

Programme for Government *Submission* 2025



Limerick
Chamber

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President's Foreword

The upcoming term of the next Government comes at a pivotal time for the nation, the need for decisive action has never been clearer. Over the past number of years, we have witnessed a pervasive lack of progress across key sectors—housing, energy, infrastructure, and regional development—despite widespread recognition of these areas as critical to Ireland's growth and well-being. This inertia has hampered the delivery of essential services and delayed solutions to crises that demand immediate attention.

This Programme for Government represents a unique opportunity to reverse this trend. Now is the time for bold leadership, strategic investment, and an unwavering commitment to delivery. The challenges ahead are significant, but so are the opportunities to build a fairer, more prosperous society. The time for debate has passed; the time for action is now.

This document outlines clear priorities for the next term of government, emphasising accountability, efficiency, delivery and urgency. Now is an opportune moment to address the needs of our people and ensure Ireland's potential is fully realised.

Over the past number of years, Ireland has faced persistent delays and inefficiencies in addressing some of its most pressing challenges. From the housing crisis, which continues to escalate despite extensive policy making efforts, to the underwhelming progress in renewable energy infrastructure, particularly DMAPS for the West Coast, our inability to deliver at pace has resulted in widespread frustration among citizens and businesses alike.

The housing sector exemplifies this struggle. Despite growing demand for affordable homes, targets remain inadequate, and the pace of development lags far behind what is needed. Similarly, the energy transition, a cornerstone of our climate and economic strategies, has suffered from bureaucratic hurdles, delaying critical projects like offshore renewable energy development. The lack of progress in regional development, particularly in the Mid-West and other areas outside Dublin, further underscores the need for a more effective governance framework.

This Programme for Government must prioritise delivery, accountability, and measurable outcomes in Ireland's huge infrastructural challenges. It calls for decisive interventions to accelerate housing construction, fast-track renewable energy projects, and support regional growth through targeted infrastructure investments. The proposed measures emphasise accountability at all levels of government, ensuring that underperformance is swiftly addressed and resources are deployed effectively.

The upcoming term represents a critical juncture. The government must rise to meet these challenges, ensuring that promises are translated into tangible improvements. Success will not only restore trust but also lay the foundations for a resilient, equitable, and dynamic Ireland.

It is worth noting, while Limerick Chamber is the largest business representative organisation in the Mid-West, representing 400 sectorally diverse organisations and 50,000 employees, the issues presented in this submission are very much national issues, not just regional issues, and should be read and treated as such.

Noel Gavin
President, Limerick Chamber



KEY ASKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Affordable Housing

Deliver affordable housing at scale urgently. Provide larger targets and ensure brownfield and dense development



Social Housing

Landbank and directly build social homes, and reduce reliance on the private market



Cities & Towns

Encourage affordable worker housing in city centres



Energy Security

Advance Shannon LNG Project, improve planning process for existing onshore windfarms



Ports

Invest in ports as key strategic energy and trade assets



Offshore Renewable Energy

Immediately advance DMAPS for the West Coast



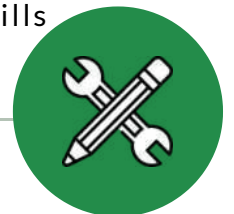
Supporting Business

Improve support for SMEs



Skills & Talent

Continually increase skills offering for businesses



Liveability

Boost liveability for Limerick and Ireland by tackling key infrastructural challenges



Aviation

Long-term inclusion of Shannon in the RAP as well as a PSO connection to a Northern Europe hub



Infrastructure

Ensure timely delivery and investment in critical projects



Mobility

Begin the work of a commuter rail network for Limerick and improve adherence to TOD



Increased Policing

Increased on the beat policing by utilising a population based model



New Hospital with A&E

Immediately begin the process of securing a site for a new hospital as well as interim measures



Limerick
Chamber

1

Affordable Housing



Housing has become the foremost priority for our members over the past several years. Consequently, Limerick Chamber dedicates substantial research to this area, adopting an evidence-based advocacy approach to increase home provision for workers in the Mid-West. The current housing crisis poses a severe threat to businesses, not just in the Mid-West, but across all of Ireland. Affordable and market housing is essential for providing stability and fostering economic growth for both employees and businesses. However, delivering adequate housing in Ireland faces immense challenges due to a severe shortage across all housing options.

While the state is responsible for allocating housing funds, it must also ensure transparency and accountability among the departments, agencies, and other government-funded organisations responsible for implementation. Election candidates should prioritise this accountability. Limerick Chamber's efforts focus on addressing the concerns of owner-occupiers and renters, who are under intense pressure in the current market.

