.

The above does not represent an exhaustive list of all buildings of merit and this Plan will seek to safeguard and enhance all buildings of intrinsic heritage value within the Shannon Town and Environs Plan area.

LAP 9.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To safeguard and enhance all buildings of intrinsic heritage value within Shannon Town and Environs and to protect all existing Protected Structures, as set out in the Record of Protected Structures.

9.3.6 Vacant Structures

There are a significant number of vacant buildings within the Plan area. This is not limited to the Shannon area, with a recorded 21% vacancy rate throughout County Clare (Census 2011). The Plan will seek to facilitate the active and appropriate reuse of vacant structures throughout the Plan area, in the interests of promoting sustainable communities and improving the quality and character of the built environment.

LAP 9.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage the facilitation and active and appropriate reuse of vacant structures within the Plan area.



Map 9.1: Designations



Heritage Landscape



Special Area of Conservation



Special Protection Area



Proposed Natural Heritage Area



Chapter 10

Tourism

10.0 Introduction

GOAL 9

To develop Shannon as a visitor destination

The development of tourism in Shannon is vital in order to encourage people to visit the town. Shannon is home to an international airport and is also located on the highly accessible Atlantic corridor. This accessibility and locational advantage provide the baseline for Shannon to increase its share of the tourist market in Clare.

Chapter 12 (Tourism) of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out the following objectives in relation to Shannon:-

CDP 12.2

(f) 'To promote strategic links with Shannon Airport and the major tourist attractions within County Clare and the region as a whole in order to support the local tourist economy'.

CDP 12.8

(a) 'To promote and facilitate tourism associated retail developments in Ennis, Bunratty and Shannon Town'.

CDP 12.8

(e) 'To support the role of Shannon Airport as the international tourist gateway to the west of Ireland'.

CDP 12.8

(f) 'To facilitate the development and expansion of the hospitality sector in Ennis, Bunratty and Shannon town'.

Whilst objective CDP 12.8(e) recognises the role of Shannon Airport as an international tourist gateway to the west of Ireland, there is a need for Shannon to capitalise on the significant passenger numbers through the Airport.

The resource of the Shannon Estuary needs to be promoted, enhanced and marketed as an attractive location for recreation and walking. This is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 12 – Infrastructure. Moreover, the specific objective for the site at Illaunagowan Point (TOU1), as set out below in objective 10.8, may facilitate the development of a visitor centre, incorporating café/restaurant which will showcase the Shannon Estuary and the biodiversity that it supports. As part of a walking strategy, it is also proposed to formalise looped walks in the town that incorporate the existing estuary walking trails.

As acknowledged in the County Development Plan objectives above and in the Mid-West Retail Strategy, Shannon needs to create a niche for itself in respect of retail offer, and one option to be pursued is the provision of tourist-related retail development. As outlined in Chapter 5, due to Shannon's accessible location midway between the two largest shopping centres in the region – namely Limerick and Ennis, the extent of comparison retail offer that it can attract may be limited. However, developing a niche offer may serve to attract an increased number of visitors. An existing example is the Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre, which is an attractive development of small, craft, design and business outlets, and also incorporates a restaurant.

10.1 Aims

- To attract increased visitor numbers to Shannon Town and Environs.
- To develop strong, year round, high quality integrated tourism products for Shannon Town and Environs.
- To capitalise on the passenger numbers through Shannon Airport and the existing daily workforce in the Industrial Zone by developing, promoting and marketing a unique tourist offer.

10.2 Developing the tourist product

The following section sets out objectives which will be pursued over the Plan period which seek to maximise Shannon's existing competitive advantages and to promote a range of attractions that will encourage visitors to come to Shannon.

LAP 10.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the development of an attractive centre with a unique and distinctive shopping character, including a healthy range of convenience and comparison shops, improved dining facilities and affording greater options for evening entertainment, e.g. cinema/ theatre.

LAP 10.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote, formalise and enhance the existing network of riverside walks and to market the Shannon Estuary as an important natural, high amenity resource.

LAP 10.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To formalise, enhance and promote looped walks around Shannon, encompassing the Shannon Estuary riverside network and the Sli Na Mara Way.

LAP 10.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage the development of a museum on the history of Shannon Airport.

LAP 10.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To encourage the development of an improved visitor aircraft viewing point.

LAP 10.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To support, develop and expand the hospitality sector in Shannon.

LAP 10.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

To promote the existing abundance of recreational activities, including sports clubs, walking trails and Shannon Golf Club.



10.3 TOU1 - Illaunagowan Point

This site is located at Illaunagowan Point (or Third Point) on the Shannon Estuary and is located outside of, but adjoining, the environmental designations – namely SAC, SPA and pNHA. The site is located adjacent to the existing riverside walk network and affords spectacular views of the Shannon Estuary.

Clare County Council will consider high quality development within this site in order to create a stronger link between the town and its outstanding estuary setting. The objective is to strengthen connections between the town and the estuary and to increase the attractiveness of Shannon to the tourist and day visitor market. The envisaged use will work in harmony with the high amenity setting.

It is considered that the site has potential to accommodate a tourist information / interpretative centre to promote the estuary for environmentally-sensitive tourist-related activity including inter alia – walking, biodiversity trails, bird watching etc. This centre could be complemented by other appropriate uses, for example a cafe, small indoor play area etc. It is considered that the significant walking and recreational resource provided by the Estuary is being underutilised at present. An appropriately designed and integrated facility at this location would reinforce and enhance this valuable resource for the local community and visitors alike.

Any development proposals on the subject site will be required to undertake a Habitats Directive Assessment. Given the environmental quality of the site and its exceptional potential, the design of future development proposals will be required to be of a very high standard. All proposals will be required to connect to the existing water main and foul sewer network. Layout and design shall be required to be of an exemplar standard, embracing the principles of environmental sustainability and energy conservation. In addition, the existing network of paths in the area will be protected.

The location of Illaunagowan Point directly in line with Bothar Na Rinne affords the opportunity

to consolidate this route as the main 'spine' of the town, providing a high quality facility at its southernmost extent, which will draw people down to the Estuary.

The extension of the existing Bothar Na Rinne road south to connect to the southern relief road will be imperative in facilitating development of the subject site, and more importantly, in making any future development viable, encouraging footfall and increasing the probability of securing a successful and popular venture. Access to the subject site shall be as indicated by the indicative safeguard on the Map A, i.e. via an independent access taken off the southern relief road at a point east of the existing pedestrian access to Illaunagowan Point.

LAP 10.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To secure the development of the TOU1 site for tourism-related development subject to satisfactorily addressing all environmental constraints and in accordance with the following criteria:

- a** Proposals shall relate strongly to the exceptional setting and demonstrate physical integration with the existing environment;
- b** Any building shall be appropriate in scale to this sensitive location and shall maximise the views afforded of the Estuary at this location;
- c** Design and layout of any new development shall be of a suitably high standard to complement and enhance this prominent location.
- d** Vehicular access to the site shall be taken off the southern relief road to the north, across site REC2, as indicated by the designated infrastructure safeguard at this location. Access will be restricted to any future facility, with any associated parking (apart from disabled parking) located outside of the TOU1 site.
- e** A construction management plan and hydrological report shall also be required to accompany all development proposals.
- f** The requirements of Habitats Directive Assessment shall be met.



10.4 Existing Tourist Attractions

10.4.1 Atlantic Air Venture

Atlantic Air Venture is an aviation education and flight simulation visitor centre located at the junction of An Bothar Mór and Bothar Na Luachra. It includes packages for family days out, school excursions and tours, as well as facilitating individual visitors, birthday parties, corporate events and providing flight simulator training, field trips and aviation displays.

It is considered to be a very appropriate commercial use for Shannon, on account of its location in proximity to the Airport. It also has a very prominent location on an important route into the town and at a busy junction. Clare County Council considers that Atlantic Air Venture has an important role to play in developing and promoting the tourist product in Shannon.

The Council will facilitate and support any future expansion / redevelopment proposals, where appropriate, of the existing Atlantic Air Venture facility.

10.4.2 Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre

Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre opened in 1981. It is located in the courtyard of the 18th Century Ballycasey House, within a mature woodland setting, and showcases some of the finest examples of Irish crafts and design. It also includes a restaurant, car park and toilet facilities.

The Centre is a high quality tourist facility, with an important role to play in developing and promoting the tourist product in Shannon. The Council will facilitate and support any future expansion / redevelopment proposals, where appropriate, of the subject development.

10.4.3 Future cinema / theatre

Objective 10.1 above outlines the need to improve facilities in Shannon for evening entertainment. One such facility is the provision of a cinema or theatre. This will preferably be located in the town centre, but if not, at a central, highly accessible location in close proximity to the town centre. A future cinema or theatre will face competition from the existing facilities available in Limerick and Ennis. In this context, it is considered that Shannon should explore opportunities to develop a niche product, for example a drive-in cinema or I-max / 3D theatre.

The Council will facilitate and promote new uses in Shannon which support the objective of providing social and evening entertainment uses that will assist in creating a viable and vibrant town centre area.

Chapter 11

A Green Infrastructure Framework

11.0 Introduction

GOAL 10

To deliver an integrated and coherent Green Infrastructure Framework, encouraging walking, cycling and recreation

Shannon enjoys a rich natural environment consisting of an impressive supply of landscaped and natural open space within the town itself and a stunning natural environment as a result of its location on the Shannon Estuary. The estuary is recognised internationally for its flora, fauna and wildlife habitats and is designated as an SAC and SPA under the EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directives respectively.

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 has classified the Shannon Town and Environs plan area into two different landscape types:

- Working Landscape – intensively settled and developed areas within settled landscapes or areas with a unique natural resource (the majority of the Plan area);
- Heritage Landscape – areas where natural and cultural heritage are given priority and where development is not precluded but happens more slowly and carefully (in western and southern extremes of the Plan area adjacent to the estuary).

As noted, within the town, open space provision is abundant. The wooded upland areas of Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga Hills provide an important amenity and visual variation to the vast lowlands of much of the town. In this context, they also perform an important navigation function as a result of their height and scale.

The policies within this plan seek to retain much of the open space. Selected sites are identified for enhancement / development. There are also a number of prime sites throughout Shannon which are important and need to be protected.

The abundance of open space in Shannon means that it is an ideal settlement to progress the concept of Green Infrastructure. Essentially, Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. In urban areas, such as Shannon, it can include domestic gardens, street trees, sports pitches, civic spaces, green roofs and walls. In a green infrastructure context, approaching these elements as service-providing infrastructure encourages one to focus on the benefits that they provide to biodiversity, including human populations. The concept requires an integrated approach, ranging from the strategic to the site specific and is not about pure preservation but an emphasis on the multi-functionality of open space corridors, sites and spaces.

Shannon already has a significant network of existing footpaths and some cycle lanes. This chapter includes a walking and cycling strategy that will seek to develop, enhance and connect this network. This strategy will be fully integrated with this Local Area Plan, including the zoning map, the Green Infrastructure Strategy, discussed below and the Placemaking Strategy for Shannon, as outlined in Chapter 2. Successful implementation of these plans requires that the plans complement each other.

