



Event Industry
Association Of Ireland

Limerick City Centre Public Realm Strategy

Submission from the Event Industry
Association of Ireland (EIAI)

Public consultation on the proposed
Limerick City Centre Public Realm Strategy

October 2026

Supporting safe, inclusive and sustainable
event use of Limerick's public spaces



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Executive Summary

The Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI) welcomes the Proposed Limerick City Centre Public Realm Strategy and supports its ambition to create an accessible, attractive and culturally active city centre. Events are a core public-realm function that contribute to community life, local business, cultural identity and the Strategy's objectives for activation, animation and placemaking.

The Strategy already identifies important requirements for event use, including power, water, robust surfaces and flexible street closures. EIAI's submission focuses on translating these provisions into tested designs, usable infrastructure and clear operational arrangements so that investment results in spaces that can safely and sustainably accommodate their intended activities throughout the year. This approach directly supports Goal 5 of Limerick's Festivals and Events Strategy 2024–2028 and strengthens the city's capacity to deliver Riverfest, St Patrick's Festival, community programming and Ryder Cup 2027, while leaving a practical legacy for future activity.

EIAI proposes six targeted amendments, each linked to specific provisions in Volumes 1–3 of the Strategy. Together, they would reduce avoidable temporary works, surface damage and administrative friction; improve outcomes for residents; and strengthen future funding proposals for regeneration, culture, climate resilience and active travel.

1. Event-use testing and published maps

Require representative layout testing at planning and detailed-design stages, supported by accessible, verified site information and commissioning trials before handover.

2. Flexible furniture and usable space

Qualify root-fixed furniture guidance at event locations to preserve usable layouts and accessible circulation, supported by removable elements and defined responsibilities.

3. Permanent utilities and suitable surfaces

Specify usable power, water, servicing and load capacity, including targeted grass reinforcement, controlled vehicle access and sustainable temporary infrastructure.

4. One coordinated event pathway and planned street use

Publish a clear, proportionate pathway covering notification, land-use permission, safety review, statutory licensing and road closures, aligned with Part 16 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 and the 2026 Licensing Regulations.

5. Environmental and inclusive use

Connect event operations with residential amenity, heritage, flood-risk arrangements, accessibility, night-time safety and the Strategy's AA and SEA assumptions.

6. Funded delivery and continuity

Assign ownership, maintenance and fair-access arrangements; protect existing events during public-realm and transport works; and review delivery using organiser and resident feedback.

These recommendations are intended to complement, not replace, the Strategy's existing provisions. EIAI supports Limerick City and County Council's ambition and is available to assist as the Strategy moves into implementation, offering practical national-industry expertise wherever it may be helpful.



About the Event Industry Association of Ireland

The Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI) is the national representative body for Ireland's professional event industry. Its membership comprises more than 850 businesses, organisations and individual professionals, collectively representing over 56,000 people working across the sector.

Ireland's event industry connects organisers, producers, venues, performers, technical specialists and suppliers across festivals, exhibitions, conferences, business events, entertainment and community activity. It encompasses the infrastructure and services that make these events possible, including staging, temporary structures, safety, security, transport, catering and communications. Many businesses and professionals work across several disciplines and event types, making the industry's contribution difficult to capture within conventional sectoral classifications.

EIAI works to ensure that this breadth of expertise informs public policy and investment. We advocate for clear responsibilities, proportionate requirements and consistent processes that reflect how events are planned and delivered. In public realm planning, this means connecting ambitions for culture, community participation and economic activity with the design, infrastructure and operational arrangements needed to support safe, accessible and sustainable events.



1. Introduction

The Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Limerick City Centre Public Realm Strategy and supports its ambition to create an accessible, attractive and culturally active city centre. Events are a core public-realm function: they bring communities together, support local businesses and give practical expression to the Strategy's objectives for activation, animation and placemaking.

The Strategy already recognises key requirements for event use, including power, water, robust surfaces and flexible street closures. Our submission focuses on translating these provisions into tested designs, usable infrastructure and clear operational arrangements. Integrating these requirements before designs are finalised will reduce avoidable costs, surface damage and disruption, while protecting residential amenity, heritage and everyday public access.