The housing crisis is multifaceted and indeed there will be no one singular solution to the challenges observed in the sector. However, there are some chief concerns that if addressed could make significant strides towards solving the issue. For example, the scale at which the state is interfering in the private market to bulk purchase social homes, drastically reduces the supply of private housing. Furthermore, the extremely slow pace at which the Land Development Agency (LDA) is bringing forward housing in Limerick must be investigated and solutions brought forward.

We also need to ensure adequate targets and responsibility for delivering homes. The LDA has no county or city level targets, and only some local authorities have affordable housing targets, and those that do are far too low to have any impact on the wider market.

Supporting Research



Short-term letting Report



Limerick Rental Barometer



Mid-West Economic Insights



Budget 2025 Submission



Limerick City Centre Report



National Planning Framework Review

Key Asks

Introduce an expanded help-to-buy scheme for apartments

Change cost rental discount to market criteria to account for quality of accommodation

County level targets for the delivery of housing must be implemented as per the findings of the Housing Commission

The Local Authority Home Loan limit for Limerick must be increased to match Cork and Galway

Income limits for cost rental must be revised upwards

Schemes must be expanded / brought forward to bring student housing under affordable housing

The vacant and derelict grant should be amended to help provide owners with the cashflow to undertake works

The state and adjacent bodies need to drastically reduce reliance of turnkey properties and thus competing with owner occupiers

Multi annual funding must be provided for the Land Acquisition Fund with an increased focus on affordable housing

Agencies that are under-delivering in the provision of affordable housing must be held to account and swift action taken

The Living Cities Initiative needs to be re-worked as per the Limerick Chamber Pre-budget Submission 2025

1

Social Housing



Like any country, Ireland needs a robust and dependable social housing system. However, there are many challenges in the Irish landscape of social housing provision.

Continually, Limerick Chamber research has found social housing impacting on the availability of private housing across Limerick and indeed the Mid-West. This is due to the bulk purchasing of homes and developments by approved housing bodies (AHBs), local authorities and other organs of the state. Because of this, in Limerick alone, bulk purchasing of social homes often accounts for 60% of new housing built that year. Meaning, just 40% goes to the private market. This does nothing to increase the absolute number of homes delivered, instead it allocates housing from one cohort to another, when in reality all segments of society are in need of housing. This policy sees the state essentially competing with owner occupiers which may result in artificially inflating of house prices.

This policy is a result of a failure to build up a landbank

for the provision of social homes, and a lack of direct build developments undertaken by AHBs and local authorities.

The policy of bulk purchasing of homes must be ceased and replaced by a more sensible approach by landbanking and directly building social homes.

Furthermore, we have also seen, because of density guidelines and the cost of building apartments that these developments are normally targeted towards social housing and does not encourage a mixed-tenure approach by also including private or cost rental and home ownership. This repeats the mistakes of the past and Government must address this to ensure that workers and private occupiers will no longer be locked out of the apartment market.

Lastly, the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) continues to be an extremely poor investment for the state, where, again, landbanking and directly building social homes would provide a much larger return in the medium to longer term. An adequate plan must be brought forward to address this issue.

Supporting Research



Short-term letting Report



Limerick Rental Barometer



Mid-West Economic Insights



Budget 2025 Submission



Limerick City Centre Report



National Planning Framework Review

Key Asks

A drastic decrease in states reliance on the private market to deliver housing through turnkey properties, Part V and leasing

The state must move to a direct build model of social housing and correctly supporting local authorities

End competition with owner occupiers by reducing state interference in the private market for the provision of social housing

The tenant purchase scheme reduces stock of social homes and should be stopped unless the sales cost is adequate to build a new social home

An adequate plan for reducing state reliance on the Housing Assistance Payment must be implemented

Where the state provides non-repayable grants or other monetary support, it should take an equity stake

Local Authorities need to be encouraged to landbank for the provision of social and affordable housing

The cost of the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme must be analysed to ensure value for money

Repair and leasing scheme should be expanded to include cost rental housing

2

Policing



Policing in the city centre and other populous areas is a pressing concern for the business community.

Key needs include: Increased police numbers to match the population, a dedicated mobile community policing van for Limerick (currently ad-hoc), and allocation of community wardens to enhance daytime presence and support law enforcement. These measures are vital for attracting people back to the city and rebuild trust.

Additionally, the Department of Justice should provide funding allocation for courts to use private security services, reducing pressure on police resources by allowing existing police resources within the court services to be allocated to visible footfall duties.

