



Limerick Chamber Submission on Draft  
Anti-Social Strategy 2022

September 2022

## Introduction

Limerick Chamber is the largest business representative body in the Mid-West, with c. 400 member organisations supporting 50,000 jobs across the region. Limerick Chamber would like to thank Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) for the opportunity to submit our views on the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022 - Public Consultation. Housing is an ever-present factor in our lives, and we welcome the initiative taken by LCCC to ensure that the residents of Limerick are cared for in an appropriate way through safe and secure communities.

Limerick Chamber supports the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022 initiative, which promotes safe communities and more liveable spaces. The Governments 'Housing for All' plan gives Limerick, and Ireland, a roadmap for achieving housing targets, however, it is important that it is underpinned by local policy documents such as "the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022" which provides the opportunity for people to live in safer communities.

As part of the National Planning Framework there is a focus on promoting urban dense living, in other words, having more people living within close proximity to each other, whether that be in apartment blocks or housing estates in or near the city centre. The Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy will help play a role in making these places safe and attractive for people to live in by protecting residents from any antisocial behaviour which could potentially affect their day to day living and ultimately desirability of neighbourhoods.

While we note the Anti-Social Strategy is primarily focused on homes and neighbourhoods under the administration of Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Chamber would welcome a wider more expansive Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy covering all neighbourhoods regardless of ownership. Antisocial behaviour can damage reputations of neighbourhoods and cause issues for other residents trying to go about daily life. Therefore, putting appropriate measures in place to quickly act and stop antisocial behaviour is key to making areas more liveable.

Limerick Chamber congratulates Limerick City and County Council on this strategy and looks forward to seeing it progress over the coming months and we will offer support where possible.

## Safe Community Living

The creation of safe and liveable communities is a cornerstone to people's daily lives. The measures taken in this draft strategy such as the planned co-ordination of services within the housing authority that are directed at dealing with, or preventing, or reducing anti-social behaviour are welcomed. A person's home and neighbourhood is a place where they should feel safe, and we welcome the steps taken in this draft strategy that will help ensure this.

Further to this, the preventative measures proposed to deter antisocial behaviour, especially for residential areas are encouraging. Limerick Chamber welcomes the steps that will be taken to ensure that a residential area remains safe, such as full Garda checks, as well as plans to seek out and address any antisocial issues at the root cause and addressing them in a timely manner. The introduction and management of a 'Tenancy Induction Programme' for all local authority tenants will be important in informing all new tenants about the rules on antisocial behaviour, while encouraging patterns of community building within residential areas which helps create a safer environment in itself.

The stated commitment to investigate all antisocial behaviour complaints fairly and objectively is welcome. Limerick Chamber recommends that all reviews of tenancy warnings be acted on as quickly as possible to avoid prolonged tenancies whereby antisocial behaviour continues to occur over a prolonged period while a tenancy warning is reviewed.

## Recommendations:

It is important that appropriate action is taken on antisocial complaints. Not only will this act as a deterrent for antisocial behaviour, it was also ensure that other residents know that their voice and concerns are heard. This will help to create more liveable, vibrant communities and neighbourhoods.

With regards to making a complaint, it may be a potential deterrent for complainants if they think that the complaine will know the source of the complaint. Therefore, it might be more appropriate to ensure absolute anonymity and confidentiality for complainants to ensure that no retaliation takes place. We would also recommend that anonymous complaints be investigated for the reasons outlined above. However, we note the need to validate complaints.

In some instances, certain residents need certain care above and beyond what would be expected normally, this would also be the case with preventative measures. It is important that these cases are identified, and appropriate measures put in place. We commend Limerick City and County Council for emphasising this in the draft strategy.

It would be beneficial if the language was strengthened around "one-off" and "not persistent" nature of antisocial activities, this language leaves a lot open to interpretation and may not provide the security that other tenants require when dealing with potential antisocial behaviour.

It would be added value and provide assurance to residents if Limerick City and County Council included in the strategy what action they propose to take with residents that are behaving on an antisocial basis repeatedly, while we note each case is different it would at least provide an outline in the majority of cases.

It is also important, given the new Garda Operating Model, that members of An Garda Síochána are consulted on the drafting of the strategy as their insight would be invaluable especially with the increased focused on community policing.

With regards to the transfer and estate management, we note that "Anti-social behaviour does not normally constitute grounds for a transfer. However, in very exceptional circumstances, and in the interest of good estate management, such an application may be considered..." it is unclear whether this relates to the complainant or the complaine. If it is the case where no solution can be found, it is likely not appropriate to move the complaine to another location as the antisocial behaviour could continue and another mechanism should be examined. If it is the case that this relates to the complainant, then the process for moving should likely be made easier if a solution cannot be found for antisocial behaviour from neighbours.

## Conclusion

Limerick Chamber welcomes the opportunity to be able to provide input into the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022 - Public Consultation. It is encouraging to see the Limerick City and County Council to show such ambition in creating a safe living space. The introduction of this proposed strategy and an appropriate strong response to antisocial behaviour will help make communities more safe and enjoyable for its residents.



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