11.1 Aims

- To preserve and enhance the existing network of green spaces, amenity / recreation areas, wildlife hubs and wildlife corridors in Shannon through the delivery of an integrated Green Infrastructure network that will provide spaces and corridors of high amenity value, deliver biodiversity benefits and enhance quality of life and general health and well being.
- To enhance existing and develop new linkages between the town centre, residential areas, industrial zone, airport and the wider countryside.
- To promote Shannon as a high amenity, safe and enjoyable place for walking and cycling.
- To formalise and implement on a phased basis, a cycling and walking strategy for Shannon.

11.2 Green Infrastructure

For the purposes of this Local Area Plan, Green infrastructure is defined as the integration of walking, cycling and recreation with biodiversity, creating interconnected networks of land and water that sustain environmental quality and enrich our quality of life. A successful Green Infrastructure Framework for Shannon will ensure that all these elements are provided and that they work in harmony with each other.

Green Infrastructure provides space for nature, connected corridors and natural ecosystem services, including regulation of temperature, clean water and air and reduced storm water flows, including sustainable urban drainage systems. High quality and accessible amenity areas and green corridors also provide health benefits to human populations, including space for children to play, meeting places for the local community and safe and attractive walking and cycling routes that can encourage a modal shift away from use of the private car.

A key concept is the creation of multi-functional networks, whereby green infrastructure is planned, designed and managed as a network so that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Such networks can benefit urban areas in terms of addressing the challenges of climate change, flood risk, water management and food supply, in addition to providing efficient and renewable energy and creating comfortable, attractive places in which to live.

Green Infrastructure is high on the agenda and is an approach supported in the National Spatial Strategy, which calls for a Green Structure to be put in place to prevent urban sprawl, loss of agricultural and other land to urban uses, to create green settings for towns and cities, to conserve and enhance biodiversity and protecting other elements of the built, natural and cultural heritage. Green Infrastructure planning is also important to meet the increasingly complex demands of environmental legislation, including the Habitats, Birds, Floods, Water Framework, SEA and Environmental Liability Directives. In this context, EU Guidance on 'Green Infrastructure and Territorial Cohesion' was published in 2011.

In Shannon Town and Environs, there is significant scope to connect the green infrastructure within the town centre, industrial areas and airport to the Shannon Estuary and to the wider County Clare countryside.

The remainder of this Chapter presents a map-based approach to the Green Infrastructure plan for Shannon. The map-based approach is considered the most effective in communicating the message to a wide audience and in illustrating the concept and benefits of connectivity and the creation of new linkages. Map C illustrates the Green Infrastructure Framework for Shannon Town and Environs.



LAP 11.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To identify and map key open spaces, wildlife hubs, corridors and circulation routes throughout the Plan area.

LAP 11.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To identify and map key recreational areas and recreational routes throughout the Plan area.

LAP 11.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To connect the component elements of the town through the delivery of an integrated Green Infrastructure network, i.e. the town centre with the residential areas, the Industrial Zone, the Airport, and the Estuary.

LAP 11.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To increase the amenity value of key recreational areas / corridors through the enhancement with, and protection of, biodiversity.

LAP 11.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To identify areas for additional tree planting / species enhancement in order to improve connectivity and linkages between existing corridors, open spaces and wooded areas.

11.3 A Green Network

There are features within the landscape, which by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (corridors) or their existing amenity and / or important biodiversity function (green areas and wildlife hubs), are essential components of an integrated and well connected Green Infrastructure network for Shannon Town and Environs. The Green Infrastructure network will seek to connect these features and safeguard them from inappropriate development that would give rise to their loss or severance from other important features in the area.

There are a number of key green amenity spaces, together with wildlife hubs of important biodiversity function – these areas include the wooded upland areas of Tullyglass and Tullyvarraga Hills, the Town Park (behind the fire station), the Shannon Wetlands (adjacent to St Patrick’s Sportsfields and Riverside Park), the proposed future Civic Park (opposite the recycling centre), the small woodland to the east of the Plan area (adjacent to Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre) and the embankment of the Shannon Estuary.

Bothar Mór, Bealach Bri and Bothar na Rinne are important corridors with extensive treelines and shrubbery, which link the future Civic Park, Tullyvarraga Hill and the Woodland adjoining Shannon Town Roundabout (refer to site IS4, Map A) to the Town Park, Shannon Wetlands, and the Shannon Estuary at Illaunagowan Point. These roads also contain smaller access roads, which allow for corridors linking up to Tullyglass Hill and Tullyvarraga Hill, as well as linking into Sli na Mara.

Drumgeely Road is also an important wildlife corridor which links the wooded area at Shannon Town Roundabout to Tullyglass Hill and the woodland within Shannon Airport. In addition, it provides several corridors running in a southern direction linking to the estuary and wider countryside, including an important corridor between two housing estates which links it to Illaunaconeen Point.



These areas also offer opportunities for cycle ways and pedestrian routes. It should be noted that many of the existing wildlife corridors within Shannon consist of tree lines and grassed areas along roadsides, which enable wildlife species to move across the landscape. These areas should be carefully managed and enhanced where they run parallel to walking and cycling routes to enhance these routes, and ensure safer, greener routes for both pedestrians and cyclists. Any works proposed to enhance these areas will be facilitated, such as under-story or ground layer planting, taking account of the requirements of cycle ways and general road safety requirements.

Ballycasey Creek is an important wildlife corridor linking Ballycasey Woodland to the Shannon Estuary. The lands on either side of this stream are proposed for residential development. However, the retention of this stream and riparian buffer will ensure a key wildlife corridor is protected to the east of the Plan area, as well as enhancing the residential amenity of the area.

11.4 Important Green / Amenity areas

The following section outlines the existing green areas and open spaces, which are component parts of an integrated Green Infrastructure approach within Shannon Town and Environs.

11.4.1 OS2 – Town Centre Woodland Area

This area is an important space and forms part of a circulation route, linking the town centre with the school and leisure centre, and indeed the Shannon Estuary via the wetlands area. The site now supports a significant woodland resource of mature deciduous trees and is in Council ownership. Clare County Council supports the continued existence of this green area. As indicated in Chapter 2, and also in objective 11.6, it is an objective to bring forward design / management proposals for this site.

11.4.2 OS4 – Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary, together with the Fergus Estuary, forms the largest estuarine complex in Ireland. The Lower River Shannon SAC lies partly within, and adjacent to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan area. There are extensive intertidal mudflats adjacent to the Plan area, fringed with saltmarsh vegetation, which provide important habitat for overwintering wildfowl and waders. The Shannon Estuary is discussed in greater detail in sections 9.2.1 and 12.5 of this Plan.

In June 2011, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht issued a notice of intention to extend the boundary of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (Site Code 004077).

Part of the estuarine land falls within the Shannon Town and Environs boundary and therefore requires policies for protection within this Plan. OS4 takes in the entire landward side of the Shannon Estuary that lies within the town boundary, incorporating the tidal mudflats, the flood protection barrier, Illaunmanagh Point, Illaunagowan Point and Illaunaconeen Point. Proposals for this area include enhancing the safety and walkability of existing walkways, trimming back or felling some vegetation, appropriate signage, and the erection of bird hides in consultation with NPWS, Clare Biodiversity Ltd and Birdwatch Ireland. Features such as lighting, fencing or works which would require heavy machinery or earth movements will not be carried out in this area.

In order to enhance linkages between Shannon Town and the Shannon Estuary, it is proposed to develop a tourist information centre at Illaunagowan Point to promote the estuary for ecologically sensitive tourist-related development. This will be located so as to allow a view of the estuary, but not resulting in a visual impact on the shoreline, reduce the amenity of the area, or negatively impact on the Estuary, its flora or its fauna, particularly in relation to wildfowl and waders.



11.4.3
OS5 – Shannon Allotments and lands in the vicinity of Hastings Cottage

The existing allotments on this site are an important resource for the local community and should be retained. There is also the opportunity to expand these allotments, subject to dealing satisfactorily with all environmental constraints.

The ruins of Hastings Cottage (Protected Structure) adjoin the eastern perimeter of the cemetery (C11). The sensitive redevelopment of Hastings Cottage, subject to environmental constraints and its designation as a Protected Structure, has the potential to further open up this area to recreational and tourism-related activity.



11.4.4
OS6 – Drumgeely Hill

This site, which is surrounded by the existing residential development on Drumgeely Hill, shall be retained as an open space amenity area for the local community.

The Integrated Area Plan (IAP) for Shannon was prepared under the 1998 DoELG Urban Renewable Scheme and includes a number of key development sites, with a number of initiatives and programmes proposed for each. One of these development sites, referenced ‘sub area 7’ in the IAP, relates to Drumgeely Hill and proposes that the derelict site be developed as a local community hall. This Local Area Plan has zoned the central area of the Drumgeely complex as Open Space.

It is considered that the Open Space zoning is appropriate having regard to the need to preserve the residential amenities of the existing dwellings at Drumgeely and to provide a high quality, amenity open space for the local residential community.

11.4.5
OS7 – Open space / wooded area west of Cluain Airne

This large area of open space is criss-crossed by a network of pedestrian paths which link the existing high density communities to the east and west. It also consists of a wooded area which affords access to the Shannon Estuary riverside walk. It is an objective to retain this area as an amenity open space for the local resident community. It is also an objective to increase linkages in this area through the provision of a cycle route. Such a route would also reinforce objectives in relation to Smarter Travel for Shannon.

This area is an important corridor between two housing estates which links to Illaunaconeon Point. The area consists of a large open green area, interspersed with groups of trees, wooded areas and wet areas, which offer ample opportunities to enhance the green infrastructure while also enhancing residential amenity.

The wetland areas have potential to be enhanced. This could be achieved, for example, through scraping away the surface using an excavator to create a shallow area of water. These could then be planted with common reed around the shallow margins and leave an open water area which will attract wildlife. Opportunities exist to create a local community scheme in consultation with the Council and County Biodiversity Officer. In addition to the above, the pockets of scrub/ wooded areas can be increased by suitable shrub planting around their edge, while under-story planting of the trees adjacent to Drumgeely Road and along the edge of the housing estates would greatly enhance its function as a wildlife corridor while retaining its amenity use.



11.4.6

OS10 – Open space adjoining Killian Park / Tullyvarraga Court

This site shall be retained as an open amenity area. At present, it is underutilised and it is an objective to facilitate its appropriate development for amenity use. Such proposals may include play area, skate park, basketball court, tree / shrub planting etc.

11.4.7

OS11 – Open space adjoining St. Aidan's School

This area of open space adjoins St. Aidan's school and is criss-crossed by a network of pedestrian footpaths linking the surrounding residential communities. It shall be retained and enhanced as appropriate as a local amenity area.

11.5

Wildlife hubs

This section outlines five areas within the Plan boundary which are considered to be critical, fundamental components of a successful Green Infrastructure network, with particular regard to wildlife. They are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. They contain small habitats located between larger sites, including designated sites, and function as important connecting habitats for wildlife. Therefore, any future development proposed for these areas will have to be carefully considered in the context of their function as wildlife hubs.

11.5.1

OS1 – Future Civic Park

This mature woodland site, and site of the old nursery, is located directly adjacent to the future expanded town centre area. It is proposed that this area be developed as a civic park, providing an accessible amenity area at a central location. The site has potential to also cater for future outdoor events and festivities and as a location for a playground and activities area, including skateboarding and scouting etc. In this regard, Clare County Council will favour natural playgrounds. These are playgrounds which are designed to fit in with and enhance the local surroundings. They make use of natural features, provide a wide range of play experiences which appeal to all five senses, are accessible to all, allow children of different ages to play together, and build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge. The publication 'Design for play: A guide to creating successful play spaces' (Free Play Network, June 2008) should be used as a reference tool.