This approach directly supports Goal 5 of Limerick's Festivals and Events Strategy 2024–2028, “to create new festival and event infrastructure”. It would strengthen the city's capacity to accommodate Riverfest, St Patrick's Festival and community programming, support preparations for Ryder Cup 2027, and leave a practical legacy for year-round activity. Demonstrating operational readiness and inclusive use can also strengthen proposals for relevant regeneration, cultural, climate and active-travel funding.

The recommendations below are designed to reinforce the Strategy's existing principles and delivery arrangements. EIAI proposes six targeted amendments, each linked to relevant provisions in the consultation documents, to ensure that investment creates public spaces capable of accommodating their intended activities safely, inclusively and sustainably.

1. **Event-use testing and published maps.** Add representative layout testing, accessible site information and commissioning trials to the project checklist (Volume 2, p.234).
2. **Flexible furniture and usable space.** Qualify root-fixed furniture guidance where event flexibility is required (Volume 2, p.176; Volume 1, p.74).
3. **Permanent utilities and suitable surfaces.** Specify usable power, water, servicing and load capacity, including targeted grass protection (Volume 2, pp.13, 15 and 221).
4. **One event pathway and planned street use.** Connect event permissions, mobility and flexible closures through a published, proportionate process (Volume 2, p.233).
5. **Environmental and inclusive use.** Connect event operations with residential amenity, heritage, flood risk, accessibility and the environmental screening assumptions (Volume 1, p.72, 74; Volume 2, p.234; Volume 3).
6. **Funded delivery and continuity.** Assign ownership, maintenance and fair access arrangements, protect events during works and review delivery with industry input (Volume 2, pp.233–234).



2. Event-use testing and published maps

Before designs are finalised, representative community, market, performance and civic layouts should be tested against the intended uses of each space. The checklist on Volume 2, page 234 should require this at both planning and detailed-design stages. Testing must address installation and removal, usable audience area, queues, servicing, temporary facilities and emergency access; gross surface area alone does not establish event capacity.

Tested layouts should be published as accessible PDFs and editable, scaled drawings verified against completed works. They should show dimensions, fixed features, utilities, available capacity, loading constraints, accessible circulation and viewing, servicing and escape routes. Assumptions, revision dates and a responsible Council owner should be included. Screen-reader-compatible text descriptions should accompany visual maps.

These templates should be provided to, and help organisers understand workable uses while allowing alternative safe layouts. They are not blanket approvals or guaranteed capacities. The Council should identify which underlying site information organisers can rely on and which matters require event-specific confirmation, avoiding repeated surveys and duplicated reports.

At Potato Market, layout testing should reconcile the proposed event space with retained parking, coach provision, boat-club access and the bridge landing. At Arthur's Quay Park, event infrastructure and servicing should be coordinated with flood resilience and water-based activity. At High Street and the Milk Market, designs should demonstrate how market spill-out, loading, walking and cycling operate together. At Pery Square, testing should address temporary equipment, circulation, planting, heritage and residential amenity. These observations relate to Volume 2, pages 33, 43–44, 75–76 and 95–96; the illustrative designs require further investigation and detailed development. [1]

Before handover, the Council should verify that completed works meet the agreed operational brief and undertake a practical trial with operations staff and experienced organisers. This should test vehicle access and turning, bollard operation, removal and reinstatement of furniture, access to utility points, specified supply capacity and workable accessible routes. Defects should be addressed and verified drawings, inspection records and operating instructions handed to the responsible asset owner. This closes the gap between design intent and a usable event space.



3. Flexible furniture and usable space



Movable planting and seating modules can support everyday amenity while allowing public spaces to be reconfigured for markets, performances and community events. [Example Product](#)

Volume 1, page 74 recognises that raised planters can constrain larger events, while Volume 2, page 176 recommends root-fixed furniture to reduce vandalism and theft. This guidance should be qualified at locations intended for event use so that permanent seating, planting and installations preserve usable layouts and accessible circulation. London Plan Policy D8 provides a relevant precedent for relating street furniture to the function of a space and addressing unnecessary clutter. [1, 2]

The Council should identify clear usable areas, position permanent furniture to support both everyday and event use, and specify removable or retractable elements where periodic reconfiguration is required. Where elements are removable, responsibilities for lifting, storage, reinstatement and associated costs should be defined. Greening and accessible seating should be integrated within this approach, with protection for tree roots and adequate everyday resting places.