Securing funding for the continuation of resourcing including staffing for the Community CCTV scheme is also critical, as its current funding which is linked to Regeneration via the Department of Housing and under threat from Q1, 2025. We urge the Minister of Justice to allocate funds from the Community Safety Fund to prevent service loss which will act as a further drain on the already stretched resources of our police force.



Supporting Research



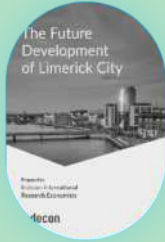
Limerick City Centre Report



Mid-West Economic Insights



Budget 2025 Submission



Future Limerick Report



National Planning Framework Review

Key Asks

The provision of social services for those at risk need to be better dispersed taking a whole county approach

Increased visible policing numbers utilising a population, as well as a needs based approach

Funding for a dedicated mobile community policing van for Limerick

Funding for courts service to use private security services as per other jurisdictions. This will free up existing police to be re-deployed to on the beat policing

Continued funding for Community CCTV Scheme

A review of prison capacity to examine if a new prison is required, while budget 2025 announced additional capacity this must be measured against population growth

2

Revitalisation Enablers



Limerick City Centre is the vibrant heart of the Mid-West region, rich in commerce, culture, and community. As the city evolves, it's crucial to ensure the city centre's resilience and adaptability to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Limerick Chamber City Centre report is the most comprehensive study of its kind, focusing on this core area. It examines the current status, identifies challenges and opportunities, and offers strategic recommendations to secure a prosperous and sustainable future for Limerick City Centre.

This research report presents evidence-based findings and recommendations aimed at accelerating the revitalisation of not only Limerick's city centre, but to act as a blueprint for other cities, towns and villages across the Mid-West and Ireland.

Leveraging Census 2022 data and a survey of nearly 500 respondents, the study highlights both the strengths and areas for improvement in the city.

While Limerick Chamber envisions a thriving, vibrant city centre, this vision remains somewhat removed from the current reality. Key recommendations include increasing housing availability, particularly private ownership and affordable rentals, and making the city centre a safer, more attractive place to live, work, and raise families.

There is a core concern around the magnitude of IPAS accommodation being brought forward in the city centre. These developments do not require a submission through the regular planning system whereby observations can be made. These developments can often go against Local Development Plans. Limerick City Centre must be carefully monitored and planned in order to succeed, however, the current systems allows any building owner to engage with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to bring forward this type of temporary housing with no consideration for the longer-term goals of the area. This policy approach returns Ireland to a developer-led system, which is not appropriate.



Supporting Research



Limerick City Centre Report



Mid-West Economic Insights



Budget 2025 Submission



Future Limerick Report



National Planning Framework Review

Key Asks

There needs to be a clear definition of a city centre boundary. The current designation sees the city extend to the suburbs

Lucrative IPAS contracts with the DCEDIY act as a disincentive for building owners to invest in their property for long-term residential, commercial or other use. This must change

The exemption for IPAS accommodation is not appropriate and sees a return to developer-led planning with no need for the accommodation to adhere to local development plans

A Government fund must be launched to enable local authorities to provide grants for painting the fronts of buildings, upgrading signage and revitalising shop fronts

In a regional context, not enough is being done in terms of providing new homes for workers in the city centre. This is critical and without it city centres will continue to decline

The Living Cities Initiative must be expanded to include homes pre-1945. A review of the LCI must be undertaken to estimate the impact and outcome of the scheme

Barriers to over the shop living and development must be analysed with an appropriate policy brought forward to encourage worker housing being brought forward

Outline targets for building homes in city centres for workers, and enforce these targets with the LDA, local authorities and state supported developers such as AHBs

Review flexibility for local authorities to charge reduced commercial rates for vacant commercial properties

There needs to be better annual collection of data for NPF focused cities to increase frequency of data collection for key areas

The provision of social services for those at risk need to be better dispersed taking a whole county approach

3

Energy Environment



Ireland's energy security hinges on two paths: maintaining reliance on the UK's gas pipeline at Moffat, Scotland, or making substantial efforts to fully harness Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) while also utilising other alternative fuels to enhance supply security. Limerick Chamber firmly advocates for the latter. A critical step is advancing the Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAPS) for the west coast, providing clarity and security for private investors.

Given the extended lead time for ORE projects, aligning with EU energy policies and supporting Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in Ireland as an interim measure is essential for security. Limerick Chamber has consistently supported LNG for supply security.

Energy security must also encompass onshore generation, including wind farms, biomass, and alternative fuels such as HVO.