The future Civic Park will be an integral part of the new urban fabric, tying in to the pedestrian / cycle network and the layout of future mixed use and residential development to the west and east respectively.

Importantly, a new vehicular access will be required through OS1 in order to facilitate access to site R1 and to connect it with the town centre to the west. The future development of OS1 shall be dealt with as a whole, in order to mitigate the loss of habitat and/or trees in the provision of the new vehicular access through appropriate replanting in / enhancement of other areas.

All development proposals will be required to take account of the significant woodland resource on the site and shall be accompanied by landscaping plans that seek to maximise the retention of existing trees on the site.

11.5.2

OS3 – Shannon Wetlands

OS3 is a sizeable wetland area to the south of the town centre, St Patrick's Comprehensive School, the Leisure Centre and the Gaelscoil. It is proposed to enhance and formalise this site as a local wetland amenity area, and to formalise and enhance the existing pedestrian network through the site.

In this context, there is an existing walkway along the eastern boundary of the wetlands site. However, at present when walking from the town centre southwards towards the Shannon Estuary, the use of this walkway requires the pedestrian to break their walk by travelling eastwards along the roadway to link the town park to the Shannon wetlands. As such, the potential for a walkway along the western boundary of the wetlands has been proposed as part of this Plan and its feasibility and viability will be investigated as one of the objectives of this Plan.

11.5.3

OS8 – Tullyglass Hill

This elevated wooded area is an important landmark in the town and is highly visible from the town centre. Any future felling required in this area shall be carried out in accordance with best practice and shall be accompanied by a detailed replanting schedule. The site shall be retained as a wooded amenity area.

11.5.4

OS9 – Tullyvarraga Hill and Sli Na Mara

Tullyvarraga Hill shall be retained as an open space amenity area. Projects like the recent neighbourwood scheme are welcomed, where they reinforce the high value of this area for providing amenity space, walking routes and pedestrian connectivity.

The Sli Na Mara Way, which is the oldest route in Shannon, shall be protected and enhanced as a walking route and it is an objective of this Plan to develop a cycle route along its length and improve lighting in the area.

11.5.5

OS12 – Ballycasey Woodland

This is a mature mixed woodland adjacent to Ballycasey Craft and Design Centre which provides an attractive approach and setting for Ballycaseymore House.

LAP 11.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To preserve and enhance the network of green spaces, wildlife hubs and amenity/wildlife corridors in Shannon as illustrated on Green Infrastructure Map C, in the context of an integrated Green Infrastructure network that will provide recreational and amenity benefits, space for nature, enhanced biodiversity and deliver health and quality of life benefits.

LAP 11.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

To maximise the amenity and tourism potential provided by the Shannon Estuary, subject to all environmental considerations.



11.6 Cycling and Walking Strategy

The promotion of walking and cycling plays an intrinsic part of the overall Green Infrastructure Strategy for Shannon Town and Environs. Walking and cycling is of critical importance in ensuring that green spaces and corridors are multi-functional and deliver important community benefits through enhanced amenity, health, well being and quality of life.

As outlined in Chapter 8, the Government document – Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 aims to ensure that transport policies underpin sustainable development. This document, together with The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 highlight the need to change people’s travel behaviour in terms of choosing alternative transport modes to the private car. A cycling and walking strategy for Shannon is an important element of the overall smarter travel concept.

LAP 11.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To outline and implement a walking strategy for the Plan area, based on a series of looped walking trails that seek to maximise the key green ways, open spaces and wooded areas.

LAP 11.9 Local Area Plan Objective:

To outline and implement a cycling strategy for the Plan area, which builds on and connects the existing cycle network, providing high amenity, accessible corridors linking the town centre with the Industrial Zone, Airport and residential neighbourhoods, and offering an alternative and efficient modal choice other than the private car.

11.6.1 Cycling – Context and Vision

The town of Shannon is relatively compact, measuring approximately 3.0km x 1.25km. It is a new town in comparison to other settlements (only being constructed in the 1960s) and the existing road infrastructure is quite wide. This affords the potential to introduce new modes of transport on the existing network, including cycling (and also bus lanes as part of an overall Smarter Travel Plan).

There is currently approximately 4km of cycle routes in Shannon Town. These existing cycle routes are of mixed quality and type and they will be maintained. However they are not linked directly to each other in a coherent way. This strategy proposed the creation of clear linkages between the existing and proposed cycle routes in Shannon.

The industrial zone includes a large number of workplaces which employees could be encouraged to cycle to work (among other initiatives including car sharing and travel by bus). Also Shannon leisure centre, the numerous sports clubs and significant number of schools would be ideal places to encourage cycling as opposed to use of motor vehicles. It is also considered important that provisions are made to accommodate cycling to and from the Airport.

The vision for Shannon town is that it will become a bicycle-friendly town. Cycling will become a normal way to get about, especially for short trips. Cycling will be promoted to cater for the following type of cyclists-

- Commuting cyclists
- Recreational and tourist cyclists
- Competitive cyclists

There will be an ethos of claiming back the existing road space for the cyclist where possible and the installation of new high class routes, both on and off road as well as cycle parking facilities. This will give an advantage to the cyclist and enable safe and convenient access to destinations.



Rubbish bin for cyclists

The Cycling Strategy reinforces the importance of linking the town centre with the following areas and routes in the town:

- Shannon Airport
- Shannon Free Zone Industrial Estate
- Smithstown Industrial Estate
- Shannon Aerospace
- Ennis to Shannon cycle route
- Primary and Secondary Schools
- Rural hinterland around Shannon and proposed looped cycles
- Scenic points of interest within and around Shannon

It is intended to develop looped cycle routes with clear well-defined signage and mapping throughout the town and hinterland.

It is envisaged, through consultation with the various public transport providers, that the cycle network will in future have links the public transport system such as a future bus network, the proposed rail link at Sixmilebridge, as well as Shannon Airport.

11.6.2 Benefits of Cycling

Cycling is a sustainable mode of travel which has considerable health benefits and contributes to improved quality of life. Cycling is the most efficient form of transport as it has no impact on the environment, is free after initial purchase of the bicycle and does not do any damage to the road surface.

The installation of more cycling routes and cycling facilities within the town will enhance accessibility to services, improve road safety for cyclists, contribute to the local economy, improve the social fabric of the town by getting people out and about and meeting one another and help to create a better built environment which is well-connected to the local community.

It is hoped that the provision of direct cycling routes along with suitably located cycle parking will make cycling a more attractive mode of transport in Shannon.

11.6.3 The Cycle Strategy

Cycle lanes and cycle tracks will be installed or constructed as part of a coherent plan which will begin with routes around the town centre and will then progress on a phased basis emanating from the town centre. Linkage with the existing cycle network in the area is a priority (refer to figures 11.1 and 11.2 below).

In addition, this Cycling Strategy also identifies cycle parking facilities, including within the town centre, which enable the cyclist to leave their bicycle in a secure position. Such facilities should be located in the town square, the industrial areas and at the airport.

Figure 11.1
Existing Cycle Routes



Figure 11.2
Proposed and Existing Cycle Routes



In line with new cycling routes, cycle parking facilities will be provided around the town at strategic locations such as the town centre, schools, churches, sports grounds and hotels (see figure 11.3 below).

Figure 11.3
Potential cycle parking facility locations



The Council will promote and encourage cycling through initiatives such as Bikeweek and road safety awareness programs run from time to time, and also through support for initiatives including 'Green Schools'. As part of Bikeweek cycle training and cycle maintenance courses take place and it is hoped that these will be run in Shannon.

The key elements of the Cycling Strategy are outlined below:

- Install on and off-road cycle routes around the town emanating from an orbital route around the town centre
- Carry out improvement works at junctions so as to provide better for cyclists including installing advanced stop lines at traffic signals for cyclists.
- Install cycle parking at strategic locations throughout the town

- Create better signing and wayfinding along routes to areas of strategic importance in the town
- Create links to surrounding interurban and leisure routes
- Install traffic calming where necessary to create a safer environment for cycling
- Promote the use of Workplace Travel Plans for schools and workplaces
- Encourage and promote the uptake of cycle training and bicycle maintenance classes
- Promote road safety education and awareness
- Ensure proper maintenance of cycle facilities

The initial phase of implementing the cycle strategy (Phase 1) will consist of Cycle Routes and Cycle Parks around the main Town Centre block (Figure 11.6 refers).



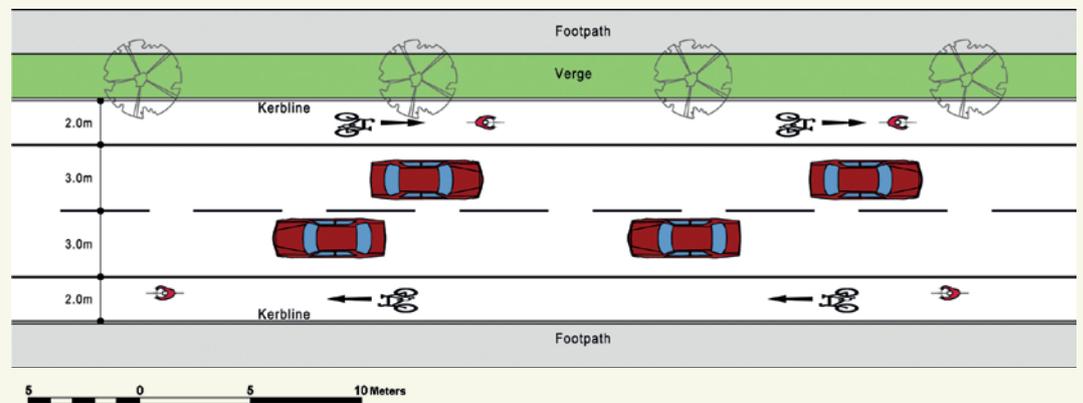
Figure 11.4
Town Centre Block



Existing Cycle Routes

Proposed Cycle Routes

Figure 11.5
Phase 1 Mandatory Cycle Lane - Proposed
Cycle lane arrangement (Around the Town
Centre) Bealach Bri, Bothar na Rinne, Bothar
An Aerfort



An implementation plan must be put in place to ensure that the Cycling Strategy is implemented in a coordinated, strategic fashion and is planned in its entirety through an analysis of what is achievable.

The Cycling Strategy will be phased and prioritised to allow for easier implementation. Figure 11.6 below outlines the proposed phasing of the new cycle network.

Figure 11.6
Proposed Cycle Route Phasing



11.6.4 Walking – Content and Vision

Shannon has an abundance of walking routes which are regularly used by the local community, including a network of riverside walks alongside the Shannon Estuary. In addition, there is the Sli Na Mara Way and recreational walking routes at Drumgeely Hill, Tullyglass Hill and Tullyvarraga Hill. These walking routes are supported by a pedestrian footpath network throughout the town. Shannon's compact layout, attractive estuary setting and network of open spaces affords the opportunity to maximise the benefits derived from providing high quality, well signed and safe walking trails.

