

5.0 Cross Cutting Issues

This Plan sets out the Corporate objectives of Limerick County Council as having a strong focus on the traditional mainstream services for which it is responsible but also incorporating recent responsibilities in the areas of social inclusion, quality of life and community participation. In recognition of the fact that the two roles cannot operate independently of each other, the process of cross departmental consultation undertaken in the preparation of the Plan has acknowledged the need for

all mainstream services to be delivered in an inclusive manner which demonstrates a commitment towards improving the quality of life of the people of County Limerick now and into the future. Thus, a number of cross cutting issues which will influence the manner in which the Council delivers its services over the lifetime of the Plan and beyond have been identified as follows:

5.1 County Development Board Strategy 2002-2011

This 10 year vision for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of County Limerick and which is the framework for the development of all public policies and services in County Limerick until 2011 has identified the key strategic objectives as follows:

- A Quality Infrastructure to support and sustain communities
- An Economy that is strong and well balanced
- A Social Infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of the people
- Quality Public Services that are efficient and accessible
- A Society where the potential of the County's resources are developed in a sustainable way.

To implement these objectives two priority themes have been identified in the Strategy.

(a). **BALANCED GEOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT**

This theme addresses spatial planning and infrastructural deficits. There are four sub-themes each with their own goals to address the needs of the county:

Sub Themes

Goals

Large Towns

To develop the four large towns in the County to become stronger centres for residential, commercial and industrial development.

Area of Urban Influence

To provide and facilitate access to the services and facilities associated with a contemporary urban area.

The Shannon Estuary Area

To develop the potential of the Shannon Estuary.

Towns, Villages & Rural Areas To enhance towns as commercial and residential centres and to protect and sustain villages and rural areas.

(b). QUALITY OF LIFE

This theme aims to promote sustainable economic development as the foundation on which social supports can facilitate equal access to all aspects of life. There are seven sub-themes each with their own goals to address the needs of the county:

Sub Themes	Goals
The Economy	To develop a thriving economy and exploit under-utilised potential.
The Environment	To protect the environment and use natural resources in a sustainable way.
Lifelong Learning	To develop an educational system that affords every individual access to a high quality integrated service of lifelong learning.
Health and Lifestyles	To provide access to a quality health service while encouraging people to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to engage in a wider variety of leisure activities.
Active Communities	To promote participation in voluntary activity.

Equality To create a more equitable society by promoting the right to equal opportunities and an understanding of minorities.

Family Support To provide support to families to enable their full participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the County.

In preparing its Corporate Plan, Limerick County Council has had regard to its commitments under the Strategy and its role as a lead agency on the County Development Board. The Corporate Plan therefore reflects the role to be played by Limerick County Council over the next five years towards realising the strategic objectives for the development of the County and each Directorate in preparing its Annual Operational Plan will need to be cognisant of its responsibilities in this regard.

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5.2 Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion is a set of positive actions whereby all members of society are enabled or empowered to participate in a society's social, economic and cultural activities.

Partnership 2000 defines social exclusion as:

"Cumulative marginalisation from production (unemployment), consumption (poverty), social networks (community, family and neighbours), decision making and from an adequate quality of life."

Social Exclusion can mean exclusion from some, but not necessarily all aspects of daily living which are considered normal. It may also include poverty. The four aspects of daily living which individuals can be excluded from are:

- Employment or education
- Inability to afford goods and services
- Inability to participate in community, sport or cultural activities
- Inability to participate in decision making

Creating a more inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is one of the major challenges facing Ireland. Social Inclusion is a core issue identified in the Local Government Act 2001 and Limerick County Council recognises that the meeting of needs of local people is one of its core tasks.

Limerick County Council has a key role to play in achieving the

objectives set out under the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), especially in relation to the following target groups:

- People experiencing rural disadvantage and urban poverty.
- Homeless persons.
- Older people.
- Children and young people.
- Migrants and ethnic minority groups.
- People with disabilities.
- Women.
- Travellers.

The County Council must also take into account the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005 (NAPS/Inclusion) and the tasks outlined for local authorities under the recently published Disability Bill 2004 and the Sectoral Plan for the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Limerick County Council is aware of its role in tackling social exclusion and in November 2003 became a member of the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network which is supported by the Combat Poverty Agency.

Limerick County Council, in partnership with other agencies on the Social Inclusion Measures Committee of the County Development Board, is working to address the broader problems of social exclusion in County Limerick.

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The Corporate Plan has identified Social Inclusion as one of its core objectives to demonstrate a clear commitment towards embedding the principles of inclusiveness and accessibility across the diversity of services it provides.

Social Inclusion is included here as a cross cutting issue to reinforce the message that it is a shared corporate responsibility which impacts on the activities of each Directorate and the delivery of services.

5.3 Sustainable Development

The most common definition of sustainable development is “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Sustainable development has been identified in this Plan as a core value of Limerick County Council and is also emphasized in the Mission Statement.

The promotion of sustainable development in all the Council’s activities has been greatly enhanced by its engagement with local communities as part of its widened remit of local governance. This was the intention behind the Government Guidelines on Local

Agenda 21: ‘Towards Sustainable Local Communities’ which sought to involve the participation of communities in identifying and balancing economic, social and environmental needs.

Particularly through the SPC process, the wider community will participate in the formulation of policy to direct the Council in the provision of its services to reflect local needs and priorities. By this mechanism the concept of sustainability as it affects local communities can be embedded into all future policies and practices ensuring not only a better balance between development and conservation but also delivering a better quality of life for the people of County Limerick.