Ireland faces a critical supply security challenge that demands a response aligned with our decarbonisation goals while being resilient enough to address long-term economic and industrial demands. Low-carbon thermal power generation, complemented by storage and other flexible solutions, will remain essential during the transition to net zero. These technologies provide vital support to ensure supply security and system stability during periods when renewable sources like wind and solar are unavailable. Advanced solutions such as hydrogen power generation and carbon capture and storage offer the potential for low-carbon, dispatchable energy generation, further enhancing reliability and sustainability.

Supporting Research



National Energy Security Framework Consultation



Security of Energy Supply Consultation



Budget 2025 Submission

Key Asks

The national electricity grid needs to be upgraded. Particularly in the west of Ireland to take advantage of ORE

The national gas grid must be futureproofed by funding biomethane and hydrogen technologies and systems

Increased policy support for repowering and life-extension of existing wind assets

Support lower carbon flexibility infrastructure such as carbon capture and storage and emerging technologies such as HVO

Implement the 2023 Hydrogen Strategy into a strategic plan for deployment of hydrogen storage and transmission as well as production and offtake

Local Development Plans and Climate Action Plans need to be aligned with national objectives and policy including zoning relevant land

A Minister for Energy Security with the responsibility for ensuring supply and building out future infrastructure

Ireland needs to align with EU policy on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and the infrastructure at Ballylongford must proceed

Develop a clear timeline for onshore renewable energy auctions to 2030 and extend duration of contracts to de-risk investment

Further define Ireland's electricity generation mix past 2030, providing clarity on types of generation, storage and other assets needed

Develop a strategic plan to implement the 2023 Hydrogen Strategy, focusing on hydrogen storage, transmission infrastructure, production, and offtake

Advance plans for energy clusters focusing on hydrogen power and carbon capture and storage (CCS)

3

Foynes Port & ORE



Both the Climate Change Advisory Council and the Fiscal Advisory Council have warned of the fines potentially being levied on the state by a failure to meet carbon emission reduction targets. These estimates range from €8 billion to €20 billion. There is a significant financial and security risk to the state by not developing the renewable and alternative energy, particularly offshore renewable energy, quick enough and the Programme for Government should rectify this.

Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is around seven times the size of its land area, offering vast potential for wind energy, especially along the west coast, thanks to strong and consistent winds. The deep waters in this region make it ideal for floating offshore wind turbines, a technology already gaining momentum in the UK, with Scotland awarding 15 GW of leases in 2022. This technology is available and ready for deployment.

Foynes Island and the Shannon Estuary have exceptional features that position them as a prime supply chain hub for ORE on the west coast.

There's the potential to generate 70 GW of wind energy within a 36-hour towing distance from Foynes Island. Additionally, 400kV transmission lines from Foynes and Moneypoint connect to the East Coast, and the deep channels—reaching 32 metres—are particularly suitable for offshore wind installations.

The Shannon Estuary offers numerous locations for wet storage, and the Foynes to Limerick rail line, set to reopen by 2026, will further enhance infrastructure. Plans for major upgrades to the Limerick to Foynes road will improve national access to the port and region.

The expedited advancement of West Coast DMAPS is critical to advance the sector and provide clarity to investors.

The shortage of port capacity, as highlighted in the Port Policy Review Issues Paper, is likely to be a major constraint for Ireland to reach its binding Climate Action Targets. Therefore, we need to ensure strategic investment in the sector not only from a trade perspective, but also from a climate perspective.

Supporting Research



Offshore Wind Phase 2 Consultation



Security of Energy Supply Consultation



Review of National Ports Policy Consultation



National Energy Security Framework Consultation



Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II Consultation



Budget 2025 Submission

Key Asks

The West Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) must not be delayed any longer

Port infrastructure is crucial to Ireland's economic and energy growth and multi annual funding must be provided for upgrades

Utilising the resource of the Shannon Estuary will allow for data centres and energy parks to be sustainably located along the estuary

The Government should publicly back Shannon Foynes Port and the estuary as the enabler for ORE development on the West Coast

It is critical that the Government prioritises the funding and implementation of the Limerick to Foynes road which will connect the port to the national network

Funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) plays a key role in ports projects and Government will need to drive this along with MEPs

The track access charge for rail freight acts as a disincentive and drives more HGV traffic to roads. This must be reduced, as per the findings of the All Island Strategic Rail Review

This flexibility needs to allow a range of funding structures such as corporate debt and project finance from a variety of public and private structures

When it comes to exchequer support of ports, Government need to view the investment through the lens of improved trade links, energy security and economic appraisal

Government need to ensure quick decisions on an increased range of acceptable investment structures for ports

4

Supporting Business



The rising cost of doing business has been a concern since Brexit, and this has been worsened by the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, rising interest rates, and shipping challenges in the Red Sea. The introduction of an increased minimum wage, statutory sick pay, and a mandatory pension program are further straining business viability. Adding to this, the proposed EU Late Payments Directive will require firms to repay all invoices within 30 days or incur additional fees.