Suitable positions should be identified for stages, marquees, market stalls and temporary lighting. Engineered fixing points or sleeves should be assessed where repeated installation justifies them, with defined uses, load limits, inspection requirements and ownership. Heritage, archaeology and underground services must inform their location.



4. Permanent utilities and suitable surfaces

EIAI welcomes the provision for three-phase power and water in primary squares and green spaces in Volume 2, pages 13 and 15. These commitments should be supported by an assessment of anticipated demand, outlet locations and simultaneous use by traders, production equipment and other facilities. Provision should include 16A and 32A electrical connections where required, together with larger single-phase or three-phase supplies where justified by the intended programme.

Services should be positioned around tested layouts to minimise cables and hoses crossing public routes. The Council should publish total available capacity, outlet locations, access procedures and charges; outlet ratings alone do not establish the supply available to an event. Water provision should address potable supply, handwashing and food preparation, alongside wastewater collection or authorised discharge.

Retractable or flush-mounted in-ground utility units should be assessed for recurring event spaces. These can preserve visual quality and reduce temporary distribution and generator use, but suitability depends on flood exposure, drainage, accessibility, loading, maintenance and underground constraints. Pop Up Power Supplies' UK installations illustrate available systems; these are supplier-reported examples, not a product endorsement. [4]

Where adequate, reliable mains power is available on reasonable terms, routine generator use should be discouraged, while retaining assessed backup generation for safety or resilience. Permanent provision must be supported by authorised access, inspection and maintenance arrangements.

Volume 2, page 221 already recognises that event deliveries can impose heavier loads than everyday use. Design briefs should specify delivery routes, turning areas, surface and cover loading, trader positions and installation windows. Selected grass routes and trader positions should be reinforced where recurring use justifies it; temporary protection should be used for occasional activity. Tree roots must be protected, and ground conditions, drainage and wheel loads assessed. Reinforcement must not imply unrestricted vehicle access.

Bristol's Queen Square guidance and Melbourne's event planning guide provide useful precedents for controlled vehicle access and ground protection. Hardstanding should be identified for toilets, loading and waste collection, and the Council should assess whether a shared stock of reusable protection would offer value. Procurement should favour durable, repairable and reusable materials, with lower-carbon options and clear waste-minimisation arrangements. [5, 6]



Retractable service units provide access to permanent utilities for temporary events while preserving usable public space when lowered.



5. One event pathway and planned street use

Publish one coordinated pathway that clearly explains notification, land-use permission, safety review, statutory licensing and road-closure requirements, with defined triggers, contacts, information needs and timelines. These remain distinct permissions, but organisers should be able to reuse information through a single coordinating contact. Requirements should reflect scale, complexity and risk, with concise templates for smaller events and clear reasons for any additional requests.

The pathway must reflect Part 16 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 and the Planning and Development (Licensing of Outdoor Events) Regulations 2026, S.I. No. 468 of 2026. The remaining outdoor-event licensing provisions and these Regulations came into operation on 9 September 2026, and any applicable transitional arrangements should be explained. Guidance should distinguish legislation, conditions and advisory material, including the 1996 outdoor-event and 1998 indoor-concert Codes within their respective scopes. [9–11]

Volume 2, page 233 proposes exploring automated bollards at Nicholas Street, Pery Square, Honan's Quay and the Market Quarter to enable flexible event closures. This proposal should be connected to planned street-event layouts, delivery access and published closure procedures.

Reusable closure and diversion options should be developed with relevant authorities and transport operators, retaining statutory consultation and event-specific checks. Plans should address build and removal periods, bus operations, walking and cycling continuity, emergency access, resident and business access, deliveries, accessible drop-off and reopening. Coordination should align with LSMATS, BusConnects, active-travel projects and construction schedules. Evening transport should reflect departure demand for audiences and workers.

The pathway should explain agency roles, including Gardaí, the Fire Service, National Ambulance Service, Civil Defence, OPW and relevant water-based emergency services. Consultation must not imply guaranteed attendance. Capacity, emergency arrangements, safeguarding and protective security should be assessed proportionately; Appendix A identifies the operational matters to address without creating additional approval layers.

