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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Action Plan for Urban Parks and Green Areas in Mid West

Work has commenced on a new strategy document aimed at guiding the sustainable development and public management of urban parks and green areas in the Mid West Region.

The Mid West Regional Authority, in conjunction with Limerick City Council, this week awarded a €56,100 (ex VAT) contract to Dublin-based Cunnane Stratton Reynolds to develop the *Urban Parks and Green Areas Action Plan*, as part of the EU-funded 'Parkatlantic' project.

The completed strategy will be circulated to regional development agencies in the Mid West Region, including Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council, North Tipperary County Council, Clare County Council, Shannon Development, the Limerick Regeneration Agencies and Fáilte Ireland.

The plan also will be distributed to relevant development agencies in other Parkatlantic regions such as Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Angers (France), and Ave Valley and Municipality of Vila Nova de Famalicao (Portugal).

According to **Cllr. Joe Leddin, Chairperson of the MWRA** stated: "Once completed later this year, the Action Plan will be made available to both policy makers and practitioners to improve policies in relation to urban parks planning and management, promote the use of green resources and improve the quality of life in urban areas as well as the quality of the urban landscape and environment."

"While there will be no obligation on any agency or authority to use this Action Plan many of the project partners are facing the same challenges of reduced resources-and the expectation to try to do more with less. This action plan will give policy makers and practitioners achievable objectives to attain in the short and medium term that promote sustainable management and planning of parks and green areas. As such it is expected that such a document will be welcomed by most agencies as a useful tool in maximising their potential", added Cllr. Leddin.

Commenting on the background to the Action Plan, **Linda Newport, EU Projects Officer, Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA)** explained: "The Urban Parks Study, carried out in conjunction with Limerick City Council identified existing policy on urban parks and green areas and its contribution to sustainable development. The results and conclusions arising from the review have provided the basis for the development of an action plan for project partners to utilise in the planning and management of urban parks and green areas."

Ms. Newport explained that the overall objective of the Urban Action Plan is to improve the quality of life in towns and cities via the implementation of policies geared towards sustainable development.

The Action Plan also will seek to promote the use of green resources, support educative and environment actions, harmonise integration of human activity in parks and green areas and reduce their impact on same, and to encourage increased usage of parks, green areas and public spaces.

Ms. Newport said that the MWRA and Limerick City Council will organise a conference in the Mid West Region to disseminate the results of the Action Plan to policy makers and practitioners in the Mid West region.

She noted that as the Action Plan will provide recommendations that are not specific to Limerick City alone, but also to other EU cities and regions, the Plan will be highly transferable to other areas.

The Urban Parks and Green Areas Action Plan is scheduled for completion by July 2012.

The Parkatlantic project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through an INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Programme The project began in 2010 and will continue until September 2012.

For more see www.mwra.ie.

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Notes To Editor:

- Images (no reproduction fee) are available from Press 22 on 061-204222
- Interviewees are available on request. Please contact Mark Dunphy of Dunphy PR on 086-8534900 or media@dunphypr.com
- In December 12th October 2011 the Mid West Regional Authority launched a call for tender, inviting submissions to develop a sustainable management Action Plan for Urban Parks. Deadline for submission of tenders was 5th December 2011. A total of seven tenders were received and evaluated by a team comprised of members of the Regional Authority and Limerick City Council. Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, 3 Molesworth Place, Dublin 2 (Managing Director Declan O'Leary) was awarded the tender and will work with two sub consultants to implement the external expertise: Michael Cregan & Associates, 6 Brookville Park, Blackrock, Dublin (Managing Director-Michael Cregan) and Optimize Economic Consultants, Barracks House, Croghan, Boyle, Co. Roscommon (Managing Director: Dr Craig Bullock).

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