Although recent changes in the tax debt warehousing scheme are welcome, a significant viability issue remains for many businesses.

Nearly 44,000 people in the Mid-West work in retail and hospitality, representing about 18% of total employment in the region. Urgent action is needed to ensure these businesses can continue to operate and serve the community.

Smaller firms, and those in the retail and hospitality sector, due to smaller margins are unable to deal with the increased cost of doing business in the same way a larger business would.

Given the economic impact the impending closure of Wyeth will have on West Limerick and the Mid-West as a whole, we strongly encourage the next Government to ensure a buyer and operator for the plant is secured.

Supporting Research



Budget 2025 Submission



Mid-West Business Sentiment Survey



National Energy Security Framework Consultation



National Planning Framework Review

Key Asks



The 9% VAT rate for independent food focused businesses must be reinstated

There needs to be a strong focus on repurposing the Wyeth plant to ensure a supply chain for the agriculture and food sector, and for economic development of West Limerick

Some businesses in rates arrears were not eligible to have the ICOB grant paid out despite having a payment plan in place. These businesses should be eligible and have payments backdated

The power up grant only applies to businesses that received the ICOB grant. This must be expanded to other businesses within hospitality and retail

There needs to be a focus on setting expedited timelines for the introduction of business energy efficiency supports

There is a clear need amongst customer facing businesses for increased Garda numbers and response times. Government needs to prioritise improvements in both areas

Implement a trading interruption waiver on local authority rates for businesses due to unforeseen or unplanned changes to capital projects which results in long delays

The next Government must review the tendering process for state contracts to ensure Irish SMEs have an equal chance of participating and winning contracts versus larger companies

Ireland is highlighted as having one of the highest energy prices in Europe, this directly impacts businesses, there is a requirement to investigate and tackle this

Given the impact changes such as minimum wage and pension contributions have on SMEs, we must investigate if the cost burden can be reduced elsewhere in the system

4

Skills & Talent



There are many ways that businesses can be supported. One of those is developing the skills of new and existing employees to ensure business productivity and competitiveness is maintained or increased.

Over the last number of years Ireland has undertaken an incredibly effective skills and training regime which has provided much needed support to the enterprise sector as a whole. In many ways, other countries are looking to Ireland for ideas on how to undertake skills provision transformation.

However, there are also very real challenges in the sector, particularly for SMEs. This is due to the unique skill set required, but also the fact there isn't the ability for employees to take leave for training to the same extent as there would be for larger companies. Party manifestos, and indeed, the next programme for Government must account for this issue. Furthermore, we need to ensure continual support for the expansion of initiatives for SMEs and other companies to take part.

There is also the potential for greater clarity and transparency around the allocation of the NTF and other skills funding. This will allow companies to examine where the funding is going and how they might be able to receive skills investment.

The current employment landscape and availability of skilled workers makes expansion difficult for some companies. However, the solution is not as simple as expanding the labour force, the labour force must be expanded by those with appropriate skills. Limerick Chamber believes that this can be tackled and addressed through continued investment in programmes and liaising with industry participants of all sizes and sectors.

Supporting Research



Budget 2025 Submission



Mid-West Business Sentiment Survey

Key Asks



Following Budget 2025 it is critical that the NTF supports all businesses, particularly SMEs, through upskilling and workforce development incentives

There needs to be a targeted approach to utilising the NTF by providing direct support to employers via such avenues as Skillnet

The micro-credentials system must be reviewed to make it more attractive to SMEs and to ensure a greater uptake from industry

SME engagement is critical and we need to ensure programs like Springboard+ and other SME-targeted initiatives receive increased funding to boost appeal to smaller businesses

SMEs face financial and resource difficulties with the block release model which limits participation. Increased flexibility will help to boost participation utilising apprenticeships

Employers require transparency on how the NTF is allocated, this should be a priority of the next Government

There also needs to be greater communication and transparency on how funds are allocated to workforce development programs

The current funding model for some agencies makes it difficult for education providers to plan training. Multi-annual funding provides certainty and should be more widely adopted

Larger companies receiving investment assistance show less interest in training due to potential double dipping. This needs to be reviewed to develop larger workforces

The Human Capital Initiative (HCI) requires continual funding to ensure the development of skills for enterprise

5

Liveability



In Ireland's dynamic business landscape, creating a liveable environment and fostering talent are key to attracting and retaining skilled workers. As a small, open economy, Ireland's growth and competitiveness are heavily reliant on its human capital. Investing in people is not only critical for individual success but also essential for building a thriving business ecosystem. Feedback from our members consistently points to Ireland's skilled workforce as a primary reason businesses choose to establish themselves here.