Enhancing, formalising and promoting high amenity walking routes will have a number of benefits, namely:

- Economic benefits arising from increased share of walking tourism revenue.
- Health and active living benefits enhancing the general well being of local communities.
- Social, environmental and leisure benefits from encouraging smarter travel and less vehicle use, encouraging social interaction and providing the opportunity for low cost recreational / leisure activity.

The existing walking routes in Shannon are not being utilised to their full potential. This is as a result of a number of factors, including lack of awareness, concerns with regard to personal safety, lack of signage and clear marking and existing travel behaviour.

Shannon needs to promote walking and market the town as an ideal destination for the keen walker, the rambler and the worker who walks during lunch hour.

Shannon's compact layout makes it ideally suited to those who enjoy walking. The Walking Strategy needs to ensure that existing routes are preserved and enhanced where they provide an important local community function and that new routes are developed in the context of a Green Infrastructure Strategy that maximise the enjoyment of existing green areas and amenity corridors.

This Local Area Plan has outlined a number of indicative looped walking trails throughout Shannon Town and Environs and these walking trails will be implemented throughout the lifetime of the Plan. This Strategy has three main elements-

- Trail development
- Product development and promotion
- Ongoing trail maintenance

Figure 11.7

Slogans to encourage walking (and cycling) which can be used to inform signage strategies which promote these activities



DID YOU KNOW

Wear and tear on an average car is 10¢ per KM driven



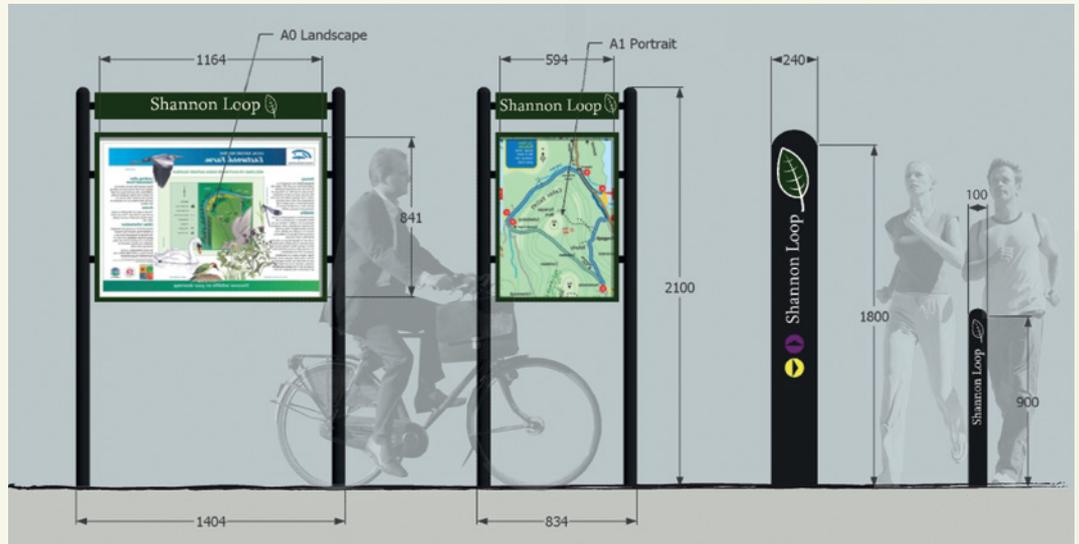
DID YOU KNOW

A brisk 45 minute walk burns off 300 calories



DID YOU KNOW

Walking and cycling benefit hearts and lungs



11.6.5 Looped walks

A total of four looped walks are proposed within the Plan area, each of which will be discussed in turn below. Three of the walks start in the town centre and will be advertised by way of a display board and map, colour coded according to route. By commencing three of the walks in the town centre, it is intended to reinforce the plan goal of a vibrant and viable town centre that has increased activity, social use and is an attractive place in which to spend time, meet people and to recreate. The town centre also provides ample existing parking provision (surface and multi-storey) and its central location and existing function provides an appropriate base from which to commence the walking trails.

The fourth trail begins in the Shannon Free Zone. The development and promotion of this trail will tie in with the overall objective to increase linkages between the industrial zone and the rest of the town. By formalising and promoting a Free Zone - Estuary trail, it is hoped to attract a greater percentage of the 7,000 daily commuters to avail of this recreational opportunity and ultimately spend more time in Shannon.

Map C outlines the four indicative looped walking trails as detailed below.

Estuary Trail West – 4.5KM

This trail commences in the town centre and heads south through the town park, past the leisure centre and alongside the Shannon Wetlands, past Shannon Olympic sports grounds, a loop around Illaunagowan Point, Illaunaconeen Point, west around Shannon Town United grounds, past Mary Immaculate Church, through the woodland north of Illaunaconeen Point and back along the same route to the town centre.





Sli Na Mara Trail – 8KM

This trail commences at either the town centre or the Oakwood Arms Hotel. It follows the same route as Estuary Trail West as far as the Shannon Olympic sports grounds, then heads east along the existing estuary walk as far as the cemetery before heading north along the Sli Na Mara Way, past Wolfe Tones GAA club and St. Conaire's school, north along the Sli Na Mara onto the old N19, past the Oakwood Arms Hotel and heading south along Bealach Bri before returning to the town centre.

Estuary Trail East – 7.5KM

This trail commences in the town centre and again follows the same route as the above trails before heading east to the roundabout and then south along the cemetery road. The trail then follows along the estuary and the existing access road to the Shannon Wastewater Treatment Plant before returning to the town centre via the same route.



Free Zone Estuary Trail – 9.6KM

This trail commences at the Shannon Free Zone West, following an existing trail south, around the base of Drumgeely Hill, past Shannon Town United grounds, alongside St. Senan's national school and along the estuary walk past Illaunaconeen Point, looping around Illaunagowan Point and returning to Free Zone West via the north side of Drumgeely Hill. An additional trail spur will connect this trail to the hotel at Shannon Airport.

The walks range from 3.7km to 8km in length, providing a variety of different distances to suit all persons – the worker during lunch hour, the keen walker and the opportunist looking to pass time in the town. The routes are also all inter-connectable so that longer or shorter loops can be created as desired.

11.6.6

The Town Park

This is an valuable space and forms part of an important circulation route, linking the town centre with St Patrick's Comprehensive school, the leisure centre, playground and indeed the Shannon Estuary via the wetlands area. Three out of four of the above trails require access through this Park, so the treatment of this space is crucial to the delivery of a successful walking strategy.

The site supports a significant woodland resource of mature deciduous trees and is in Council charge. The town park is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 2 – Placemaking Framework.

11.6.7

Product development and promotion of Walking Trails

In terms of product development and promotion, it is envisaged that a brochure will be produced that will be available at a specified location(s) in the town. Clare County Council (and Shannon Town Council) will ensure, through press release and media contact, that the trails are well publicised. Signage, particularly the type and placement, will also be important in encouraging use of the trails.

11.6.8

Pedestrian Connectivity

In order to ensure ease of movement of pedestrians within and circulation around the town centre block, it is proposed to provide a number of pedestrian crossings. The overall strategy for the town centre in terms of placemaking, navigation and way finding is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2 shows the location of the proposed new pedestrian crossings which will ensure improved linkages and encourage walking as an increased modal choice in the town.

Chapter 12

Infrastructure

12.0 Introduction

GOAL 11
To maximise infrastructural resources, including the Shannon Estuary

The provision of a high quality transportation and service infrastructure network is critical to Shannon Town and Environs, and indeed the wider region's existing and future socio-economic growth, sustainable development and competitiveness. This is especially critical in the context of the existing global economic downturn. Shannon must take full advantage of its strategic location and seek to enhance its competitive advantages.

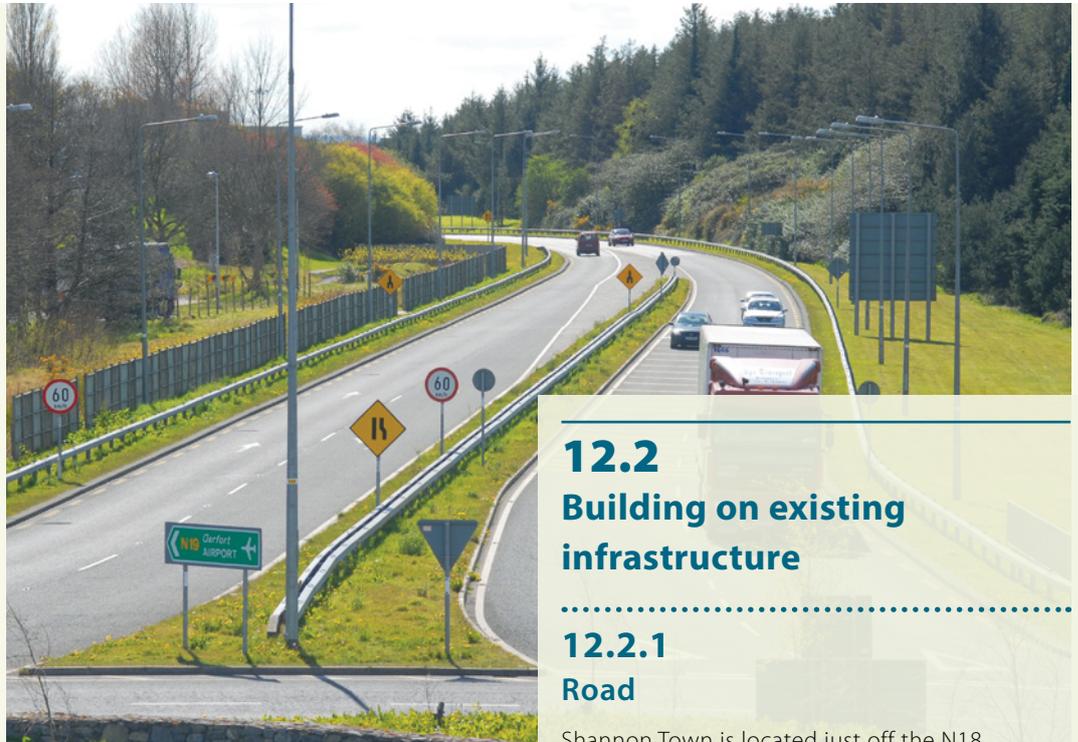
Shannon Town and Environs is well placed to build on and maximise its existing infrastructural resources. It is located on the Atlantic corridor with excellent road connectivity to the Gateway cities of Limerick, Cork and Galway. Shannon has excellent accessibility from the M18 / N18 road network via the N19 road link.

Shannon International Airport is of strategic importance to the entire Region and its importance has necessitated that it be dealt with under a separate chapter in this Local Area Plan. Chapter 4 sets out the aims and objectives to enable the continued growth and development of Shannon International Airport.

Shannon Town and Environs is also located directly adjacent to Ireland's largest deepwater estuary which covers a distance of 100km from Limerick City to Loop Head, with 500 square kilometres of navigable waters. It has significant potential to further develop its capacity for industrial, marine-related and renewable energy development, in addition to opportunities for tourism and recreation. This is evidenced by the importance and weight attributed to it by dedicating a separate chapter of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 to the Shannon Estuary.

The pursuit of a strategic rail link to Shannon Airport as a spur off the main Ennis – Limerick line remains a high level objective in the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2012 and the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017. The rail line is further endorsed in the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

Shannon is served by a wastewater treatment plant, public water supply and a storm water network. This Local Area Plan ensures that this service infrastructure is of an adequate standard to accommodate future economic development, new population growth and the provision of service facilities, such that Shannon can reinforce its status as a linked Gateway.