6. Environmental and inclusive use

Noise guidance should address residential clusters beside event spaces, particularly evening and night-time sensitivity, with proportionate limits, mitigation, monitoring and advance communication. A clear contact point should be available for concerns during events. Neighbouring development should consider established event uses early, including acoustics, servicing and access, to reduce future conflict.

At waterfront sites, operational flood triggers, infrastructure restrictions, safe egress and thresholds for suspension, cancellation and reopening should be established in line with Council flood-risk arrangements. Responsibilities for monitoring conditions and deciding when access is unsafe or temporary equipment must be removed should be clearly defined. Water safety, barriers, lighting, stewarding and emergency access should reflect each site and its intended use.

We request confirmation that the Strategy's AA and SEA assumptions—particularly the non-intensification of use referenced in the AA screening—reflect the intended future programme of activation and events. The Council should explain how subsequent proposals and changes will be assessed, including lighting, sound, wastewater and disturbance at sensitive waterfront locations. This request seeks clarity and consistency without making a finding on screening adequacy. [1]



Heritage guidance within the same pathway should explain temporary installations in Architectural Conservation Areas and near protected structures or archaeology, including fixings, loading, vibration and when specialist advice or consent is required. Riverside event design should be coordinated with flood-relief schemes and preserve safe access and escape routes.

Accessibility should be tested with event equipment and audiences in position, involving disabled people and representative organisations. Continuous journeys should be provided from transport and drop-off points to viewing areas, toilets and exits; companion arrangements, Changing Places provision, sensory needs and quieter areas should be considered. Clear information should be published on surfaces, gradients and temporary changes. Designs should address rain, wind, shade and shelter, with lighting and wayfinding that support a welcoming night-time environment, including for women and others who may feel less secure after dark.

Programming and allocation should support a balanced mix of community, cultural and commercial activity, consistent with equality and human-rights considerations, and avoid displacement of grassroots events. The Public London Charter provides a useful precedent for combining community use and public amenities. Everyday access should be retained, with support available to under-represented communities and smaller organisers. [8, 13]

7. Funded delivery and continuity

Use the Streetscape Focus Group identified in Volume 2, page 233 to involve event operations, suppliers, accessibility representatives and relevant Council services at an early stage. The maintenance and management arrangements on page 234 should be expanded to cover event infrastructure, named asset owners, inspection regimes, budgets, operational instructions and reinstatement standards. Edinburgh's coordinated public-space administration illustrates the value of a clear organising contact. [7]

Publish the total cost of using a space, including utilities, attendance, furniture removal, closures, cleaning and deposits. Booking priorities, disputed decisions and proportionate insurance requirements should be clearly explained, including minimum cover and how Council-provided infrastructure interfaces with organiser obligations. Responsibilities for defects, connection, operation and damage should be documented so risks are not informally transferred to small community organisers.

Establish a network of complementary event-capable spaces, including the principal waterfront, market, park and civic locations identified by the Strategy. Prioritise audits, layout trials and funded upgrades according to intended use and constraints. This network should not assume simultaneous activation or access to privately managed venues.

Assess the effects of public-realm, transport and flood-relief works on existing events before construction programmes are fixed. Provide organisers with early notice, coordinate with the cultural calendar and identify suitable temporary alternatives where needed. Preserve accessible routes throughout works, communicate changes in advance and explain how displaced event functions will be retained or accommodated elsewhere.

Review the framework periodically using organiser and resident feedback and proportionate indicators for accessibility, participation, infrastructure reliability and economic impact. Publish collection methods, organiser expectations and how findings inform design, programming and maintenance. Reuse existing records and aggregate information rather than creating duplicate reporting.



8. Conclusion

EIAI supports and commends Limerick City and County Council's ambition to create an accessible, vibrant and culturally active city centre. The amendments proposed in this submission are intended to strengthen the Strategy's delivery by ensuring that public realm investment creates spaces that can safely, sustainably and inclusively accommodate their intended activities throughout their lifetime.