To meet the evolving demands of industries, retention and attraction of our people is crucial. With rapid technological advancements and shifting global markets, businesses must adapt. By prioritising Ireland's liveability, we can ensure to attract and retain a workforce that remains agile and proficient in emerging sectors, strengthening the Irish economy's resilience.

Attracting and retaining top talent, however, goes beyond what a person's career can offer. Quality of life factors such as housing, childcare, and overall liveability are becoming increasingly influential. For Ireland to maintain its status as a global hub for innovation and technology, these elements must be addressed. A strong connection exists between business success and the well-being of individuals. By enhancing Ireland's liveability, we not only support the growth of skilled workers but also reinforce Ireland's position in the global business landscape, ensuring long-term prosperity and sustainability.

Supporting Research



Budget 2025 Submission



Mid-West Business Sentiment Survey



Mid-West Economic Insights

Key Asks



The region requires an appropriate health system including a new hospital with an A&E - finding an appropriate site must be expedited as well as advancing short-term options

Government need to take a more hands on approach to the allocation and distribution of Gardaí while allocating Gardaí based on population and need

Government needs to commit to the indexation of income tax bands to ensure real wages are not eroded

Greater urgency and intervention is required in the childcare sector to ensure that it becomes affordable for workers to remain in the workforce while placing children in creche

Overhaul personal investment system to cut red tape to make investing outside property more attractive such as individuals investing in ETFs

Greater emphasis needs to be put on retaining talent and attracting diaspora home including those in public services

Ireland must continue to invest in its transport network, both public/active transport and the road network

Housing is seen as the number one concern for businesses and Government must bring forward a realistic plan for tackling the crisis

Government need to ensure that funding remains available for local authorities to invest and improve public realm as well as boosting recreational and cultural amenities

5

Aviation



Shannon Airport is a key driver of growth for regional development. Nationally, we are lagging behind in providing the necessary infrastructure to support a growing population. Additionally, we are falling short of aligning the ambitions of Project Ireland 2040 and the National Planning Framework (NPF) with concrete delivery mechanisms and policies. We believe that expanding Shannon Airport is one such vehicle for both regional and national growth.

While much of the discussion centres around the capacity limits at Dublin Airport, there remains considerable unused capacity within state-owned airports in Shannon and Cork. Shannon alone could accommodate an additional 3 million passengers annually, with Cork capable of handling an extra 2 million, providing up to 5 million passengers that could be diverted to relieve pressure on Dublin's airport and infrastructure.

There is also a compelling argument from a national security standpoint against concentrating 88% of the country's aviation traffic into a single asset.

It is unwise not to fully leverage Shannon Airport, especially considering that 40% of passengers arriving in Dublin are travelling onward to other locations. Shannon's catchment area already encompasses 38% of the national population, yet it only accounts for just over 4% of Ireland's total air traffic.

Furthermore, Shannon/Limerick boasts the largest 90-minute catchment area outside Dublin. Indigenous companies and multinational corporations view Shannon as a key growth enabler, a major reason they choose to base themselves in the Mid-West.

Improved connectivity is essential to attracting businesses and supporting trade in the region. We welcome the inclusion of a rail link between Limerick and Shannon Airport by 2030, as outlined in the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review (July 2024). We urge the Government to back this project with the necessary support and funding to ensure it becomes a reality by 2030. Enhanced transport links will strengthen the regional economy, contributing to more balanced growth beyond Dublin.