12.2 Building on existing infrastructure

12.2.1 Road

Shannon Town is located just off the N18 National Primary Route between Ennis and Limerick. The N18 is an integral part of the western road network, which connects all of the major towns along the west coast from Derry in Northern Ireland to the Republic's most southerly city, Cork. The completion of the N18 has provided a bypass for Shannon and Newmarket on Fergus on the Ennis/Limerick route. The N19 plays a critical role in linking Shannon to the western corridor via the N18 and M18.

The internal road network of Shannon Town itself is designed to facilitate the development of neighbourhoods. It is anticipated that the development of the lands north of the existing town centre will provide new vehicular access, cycle lanes and pedestrian linkages for an expanded town centre, which will require additional traffic management.

In addition to the above, over the Plan period, Shannon must continue to promote itself through the provision of a modern ICT and broadband communications infrastructure, smarter travel options, new renewable energy / low carbon generating opportunities and sustainable urban drainage systems. Chapter 8 outlines the aims and objectives that are necessary to pursue a low carbon strategy for Shannon Town and Environs. These additional provisions will reinforce and compliment an existing strong competitive advantage.

12.1 Aims

- To build on the existing infrastructural resources and competitive advantages that Shannon Town and Environs offers, ensuring that it reinforces its status as a Gateway.
- To develop and strengthen links between Shannon Town and Environs and the Shannon Estuary and to ensure that Shannon Town and Environs derive benefits from the future strategic development of the Shannon Estuary.
- To facilitate the sustainable provision of necessary water supply, wastewater and storm water infrastructure.

LAP 12.1 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the completion of the southern link road in Shannon and the continuation of the existing Aerospace Road to serve future airport related development lands, subject to all environmental considerations.

12.2.2

Rail

The Limerick to Galway rail service is welcome as the first phase of the Western Rail Corridor. However, the delivery of a rail connection to Shannon from the existing line is critical to the future economic development and growth of Shannon town and to maximise the full potential of Shannon International Airport. It is acknowledged that, whilst this must remain as a key objective, it may not realistically be something that will be witnessed in the short to medium term. It is noted that the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 state that this rail access is critical to the future development and success of Shannon International Airport. In this context, the achievement of this rail line to Shannon remains a key objective of this Local Area Plan. Map B – Infrastructure outlines the route of the proposed future Shannon rail link.

LAP 12.2 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the future development of a Shannon Airport rail link by reserving an infrastructure safeguard corridor.

LAP 12.3 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate and encourage the provision of a direct Shuttle Bus service from Sixmilebridge railway station, via Bunratty, to Shannon Airport, as an immediate priority.

12.2.3

Air

Shannon, with an international airport on its doorstep, has excellent air connectivity and this has been dealt with in greater detail in chapter 4 – Shannon International Airport.

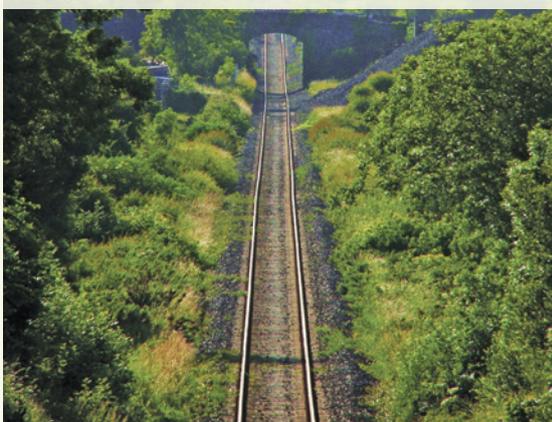
12.2.4

Water Supply

The water supply to the town is provided from the Castle Lake supply. Although this source has the potential capacity of 9.5 million gallons per day, the current operating capacity for water treatment is 3.5 million gallons per day. Restrictions result from the pipe work at Moygalla reservoir. Preliminary discussions regarding a second pipe at Moygalla to improve the flow of water have taken place, however such a provision may have implications for production at Castle Lake. The Castle Lake supply scheme for Shannon water was omitted from the Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 (WSIP). In the absence of any improvements on operational capacity, future development proposals will be assessed on their own merits. Objectives CDP 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 9.1 and 9.2 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, which relate to water quality and monitoring, are also relevant in this regard.

LAP 12.4 Local Area Plan Objective:

To provide water supply infrastructure in accordance with statutory obligations, as set out in EU and National policy.



12.2.5

Wastewater

The treatment of wastewater is operated by a single public wastewater treatment plant at Tradaree Point, which caters for both domestic and industrial wastewater. The industrial waste is treated using a chemical system while the domestic waste uses a standard aeration system. There is sufficient capacity in principle to accommodate additional development proposals over the plan period. However the plant is not currently capable of complying with the requirements of the EPA discharge licence. Currently, the proposals for an upgraded Shannon Sewerage Scheme are at planning stage and are included as part of the WSIP 2010-2012. Clare County Council will continue to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis.

LAP 12.5 Local Area Plan Objective:

To secure the upgrade of the Shannon wastewater treatment plant in accordance with the requirements of the EPA discharge licence.

12.2.6

Broadband Network

Clare County Council will support and facilitate the roll out of MANs (Metropolitan Area Networks) for Shannon to support the existing industrial base and encourage further economic investment in the town.

LAP 12.6 Local Area Plan Objective:

To facilitate the delivery of a high capacity Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and broadband network and digital broadcasting within the Shannon town and environs area.

12.2.7

Flood Risk and Sea Defences

Much of Shannon consists of low-lying coastal flatlands. It is protected from tidal flooding by embankments at a level of approximately 7.3 metres O.D. The existing and future suitability of these embankments to act as flood defence barriers has already been the subject of study as part of a County level Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Flood risk maps are included as part of Volume 2 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 and Volume 3 of the CDP also presents the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The flood risk areas for Shannon are shown on Map 12.1 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017. The larger map shows flood risk zones which are based on the OPW/DoEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities - The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (November 2009) and, as required, do not take account of flood defences, natural topography and other man-made structures. It is to be used as an indicative tool only, which will identify future projects which may require more detailed flood risk assessment. The inset map shows the results of a further flood study undertaken for Shannon which takes into account additional factors in modelling flood risk, including the existing flood defences.

Furthermore, a preliminary flood risk assessment was completed in August 2011 for Shannon as part of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAMS) project, a national strategy for flood risk management in compliance with the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. Shannon will be the focus of a further assessment and detailed flood mapping will be produced. This will be followed by the preparation of a flood risk management plan that will provide a definite view on Shannon in the context of future flood risk management and mitigation.

Notwithstanding the above, in the interim, all future developments proposed along the banks of the estuary will be required to assess the suitability of the existing flood defences to ensure that flood risk is avoided, minimised or mitigated.

LAP 12.7 Local Area Plan Objective:

- a** To ensure that all proposals for development in areas identified as being at risk of flooding undertake flood risk assessment and have regard to the OPW/DoEHLG guidelines The Planning System and Flood Risk Management and any future OPW flood assessment information.
- b** To facilitate the maintenance and improvement of the existing seawall embankments as necessary.
- c** To facilitate the implementation of the CFRAMS for Shannon when complete.

12.2.8 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be encouraged throughout the Plan area. The use of swales (grassy depressions in the ground designed to collect storm water run-off) for local attenuation of storm water is recommended to reduce the storm water load to the main drainage system – this is achieved by periodically storing storm water within the swale, which infiltrates into the underlying soil. An overflow discharge pipe can be provided to connect to the main storm water drainage system. The advantages of using swales are as follows:

- Storm water velocity is reduced
- Storm water discharge to the main system is reduced
- Pollutants can be removed by infiltration
- Vegetation / planting of the swale contributes to local biodiversity

Constructed wetlands are another element of SUDS that have the potential to be utilised in Shannon. With specific regard to the undeveloped lands north of the town centre and the existing wetland areas in the vicinity of the Shannon town roundabout, this area of the town affords the opportunity of a viable constructed wetland strategy. Oil / petrol interceptors and appropriate planting shall be used to assist in trapping pollutants. The base of any constructed wetland shall be impervious to prevent contamination of the groundwater and to hold water within the area.

In addition, permeable surfaces can be used on driveways, car parks, pathways etc. to allow storm water to percolate directly into the underlying subsoil, thereby reducing the pressure on the main storm water drainage system.

Future planning applications and design proposals shall assess the effects that implementing SUDS within the Plan area would have in attracting birds to the area (or affecting bird flight patterns within the area), particularly taking account of the nearby airport. This shall take the form of a Bird Hazard Risk Assessment and Management Plan. Consultation with Shannon Airport will also inform the preparation of the management plan. Where appropriate, birdlife deterrent methods shall also be assessed.

LAP 12.8 Local Area Plan Objective:

To ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and in particular to ensure that all storm water generated by a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved storm water system.

12.3 Infrastructural Safeguards

12.3.1

IS1 – New Road Links

The development of the southeast of the town, primarily for residential development, will require the provision of new road links, all of which are identified on the settlement plan.

12.3.2

IS2 – Link adjoining Cluain Airne and Park Rangers

The Council will reserve a corridor between Cluain Airne housing estate and the Park Rangers soccer grounds for the future provision of a two way cycle route, a pedestrian footpath and associated lighting.

The provision of a future cycleway and pedestrian footpath are considered important to assist in way-finding and improved circulation around the defined central area of the town. In addition, they will provide enhanced linkages between the central area, town centre, established residential areas and the Shannon Estuary.

The provision of the above infrastructure will be carefully planned to ensure that all existing residential amenities and established natural features in the area are retained.

Figure 12.1 provides an indicative layout for a cycle way and footpath along the subject route, protecting established amenities and allowing for existing features, including mounding and trees, to be retained.

Figure 12.1
Indicative layout for future pedestrian /
cycle route adjoining Cluain Airne



12.3.3

IS3 – Shannon Rail Corridor

The Council will retain and protect the indicative rail corridor (infrastructural safeguard) for Shannon identified on the map B accompanying this plan. A rail link to Shannon Airport and Shannon town is considered to be critical for the growth of the Limerick-Shannon-Ennis area. A route has been identified for such a rail link, and this Local Area Plan makes provision for either a heavy rail or light rail link into Shannon town. (Refer also to section 12.2.2)

12.3.4

IS4 – Proposed ESB Cable

The Council will retain and protect the infrastructure safeguard shown on Map B to accommodate a proposed future ESB cable. The Council will also facilitate all proposals to enhance the electrical power infrastructure available to the Plan area in the interests of achieving security of energy supply, supporting established business and attracting additional investment.

A Seveso site is defined as an industrial company which has notified the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health as meeting a specified threshold for quantities of hazardous substances as outlined by European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2000.

In line with the requirements laid down by Directive 96/82/EC, as implemented by the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2000, SI No 476 of 2000. The National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health, as the Central Competent Authority, is obliged to provide technical advice to the Planning Authority in case of relevant decisions taken relating to:

- Specified development within the vicinity of existing Seveso site areas.
- The proposed development of a new Seveso establishment and iii) the modification of an existing establishment. This is in accordance with Regulation 29 of the said regulations, entitled 'Advice on Land Use Planning'.

12.4

Seveso Establishments

Shannon has 3 designated Seveso sites within the plan boundary and these are shown on Map B.