We request that the final Strategy and its implementation programme incorporate the following six commitments:

1. **Event-use testing and published maps:** Add representative event-layout testing, accessible site information and practical commissioning trials to the project checklist in Volume 2, page 234, and make verified template layouts available to organisers.
2. **Flexible furniture and usable space:** Qualify the guidance on root-fixed furniture in Volume 2, page 176, to preserve flexible event areas, responding to the constraints identified in Volume 1, page 74.
3. **Permanent utilities and suitable surfaces:** Translate the provisions in Volume 2, pages 13, 15 and 221 into defined requirements for power, water, servicing and load capacity, including assessment of retractable utility units and targeted ground reinforcement or protection.
4. **One event pathway and planned street use:** Connect permissions, event review, mobility and road-closure arrangements through a published, proportionate process, supported by reusable street-event layouts and the flexible closure proposals in Volume 2, page 233.
5. **Environmental and inclusive use:** Integrate residential amenity, heritage, flood-risk operations, accessibility and equitable participation into event planning, and confirm that the environmental assumptions in Volume 3 reflect the intended programme of activation.
6. **Funded delivery and continuity:** Extend the delivery arrangements in Volume 2, pages 233–234 to identify asset owners, maintenance resources, fair access arrangements and review mechanisms, while protecting existing events and accessible routes during construction.

We look forward to continued constructive engagement, and welcome continued dialogue. With Limerick City and County Council in realising the Strategy's cultural, social and economic objectives.

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Appendix A: Operational matters for the coordinated pathway

These matters should be addressed through proportionate guidance and site information, rather than separate approval processes or identical requirements for every event.

- Crowd and emergency planning: Assess layout-specific capacity, crowd flow, queues and evacuation. Use modelling where complexity or risk warrants it. Establish competent roles, weather decisions and agency liaison.
- Safeguarding and security: Provide visible stewards, assistance points and arrangements for lost or separated people. Assess hostile-vehicle risks without assuming ordinary bollards provide protective security.
- Information and communications: Use legible temporary signs, multilingual information where needed, digital updates and on-site assistance for closures and accessible alternatives.
- Digital systems: Deploy CCTV or sensors only for a defined operational need, with a lawful basis, proportionate governance, retention periods and public information.
- Reinstatement: Agree standards, timeframes and responsibilities, supported by pre-event and post-event inspections that distinguish existing defects from event damage and provide a route for resolving disputed costs.



Appendix B: References

- [1] Limerick City and County Council. Proposed Limerick City Centre Public Realm Strategy, Volumes 1–3, July 2026. Volume 3: Appropriate Assessment screening, PDF p.10. <https://mypoint.limerick.ie/en/consultation/proposed-limerick-city-centre-public-realm-strategy>
- [2] [Greater London Authority. London Plan 2021, Policy D8 Public realm.](#)
- [3] Limerick City and County Council. Festivals and Events Strategy 2024–2028, Goal 5. <https://www.limerick.ie/council/services/community-and-leisure/culture-and-arts/limerick-city-and-county-council-festivals>
- [4] [Pop Up Power Supplies. Retractable and in-ground utility systems and UK case studies. Manufacturer information.](#)
- [5] [Bristol City Council. Queen Square Site Guide, 2025.](#)
- [6] [City of Melbourne. Event Planning Guide, section 5.11 Infrastructure and facilities.](#)
- [7] [City of Edinburgh Council. Events in Public Spaces charging model report, executive summary on coordinated administration.](#)
- [8] [Greater London Authority. Public London Charter, 2021.](#)
- [9] [Government of Ireland. Safety at outdoor pop concerts and other outdoor musical events, 1996.](#)
- [10] [Government of Ireland. Code of Practice for Fire Safety and Indoor Concerts, 1998.](#)
- [11] Planning and Development Act 2024, Part 16; S.I. Nos. 466 and 468 of 2026; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Commencement Circular 2026/02, 10 September 2026. https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/cd80a7a6/PDA_2024_Commencement_Circular_No_2026_02_Event_Licensing.pdf
- [12] [Limerick City and County Council. Road closures and street events guidance. Published road-closure lead-in and street-event expression-of-interest arrangements.](#)
- [13] [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, section 42. Public bodies.](#)