Supporting Research



Budget 2025 Submission



Mid-West Business Sentiment Survey



Assessment of aviation policy as a driver of economic development



Regional Airports Programme Review Submission

Key Asks



A new National Aviation Policy must be undertaken and published with a new focus on the regional goals of Project Ireland 2040

Shannon Airport must be included in the Regional Airports Programme in the long-term with threshold increased to 3m passengers

Funding must be provided to support strategic business route development such as a PSO to a Northern European hub

Public transport is critical to any airport and we ask that both train and bus routes remain a Government priority

De-risk our aviation system by encouraging more flights from Shannon and Cork Airports

Fully utilise the capacity at Shannon and Cork Airports prior to the expansion of capacity elsewhere in the system

There needs to be support in developing a high-speed bus network for the Shannon Airport catchment area

There needs to be a focus on increasing inter-county bus services to regional airports that align with flight times



5

Infrastructure & Mobility



A well-functioning transport network is essential for societal and enterprise wellbeing. With significant population growth, it is crucial to ensure that Limerick and the Mid-West's transport needs are effectively met. Limerick Chamber advocates for a diverse transport system, emphasising the importance of public transport and improved road infrastructure.

Future transport planning in the region must follow transit-oriented development principles, where dense residential areas are built near transport hubs and nodes. This approach will reduce Limerick's sprawl and make public transport more attractive by minimising journey times.

Additionally, Limerick Chamber views active travel options as crucial for future transport success and advocates for their support, especially connecting large residential and employment areas.

Limerick boasts the second-largest catchment area within a 90-minute drive outside Dublin. It's crucial to not only enhance infrastructure for our growing region but also for the extensive area it serves. Strategically, investing in critical infrastructure in Limerick is imperative to maximise balanced regional development, given its substantial population impact outside Dublin.

Several key infrastructure projects in Limerick are slated for completion under Project Ireland 2040 and other supplementary initiatives. However, lengthy lead times and the current planning system threaten to delay these projects significantly. It is imperative that these projects remain a top priority. The projects in question are:

- The N/M20 Limerick to Cork
- The N21/N69 Limerick to Adare to Foynes
- Foynes to Limerick Railway
- BusConnects (with inclusion of Annacotty)
- The Limerick Northern Distributor Road

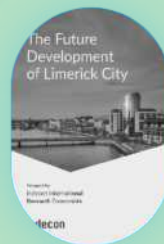
Supporting Research



Budget 2025 Submission



LSMATs Consultation



Future Limerick Report



Limerick BusConnects Consultation



Limerick Chamber Strategic Development Pipeline

Key Asks



The Limerick Northern Distributor Road is required to alleviate congestion in the city centre and create a knowledge corridor

Annacotty Business Park is home to a significant number of employees and still has no adequate public transport, it is urgent that this is rectified

Adherence to transport oriented development principles has been weak in the region to date and require greater focus and investment from Government

It is of critical importance to the designation of Shannon Foynes Port as a TENT-T port that funding is allocated and works begin on the road

The advancement of works at Colbert Quarter and other state owned sites is proving to be extremely slow and need to be address by Government

The Mackey Roundabout congestion poses a significant danger to people traveling to the east of the city and works must advance quicker

Active and public transport need to be continually invested in and expanded, particularly with a focus on key employment nodes

5

Rail Travel



The public transport and investment plans for Limerick must be based on long-term strategic vision for the sustainable mobility of people and goods. There is huge potential for a "rail linked Limerick" connecting all areas of the city and extending the reach of rail to suburban rail services using existing and disused lines with Colbert Station as the transport hub at the core.

As Limerick continues to grow, it is imperative that we invest in the transport system to match this growth. A connected rail network has huge upside potential to decrease car use in the Mid-West, decrease congestion and transport times, boost the Mid-West's contribution to decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and also has the potential to create a better air quality environment.

It is critical to adhere to Transport Oriented Development principles, ensuring people can live and work in connected areas.

Limerick and the wider Mid-West is ripe for a commuter rail system, this needs to be a priority of the next Government

As part of the Programme for Government, there must be a firm commitment to support and advance this city and regional rail network