- Schwarz Pharma, Shannon Industrial Estate – a pharmaceutical plant with a consultation distance of 1000m.
- Enva Environmental, Smithstown, Shannon – a waste disposal / handling plant with a consultation distance of 1000m.
- Tedcastles Oil Products, Shannon Airport – an Aviation fuel farm with a consultation distance of 700m.



12.5 The Shannon Estuary

As acknowledged in Chapter 3, Section 3.5 above, the Shannon Estuary has significant potential to further develop its capacity for industrial, marine-related and renewable energy development, in addition to opportunities for tourism and recreation. The critical aspect in terms of future development is the adoption of an integrated management approach to the potential of the estuary. A key objective of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 is to lead the development of an Inter-Jurisdictional Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary, in collaboration with other local authorities and agencies. This process is underway, a multi-agency steering group has been set up and a consultant appointed to carry out the Plan.

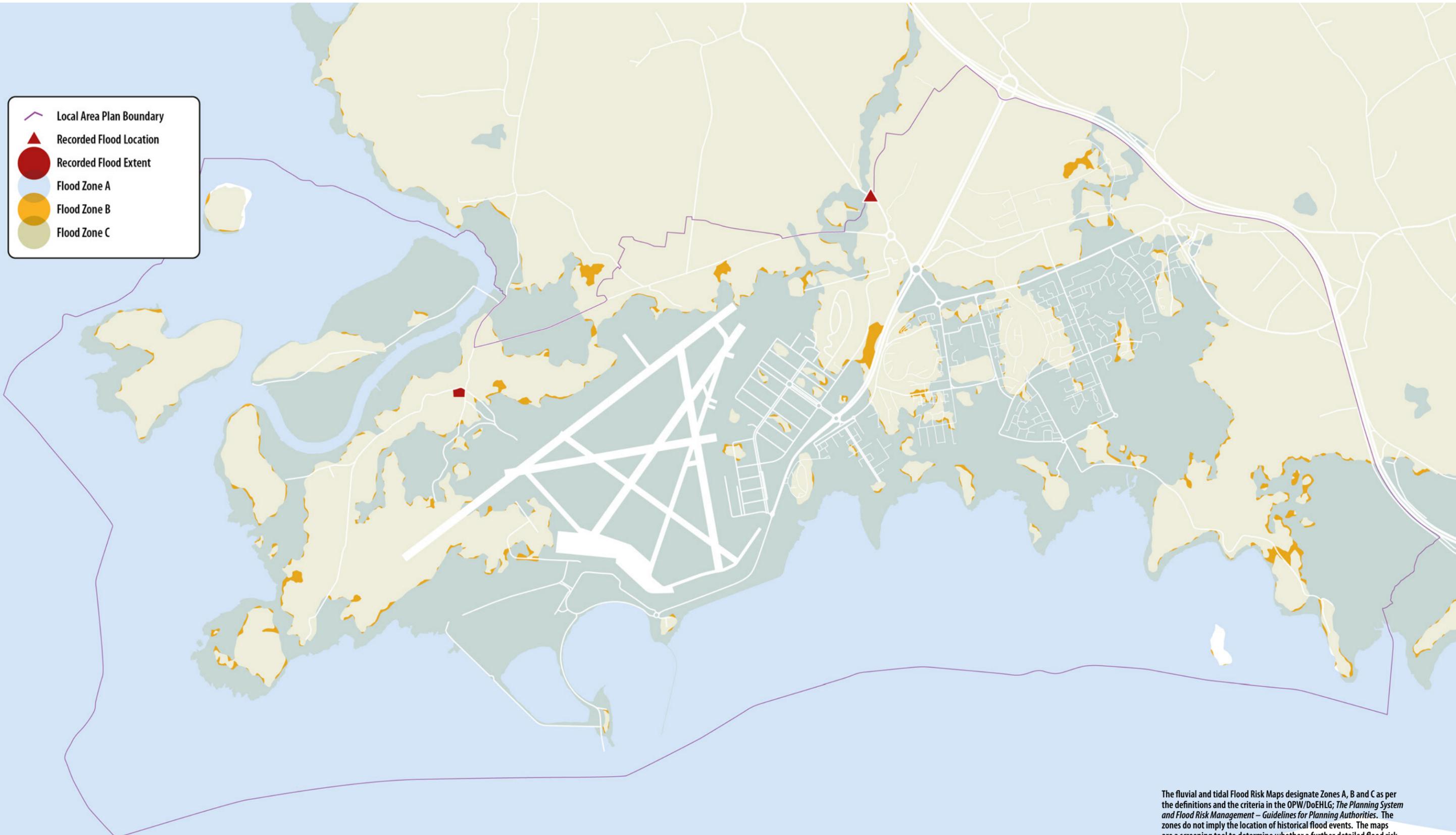
As also noted in section 3.5, Shannon is ideally placed to benefit from future development of the estuary, given its significant infrastructural resources as discussed earlier in this chapter, and other competitive advantages.

The future development of the Shannon Estuary must to be reconciled with the need to protect the sensitive estuarine habitat and scenic amenity. The Shannon Estuary is designated as an SAC and an SPA, which are EU designated NATURA 2000 sites under the Habitats and Birds Directives respectively.

LAP 12.9 Local Area Plan Objective:

To maximise the opportunities for Shannon Town and Environs to benefit from its strategic location adjoining the Shannon Estuary.

Map 12.1a: Flood Risk Map



- Local Area Plan Boundary
- Recorded Flood Location
- Recorded Flood Extent
- Flood Zone A
- Flood Zone B
- Flood Zone C

The fluvial and tidal Flood Risk Maps designate Zones A, B and C as per the definitions and the criteria in the OPW/DoEHLG; *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. The zones do not imply the location of historical flood events. The maps are a screening tool to determine whether a further detailed flood risk assessment is required for a specific site.

Map 12.1b:
Detailed map and flood risk assessment of Shannon study area showing benefits of the existing Shannon Flood Defences – Defended Risk Model at Extreme Still Water Sea Level incorporating effects of climate change.



Chapter 13

Implementation

13.0 Introduction

Implementation is a fundamental element of any Plan. The success of this Local Area Plan will be measured only in terms of actions and deliverables on the ground. If some of the objectives can be delivered at an early stage during the Plan's lifetime, this will reinforce commitment to the Plan and help to achieve public buy-in to the goals sets out therein. It could also assist in stimulating further development within the Plan area.

This Local Area Plan is the first consolidated, stand alone statutory document that has been prepared for Shannon Town and Environs. By having a single consolidated document prepared through a statutory Local Area Plan process, this provides a clear roadmap and robust framework to enable the delivery of the goals and objectives set out within.

13.1 Delivering the Plan

This section outlines the key concepts and mechanisms which will assist in the implementation of the Local Area Plan. Implementation is dependent on adequate resources being in place, and this will be monitored over the Plan period. However, there are a number of mechanisms, including those outlined below, which can assist in delivering the stated goals and objectives.

13.1.1 Collaboration and Working in Partnership

Over the Plan period, there needs to be continued collaboration between the key stakeholders, groups and agencies, including inter alia Clare County Council, Shannon Development, the local community, elected members, Clare County Development Board, Clare Local Development Company, Enterprise Ireland, IDA and others. By working together in partnership, the benefits of shared resources can be maximised. One example of this collaboration is the preparation of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (refer to section 1.7).

13.1.2 Community Groups

The Council recognises that the local community and the abundance of local community groups have a key role to play in implementing the Plan. Through the statutory public consultation process, they were given an opportunity to voice their concerns, ideas and wishes in relation to the future growth and development of Shannon Town and Environs. This level of engagement and ownership of the Plan needs to continue throughout the Plan period. The Council will engage and work constructively with local community groups in securing the goals and objectives of this Local Area Plan.

13.1.3

The Private Sector

The consolidation of the future development of Shannon Town and Environs into one concise document provides a clear statutory framework to encourage investment and future development within the Plan area.

To date, Shannon has not been subject to a separate Local Area Plan process and has been subsumed into the Local Area Plan in place for the wider South Clare area. Given its status as a Gateway, its employment base, international airport, population and other competitive advantages, it was considered of paramount importance that a central plan focusing on the future growth of Shannon Town and Environs was prepared.

By having a clear vision, goals and objectives, it is envisaged that the Plan will provide the security, incentive and encouragement to the private sector to invest in Shannon and to assist in its future growth from an economic, social, cultural and environmental perspective.

The Council will facilitate any potential future investors or developers who wish to discuss any aspect of the Plan or any proposed development at a pre-application stage.

13.1.4

Funding Streams

The Council will explore all potential funding options to secure the objectives of the Local Area Plan. Moreover, by having strategies in place as part of a statutory Local Area Plan, for example the Green Infrastructure, walking and cycling strategies, this can ensure that funding opportunities, which often have tight schedules, are not wasted and that an efficient and focused application for monies can be made as and when funding becomes available.

Funding opportunities will be pursued whenever possible and the Council will support applications by community groups who wish to secure funding in the interests of community, social, cultural and economic development. Potential funding streams include the Heritage Council, Leader, EU Life and Failte Ireland amongst others.

13.1.5

Prioritisation / Phasing

A phased approach will be adopted, outlining priority projects which should be implemented in the first instance as resources and funding permit. It is important to outline projects which can be implemented in the short term at relatively low cost. This includes priority junctions and circulation routes to be upgraded to improve way finding as part of the Placemaking Strategy, improvements to the physical appearance of the town centre, and a phased, priority approach to the implementation of the Cycling Strategy.

13.1.6

Development Management

The development management process will ensure that all future development proposals within the Shannon Town and Environs Plan area are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Local Area Plan.

13.1.7

Implementation Report

A report on the implementation of the objectives of this Local Area Plan will be undertaken two years after the adoption of the Plan. This report will monitor the success of the implementation of the objectives.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Land Use Zonings

The Core Strategy of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 outlines the overall strategy for the development of the County for the duration of the Plan period, having regard to a number of issues, including national and regional population targets. The Clare County Development Plan sets the policy framework to ensure that the availability and orderly development of suitably zoned lands, housing in the countryside and infrastructure provision are sufficient to accommodate the population requirements within the lifetime of the new LAP for Shannon Town and Environs.

In accordance with the overall strategy of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan zoning strategy is based on three important principles:

- Sufficient lands should be provided at appropriate locations, in accordance with the population targets as set out in the Core Strategy, to facilitate the envisaged land use requirements during the lifetime of the Local Area Plan.
- Sustainable development and the use/ redevelopment of brown field sites should be encouraged.
- Land use zoning objectives should assist individuals in accessing the most appropriate location for new development. Not all needs can be anticipated and therefore some flexibility is required, having regard to all other principles, policies and objectives.

Land is zoned for particular purposes within the area covered by the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan, as outlined below.

Land Use Zoning Definitions

At the outset, it should be noted that a development proposal which complies in principle with the relevant land use zoning, will not automatically be guaranteed or granted planning permission. Clare County Council shall consider each proposal for development on its individual merits having regard to Section 34 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000, (as amended).

The following outlines the suite of zonings (and accompanying definitions) as adopted into the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, which the Local Area Plan is required to be consistent:

Commercial

The use of commercially zoned lands shall be taken to include the use of land for commercial and business uses, including retail, office, service industry, warehousing and the facilitation of enterprise/ retail park / office park type uses, as appropriate. It is important to reserve these lands for possible commercial and/or business uses and redirect other uses where it is considered that such uses would be more appropriately sited within other land zoning categories.

Retailing is open for consideration in this area, provided that an appropriate sequential test is carried out and that the lands are demonstrably the optimum location for the proposed development. The development must not detract from the vibrancy and vitality of the identified town centre and the development must be in accordance with the Retail Strategy for the Mid West Region 2010-2016, or any subsequent strategy.

Community

The development of lands for Community uses shall be taken to include the use of land for community, public or educational uses, including the provision of schools, community halls, health care institutions, utilities, libraries and the development of other community uses. Ancillary facilities such as dedicated open space and sports facilities will also be facilitated within this type of zoned land.

Enterprise Development

Lands zoned for 'enterprise development' shall be taken to include the use and development of lands for light industrial, high-end research and development, science and technology based industry, financial services, call centres, incubator and small/medium manufacturing purposes, corporate offices excluding general retail, retail park outlets, motor sales and heavy industrial undertakings.

General Industry

The use of land for 'General Industry' shall be taken to include the use of land for major industrial manufacturing. This type of manufacturing may be subject to the European Communities (Control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Seveso Sites) under the EU Directive 96/82/EC, and Health and Safety Regulations SI No 74 of 2006. The mix of uses such as light industrial, office-based or retail development is not considered appropriate in areas zoned for industrial development.

Light Industry

The use of land for 'Light Industry' shall be taken to include the use of land for industry/manufacturing, distribution, open storage, transport operating centres and the treatment and recovery of waste materials. A mix of uses such as 'office-based development' and or 'retail development' is not considered appropriate in areas zoned for 'Light Industry'.

Marine-Related Industry

The use of land for 'Marine-Related Industry' shall be taken to include the use of land for industry that, by its nature, requires estuarine / deep-water adjacency e.g. marine-transport, transhipment etc.

Maritime/Harbour

The use of land for maritime/harbour related activity shall be taken to include the use of land, including harbours and piers that will facilitate water-based commercial or tourism activity.

Neighbourhood Centre

It is intended that lands zoned for this purpose will be developed to provide an appropriate range of local services including commercial, retail and community uses, to support the population of the surrounding area.

Open Space

The use of land as 'Open Space' shall be taken to include the use of land for afforestation, playgrounds, housing estate open spaces, landscaped areas and parks. Developments incidental to the enjoyment of open space including sports centres, outdoor recreation centres and landscapes areas, play equipment, dressing rooms and similar facilities are open for consideration. There may be limitations to what 'Open Space' can allow, particularly in relation to sensitive ecological sites.

It should be noted that lands zoned as Open Space are not necessarily in public ownership and members of the public should not automatically assume that access to the lands is permitted

Low Density Residential

The use of land to accommodate a low-density pattern of residential development, primarily detached dwellings. The underlying priority shall be to ensure that the existing character of the settlement/area is maintained and further reinforced by a high standard of design. Proposed development must also be appropriate in scale and nature for the area in which they propose to locate.

Existing Residential

The use of land for existing residential development and uses that enhance existing residential communities.

Proposal Sites

'Proposal Sites' comprise lands identified for future potential development where development and service objectives are defined for future development, and further masterplan development.

Residential

'Residential' use shall be taken to primarily include the use of land for domestic dwellings. It may also provide for a range of other uses particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities e.g. schools, crèches, small-scale medical facilities, formal and informal open spaces etc.

Strategic Development Areas (SDA)

'Strategic Development Areas' are areas identified within the plan area where specific planning and development objectives, land use policies and or master development plans have been identified for the future development of such designated area.

Agriculture

The use of land for agricultural purposes. Individual dwellings for permanent occupancy for family members will be open for consideration subject to normal site suitability considerations.

Recreation

The use of land for recreation will be taken to include sports centres, playing pitches and associated facilities, outdoor recreation centres and other facilities that contribute to meeting the leisure, recreation and amenity needs of the immediate community and/or the wider area.

Tourism

Lands zoned for tourism development shall be used for a range of activities which are primarily designed for the facilitation of tourism development.

Town Centre / Mixed Use

The use of land as 'Town Centre / Mixed Use' shall include the use of land for a range of uses, making provision where appropriate, for primary and secondary uses e.g. commercial/retail development as the primary use with residential development as a secondary use. Secondary uses will be considered by the local authority, having considered the particular character of the given area.

A diverse range of both day and evening uses is encouraged and an over-concentration of any one use will not normally be permitted. These areas must be accessible to pedestrians, cyclist, persons with special mobility requirements and public transport (where feasible). The Council will continue to ensure that any proposed development is in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and serves to reinforce the vitality and viability of town centres whilst meeting the needs of its community and surrounding hinterland. Local Area Plans will also identify town centres that require the preparation of a town centre strategy, in order to encourage and facilitate the enhancement and improvement of the town centres.

Utilities / Infrastructural Safeguard

Certain lands have been identified and reserved for the protection of existing and future provision of key infrastructural services, and the upgrading of existing service infrastructure. Such land uses may include the safeguarding and protection of energy water/ wastewater, road, rail and air infrastructural land uses requirements for the County.

Appendix 2

Land Use Zoning Matrix

The Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 contains a land use zoning matrix. This Draft Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan has reproduced the land use zoning matrix for ease of reference. This matrix lists the most common forms of development and classifies whether the proposed use is acceptable in principle, or otherwise, on lands that are zoned for a particular use, so as to promote the orderly development of settlements and to guide future development to the most appropriate locations within the Plan area. The Land Use Zoning Matrix is outlined in Table 4.

Key:

✓ = Permitted in Principle:

The proposed use is generally acceptable subject to normal planning process and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan, and by other government bodies/ sections, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. If a proposal is indicated to be “permitted in principle” in the zoning matrix, this does not imply that planning permission will automatically be granted as each proposal for development is considered on its individual merits.

O = Open for Consideration:

The proposed use may be permitted where the local authority is satisfied that it is in compliance with the zoning objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan and by other government bodies/ sections, and will not conflict with the permitted existing or adjoining land uses, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

X = Not Normally Permitted:

The proposed use will not normally be favourably considered by the local authority, except in exceptional circumstances, and in such instances, the development may represent a material contravention of the Plan. This may be due to envisaged negative impact on existing and permitted uses, incompatibility with policies and objectives contained in the County Development Plan or it may be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Note:

Uses not Listed in the Zoning Matrix

Proposed land uses which are not listed within the land use zoning matrix will be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2011 - 2017, guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and other government bodies / sections.

Non-conforming Uses

‘Non-conforming uses’ are established uses that do not conform to the zoning objectives of the Plan. Generally, the Council will consider reasonable extensions and improvements to premises that accommodate non-conforming uses, provided that it would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Settlement boundary

The following criteria were taken into account when deciding the appropriate boundary for the Shannon Local Area Plan:

- The existing character and urban structure of the settlement.
- Population target for the Plan period.
- Extant planning permissions and committed developments.
- Existing and, where applicable, proposed infrastructure: roads, water and wastewater services, community facilities etc.
- Capacity of the landscape to absorb future development.
- Outcomes of pre-draft consultation.

Table 4
Indicative Land Use Zoning Matrix

Table outlines uses that are 'permitted in principle', 'open for consideration' or 'not normally permitted' on areas zoned for different purposes in the Plan area.

Land Use	Mixed Use/ Town Centre	Existing residential	Resid-ential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recre-ation	Open Space	Enterprise Lands	Tourism	General Industry	Light Industry	Agri.
Advertisement Structures	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	O	X	O	O	O	O	X
Agri. Business	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	✓	O	O	✓	✓
Agri. Tourism	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓
Amusement Arcade	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Apartments	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
B and B /Guesthouse	✓	O	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	O
Bank / Financial Institution	✓	X	O	X	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Betting Office	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	O	O
Bring Bank	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O	O	✓	X	O	✓	X
Car Park	✓	X	O	X	✓	O	X	X	✓	O	✓	✓	X
Caravan Park / Camp Site	O	X	O	✓	X	O	O	X	X	✓	X	X	O
Cash and Carry / Wholesale Outlet	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Casual trading	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Chemist / Pharmacy	✓	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cinema / Theatre	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Civic and Amenity Recycling Facility	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	✓	X	O	✓	O
Civic / cultural / heritage building	O	X	X	X	X	✓	O	X	O	O	X	X	X
Community Facility	O	O	O	O	O	✓	O	X	✓	O	X	X	X
Composting Facility	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	O
Construction and Demolition (CandD) Waste Recycling Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	✓	O
Crèche / Childcare Facility	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	O	O	X
Disco / Night club	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doctor/Dentist	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Education/Enterprise Centre	O	O	O	O	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	O	X
Funeral Home	O	X	X	X	✓	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fuel Depot	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X
Garden Centre	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	O	✓	O
Golf Course / Pitch and Putt	O	X	X	X	X	O	✓	✓	O	✓	X	X	O
Go-kart track	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	O
Government Office	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Hair Dressing Salon	✓	O	O	O	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Health Centre / clinic	✓	O	O	O	✓	✓	X	X	O	X	X	X	X

Land Use	Mixed Use/ Town Centre	Existing residential	Resid-ential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recre-ation	Open Space	Enterprise Lands	Tourism	General Industry	Light Industry	Agri.
Heavy Vehicle Park	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	✓	✓	O
Helicopter Pad	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O
Home Based Economic Activities	✓	O	O	O	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O
Hospital	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Hostel	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X
Hotel	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X
Industry - General	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	✓	O	X
Industry - Light	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	✓	X	O	✓	X
Launderette	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Leisure / gym /rec. sports club	✓	O	O	O	✓	O	✓	O	O	✓	X	X	X
Library	✓	O	O	O	✓	✓	O	X	O	O	X	X	X
Licensed Premises	✓	O	O	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lorry Depot	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	O
Mart / Co-op	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	O
Motor Sales / Repairs / Service	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Multiple housing units	O	O	✓	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Office <100m ²	✓	O	X	O	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Office 100m ² -1000m ²	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	O	X
Office > 1000m ²	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	X
Open Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Petrol Station	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Plant / tool hire	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O
Playground	✓	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	✓	O	O	O	X	O	O
Playing pitches	O	✓	O	O	O	✓	✓	O	X	X	X	O	✓
Refuse Landfill	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O
Religious Places of Worship	O	O	O	X	O	✓	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Research and development	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	✓	X	O	O	X
Residential – single dwelling (Permanent Occupation)	✓	O	✓	✓	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Residential – single dwelling (short-term tourist accommodation)	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Restaurant/Café	O	X	X	X	✓	X	O	X	O	✓	X	X	X
Retail Warehousing	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
School / College	O	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Science and Technology Based Enterprise	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	✓	X	O	O	X
Scrap yard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X
Shop	✓	O	O	O	✓	O	X	X	O	O	X	O	X

Land Use	Mixed Use/ Town Centre	Existing residential	Resid-ential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recre-ation	Open Space	Enterprise Lands	Tourism	General Industry	Light Industry	Agri.
Small Scale Manufacturing	0	X	X	0	0	X	X	X	✓	X	0	0	X
Industrial Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	0	X
Take-Away	✓	X	0	X	0	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	X
Tourism Complex	0	X	X	X	✓	X	0	X	✓	✓	X	X	0
Training Centre	0	X	X	X	✓	0	X	X	✓	X	0	✓	X
Traveller Accommodation	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	0
Veterinary Surgery	0	0	0	0	✓	0	X	X	0	X	X	X	0
Warehousing	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	0	X	0	0	X
Water-based recreational activities	0	X	X	X	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	X	X	0
CHP/Waste to energy facilities	0	X	0	0	0	0	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	0

Appendix 3

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, and in this case the preparation of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018. Article 1 of the EU Directive states *"The objective of the SEA process is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of specified plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment"*.