Supporting Research



Budget 2025 Submission



LSMATs Consultation



Future Limerick Report



Limerick BusConnects Consultation

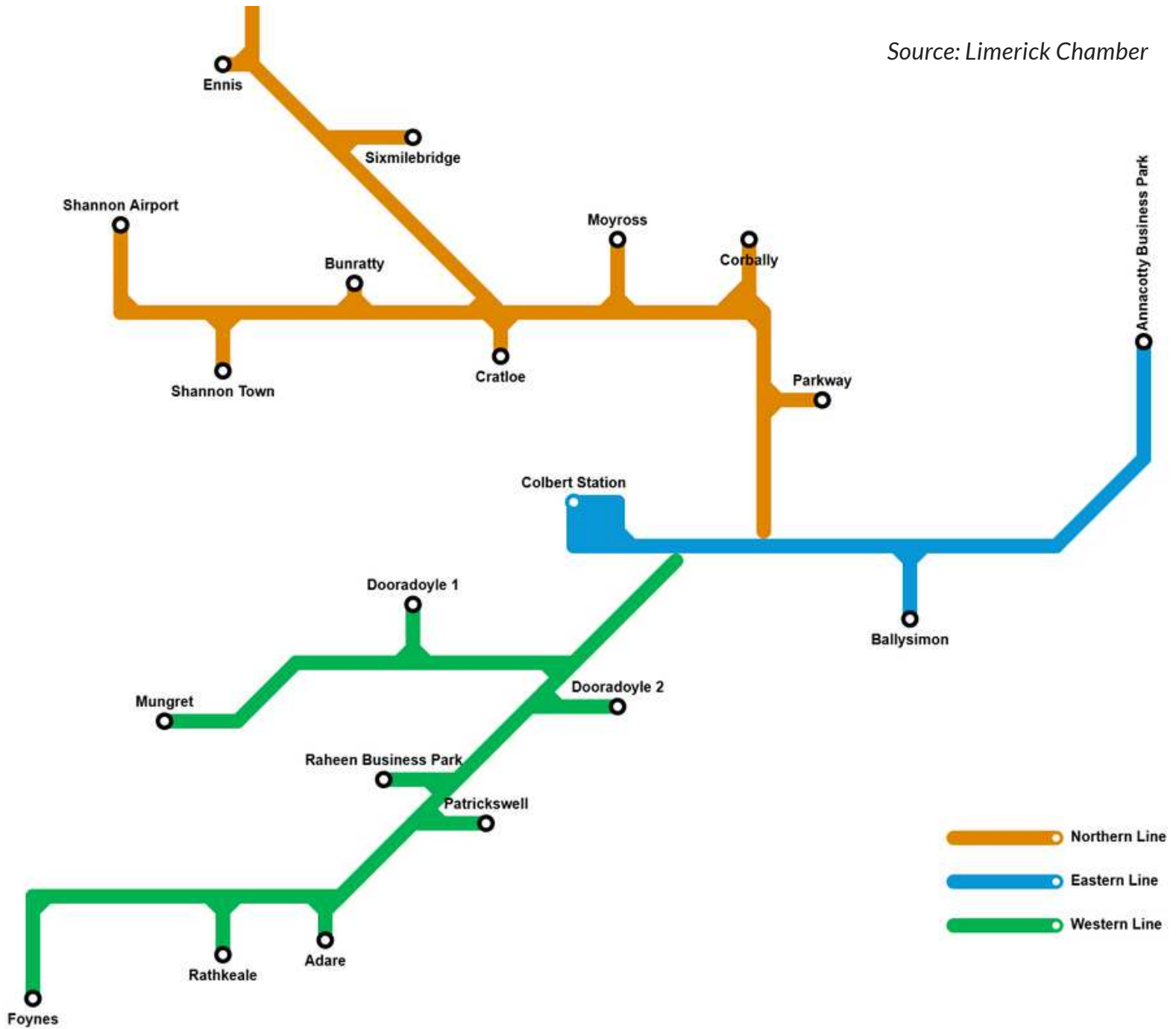


Limerick Chamber Strategic Development Pipeline



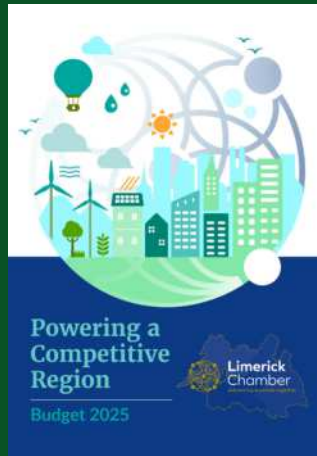
Potential Metropolitan Area Rail Stations

Source: Limerick Chamber



Other Publications & Recommended Reading

Economic Development



Housing



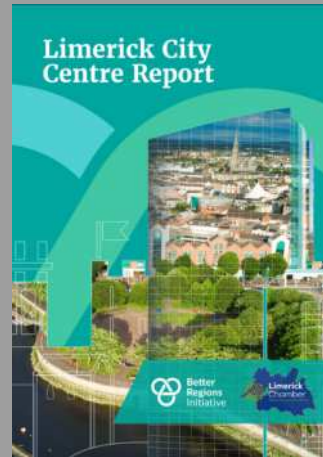
Energy



Transport & Trade



City Centre



Find more at
www.limerickchamber.ie/influence



Limerick
Chamber





www.limerickchamber.ie