For the purposes of the preparation of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018, the SEA process was integrated into the plan-making process by:

- Carrying out consultations with the public and prescribed environmental authorities
- Preparing a Draft Environmental Report in conjunction with the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan
- Integrating environmental considerations land, use zoning and the formulation of objectives
- Publishing information on the decision
- Monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans/programmes

The Strategic Environmental Assessment process is an iterative process, carried out in conjunction with the development of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan. The principal reason for doing so is to ensure that negative environmental impacts are highlighted at an early stage enabling them to be effectively 'designed out' as soon as possible. The result is a Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan which has due regard to the environmental issues pertaining within the area. Furthermore, due regard has been given to the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, its objectives in relation to environmental protection, and the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report, the Habitats Directive Assessment, and the mitigation measures contained within these environmental assessments. These documents should be read in conjunction with the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

It should be noted that results from the SEA process were fully considered and integrated into the preparation and making of the Local Area Plan. The Environmental Report (SEA) provides a detailed analysis of each settlement.

Volume II of this Plan contains the Strategic Environmental Assessment, including an Environmental Report, Non-Technical Summary and SEA Statement.

Appendix 4

Habitats Directive Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive, 92/43/EEC, provides the legislative framework for the protection of habitats and species throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive. In general terms, these sites are considered to be of exceptional importance in terms of rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community.

There are 24 Articles contained within the Habitats Directive. Article 6 is viewed to be one of the most important of the 24 as it determines the link between land use and conservation. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires competent local authorities to carry out an 'Appropriate Assessment' (Habitats Directive Assessment) of plans and projects that, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely to have a significant effect on European designated sites (Natura 2000 sites), and includes the preparation of the Draft Shannon Local Area Plan 2012-2018. This is to ensure that the favourable conservation status of the Natura 2000 network, both within and outside the Plan area, is maintained.

The Competent Authority (Clare County Council in this instance) cannot adopt a plan unless it determines that the provisions of the plan are not likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site. As required by the Habitats Directive mitigation measures or measures proposed to avoid impacts on Natura 2000 sites were incorporated into the policy or detail of the Shannon Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

Volume III of this Plan contains the Habitats Directive Assessment.

Habitats Directive Assessment in relation to proposed Plans or Projects within the Plan area.

Any proposed development with the potential to impact on the Natura 2000 Network must be the subject of a Habitats Directive Assessment as per Objective CDP 17.4 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and Fergus Estuaries SPA are the Natura 2000 sites which are located within the Shannon Town and Environs Plan area, where proposals for development have the potential to negatively impact on the Natura 2000 Network, and which will require Habitats Directive Assessment.

Other developments may come forward in the Open Countryside that are not included here, but which have the potential to negatively impact on the Natura 2000 Network and as such will also require Habitats Directive Assessment.

In settlements where there is overlap with an area zoned as 'Open Space', 'Recreation' or 'Tourism' and a Natura 2000 site, only developments that can clearly demonstrate that there will be no excessive disturbance or detrimental impact on the conservation value of the area will be permitted.

Any development on lands zoned as Open Space shall:

- a** be appropriate to the lands in question, taking into account ecological sensitivities and constraints;
- b** comply with the objectives of the County Development Plan, particularly in relation to protection of nature conservation sites, habitats and species; and
- c** be subject to ecological impact assessments and/or appropriate assessments as necessary.
- d** Any landscaping or planting should be appropriate in areas of ecological sensitivity and should comprise native species appropriate to the area and local site conditions and require minimal management input. An ecologist should advise in this regard.

In settlements where a masterplan* is required, it must incorporate a habitat and species survey as part of an Ecological Impact Assessment, which will inform a Habitats Directive Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Assessment, where required.

*Masterplan – The scope of a masterplan will be taken to include a document with an accompanying map/site layout plan and/or preliminary drawings which will describe in narrative, an overall development concept for a future development proposal giving an outline of a development whilst illustrating the concept through indicative site layout plans and/or plan drawings. It should be noted that not all masterplans will be required to submit an Ecological Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Assessment but where necessary, the corresponding environmental impacts associated with a development proposal should be addressed, which should be determined by preliminary site investigation.

Of particular importance in relation to the protection of the Natura 2000 Network within the Plan area, is the protection of the local water resource. As such, it is the policy of the Council not to allow any development that would have an unacceptable impact on the water resource of an area (surface and groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands) through encroachment, fragmentation or direct/indirect discharge. It is also the policy of the Council to promote the conservation of biodiversity through the protection of buffer zones and wildlife corridors.

Description of Natura 2000 sites within Plan area

The Shannon Estuary is the most important site in Ireland for overwintering wildfowl and waders, and is an important breeding bird's site in the summer season. It is internationally important for the number and species of overwintering wildfowl and waders, including Annex 1 species such as Whooper Swan, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit. It also hosts internationally important numbers of Light-bellied Brent Goose, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit and Redshank, and nationally important numbers of 17 wintering species. The main macro-invertebrate community present in the vast expanses of intertidal flats is a *Macoma-Scrobicularia-Nereis* community which provides a rich food resource for the wintering birds. In June 2011, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht issued a notice of intention to extend the boundary of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (Site Code 004077), which will approximately overlap with the existing Lower River Shannon SAC designation.

The Lower River Shannon SAC is designated for a range of coastal, estuarine and riparian habitats including Estuaries, Mudflats, Sandflats, Coastal lagoons, Sea cliffs, *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand, Atlantic and Mediterranean salt meadows, Alluvial forests, Sandbanks, Large shallow inlets and bays, Reefs, Perennial vegetation of stony banks, *Spartina* swards and *Molinia* meadows. It also supports species such as River, Brook and Sea Lamprey, Atlantic Salmon, Bottlenose Dolphin, Otter and Freshwater Pearl Mussel.

Appendix 5

References

Title	Year	Author
SFADCO First Report on Shannon	1958	SFADCO
Outline Development Proposals (ODP)	1963	Downes and Meehan
Report and Advisory Outline Plan for the Limerick Region	1966	Lichfield
Development Plan	1967	Clare Co Co
Regional Evaluation: Transportation	1969	SFADCO/McCarthy and Partners
Regional Land Use: Transportation	1971	McCarthy and Partners
Appraisal of ODP	1972	Sheppard, Fidler and Associates
The Shannon Estuary - An outline Development Framework	1974	SFADCO
Clare County Development Plan 1977	1977	Clare Co Co
Variation to 1977 Clare County Development Plan	1982	Clare Co Co
Clare County Development Plan 1988	1988	Clare Co Co
Integrated Area Plan for Shannon	1998	Brady Shipman Martin for CCC
Shannon Free Zone Masterplan	2008	Shannon Development

Acknowledgements

Photography

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20, 21b, 22, 23b, 23c, 27b, 43, 54, 55,
57, 58, 61, 62a, 62b, 64, 69, 70, 71, 75,
79, 82a, 83, 84, 88, 90, 92, 95, 96

Dublin Airport Authority

21a, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52

Seamus O'Donoghue

5

Skycourt

10

Seán Ó Nuanáin

12

Shannon Airport

15

Bernard Ryan

17

Seamus O'Donoghue

18

Nicholas de Jong Associates

29, 36, 80

Shannon Development

40, 82(b)

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108

Clare County Council

114

Eilis O'Nuallain

23a, 23b, 24, 33, 106

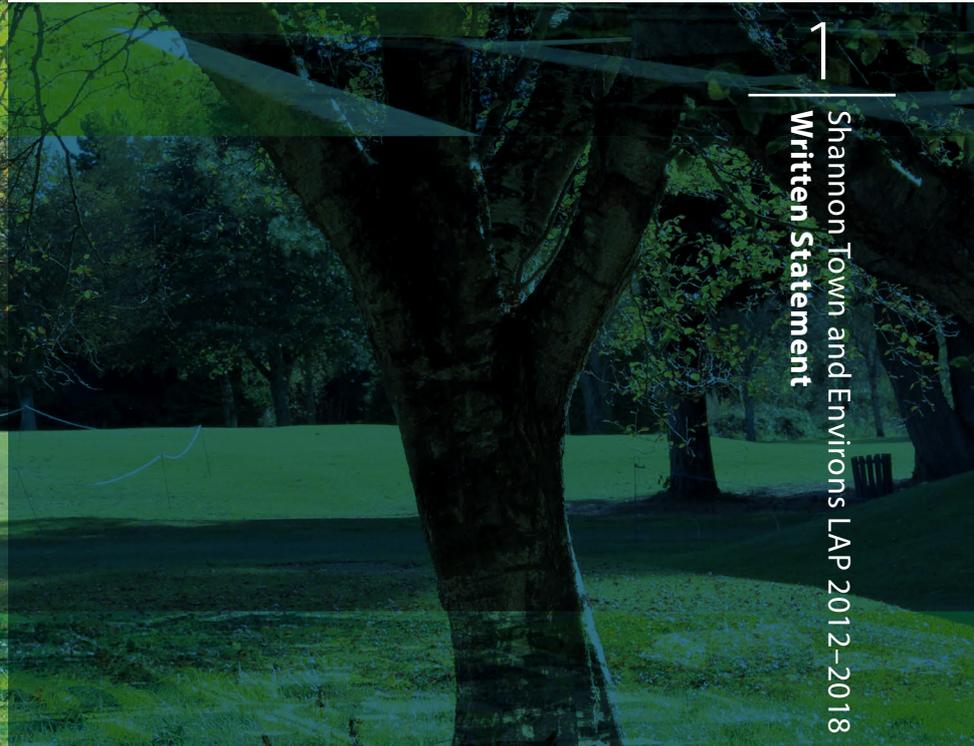
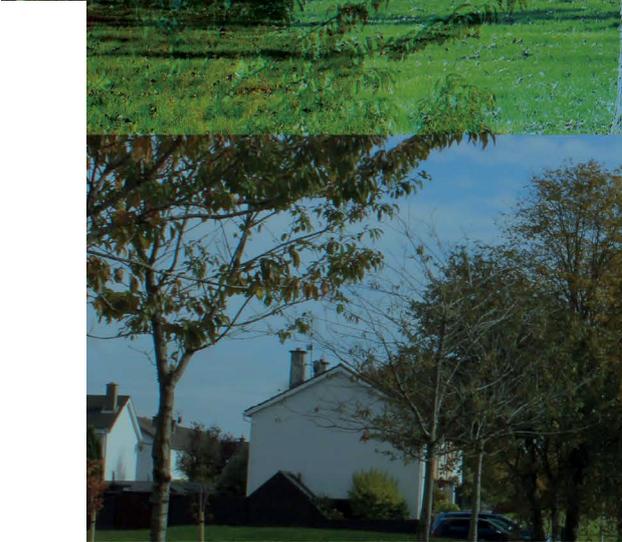
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1
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Written Statement

